

**BLACK ADULTS' ACCOUNTS OF THEIR KINSHIP CARE EXPERIENCES AND
INFLUENCES ON THEIR PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING**

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This research report is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology

DECLARATION

I, Lynne Goldschmidt, know and accept that plagiarism (i.e., to use another's work and present it as one's own) is wrong. Consequently, I declare that this research report is my own unaided work.

Signed: _____

Date: August 2017

DEDICATION

Ulrich, Danyella and Haeden

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH AIM AND RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, children not residing with either of their parents primarily live in households headed by their grandparents, followed by other relatives or siblings (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Research indicates that this role of care is more often provided by a grandmother or another adult female relative (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Rabe, 2016; Seekings & Moore, 2013). The role of the extended family in the provision of childcare has been driven by a myriad of historical influences.

The previous apartheid regime is recognised as a key contributing factor, given that Black South Africans, who constitute more than 75% of the population, were oppressed and allocated less-than-adequate resources (Seekings & Moore, 2013; Statistics South Africa, 2012). Given this enforced deprivation, along with the laws governing working and living practices, Black families were obliged to adopt segregated living patterns (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Sibanda, 2011). Moreover, whereas impoverished White families received governmental welfare and care services to promote their economic and social wellbeing, the extended Black family had to take up the role of family provision to proffer personal and financial support to its members (Seekings & Moore, 2013).

Despite the demise of apartheid, the extended family continues to occupy a critical role in the provision of care. South African polity and policy related to family and childcare still assume that the provision of care would be undertaken by family members (Rabe, 2016). As such, state intervention is only prevalent once families neglect to provide the expected care. Consequently, present-day South Africa has a multiplicity of family structures (Seekings & Moore, 2013).

Although policy, such as the White Paper of Families in South Africa, acknowledges the diversity of South African families, assumptions regarding the respective responsibilities of the

family versus the state lacks cognisance of the financial vulnerability of many families (Department of Social Development, 2012). It has been argued that the recommendations of the White Paper of Families in South Africa are subsequently skewed towards the heteronormative, nuclear, and socially middle-class family unit (Department of Social Development, 2012; Rabe & Naidoo, 2015). As such, the support and services available for families of divergent structures and socio-economic status are inconsistent (Rabe, 2016). This in turn raises concerns regarding the physical and emotional wellbeing of all members of these family constructs.

Kinship care has attracted research attention, since the caregiver role is often taken up by grandparents. Beyond concerns about the grandparents' physical and emotional wellbeing, there is also the recognition that they are generally financially constrained (Beegle, Filmer, Stokes & Tiererova, 2010). Therefore, children and adolescents raised by grandparents may be considered increasingly vulnerable, given the understanding that poverty is a significant threat to wellbeing (Beegle et al., 2010; Roelen, Delap, Jones & Chettri, 2016).

The diversity of family structures in the South African milieu gives rise to enquiry around the influence of family on the developing individual. Furthermore, the historical role of kinship care is recognised; and there is a realisation that this practice will continue to play a fundamental caregiving role for children, irrespective of the changing dynamics of family (Beegle et al., 2010). The intent of this study was both to explore Black adults' recollections regarding the influence of kinship care on their current psychosocial wellbeing, and to consider the contextual dynamics these Black adults and their caregivers may have experienced.

An integrated conceptual framework has been applied to ensure that the data are not interrogated in a contextual vacuum. The overarching framework guiding this study comprises of Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1994; 2005) fully-evolved version of the bioecological theory of

human development. This is followed by a consideration of attachment theory within this context, with the dominant focus on the foundational contributions of John Bowlby (1958) and Mary Ainsworth (1985); and a brief overview of the seminal postulations of Margaret Mahler (1968). The research concludes with an understanding of Erik Erikson's (1980) stages of psychosocial development, with emphasis on the adolescent and early adulthood life stages. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development provides a framework for this study, while the attachment theory and psychosocial theory of development permits an opportunity for in-depth analysis. Moreover, the theoretical paradigms share many commonalities (Pittman, Keiley, Kerperlman & Vaughn, 2011). These include the mutual appreciation that development occurs across the lifespan, as well as the recognition of attachment by both Bronfenbrenner and Erikson (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Pittman et al., 2011). Moreover, both Bowlby and Erikson's theories illustrate the criticality of experiencing a sense of security to socially explore and engage with the world (Pittman et al., 2011).

1.2 RESEARCH AIM

The purpose of this study is to explore the meaning making by Black South African adults around the influence of their kinship care experiences on their psychosocial wellbeing, focussing on the adolescent life stage.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall research question resulting from this aim is:

- **How has kinship care during adolescence influenced Black adults' experience of their psychosocial wellbeing?**

The overall research question will be addressed by exploring the following:

- **How have the experiences of kinship care during adolescence contributed to the way that Black adults view themselves, especially in their psychosocial wellbeing?**
- **How have the experiences of kinship care during adolescence contributed to the way that Black adults interact with others?**
- **How have the experiences of kinship care during adolescence contributed to the way that Black adults view the world in general?**

1.4 RESEARCH RATIONALE

Globally, research focussing on kinship care has predominantly placed emphasis on the challenges experienced by primary caregivers (Gibson & Singh, 2010; Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016). Additionally, though there is an increasingly greater emphasis on childhood and adolescent experiences, research remains skewed towards the United States of America (Hong, Algood, Chiu & Lee, 2011; Musil et al., 2011). Several of these international studies have indicated an increased risk for compromised emotional wellbeing in adulthood (Carpenter & Clyman, 2004). Other research findings have emphasised that wellbeing is dependent on the quality of the caregiver-child relationship during kinship care, as well as placement stability (Dolbin-Macnab & Keiley, 2009). Moreover, the exposure to trauma or neglect within the parent-child relationship prior to kinship care is a threat to wellbeing in adulthood (Lee, Clarkson-Hendrix & Lee, 2016).

According to the international literature available, kinship care in Western contexts, whether formal or informal, often arises following parental neglect, abuse or engagement in illegal activities (Gibson & Singh, 2010; Gleeson et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2016; Maaskant, van Rooij, Bos & Hermanns, 2016). These experiences infer an increased probability of negative or traumatic experiences within the initial parent-child relationships, prior to kinship care. This is

in contrast with the South African context, where kinship care has predominantly been associated with a myriad of socio-economic and socio-political factors. These include post-apartheid labour migratory practices, high unemployment rates, declining marital patterns, and the prolific impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012; Sibanda, 2011; Statistics South Africa, 2010; 2012).

Statistics South Africa (2012) indicated unemployment to be as high as 40%. These numbers are higher amongst Black South Africans, who represent 78,2% of the working age population. Furthermore, whilst South Africa has always had a low marriage rate, a declining trend became evident in 2009 (Statistics South Africa, 2012). The prevalence of HIV is approximately 12,7% of the overall South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2017). However, when reviewing statistics for the adult population the incidence is estimated at 18,9%. The introduction of health care plans and antiretroviral treatments have contributed to a decline in HIV-related deaths between 2002 and 2016. Despite the latter, a large proportion of the South African population are either infected or indirectly impacted by the pandemic (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

Moreover, Black South African families have historically been exposed to alternative living practices due to apartheid labour and living prohibitions, and may subsequently have developed alternative approaches to perceiving or managing family living arrangements (Rabe & Naidoo, 2015). Given the standard application of the Western family construct of international studies as well as the varied contributing factors to kinship care, neither the findings nor recommendations of these studies may be entirely suitable to the South African context (Sibanda, 2011). In future research, greater emphasis may be required to highlight the features that promote resilience and adaptability across various family structures (Rabe, 2016).

A further difference with regards to the prevalent body of global literature is that the research is often administered over a singular point in time. Given the absence of longitudinal studies, the literature available does not reflect changes that may have taken place during an individual's life (Kiraly & Humphreys, 2013). Subsequently, this does not provide a view of the influence of kinship care in the long-term (Dolbin-Macnab & Keiley, 2009). Moreover, research conducted with children and adolescents often indicates that during these life stages, participants often lacked the necessary insight to evaluate their relationships with their biological parents, and appeared uncomfortable in expressing their feelings to individuals unfamiliar to them (Dolbin-Macnab & Keiley, 2009). It is therefore likely that the children and adolescents included in these studies shared more favourable descriptions of their relationships, as opposed to more difficult depictions (Dolbin-Macnab & Keiley, 2009; Kiraly & Humphreys, 2013). The aforementioned factors indicate a need for research with older participants who may have a greater capacity to engage with their experiences from a retrospective perspective (Dolbin-Macnab & Keiley, 2009).

It is proposed that the widespread practice of kinship care in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2012), along with the country's unique historical and present-day dynamics, highlights the need to focus on the implications of these family constructs specifically within the South African milieu. Furthermore, emphasis on the adolescent life stage is of fundamental significance, since adolescence is a critical life stage during which the impending patterns for adulthood are established (Sawyer et al., 2012; Stortelder & Ploegmakers-Burg, 2010). This study seeks to create insight into the influence of kinship care during adolescence on the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals in adulthood.

It is anticipated that this study will contribute to the existing knowledge base on kinship care by attaining a view that is relevant to the South African context. Appropriate means of supporting caregivers, children, and adolescents may be effectively achieved only through a

comprehensive understanding of the determinants that influence the developing individual. It is surmised that the study will meaningfully contribute to conceptualising the current policies and recommend new interventions that will serve both kinship caregivers as well as children and adolescents.

1.5 ELUCIDATION OF KEY CONSTRUCTS

The following constructs will be applied throughout this proposal and are listed here to provide clarity on their meaning:

1.5.1 Psychosocial

For this study, the term *psychosocial* is rooted in the ideology of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1980). The theory has a biological foundation, with emphasis on the continuous interaction between the psychological and social influences of an individual's experience (Newman & Newman, 2015; Sacco, 2013). As per Erikson's developmental theory, the term psychosocial acknowledges the individual's capacity to contribute to psychological growth, while simultaneously recognising the possible biological and societal influences. Moreover, the construct further recognises culture as a contributor to an individual's development (Newman & Newman, 2015).

1.5.2 Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a multidimensional construct, and an array of delineations exists (Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern & Seligman, 2011). There is no agreement on a singular definition of wellbeing, although in its simplest form it is commonly accepted as the subjective evaluation of life satisfaction, quality of life and happiness (Forgeard et al., 2011). This study will apply a psychosocial lens to wellbeing. The subjective nature of the individual's experience will remain pertinent, while remaining cognisant of the psychological and societal influences on the

individual (Negovan, 2010; Ventevogel, Jordans, Eggerman, van Mierlo & Panter-Brick, 2013).

1.5.3 Kinship care

Kinship care is a term describing the care provided to a child by grandparents, relatives or friends familiar to the child in the absence of the child's biological parents (Borenstein & McNamara, 2012). Implicit to the concept of kinship care is the perception of full-time care over a substantial time-period (Pitcher, 2014). According to Statistics South Africa (2010), more than half of South African children not residing with their biological parents still have both parents alive. Given the latter, this definition cannot be equated with orphanhood.

1.5.3.1 Informal kinship care

Kinship care may be formal or informal (Pitcher, 2014). Informal kinship care refers to a form of placement that has been arranged by the child's parent or relative (Gleeson, 2014). Thus, the placement is not overseen by a judicial authority (Pitcher, 2014). Informal kinship care is the more common form of kinship care (Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016).

1.5.3.2 Formal kinship care

Formal kinship care refers to the appointment of care as prescribed by a judicial authority (Pitcher, 2014). Within the South African setting, the legal placement of a child with caregivers' familiar to the child is referred to as kinship care placement (Pretorius & Ross, 2010). Given the formal nature of the placement, the judicial authority appointed by the state screens the potential caregivers with whom the child is likely to be placed, and the family unit is subject to on-going monitoring to ensure the continued appropriateness of the caregivers and the family context in relation to the needs of the child (Pretorius & Ross, 2010).

1.5.4 Primary caregiver

The primary caregiver refers to the individual who assumes the greatest responsibility for providing to the daily needs of the child (Skelton, 2012). The primary caregiver may or may not be related to the child, since the central focus of this position is on the day-to-day care of the child. This definition separates itself from delineations rooted solely in biological relationships, and acknowledges the various family arrangements that are prevalent in South Africa (Skelton, 2012; 2013).

1.5.5 Adolescence

There is no standard definition for *adolescence*, since it is characteristically defined by age and social roles within specific societies (Sawyer et al., 2012). This study will employ the definition of adolescence as conceptualised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2014) in relation to Erikson's (1980) postulation and expectancies of this life stage. Adolescence is one of the most rapid phases of human development, during which biological maturation is reached prior to psychosocial maturation. This delineation recognises that the dynamics of the individual and the environment in which the individual exists, will influence the ultimate transformation of the individual (WHO, 2014).

1.5.6 Adult and Adulthood

The term *adult* will be reviewed in relation to the concept of adulthood, as postulated by Erikson (1980). The social construction of an adult is relative to an individual's historical and cultural experiences (Hoare, 2002). Moreover, beyond Erikson's (1956) expectations regarding the resolution of tasks and crises, comes the recognition of Bowlby's (1988) anticipation of the adult's ability to relate with people and engage with the world beyond the individual's primary attachment figure (Pittman et al., 2011).

1.6 STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

This research report comprises of seven chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces the study, the research aims and questions, and the rationale. The chapter correspondingly provides an elucidation of the constructs applied throughout the paper.

Chapter 2 provides an appraisal of the most salient literature available that is relevant to this study. The chapter commences with an overview on the changing dynamics of families, introducing the criticality of kinship care. This exploration is initiated from a global perspective, followed by a focus on Africa, and subsequently on South Africa. The chapter concludes with an overview of the proposed influence of family structure on child and adolescent wellbeing.

Chapter 3 provides an elucidation of the integrated conceptual framework. The chapter commences with an overview of Bronfenbrenner's fully evolved version of the bioecological theory of human development as the overarching framework, followed by an outline of the attachment theory and the key influences of Bowlby and Ainsworth. A brief overview of the contributions by Mahler will also be provided. This will be followed with a synopsis of the contributions of Erikson's theory on psychosocial development with specific emphasis on the adolescent and early adulthood life stages. The chapter concludes with a rationale to substantiate why an integrated conceptual framework is deemed most appropriate in relation to the research intent.

Chapter 4 provides an outline of the research design and method employed, as well as the sampling approach, data gathering process, and the data analysis method, applied as per Clarke and Braun (2013). The ethical considerations are discussed, with specific emphasis on those

unique to the qualitative process. The chapter concludes with an account of the researcher's self-reflexivity given the researcher's pertinent role as the primary data collection tool.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to an overview of the pilot study findings. Although the intent of the pilot study was to ensure the suitability of the interview schedule, the pilot study highlights prominent themes that may benefit from further exploration. The chapter commences with a demographic and descriptive profile of each of the pilot study participants. This is followed by an overview of the pertinent themes, possible risk factors, probable implications, and recommendations.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis and discussion of the final data set. The chapter commences with a demographic and descriptive profile of each participant. The chapter introduces the overarching themes and relevant sub-themes, and reviews the themes in relation to the relevant literature available.

Chapter 7 concludes the research report. An overview of the possible research limitations is provided. The research implications and recommendation section provides an overview of possible future research considerations. Lastly, a summary is provided to conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognised that family structures have become more diverse and complex over time (Goldberg & Goldberg, 2012). Given their dynamic nature, families are likely to continue being subject to change, dependent on both context and time (Buchanan & McConnell, 2017). Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2012) state that *“an inclusive twenty-first century definition of family must go beyond traditional thinking to include people who choose to spend their lives together in a kinship relationship despite the lack of legal sanctions or blood lines”* (p. 2).

Globally, ever-changing family arrangements and processes are presenting unique and varied qualities. Although historically family structures were flexible and accommodating, the “nuclear family” has become the archetypal family form since the rise of industrialisation (Walsh, 2016). However, the contemporary family seems to be returning to a more adaptable state, given the increasing complexity of the social, economic and political challenges faced worldwide (Walsh, 2016).

The acknowledgement of these circumstances has extended the possible variants of family (Buchanan & McConnell, 2017). These may include, although are not limited to, families with same-sex caregivers, multigenerational households, as well as single-parent households. It may be argued that families are socially constructed units, and subsequently are dependent on an individual’s personal experience (Buchanan & McConnell, 2017). Here, it is pertinent to consider that an individual’s social construction may be influenced by their perceived expectations, as well as the actual expectations of broader society.

Irrespective of their size, structure and the composition of their members, families are considered as fundamental to the developing individual (Buchanan & McConnell, 2017). This corresponds with Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) postulation of the family as one of the central

microsystems closest to the individual. Consequently, the family as a social unit has been a focal area of research, not merely to examine the ongoing changing dynamics of family structures, but also because of the family's potential influence on the wellbeing of children (Brown, Manning & Stykes, 2015).

Kinship care is historically the most common response to the plight of children in the absence of parental care (Assim, 2013; Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016). Moreover, it is recognised that, irrespective of the ever-changing dynamics of family, the practice of kinship care is likely to endure (Assim, 2013). This postulation is supported by the increasing global prevalence of kinship care. As a result, this subject is gathering increased importance as a focus area for research (Gibson & Singh, 2010; Kiraly & Humphreys, 2013). However, studies around these family structures have been concentrated mainly on the implications for the primary kinship caregivers and their needs (Gibson & Singh, 2010).

2.2 KINSHIP CARE IN CONTEXT

2.2.1 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES OF KINSHIP CARE

Across cultures, extended families have traditionally assumed responsibility for children (Pitcher, 2014). Informal kinship care is the more common practice, which has made the attainment of statistical data around the number of children in kinship care challenging (Gibson & Singh, 2010; Selwyn & Nandy, 2014). The statistical data available for countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, confirm an increase in formal kinship care (Borenstein & McNamara, 2012; Gibson & Singh, 2010; Selwyn & Nandy, 2014). In Australia, it is estimated that the incidence of informal kinship care is four times greater than that of formal kinship care (Borenstein & McNamara, 2012), whereas in the United States of America it is estimated to be six times greater than formal kinship care (Gibson & Singh, 2010).

A study across all United Kingdom countries however indicated that 90% of children in care are provided for in informal kinship care (Selwyn & Nandy, 2014).

Gleeson (2014) proclaims that kinship care provides greater benefit to children than formal foster care structures, as the child is retained within the biological family structure. This maintains family involvement, and nurtures the child's sense of belonging as a family member (Hong, et al., 2011). The value of the extended family is acknowledged, with an emphasis on grandparents who are most likely to assume the responsibilities of caregiver in the absence of the child's biological parents (Burgess, Rossvoll, Wallace & Daniel, 2010; Green & Goodman, 2010; Lee et al., 2016).

A primary motivation for many kinship caregivers when assuming parenting responsibility is to safeguard children from the formal foster care system (Gleeson et al., 2009; Harnett, Dawe & Russell, 2014). Beyond this concern around state involvement, caregivers' motivations also range from experiencing a sense of familial obligation to a sincere affection for the child, and culminate in a desire to ensure a sense of wellbeing and belonging (Gleeson et al., 2009). Given these motivations, kinship care placement increases the likelihood of placement stability. Both familiarity with the caregiver prior to kinship care, and the extension of the relationship in response to placement stability, positively influence the emotional and behavioural development of children in kinship care (Brown & Sen, 2014).

2.2.2 KINSHIP CARE WITHIN THE BROADER AFRICAN CONTEXT

The practice of kinship care is common in Africa, given that the extended family is the favoured form of provision for childcare (Roelen, Delap, Jones & Chettri, 2016). The extended family has shown considerable resilience in absorbing children who are without parental care (Grant & Yeatman, 2012; Madhavan, Mee & Collinson, 2014). It may thus be contended that in

Africa, the extended family is the immediate family's greatest source of support (Grant & Yeatman, 2012; Madhavan, Mee & Collinson, 2014; Zimmer & Dayton, 2005).

Children are more likely to be cared for in families defined by consanguinity (Block, 2014). As such, depending on country and culture, the child's living arrangements may be determined based on the child's paternal lineage (Block, 2014). The extent of paternal support and financial provision may be determined by the patrilineal kin's access to social and financial resources, as well as their regard of the mother (Niehaus, 2017). As such, despite the dominance of patrilineality, childcare is often negotiated, thereby permitting maternal kin to provide kinship (Block, 2014; Niehaus, 2017). Maternal kin are more likely to be represented by the maternal grandmother or a maternal aunt (Niehaus, 2017). However, many African countries have experienced an increase in grandparents accepting more accountability for the provision of childcare than other relatives (Beegle et al., 2010).

Within the African context, the prevalence of kinship care is attributed to macrosystemic influences, which include the HIV/AIDS pandemic and migratory labour practices; as well as microsystemic influences, such as the relationship status of the child's birth parents (Grant & Yeatman, 2012; Hosegood, 2009; Zimmer & Dayton, 2005). Several international scholars have focussed predominantly on ways that HIV/AIDS and orphanhood have influenced children's living arrangements (See Beegle et al., 2010; Block, 2014; Bryant & Beard, 2016; Grant & Yeatman, 2012; Hosegood, 2009; Karimli, Ssewamala & Ismayilova, 2012; Roelen et al., 2017). Consequently, emphasis is placed on how the proliferation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has strained the extended family networks, and the risks presented should the family no longer have the capacity to fill this role (Block, 2014). However, Beegle et al. (2010) recognised that there are a multitude of factors beyond the impact of HIV/AIDS and orphanhood that is of consequence to children's living arrangements across the respective African countries.

Poverty is recognised as a key determinant in family segregation, parental loss, and the resultant caregiving practices (Block, 2014; Roelen et al., 2016). Moreover, although grandparents are likely to be amongst the poorest of social groups, they are the most likely to accept the responsibility of kinship care (Roelen et al., 2016). As such, children in kinship care are most likely to reside in households facing greater financial constraints within already impoverished environments (Beegle et al., 2010).

Kinship care within this context is considerably fluid, often depending on the child's needs, as well as on the resources available within respective households (Block, 2014). Children may subsequently return to their biological parents should that household's financial state improve; or they may be moved to other relatives who have greater access to educational opportunities, or because the kinship care household experiences an increase in kinship responsibilities towards other children (Block, 2014; Roelen et al., 2016).

2.2.3 KINSHIP CARE WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

South Africa provides a distinct setting in which both the historical and present-day challenges are of consequence (Sibanda, 2011). These challenges include the remnants of the Apartheid system (Sibanda, 2011), the proliferating consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (de Witt & Lessing, 2010; Gasa, 2012; Sibanda, 2011), as well as the socio-economic implications of both (Gasa, 2012; Mogotlane, Chauke, van Rensburg, Human & Kganakga, 2010; Sibanda, 2011). It may be argued that the concept of a nuclear family has never been an appropriate description for most South African families (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). The South African family is more likely to be fluid in nature; and as such, youth within the South African context are likely to be exposed to several family disruptions throughout the formative time-span of their lives (Amoateng, 2007; Marteleto, Cavanagh, Prickett & Clark, 2016).

The complexity of the South African family stems in part from the history of apartheid, when Black men were divorced from their roles as husbands and fathers to occupy positions as migrant labourers in urban areas (Madhavan, Mee & Collinson, 2014; Sibanda, 2011). The proliferation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has compounded the already complex family structure (Sibanda, 2011). The latter presents an increased risk of economic vulnerability and family dissolution (Hosegood, 2009). Collinson (2010) postulates that the various factors implicated in kinship care, such as socio-economic status, labour migratory practices and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, directly or indirectly influence each other, thereby exacerbating the phenomenon of family disruption.

Chuong and Operario (2012) recommend that public policy and intervention strategies should not focus solely on children orphaned because of the HIV/AIDS endemic, given the implications of migratory practices on family dissolution. Reviewing the aforementioned factors, it may be argued that the South African family is piteously prejudiced (Sibanda, 2011). However, Rabe and Naidoo (2015) argue that, despite the emphasis in recent literature on the family in crisis, the diversity of family structures and practices should not necessarily be perceived as a signal of distress. Nonetheless, an impetus to explore these considerations are critical, given the significance of living arrangements on children's health, socialisation, educational outcomes, and ultimate wellbeing (Sibanda, 2011).

2.2.3.1 Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Labour Migratory Practices and its Influence on The Family and Kinship Care

According to Lu and Treiman (2011), a primary reason for parental absence in Western societies is rooted in divorce. In South Africa, labour migratory practices appear to be a fundamental contributing factor to parental absence. Labour migration is recognised as a distinct form of family disruption (Lu & Treiman, 2011). Historically, the apartheid regime

strategically and purposefully provoked instability in Black families (Collinson, 2010). Apartheid policies specifically concentrated on family dissolution by the implementation of gendered hostels, making it illegal for women and children to reside in hostels designated for men (Hosegood et al., 2009).

Couples and families subsequently had to live segregated lives, which in turn contributed to the instability of marriage as an entity. Migrant men and women would often create second families in their areas of employment, in response to the prolonged periods away from their primary families (Hosegood et al., 2009). This led to Black women having to strive towards financial independence in reaction to the implications around the disruption of their families (Philips & James, 2014). Black women were obliged to seek informal work opportunities, and eventually they replaced men as domestic workers in white homes (Philips & James, 2014). This is a trend that continues in post-apartheid South Africa (Collinson, 2010).

Regardless of the absence of legal segregation policies in the post-apartheid era, these migratory labour patterns seem to have become engrained (Collinson, 2010). It may also be argued that, despite the abolishment of apartheid, the socio-political landscape has remained mostly unchanged, thereby not facilitating socio-economic transformation for Black families (Leibbrandt, Woolard & Woolard, 2009). Consequently, family disruptions persist as the practice of migratory labour grows, particularly amongst younger individuals and women (Collinson, 2010).

2.3 FAMILY, KINSHIP AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING

The concept of wellbeing is receiving progressively more focus from both a political and a policy perspective (Carter, 2012; Diener, Kahneman & Helliwell, 2010). Although this emphasis is attributed to a drive towards a more well-rounded civilization, it may be argued that extensive consideration is also given to the economic implications of declines in wellbeing

(McDaid & Park, 2011; Taylor, 2011). The elevation of wellbeing during childhood as a fundamental determinant of a nation's wellbeing is particularly noteworthy (Carter, 2012; Greenwood & de Leeu, 2012).

In addition, existing literature demonstrates the influence of the immediate and extended environment on development and wellbeing during and beyond childhood (Hong et al., 2011). The child's or adolescent's physiological, cognitive and emotional needs must be met to contribute towards the individual's development into a healthy adult. This includes, but is not limited to, appropriate nourishment, secure attachment, cognitive stimulation and positive parenting (Niehaus, 2017).

The family unit thus has considerable influence on development and wellbeing (Beegle et al., 2010). This includes family stability, which is recognised as a vital contributor to the development of children (Marteleto et al., 2016). The instability of parent-child co-residence subsequently influences the child's access to adult resources for their own development into successful adults. This may be attributed to the lack of social support and parental guidance (Lu & Treimann, 2011).

2.3.1 KINSHIP CARE: CAREGIVER WELLBEING

It is recognised that kinship caregivers experience higher levels of stress in comparison to most parenting adults (Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016). Stress levels appear to be influenced by the caregivers' access to resources as well as their receipt of social support (Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016). Subsequently, a pertinent concern around the increasing prevalence of informal kinship care is that caregivers are likely to have poor access to services, resources and financial assistance (Harnett, Dawe & Russell, 2014). This in turn places the child at risk, given that both the child and their caregiver are exposed to physical and emotional stress in response to their material deprivation (Green & Goodman, 2010).

Research findings by Gleeson, Hsieh and Cryer-Coupet (2016) found that kinship caregiver stress was found to be highest amongst siblings providing kinship care, followed by grandparents, cousins and lastly aunts and uncles. The study however acknowledged that siblings contribute to the smallest proportion of caregivers. It is suggested that caregiving has a less severe impact on the physical and emotional wellbeing of aunts and uncles. This is attributed to the fact that the act of caregiving and child-rearing is more relevant to their life stage; whereas it may be considered less appropriate to the life stages of siblings and grandparents and so may impact more negatively on their wellbeing (Lee et al., 2016). This is supported by the finding that aunts and uncles are often raising their own children alongside providing kinship care. Furthermore, while aunts and uncles are generally expected to assist with the care of just one child, grandparents are often expected to provide care for more than one grandchild (Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016).

Globally, grandparents are more likely to assume the role of caregiver in the absence of the child's biological parents (Burgess et al., 2010; Green & Goodman, 2010; Lee et al., 2016). This raises concerns regarding the caregivers' life stage, physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as their access to resources (Green & Goodman, 2010). Moreover, grandparents are cognisant of their own life stage, and bear guilt around the psychosocial differences between them and the children they are caring for (Lee et al., 2016). This awareness and guilt further compounds their concerns regarding the children's wellbeing, which in turn heightens their parenting stress levels (Lee et al., 2016). It is argued that the level of stress experienced by grandparents negatively impacts on the child's social and emotional wellbeing (Dunne & Kettler, 2008).

2.3.2 KINSHIP CARE: CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELLBEING

Research findings indicate that children raised by both biological parents are physiologically and mentally healthier than children raised by single mothers or grandparents only (Bramlett & Blumberg, 2007; Smith & Palmieri, 2007). It is argued that children raised in kinship care are at greater risk of emotional or developmental behavioural problems (Smith & Palmieri, 2007). Conversely, it is reasoned that, despite the challenges presented by kinship care, children residing with grandparents or relatives are likely to receive greater stability given the familiarity of these caregivers to the children (Gasa, 2012). Residing with a primary caregiver familiar to the child, may not only provide stability and connectedness, but concurrently render the child some alleviation from the trauma of being separated from the child's biological parents (Hong et al., 2011). This is particularly relevant given the child's possible exposure to death and poverty in the South African context (Sibanda, 2011). The trauma resultant from parental death may contribute to psychosocial distress and restrict psychosocial development, thereby influencing overall wellbeing (De Witt & Lessing, 2010).

It is acknowledged that extended families contribute to resilience around wellbeing and educational attainment (Beegle et al., 2010). However, given that the provision of physical and financial care is often provided by grandparents, there are concerns with regards to the probability that children residing with grandparents are most likely living in poorer households (Beegle et al., 2010). Poverty is known to negatively impact on consistent parenting when the level of stress that caregivers are exposed to is considered, and they may become distant or react in a punitive manner (Niehaus, 2017). Although these risk factors are not limited to kinship caregivers, they are at an increased risk in financially constrained households.

Collinson (2010) asserts that maternal migration has a considerable influence on child wellbeing. This assumption is based on the changed family structure, as well as the possibility

that the alternative caregiver, left to provide for the needs of the child, may be less receptive to the child's physiological needs, resulting in a greater risk of illness for the child. This is supported by Chuong and Operario's (2012) postulation that maternal presence has a protective outcome on the child's wellbeing, whereas no such influence was found in response to paternal presence.

Although the literature on kinship care mostly refers to children in general, it is important to review the adolescent life stage. Adolescence provides a unique context, given both rapid physiological growth, such as brain development; and the onset of social exploration within unfamiliar networks (Niehaus, 2017). However, although this life stage is characterised by increased social exploration beyond the family context, it remains important for the adolescent to be assured of parental presence and availability (Niehaus, 2017). As a result, the quality of the adolescents' relationship with the kinship caregiver significantly contributes to their experienced levels of self-esteem (Farineau, Wojciak & McWey, 2013). Moreover, research indicates that adolescents residing with grandparents are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviour across culture and context (Wild & Gaibie, 2014).

CHAPTER 3: INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The intent of this research was to explore Black adults' accounts of their kinship care experiences, and the probable influence on their psychosocial wellbeing. An integrated conceptual framework was employed to facilitate the exploration of the various contextual and situational dynamics that the individual was exposed to during development, and the cumulative impact on the developing individual's psychosocial wellbeing.

Bronfenbrenner's (1994; 2005) fully-evolved version of the bioecological theory of human development serves as the overarching framework guiding this study. The secondary theoretical framework to support the exploration of the "individual in context" will be the attachment theory, based on the joint contributions of Bowlby (1977) and Ainsworth (1985). A brief overview of the contributions of Mahler (1968) is also provided; and to conclude, an exploration of Erikson's psychosocial development theory will be applied, with specific focus on the adolescent and adulthood life stages.

3.2 BRONFENBRENNER'S BIOECOLOGICAL THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Bronfenbrenner had an immense interest in the family as an institution, which served as a catalyst for his research in human development (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Bronfenbrenner postulated the theory on the ecology of human development in 1979 which was continuously revised and extended until 2005 (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009).

This study employs the most recent of his revisions, namely the bioecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This determination has been based on the emphasis on the bi-directionality of influences between the individual and the respective systems, as well as

the processes involved in human development. The central tenets comprise of the proximal processes, the individual traits, context, and cognisance of the importance of historical time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). These theoretical inferences become significant when deliberating on the developing individual within the South African context. The bioecological theory of human development in its most extended form permits the exploration of the individual in context, interpersonal engagements, as well as development over time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) argued that the comprehension of human development is dependent on acknowledging the ecological system in which the individual exists. This is demonstrated in the elevation of all elements influencing the individual, transcending family and community to incorporate wider societal, cultural and historical forces (Abrams, Theberge & Karan, 2005). In considering the numerous levels of influence on the developmental outcomes of children in kinship care within the South African context, it becomes critical to understand the interrelations between the individual and their specific environment (Hong et al., 2011).

Bronfenbrenner's application of the term *ecology* is a key factor in the tenets of his theory (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The term emphasises the interplay that may occur between the individual and the environment in which the individual exists, while accentuating the anti-deterministic nature of the theory (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). The theory recognises the individual as an active being, who in turn, may influence the respective systems (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009). This highlights the importance of the individual's traits, and the role they play in influencing their immediate ecology. Thus, Bronfenbrenner's theory places the individual at the core, while concurrently acknowledging the interrelations between the respective systems that influence the individual's developmental outcomes (Hong et al., 2011).

A prominent tenet of the most recent form of the theory is the centrality of proximal processes in the construction of human development (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Proximal processes are defined as *the respective modes of interaction between the developing individual and the environment over time* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). However, the extent to which proximal processes influence human development is dependent on the developing individual, the contextual factors, and the historical timeframe. This understanding of the construction of human development led to the centrality of the Person-Process-Context-Time delineation (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

A key proposition of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that human development occurs through a multitude of experiences, which give rise to subjective emotions characterised by both constancy and change (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). While this process commences during the early stages of childhood, it continues throughout an individual's lifespan. The emotions that emerge from these experiences, whether positive or negative, are likely to contribute to the course of human development in the future (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The family unit and friends are often the main constituents sharing in these experiences.

3.2.1 ELUCIDATION OF THE NESTED SYSTEMS

The environment as conceived by Bronfenbrenner, comprises of various nested systems, ranging from the microsystem to the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). According to this postulation, the microsystem represents the inner-most level of the individual within their family setting, and subsequently development is shaped by the interdependency of the lives of the family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Hong et al., 2011). It is within this system that the caregiver-child relationship exists, and consequently attachment is formed (Hong et al., 2011).

A key proposition of the bioecological theory of human development is that cognitive, moral, emotional and social progression requires exposure to increasingly more complex experiences over time, with the support of a person who is committed to the child's well-being and development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Therefore, the core of this progression relies on a strong, mutual, emotional attachment. Bronfenbrenner postulated that the establishment of a secure, reciprocal attachment would motivate the developing child to internalise the warmth and affection expressed by the child's parents (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The reciprocity of the bond shared between the parents and the developing child encourages the child to pursue activities and relationships within their social environment. Given the criticality of attachment, this concept will be further explored through the application of the attachment theory.

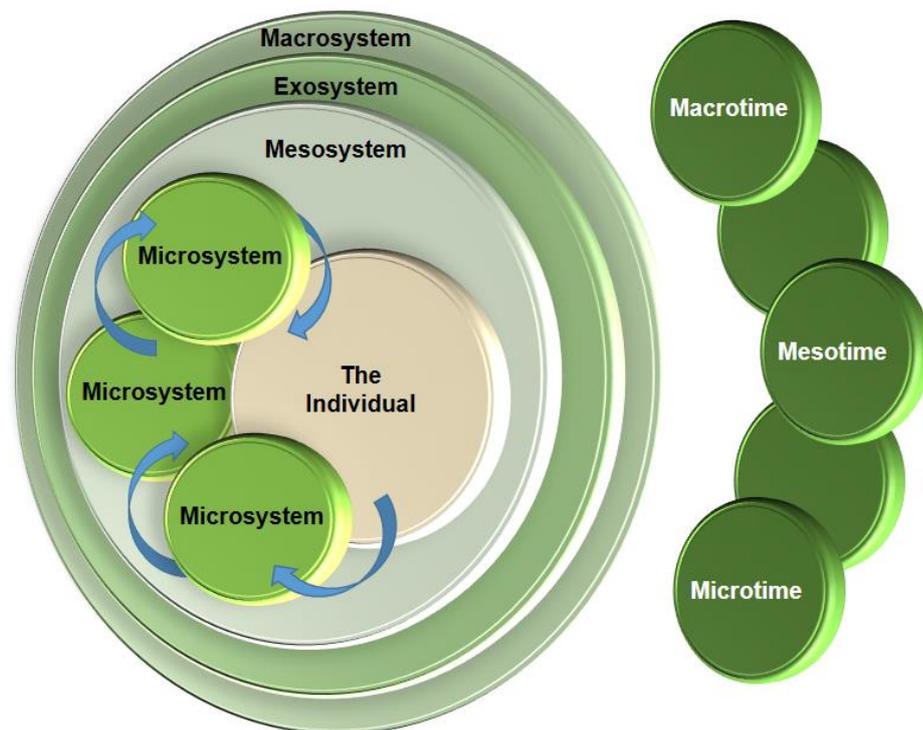


Illustration 3.2.1 Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development

3.2.1.1 *Microsystem*

The microsystem is hypothesised as the most proximal setting. It comprises of social roles, patterns of activities and interpersonal relations that the developing individual experiences in the immediate environment for a significant period (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). Frequently applied illustrations of an immediate environment are the family unit and the educational environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Within the scope of this study and its focus on the centrality of kinship care, several microsystems may be relevant to the developing individual. Given the multiplicity of family structures within the South African setting, the primary family unit may comprise of only the child and the child's biological caregivers, or may encompass the extended family from the onset. The latter is likely to be dependent on household composition.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the setting of the microsystem either invites or inhibits engagement in activities or experiences, based on its unique composition of physical, societal and representational attributes. Bronfenbrenner (1994) postulated that the immediate settings, pending their construction, provide the context in which proximal processes function to produce and sustain development. Therefore, development may be either supported or disadvantaged by the construction of the microsystem, given its foundational importance (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Furthermore, these settings include *significant others*, who may hold specific traits, beliefs and values which ultimately serve as catalytic agents for the developing individual's reciprocal interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). A feature of proximal processes is that these significant others influence the developing individual not only based on their personal characteristics, but also on their interpersonal engagements with others within the microsystem (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

3.2.1.2 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem encompasses a network of microsystems, and is subsequently a representation of the respective engagements that occur between the different immediate settings in which the developing individual participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). A possible example could include the connection between the individual's parents and the school teacher, since the developing individual is at the core of both the family and school setting. Despite the common visual interpretation of nested systems, it must be recognised that the mesosystem is not supreme to the microsystem, but rather represents the engagements that occur between microsystems (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The mesosystem subsequently increases in scope and complexity whenever the developing individual enters a new microsystem, and similarly reduces in scope and complexity whenever the individual departs from a microsystem (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Applying the concepts of both the microsystem and the mesosystem to the concept of kinship care is complex. It may be argued that the developing individual is at the core of both; yet the biological parents as well as the kinship caregivers at different stages in the child's life contribute to the immediate environment of the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This is particularly relevant in kinship care arrangements with high levels of parental involvement. Moreover, within the South African setting, the institution of family may not be neatly conceptualised, given the significance of the extended family and its considerable and continuous influence on the developing individual (Seekings & Moore, 2013).

An exploration into the influence of kinship care requires cognisance of three possible interrelating microsystems: the unit represented by the biological parents; the unit represented by the kinship caregivers; and the extended family. The latter often play a dominant role in

certain decision-making processes that influence the biological parents, the kinship caregivers, and subsequently the developing individual at the core of these engagements.

3.2.1.3 The Exosystem

The exosystem comprises of interlinked systems, although at least one of the systems does not involve the developing individual at its core (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner frequently applied the link between the family unit and a parent's workplace as an example (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Tudge et al., 2009). Despite the developing individual not being at the core of the parent's work environment, the features and dynamics of the work environment influence the parent and by extension, the developing individual. Similarly, although not an active participant in the parent's work environment, the developing individual will influence the parent, and consequently their parent's place of work (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

This example is particularly relevant within the South African context, where both apartheid and post-apartheid labour migratory practices significantly influenced Black family structures and living arrangements (Sibanda, 2011). Remnants of apartheid migratory practices are acutely visible around the role of fatherhood, marital practices, and living arrangements (Rabe, 2006). While male labour migratory practices were central to apartheid policies, in the post-apartheid era, female labour migratory practices also have a significant impact on family composition (Rabe, 2016). An example of the exosystem could be that, while the parent's work location and consequent inaccessibility to the child may result in family disruption, and a separation between the parent and the child, the parent's work may favourably contribute towards financial provision for the child.

3.2.1.4 The Macrosystem

The macrosystem comprises of the predominant themes arising between the microsystems, mesosystems, and exosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner's explication of the composition of the macrosystem incorporates terminology such as *material resources*, *opportunity structures*, *barriers*, and *life-course prospects* (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), which may be informed by socio-economic dynamics, beliefs, and traditions. These terms are relevant in clarifying the lived experiences of many Black South Africans, from both a historical and present-day perspective (Gradín, 2013). These experiences are often marked by a deficiency in resources, opportunities and options, along with a plethora of deterrents, and interlaced within the process of human development.

Material deprivation is a remnant of the apartheid era, and may be identified as the principal deterrent, resulting in the continuous construction of poverty amongst Black South Africans (Gradín, 2013). Within the context of Gradín's (2013) research, material deprivation not only refers to a lack of ownership of assets, but includes a lack of access to basic infrastructure as well as quality health care and education services.

3.2.1.5 The Construct of Time: Micro-, Meso-, and Macro-Chronological Systems

Former versions of Bronfenbrenner's model referred to the *chronosystem*, whilst the more mature form of the theory simply refers to the *construct of time* (Tudge et al., 2009; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). *The passage of time* represents the historical time of the environment, as well the subsequent lifespan of the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Therefore, the construct of time incorporates the changes and consistencies of both the environment and the individual. Examples may include changes in the family structure and socio-economic status; as well as the scope of the various roles and responsibilities that manifest during an individual's

lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The apartheid and post-apartheid periods are significant markers within South Africa's timeline, given the direct influence of both eras on Black South Africans (Sibanda, 2011).

The construct of time is delineated across the respective systems, and is referred to as microtime, mesotime and macrotime (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Whereas microtime signifies permanency as opposed to the lack of permanency in enduring occurrences of proximal process, mesotime represents the succession of these occurrences across broad periods of time, namely days or weeks. Macrotime encompasses events that influences society overall.

The reciprocity of human existence is emphasised, given the recognition that people both affect and are affected by the developments and implications of human development over the life course (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). It is important to recognise that these developments and implications do not necessarily refer to a progression of the developing individual.

3.2.2 CRITIQUE OF BRONFENBRENNER'S BIOECOLOGICAL THEORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Bronfenbrenner's theory is considered comprehensive in terms of capturing person, process and contextual influences (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). However, a criticism has been that the scope of the theory allows for breadth, but disregards any in-depth understanding on how development at each level occurs (Christensen, 2010). This in turn has raised questions around the implementation of possible interventions at the respective systemic levels (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). It is further argued that Bronfenbrenner did not attempt to demonstrate or provide clarity on the methodological application of the theory, but instead commented on other researchers' methodological application of the theory (Tudge et al., 2009).

Despite the theory having been criticised for its breadth and complexity, Bronfenbrenner maintains that he did not intend for every element of his theory to be applied within a single study (Tudge et al., 2009). His application formed a dual strategy which relied on both his own ideas and the theoretical postulations and findings of fellow researchers (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Consequently, it appears that Bronfenbrenner (1994) was transparent in his intention to evolve a theoretical model not merely to attain prominence and validity, but rather to provide a framework that would deliberately be found lacking, thereby encouraging further collegial application and investigation. He anticipated that this stance would promote further understanding of the circumstances that inform the process of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

3.3 ATTACHMENT THEORY AND FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Attachment theory is the culmination of work conducted by Bowlby (1977) and Ainsworth (1985). The theory is multifaceted in that it facilitates an understanding of normal developmental processes as well as psychopathology (Brisch, 2011). Although much of Bowlby's and Ainsworth's work primarily focussed on infants and children, both acknowledged that attachment persists throughout an individual's lifespan (Ainsworth, 1985; Bowlby, 1977), since attachments as well as affectional bonds may be formed at any life stage (Ainsworth, 1985).

Theoretically, it may be argued that Bowlby's and Ainsworth's attachment theory is incompatible with Mahler's (1968) separation-individuation theory. However, parallels between these two theories become more evident when considered from a practical perspective. This is apparent regarding the mother's role in mediating the infant's journey to exploration and independence (Brandell, 2010). Blum (2004) also argued that attachment theory does not sufficiently address the development of separateness, which is accounted for by Mahler (1968)

and her focus on independence, autonomy and identity. As a result, although Bowlby's and Ainsworth's attachment theory is principally integrated into the framework of this study, Mahler's contributions will be consulted to highlight and explain those constructs not addressed by the attachment theory.

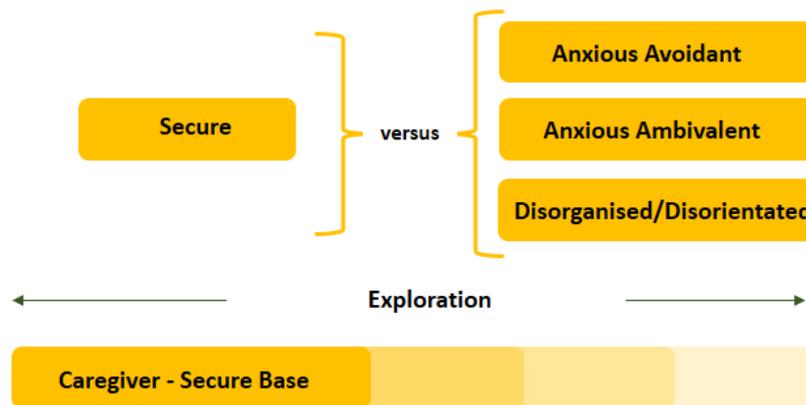


Illustration 3.3 Attachment Theory

3.3.1 THE FOUNDATIONAL TENETS OF ATTACHMENT THEORY: JOHN BOWLBY AND MARY AINSWORTH

Bowlby and Ainsworth, respectively yet concomitantly, had a keen interest in the relationship between children and their parents, as well as its probable influence on human development (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). While they initially worked separately, after exposure to each other's work they forged a long-term partnership which lasted for over forty years. The following sections will provide an overview of their separate contributions and conclude with an insight into their joint contributions.

3.3.1.1 *The Contributions of John Bowlby*

Bowlby's interest in personality development and parent-child interaction emerged while he was undertaking volunteer work among maladjusted children (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Van der Horst, Van der Veer & Van Ijzendoorn, 2007). Here, he was exposed to adolescents

who demonstrated maladjusted behaviour and who, correspondingly, did not have close relationships with their maternal figures. This motivated Bowlby into pursuing a career in the field of child psychiatry and psychotherapy (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Later in his psychiatric profession, Bowlby's interest in the parent-child relationship was further influenced by various projects relating to delinquent children.

Bowlby was concerned that psychotherapy placed too much emphasis on a child's fantasy life, as opposed to the child's actual lived experiences (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). In addition, Bowlby was reluctant to accept that a child's relationship with the parent was based merely on dependence and the satisfaction of physical needs (Bowlby, 1988). He instead believed that there was a key difference between physical wellbeing versus psychological wellbeing. Through his work experiences, he became convinced of the importance of parent-child interaction on the child's personality development.

Bowlby posited that the bond between the child and the parent is fundamentally emotional, independent from the child's physical need to be fed (Carr & Cortina, 2011). It is this emotional bond that Bowlby has termed *attachment*, and the consequent behaviour as attachment behaviour. Moreover, he believed parent-child interactions were subject to intergenerational influences, in terms of the parent's own early parent-child experiences (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991).

Bowlby conceived the attachment system as genetically and biologically orientated (Brisch, 2011). The rationale was that attachment serves as the child's means of survival, which is activated towards certain attachment figures. Bowlby (1988) proposed that attachment behaviour is a means of attaining closeness to another individual who is perceived as more capable of coping in the world. Bowlby (1988) asserted that, although attachment behaviour may be most evident during early childhood, it is relevant across an individual's lifespan. This

suggests that an individual's internal representations of themselves and others are founded on their childhood experiences with their caregivers (Fonagy, 1999). Bowlby (1988) referred to this as the individual's internal working model. The internal working model provides an internal representation of relational patterns exposed to during early childhood, which has been internalised, thus impacting the individual's own development (Bretherton, 1997). These internal representations, in turn, provide the model for the way they are likely to engage in interpersonal and social interactions (Fonagy, 1999).

Attachment behaviour is believed to occur in varying patterns, dependent on the individual; and becomes most evident when an individual experience an increased need for protection (Bowlby 1988). Although attachment behaviour may at times be apparent to a greater or lesser extent, it is the certainty that the attachment figure is both available and responsive that provides the feeling of security, and which sustains the attachment relationship. Therefore, attachment is dependent on the accessibility of the primary caregiver in terms of availability, sensitivity and responsiveness (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009). The quality of accessibility will influence the levels of security and confidence in an individual (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009).

Bowlby's work indicates that the lack of accessibility of the primary caregiver, either by itself or in combination with other variables, influences the individual, even in adulthood (Wallin, 2007). Bowlby (1982) hypothesized that the warmth of an early relationship with a primary caregiver is a precursor for the development of secure attachments in adulthood. According to Bowlby, the attachment that develops during a child's early stages of life with their primary caregiver is not static, but is subject to change in response both to exposure to alternative relationships throughout the child's respective life stages, and to the consequent emotional experiences (Brisch, 2011). Therefore, an individual's wellbeing is contingent on the level of attachment the individual shares with others (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015).

Bowlby perceived the parent-child interaction as a mutual, self-regulating system (Brisch, 2011). This concept was most likely influenced by his learnings from cybernetics and the systems theory. Bowlby believed the attachment relationship to be a separate regulatory component of the parent-child relationship, considering it an element within a much greater system (Brisch, 2011).

The link between attachment and exploration is central to Bowlby's theory of attachment (Bretherton, 1997; Brisch, 2011). Bowlby (1988) believed that *the secure base* was at the core of attachment behaviour, inferring the importance of an attachment figure who is perceived to be accessible and available. This encourages the child to freely explore their surroundings, toys or people. Fundamental to the secure base is the knowledge of its continued availability for the child to return to the accessible caregiver in times of distress (Cassidy, Jones & Shaver 2013).

3.3.1.2 *The Contributions of Ainsworth*

Ainsworth's entry into the field of psychology and her interest in psychological research was initially premised on her fascination with personality development (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1989); and during her foundational years, she had a keen interest in security theory. Although not in full agreement with all the foundational tenets of this theory, Ainsworth carried certain of the concepts through in her contributions to attachment theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1989).

During the 1950's, Ainsworth joined Bowlby's research team for almost four years. Despite Ainsworth's intrigue with Bowlby's theories post-exposure, she resisted a deviation from mainstream psychoanalytic theory which emphasised the drive theory and the parents' role in satisfying a child's physical needs (Bretherton, 2013). However, after her departure, she remained committed to pursuing further research focussed on infant and mother interactions (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1989).

Shortly afterwards, Ainsworth received an opportunity to continue these research intentions; and while collaborating with the East African Institute for Social Research in Uganda, she was exposed to mother-child dyads over a two-year period (Bretherton, 2013). Ainsworth undertook to observe mother and infant dyads, as well as family units during her time in Uganda; having been inspired by the observational work undertaken by some research members in Bowlby's team.

She followed through with these observations for a period of nine months, for two-hour slots, bi-monthly (Bretherton, 2013). Although her initial emphasis was on the infant and the infant's attachment and consequent interaction with others, her focus later narrowed specifically to the mother-infant dyad (Bretherton, 2013). She observed that infants' attachments, whether secure or insecure, was not dependent on the amount of care and attention received in total, but by the care and attention received by the mother. This work motivated her ongoing, extensive exploration of maternal reactions.

In explaining the results of her research observations, Ainsworth underlined Bowlby's theoretical framework. However, where Bowlby placed more emphasis on the infant, Ainsworth focussed on the mother-infant dyad, implicating attachment with love (Bretherton, 2013). Ainsworth expanded on Bowlby's theory by introducing attachment classifications (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012). These classifications were derived through observing the reactions of infants when separated from their primary caregiver through the application of the "strange situation", as conceptualised by Ainsworth (Wallin, 2007). The patterns of reactions observed through non-verbal communication were defined as secure, avoidant, anxious and ambivalent (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009).

Attachment is proclaimed to be relational and not temperamental (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009). This implies that the child may have a secure attachment with one parent, while simultaneously

sharing an insecure attachment with the other parent (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009). Ainsworth confirmed that the purpose of attachment is to reduce anxiety in the child (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015). The interaction between mother and child during the attachment period is considered to influence the individual significantly throughout childhood into adulthood (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009). In other words, the type of parenting received during childhood becomes evident in the way the adult interacts with the world (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015).

Ainsworth differed from Bowlby in respect of her broader focus on naturalist data, whereas Bowlby concentrated on research that observed parent and child separation (Bretherton, 2013). Consequently, Ainsworth's work emphasised different paradigms in terms of both parenting behaviour, as well as the resulting attachment type. Therefore, it may be argued that, while Bowlby de-pathologised dependency by postulating the physical and psychological protective factors of attachment, Ainsworth further de-pathologised attachment by focussing on the spectrum that included secure attachment (Bretherton, 1997; 2013).

3.3.2 CRITIQUE OF THE ATTACHMENT THEORY

The following section will provide an overview of the critiques around the respective contributions of Bowlby and Ainsworth. The section will conclude with a summation of the critique of their combined contributions.

3.3.2.1 Critique of Bowlby's contributions

Bowlby postulated the theoretical tenets of the attachment theory, constructing his suppositions on concepts derived from psychoanalysis, learning theory, general systems theory, ethology and cybernetics (Bowlby, 1958; Metcalf, 2010). Although highly original, Bowlby's work was considered controversial since it was judged to be a deviation from the psychoanalytic

movement, and subsequently from the dominant Freudian tradition (Brandell, 2010; Metcalf, 2010; Schwartz, 2015). Bowlby determined that his ideology was not so divergent from Freud's hypotheses, and was merely an exposition of childhood trauma in response to Freud's theory on the origin of neurosis (Bowlby, 1958; 1982; Schwartz, 2015). Despite these contentious beginnings, Bowlby's efforts encouraged many other theorists to deliberate both the bond between the parent and the child, and the probable enduring implications of disruption (Metcalf, 2010).

A further critique included Bowlby's classification of attachment as biologically predetermined (Keller, 2013). It is argued that this concept does not allow for contemplation around how attachment behaviour may be rooted differently in other cultural settings (Keller, 2013). Furthermore, it is evident that Bowlby's focus on the mother or mother-substitute is based on the Western construct of caregiving, and does not take into consideration cultures in which multiple caregiving relationships are common (Keller, 2013).

Despite Bowlby's assumed lack of cultural regard, he remained cognisant of the pertinence of societal support for the advancement of secure attachment relationships, in both childhood as well as in adulthood (Bretherton, 1997). This sentiment was shared by Erikson, who demonstrated further interest around the respective ways in which attachment relationships are incorporated into family life across different cultures (Bretherton, 2013). It is surmised that the application of Bronfenbrenner's (1995) theory in concurrence with attachment theory may also provide a more appropriate foundation for the understanding of attachment in the context of cultural reality.

Additionally, it may be argued that Ainsworth's contributions counteracted Bowlby's inattention to cultural influences. Her first study took place in Uganda among infants and mothers from a rural village; and her second study, a decade later, concerned mothers and

infants in Baltimore in the United States of America, and these dyads were clearly from a different socio-economic background, culture and race to the Ugandans. Although many of her findings were identical, some differences were identified which she attributed to the mothers' infant-care practices, attributable to cultural differences (Ainsworth, 1985). These cultural differences in maternal responses influenced the infant's perception of the mother as a secure base from which to explore, and as a result, the infants' responses to separation (Ainsworth, 1985).

3.3.2.2 Critique of Ainsworth's contributions

Ainsworth's contributions have been placed under scrutiny, based on her use of a qualitative approach (Bretherton, 2013). This critique is premised on the fact that Ainsworth's two core studies, the Ugandan study and the Baltimore study, were each primarily observational. Further critique emphasised her construction of concepts, which were considered too variable, as well as her application of post hoc analyses (Bretherton, 2013). However, Bretherton (2013) defended Ainsworth's approach, referring to it as a mode of spiral theory building. This defence asserts that Ainsworth applied a process of using initial research studies to inform supplementary hypotheses, which in turn would inform subsequent research studies. A suitable example would be Ainsworth's Ugandan study, which provided her with an interest in the varied responses by mothers towards their infants. Although the Ugandan study did not provide her with adequate data given the different research objectives, her initial observations informed her subsequent Baltimore study, which facilitated her findings with regards to maternal sensitivity.

3.3.2.3 Critique of Bowlby and Ainsworth's Collective Contributions

Attachment theory is representative of a comprehensive framework, and subsequently comprises of numerous possible variables (Fitton, 2012). Although the influence of select

variables may be observable based on the ways they manifest through behaviour, other variables may have more impact on an individual's internal world. Thus, measuring, defining and evaluating these internal paradigms is a complex process (Fitton, 2012). Ainsworth and Bowlby (1989) were both cognisant of the diversity of the variables involved in the exploration of attachment theory. Given the likely effect of these internal paradigms on individuals' emotional and behavioural statuses, it is argued that the probable influences of select variables may be inferred by their possible influence across individuals' life cycles (Fitton, 2012). Subsequently, despite the complexity presented by the innumerable variables that could conceivably be explored, attachment theory has a considerable research base that has provided support to the theoretical tenets (Cassidy et al., 2013; Liotti, 2006).

The collective contributions of Bowlby and Ainsworth have attracted great interest across the decades. Theorists include, but are not limited to Mahler (1968), Main (1995), and Fonagy (1999). Research has been focussed across the spectrum of attachment behaviour and its consequent manifestation in the behaviour of children and adults. The following section will provide a brief overview on the contributions of Mahler (1968).

3.3.3 THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARGARET MAHLER

Mahler's theory is based around the relationship between the mother and child, asserting that this relationship enables the child to grow into an adaptable adult (Mahler, 1968; Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975; 2000). Emphasis is placed on the biological predisposition of the infant to feel secure by means of the mother's proximity (Gilmore & Meersand, 2014), thereby suggesting that the infant experiences the self and the mother as an indistinguishable entity (Gilmore & Meersand, 2014). Consequently, during early development, the infant must accomplish the fundamental task of awareness of both psychological and physical separateness (Gilmore & Meersand, 2014). The impetus of Mahler's contribution comes with her assertion

that the child is not born as a psychological being, but that the psychological being is born through a slow inter-psychic process (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975; 2000). This psychological birth of the individual is what Mahler termed the *separation-individuation process* (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975; 2000).

For the more or less normal adult, the experience of himself as both fully “in”, and fully separate from, the ‘world out there’ is taken for granted as a given in life (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 2000, p.3).

Mahler asserts that the process of separation-individuation continues throughout the individual’s life, although the key accomplishments of the separation-individuation phase take place much earlier in life. Disruption of this phase, whereby an individual is unable to separate from the mother-child symbiosis, may be demonstrated by children who are unable to identify their caregivers as separate objects (Mahler, 1968). The implication of this is that the individual’s unique personality does not unfold. During adulthood, this may be demonstrated by the individual’s inability to maintain connections with other individuals within relationships. This is attributed to the individual’s continued search for the good symbiotic mother (Mahler, 1968).

3.3.3.1 Critique of Mahler’s Contributions

Mahler’s contributions are well recognised, although the autistic and symbiotic phases, which are both fundamental to Mahler’s theorised conceptualisation of the individual’s psychological birth, have been intensely criticised. Contemporary research has disputed the validity of the autistic phase, given the apparent responsiveness of infants to several types of stimuli, such as the human face and voice, bright colours, and movement (Brandell, 2010). The application of the term *symbiosis* has also evoked unnecessary confusion due to its origin in biology, whereas Mahler applied it metaphorically to her theory (Brandell, 2010).

3.4 ERIKSON'S THEORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Erikson, once a Freudian scholar, detached himself from Freud's exclusively biological ideology, and diverged towards an appreciation of sociocultural determinants (Shaffer, 2009). Erikson postulated human life as the culmination of all individual experiences, produced by the interaction and adaptation of biological, psychological, and social systems, and cultural as well as historical elements (Newman & Newman, 2015; Pittman et al., 2011). Erikson's theory is founded on the principle that an individual's personality develops throughout their life span, and that it occurs within a cultural setting, thereby, emphasising the importance of compatibility between the individual and their culture (Newman & Newman, 2015).

Erikson proposed eight stages of psychosocial development, which he declared to be epigenetic and, subsequently, chronological (Caps, 2012). This study will focus primarily on the stages of adolescence and early adulthood. Erikson did not provide chronological age bands for the respective stages (Sokol, 2009). Although some may perceive this as a theoretical limitation, it may be argued that it is a means of acknowledging the potential for developmental divergence across culture and context. This argument is put forward on the understanding that it was not Erikson's intention to convey a standardised form of psychosocial development (Hoare, 2002).

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

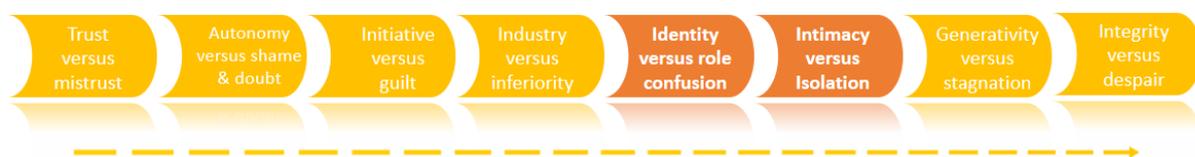


Illustration 3.4 Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

3.4.1 ADOLESCENCE: THE STAGE OF IDENTITY VERSUS ROLE CONFUSION

Adolescence is the life stage when the individual must construct their identity to facilitate a solid foundation for adulthood (Kasinath, 2013). Erikson proposed that adolescence is characterised by the crises of identity versus role confusion (Sacco, 2013). The successful acquisition of identity requires mastering separation from the values and ideologies of the individual's family (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015). Relationships with parents and parental support are nonetheless considered critical contributors to wellbeing (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl & Zumbo, 2011). During this phase, it is essential that the adolescent does not feel entirely alone, and has confidence in the caregiver's availability to intervene when necessary (Stortelder & Ploegmakers-Burg, 2010). However, according to Jones, Vaterlaus, Jackson and Morril (2014) during adolescence, relationships with peers are also of critical importance, and contribute to identity formation. Therefore, the family environment and peer relationships during adolescence are both important determinants of wellbeing later in life (Jones et al., 2014; Martikainen, 2012).

3.4.2 EARLY ADULTHOOD: THE STAGE OF INTIMACY VERSUS ISOLATION

Erikson conceptualised two stages of adulthood. These are early adulthood and adulthood, and refer to the respective stages of intimacy versus isolation, and generativity versus self-absorption (Erikson, 1956). For the purpose of this paper and the research objectives, the emphasis will be on early adulthood and the crises of intimacy versus isolation. Erikson placed emphasis on the importance of love for a well-adjusted identity (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015). According to Erikson, an individual extends love outwardly throughout their lifespan (Mackinnon, Nosko, Pratt & Norris, 2011). This love is initially connected to the self during

adolescence and is extended towards others during early adulthood (Mackinnon et al., 2011). However, Erikson maintains that intimacy goes beyond love, and requires a readiness to compromise and therefore risk ego loss to establish true partnership (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015).

3.4.3 CRITIQUE OF ERIKSON'S THEORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Erikson's theory has been criticised for being strongly rooted within a Western cultural context, despite his emphasis on the importance of cultural considerations (Newman & Newman, 2015; Sacco, 2013). It is debated that the crises to be solved in each of the respective developmental stages are embedded in Western society, and that non-Western cultures are likely to exhibit different developmental trajectories (Sacco, 2013). Additionally, the chronological order of the stages has been criticised, since it suggests that individuals move through a hierarchical categorisation of ethical reasoning (Newman & Newman, 2015). A further critique is that Erikson's theory is best defined as a descriptive overview of development as it does not explicitly explain why the development takes place (Shaffer, 2009).

However, there is a paucity of research to substantiate whether these concerns are valid, whereas research conducted by Sacco (2013) supports the epigenetic and sequential fundamentals of the theory. Given that the present study takes place within the South African context, it may provide an opportunity to explore the relevance of these claims from a cultural perspective.

3.5. RATIONALE FOR AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

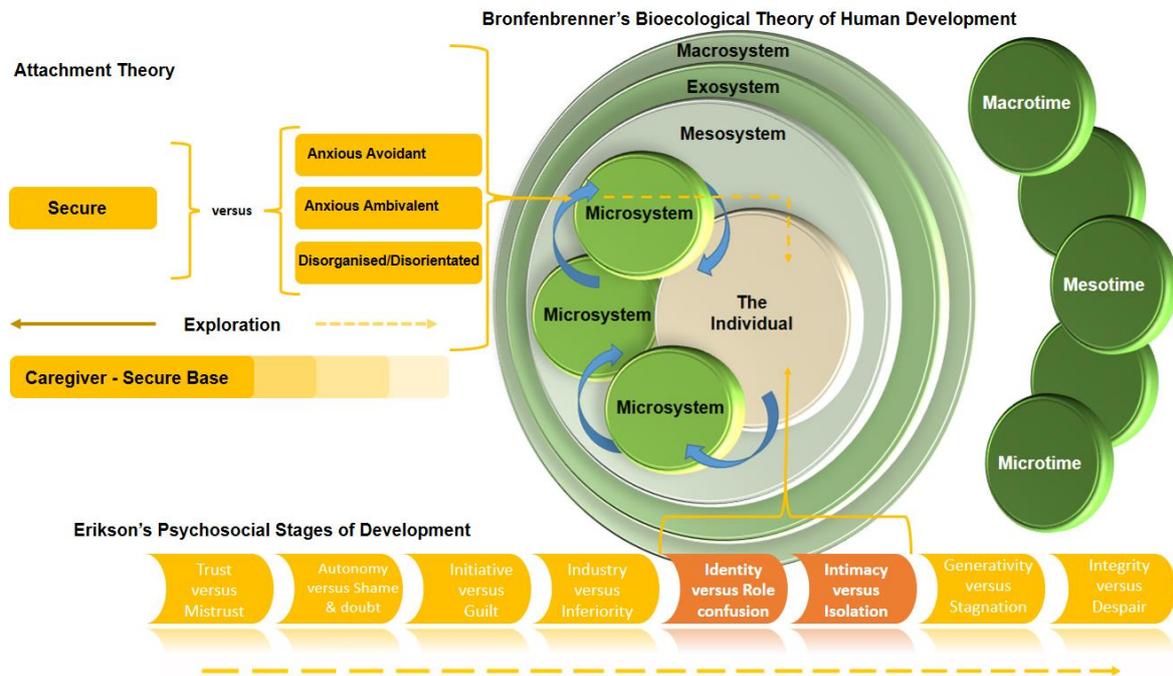


Illustration 3.5. Integrated Conceptual Framework

The aim of this research is to investigate the probable influence of kinship care on the Black adult’s psychosocial wellbeing, by gaining an understanding of how such adults view themselves, and perceive their interactions with others; as well as examining their general perspective on the world around them. The concept of kinship care highlights questions regarding primary relationships and attachment, and how these have influenced security and exploration. The attachment theory has claimed that attachment behaviour is relevant across the individual’s life cycle, and considers the way this manifests in an adult’s engagements with others.

Human development does not occur in a vacuum (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), although it may be argued that the South African milieu offers a unique set of dynamics to consider (Sibanda, 2011). Given these, there is likely to be a multiplicity of precipitating factors resulting in the need for kinship care, as well as various factors influencing the experience of kinship care. For

the purposes of this study, it was necessary to remain cognisant of the various contextual factors that may contribute to the individual's journey and to their psychosocial wellbeing.

While Bronfenbrenner's research acknowledges that the individual is at the core of the above described ecological systems, further interrogation of the complex engagements within the respective systems is required, as well as of the implications of the findings. The breadth of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development will provide an appropriate key framework for this study, while the attachment theory and psychosocial theory of development will permit more in-depth exploration and analysis. Given the extent of Bronfenbrenner's theory, he often relied on the theories of others to provide clarity and depth. Thus, it may be argued that Bronfenbrenner himself applied various integrated frameworks, dependent on the system or construct under scrutiny.

Despite having been initiated from different theoretical assumptions, in this study commonalities have become evident across the elected theoretical contributions (Pittman et al., 2011), thus facilitating the application and interrogation of the findings. These include a mutual emphasis on the developing individual's lifespan, as well as forms of adaptation (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Pittman et al., 2011). A further link, pertaining to the importance of attachment on the healthy development of an individual, is acknowledged by both Bronfenbrenner and Erikson (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Pittman et al., 2011). The initial developmental stages, as explicated by Erikson, provide the foundation for subsequent developmental stages; and are determined by the quality of the caregiver-child relationship (Pittman et al., 2011).

Bowlby has emphasised the significance that the role of attachment plays in the child's exploration phase; and similarly, Erikson recognises that the responsiveness of the caregiver during a child's early developmental stages leads to healthy development in terms of

exploration and engagement with the world. Therefore, Erikson attributes a “social” element of psychosocial wellbeing to the relationship between the caregiver and child, and the way this influences an individual’s social engagement with the world and any other significant people that they encounter (Pittman et al., 2011).

Moreover, while Bowlby and Ainsworth placed emphasis on the child’s reaction to physical separation from the caregiver, Erikson also identified the importance of the caregiver’s responsiveness both in terms of offering social feedback to the developing child on their behaviour, knowledge and emotions; and of its influence on the child’s emergent predilections (Pittman et al., 2011).

In this study, it has been surmised that the amalgamation of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory of human development, along with contributions from Bowlby’s and Ainsworth’s attachment theory, facilitate an understanding of kinship care in relation to the broader context in which it occurs. In response to attachment theory’s fundamental focus on the mother-child relationship, Bronfenbrenner’s theory provides a balance due to his perceptions that human development is not confined to a single contextual setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Erikson’s research around the psychosocial stages of development enables a view that embraces the essence of human development, while remaining cognisant of the social, cultural and contextual influences throughout development.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will commence by identifying the research approach elected for this study, and provide a motivation as to why this approach was deemed most appropriate in response to the research aim. This will be followed with a recapitulation of the data gathering procedure in terms of the recruitment method and data collection process; as well as the data collection tools applied.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In view of the dearth of research focusing principally on the influence of kinship care on psychosocial wellbeing within the South African context, an exploratory approach was proposed. This was deemed to be the most appropriate method, given the research aim and the need to understand the meaning making by participants of their experiences in kinship care. As such, this research study is embedded in a qualitative framework in response to the exploratory requirements of the study. A qualitative research approach is generally considered suitable to explore and comprehend the meaning that individuals assign to specific research questions (Cresswell, 2014). More broadly conceptualised, qualitative research may be described as the production of descriptive data intended to provide insight and understanding of the meaning making that individuals ascribe to their experiences (Rubin & Babbie, 2017; Taylor, Bogdan & De Vault, 2016). This approach enables culturally relevant information, allowing values and social contexts to come to the fore (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005).

Qualitative research may be appraised as inductivist, constructivist, and interpretative (Bryman, 2016). Whereas the intent of quantitative research is to prove or disprove pre-conceptualised hypotheses, the intent of qualitative research is to describe phenomena and explore meaning making in-depth (Rubin & Babbie, 2017; Taylor et al., 2016).

4.2.1 RETROSPECTIVE RESEARCH: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY

The intent of this study is to explore Black adults' accounts of their kinship care experiences, and the probable influence of these on their current psychosocial wellbeing. The emphasis is on past experiences and their possible influence on the present, and this could therefore be considered a retrospective study. Retrospective research is considered most appropriate in response to the aims of this study since it captures a view of the experiences of kinship care across the individual's lifespan.

However, retrospective research has been criticised for its dependency on memory recall, since participants are likely to represent constructions of experiences rather than precise recordings of lived experiences (Dalton, Frick-Horbury & Kitzmann, 2006). Another possible limitation highlighted is the impact of recall bias, which refers to the influence of the participants' current context on the process in which the participants recollects their experiences (Dalton et al., 2006; Flick, 2009). However, an understanding of autobiographical memory as conceptualised by Fivush (2011) addresses such concerns:

Autobiographical memory is that uniquely human form of memory that moves beyond recall of experienced events to integrate perspective, interpretation, and evaluation across self, other, and time to create a personal history. (Fivush, 2011, p. 560)

Autobiographical memory is most appropriately defined as the individual's identity across time, which has been socially and culturally constructed, thus enabling permanency and an interconnection (Fivush, 2011). This approach aligns to the integrated conceptual framework and its emphasis on recognising the role of time across the lifespan as well its cognisance of social and cultural influences on human development. Moreover, autobiographical memory

serves to facilitate self-definition and identity which are functions related to individual wellbeing (Fivush, 2011).

Given that the participants are in adulthood, the accuracy of memory recall should not be challenging (Schilling, Aseltine & Gore, 2007). According to Fivush (2011), an individual's recollection of their earlier years is likely to be nebulous, whereas it is anticipated that experiences during adolescence would be recalled effortlessly. Fivush (2011) states that although all individuals are born with memory, recollection becomes more reliable and resilient over one's lifespan. This is substantiated by research indicating that although some rationality becomes evident from middle childhood, coherence of a lifespan narrative increases from adolescence (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008; Reese, Yan, Jack & Haybe, 2010). As such, whilst an individual's autobiographical memory may surface during middle childhood, it is unlikely to be integrated until adolescence and early adulthood (Fivush, 2011).

This study's data collection processes support the postulations of autobiographical memory. During interviews with older participants, there was little need for prompting since they provided rich, in-depth and comprehensive narratives in response to the semi-structured interview.

4.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A sample of 13 Black adults were recruited and interviewed. The selection criteria were that participants needed to be between the ages of 18 and 45, and should have resided in kinship care at any point between the ages of 12 and 18. This age range was employed given the study's focus on adolescence as the pivotal age from which the meaning making would stem. It was also pertinent due to the application of the concept of autobiographical memory, since individuals should be able to reflect on this life-stage more readily. These requirements were

ascertained with the use of the recruitment questionnaire asking for biographical details as well as confirming the participant's capacity to recall their experiences in kinship care.

Since the participants had resided in kinship care at any stage between these ages, they may have resided with multiple caregivers. Caregivers may have included biological parents at different stages during this timeframe. However, the study concentrated on the periods during which the biological parents were not the adolescent's primary caregivers. No recruitment restrictions were placed on the duration of these periods of kinship care, so there was an allowance for a natural emergence of recall. Since there is a lack of specifically South African research relating to the duration of care and its influence, criteria limiting recruitment to a specific duration of kinship care would not have been grounded in empirical research.

Given the economic climate and the nature of household composition in South Africa, adults falling within the qualifying age bracket may not necessarily be living independently (Statistics South Africa, 2010). Therefore, the adults' residency status was not applied as an exclusion criterion, irrespective of whether the adults were still residing with their kinship caregivers or other relatives.

Due to the nature of the study, the experiences to be shared might be deemed personal and sensitive by participants. As such, individual, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to enable greater levels of security (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In-depth interviews are most effective when personal histories, perspectives, and experiences are explored (Mack et al., 2005). This approach allows participants to share their feelings, opinions, and experiences, thus demonstrating how they interpret the world (Mack et al., 2005).

4.4 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

4.4.1 RECRUITMENT

Initially, participants were recruited from the School of Human and Community Development at the University of Witwatersrand. The course co-ordinators responsible for the undergraduate, honours, masters and part-time students were approached by means of email communication, in addition to personal correspondence when necessary. The communication explained the nature of the research and requested permission to access the students. The respective classes were subsequently addressed to advise potential participants of the purpose of the forthcoming research. Information sheets pertaining to the research were provided during the information-sharing sessions. Information sheets pertaining to the research were also placed on notice boards inside the building hosting the School of Human and Community Development.

The pilot study findings suggested that the kinship care experiences may have been too recent for young adult participants in terms of meaning making. It was therefore decided to broaden the recruitment criteria regarding the age category. Therefore, it became necessary to recruit beyond the domain of the University of Witwatersrand.

Snowball sampling, which is a type of purposive sampling, was subsequently applied to recruit potential participants (Mack et al., 2005). Snowball sampling is a means by which to uncover populations that may be more difficult to access. This approach involves informants or research participants being asked to refer potential research participants from their social networks (Mack et al., 2005).

Snowball sampling was therefore applied to a select distribution list by electronically circulating an invitation to participate in the research, along with the participant information sheet. The distribution list comprised of academics, post-graduate students as well as other

working adults. The recipients of the electronic circulation were encouraged to share the invitation to participate in the research with those who would potentially meet the qualifying criteria.

Potential participants contacted the researcher either electronically or through telephonic text communication. The researcher then made telephonic contact with each potential participant to briefly inform them of the intent of the study, and to verify that they met the necessary inclusion criteria. Those who did so were asked to confirm that they were still comfortable to proceed with the interview process. A meeting between the researcher and each participant was scheduled either during that same telephonic session, or during a follow-up telephonic session. Prior to the interview, a one-on-one, face-to-face screening session was conducted, and the participant was again fully informed of the intent of the study. Subsequently, written consent was obtained whereby the participant agreed to the interview process, which included an audio recording of the interview.

During the recruitment process, the researcher became mindful of a gender bias towards an increased female sample. The researcher then concentrated on screening more male potential participants. However, the telephonic screening process appeared to be more difficult with some male potential participants. Although they indicated an interest to participate, they were more reluctant to commit to interview dates. Three male potential participants subsequently fell away during the screening process post multiple failed attempts to schedule face to face meetings.

During the screening procedure, four interested potential participants were excluded from the process based on the research aims and recruitment criteria. Here, two had been legally adopted and two had resided at boarding schools. Their resonance with the content shared in the participant information sheet and their interest to take part in the study could have indicated an

expression of a need for the meaning making of their experiences to be more widely understood.

The inclusion of participants who had boarding school experiences could be relevant for future studies around alternative caregivers for adolescents, especially emphasising their migratory patterns in response to their parents' seeking improved educational opportunities for their children. One of the participants in the final data set had experienced residing in kinship care as well as in a formal boarding school structure. This participant often spontaneously offered an understanding of the intimate and valuable influences of the boarding school caregivers on her life during childhood.

4.4.2 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were implemented as the primary means of data collection. The intent of this approach was to gain comprehensive accounts of the participants' experiences. This approach aligns with the tenets of the bioecological theory to human development, which recognises both the importance of objective reality, and the centrality of the developing individual's subjective experience (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

All interviews were conducted on a one-on-one and face-to-face basis. An interview schedule was implemented as an aid to facilitate the exploratory process, and here its development was guided by the aims of the study. An interview schedule is a document that provides guidance to the researcher in terms of the topics to be covered during the interview (Mack et al., 2005). It may be as simple as merely providing an overview of the topics to be addressed, or could be more comprehensive and provide specific questions and probes (Mack et al., 2005). A semi-structured interview is open-ended, providing the researcher with a degree of flexibility regarding choices around how to word the questions, the sequence in which to ask the questions, and the style of interviewing to adopt (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). This study employed

an interview schedule with specific questions, and minimal probes. However, additional probing was implemented as required for each interview, taking into consideration the type of information that each question intended to gather (Mack et al., 2005).

The interview schedule was applied as a framework to promote an exploration of the different aspects of the participants' kinship care experiences that might have influenced their psychosocial wellbeing. Moreover, the interview schedule aimed to elicit an understanding of how each participant makes meaning of these experiences and the probable influence on their current psychosocial wellbeing. The interview schedule was applied purely as a framework, and the researcher adapted certain questions when this was perceived to be more appropriate during each interview. As such, the application and sequencing of questions were reliant on the respective interview, and not every question was administered in every interview.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was applied to gain an understanding of the data gathered for this study. Thematic analysis is considered the most suitable for verbal interview data, as collected through semi-structured interviews (Harper & Thompson, 2012). This form of analysis is appropriate for classifying, analysing and recording patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). The patterns of meaning found in data are referred to as a theme (Harper & Thompson, 2012). A theme includes capturing points of importance relative to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). The final output of thematic analysis should thus highlight the most pertinent patterns of meanings present in the data. Moreover, it should simultaneously provide a balanced understanding of the meaning within a specific context of thoughts, instead of placing too much emphasis on the frequency of codes. Thus, its intention is to provide sight beyond the observable data, and to incorporate the tacit themes and thematic structures (Harper & Thompson, 2012).

4.5.1 OUTLINE OF DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

This study employed thematic analysis guidelines as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). It is important to note that these phases took place sequentially per interview and transcript, but not sequentially and concurrently across all transcripts.

The steps followed in this study are outlined below:

- **Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data:** The process of thematic analysis commenced with the researcher familiarising herself with the data. The researcher conducted each interview, and thus began the process with preceding knowledge of the data. In addition, the researcher also transcribed the data, which introduced greater depth in terms of familiarity. The process of transcription ensures a *verbatim* account of all the words spoken, accurately representing the way they were spoken. This is considered crucial, since it facilitates the earlier stages of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This also highlights the importance of the researcher listening to the audio recording of the interview afterwards, as this provides her with an opportunity to review the data more objectively than is possible during the interview.

In the post-interview phase, the researcher listened to the audio recordings to enable accurate transcription. Certain components of the audio recordings were listened to multiple times, to ensure accuracy in terms of words, tone and intent. Once each transcript was complete, the researcher read it through at least twice to review the data and identify preliminary themes. This phase was revisited several times, since the researcher reviewed the transcripts and listened to the audio interview again during the coding process, as well as while completing the analysis and discussion chapters. This is aligned with Braun and Clark's (2006) postulation that thematic analysis is a recursive process.

- **Phase 2: Generating initial codes:** Coding is an analytic process during which the researcher reviews the data and provides a label for all relevant components (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Although coding is common across many qualitative techniques, the key difference in thematic analysis is that coding is applied in response to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

Here, the coding process commenced individually per transcript. The coding was achieved by applying different font colours, font sizes, and highlight colours to the text, so each code was represented by its own unique text font and highlight. This coding process delivered a comprehensive list of preliminary codes. Once all the interviews had been coded, the list of codes was reviewed and finalised. The supporting data for each code was also extracted, so not to lose the context in the process. During the collation process, many extracts were placed in multiple areas since several themes might manifest in a single statement.

- **Phase 3: Searching for themes:** A theme is a meaningful pattern in the data that is appropriate to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher tracked potential themes throughout the data collection phase, and finalised these themes during data analysis based on the most pertinent codes. As suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006), the researcher applied various manual mind maps to coordinate, compare and align respective themes. After this process, select codes were categorised as main themes or sub-themes, while some codes were discarded.
- **Phase 4: Reviewing themes:** Once the themes were identified, the researcher reviewed them to ensure that they were valid in relation to the complete data set, and that the data within each theme coincided (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process also involved collapsing themes that shared commonalities (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). Although some themes are best described as sub-themes, they contribute to a

broader theme. The data set provided rich and diverse information, although not all the data were appropriate for addressing the research questions. As such, this phase included the process of discarding select themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013).

- **Phase 5: Defining and naming themes:** The themes were defined and named based on the analysis of each, and on the unique story it represented (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was important that the name of the theme signified the crux of the content and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- **Phase 6: Producing the report:** This phase comprised the compiling of themes to convey compelling and logical stories in response to the research question, but which also accurately reflect the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). Despite this process being listed as the end phase, the drafting of the relevant data and recognising its probable contribution to the final report may commence much earlier in the data collection process (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

4.6 TRIANGULATION

It is acknowledged that the application of a single source of data as the only representation of a phenomenon is likely to introduce bias (Patton, 1990), so the process of triangulation is instituted to counteract this probability. Triangulation is a process that involves the collection of data from at least three alternative sources (Patton, 1990). The different forms of triangulation included in this study were the examination of salient quantitative and qualitative literature, and the employment of an integrated conceptual framework to increase the researcher's insight into the phenomena being studied (Kitto, Chesters & Grbich, 2008). The application of an integrated conceptual framework, which requires an understanding of multiple theories, facilitated the researcher in defending against a single approach bias (Kitto et al., 2008).

It is suggested that the study implemented a further level of triangulation incidentally, by employing two different approaches to sampling (Patton, 1990). The study commenced with a more opportunistic form of sampling, namely by recruiting participants who qualified to participate in the study, but were also readily available to the researcher due to their location. However, after the pilot study a more intensive sampling approach was implemented, to ensure the inclusion of participants who might be more reflective. This was deemed necessary to obtain more in-depth narratives.

However, further forms of triangulation may have benefitted the study in terms of saturation. Giving cognisance to the probable influence of the researcher as the main data collection and interpretation tool, the research may have been better served by the involvement of a second researcher or an external coder (Kitto et al., 2008). The researcher's supervisor offered opportunities for discussion regarding the proposed codes and themes; but a second researcher may have provided an alternative interviewing style, whilst an external coder may have applied an alternate approach to coding (Kitto et al., 2008).

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research are critical, since such a study encompasses the researcher's influence on the broader world, the academic community, and - more pertinently - on the participant (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Qualitative research raises concerns around upholding and safeguarding the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of the participants (Barker, Pistrang & Elliot, 2016). The explorations into social and contextual phenomena inherent in qualitative research add to the complexity of conducting the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Ryen, 2016). This is attributed to the fluid nature of qualitative research, which contributes to a more distinct and indeterminate context (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The implementation of a semi-structured interview guide necessitates increased emphasis on the researcher's moral and ethical responsibility, given the degree of flexibility permitted by this mode of interviewing (Rubin & Babbie, 2017; Ryen, 2016). The researcher therefore has to ensure that any adaptations to questions that may emerge during the interview process, in terms of phrasing, sequencing or prompting, uphold the dignity of the research participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2017; Ryen, 2016).

Ethical considerations must remain pertinent throughout the entire research process: namely, prior to commencing a qualitative study, during the data collection period, and in the data analysis process. The latter is particularly crucial given that the researcher conducting qualitative research has the responsibility of ensuring that the data is interpreted in a manner that relays the participant's narrative, rather than being intentionally constructed to portray the researcher's narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The National Health Act (2004) makes provision for the protection of research participants who are included in research that contributes to knowledge production around psychological and social processes. The research was conducted under the auspices of the University of the Witwatersrand. Ethical clearance was therefore requested from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) because of the research emphasis on both psychological and social phenomena.

The study commenced after receiving ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical). Information sheets were provided to all potential participants to ensure clarity on the aim of the study, and on the respective phases that they would be subjected to for the duration of the study. The participants were informed of the researcher's role as well as her expectations of them. To enable an atmosphere of trust, the participants were informed

of the researcher's credentials, as well as assured of her commitment to their wellbeing throughout the research process.

The researcher ensured that proof of informed consent was provided by means of a signed, informed consent form. The researcher reviewed the content of the form, provided the participants with sufficient time to review the content of the form thoroughly themselves, and ensured clarity prior to the participants' signing the form. The participants were apprised that they would be neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by agreeing or not to participate in the study. The participants were advised of their right to withdraw at any point of the study, without negative repercussions. The participants were provided with the assurance that they need not answer any questions they considered to be too personal.

The researcher requested the participants' permission to audio-record the interviews to facilitate the analysis process. Should any of the participants have felt uncomfortable being audio recorded, the researcher had planned to request permission to take notes, but all the participants consented to an audio recording. The participants were assured that all audio recordings would be stored on a secure, password-protected computer or in a secure cabinet to which only the researcher has access. The participants were informed that the audio recordings would be kept for a period of six years, after which the data set would be destroyed.

The researcher provided the participants with clarity regarding the confidentiality of information shared during the interview, and confirmed to them that no identifying information would be used in the concluding findings. Although anonymity could not be assured due to the face-to-face nature of the interviews, confidentiality would be upheld in the research report. As such, any direct quotes implemented in this report have been reported in such a way that they cannot be linked to specific participants.

The researcher endeavoured to communicate all questions in a way that maintained each participant's dignity, ensuring that the participant was not made to feel vulnerable (Mack et al., 2005). Each participant was advised that recollections of childhood experiences may awake deep emotional responses; and was informed that arrangements could be made for a referral to either the Counselling Careers and Development Unit or the Emthonjeni Centre situated on the University of Witwatersrand's campus, should any uncontained emotions be unearthed during the interview process. On concluding the respective interviews, debriefing sessions were conducted with several participants to ensure their psychological containment. Beyond the possibility of unearthing emotions, the participants were not advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

The participants were informed that a summary of the consolidated findings would be made available should they be interested.

4.8 SELF-REFLEXIVITY

The researcher is recognised as a key instrument in both the collection and interpretation of the data set (Cresswell, 2014; Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012), and therefore the research could be influenced by numerous factors personal to the researcher. This may include the researcher's interviewing style, personality traits, as well as personal or academic experiences or perspectives related to the research topic (Pezalla et al., 2012). This has been a catalyst for numerous debates around the ontological, epistemological and axiological nature of qualitative research (Berger, 2015). As such, the researcher must acknowledge the probable influence of previous experiences or postulations on the research process, beyond the meanings ascribed by research participants (Cresswell, 2014; Kitto et al., 2008). Thus, the experience of the research process may occupy a myriad of possible realities (Riach, 2009).

Given the centrality of the researcher, the process of reflexivity is of great importance to the qualitative research process, and has become prominent in deliberations around the subjectivity and objectivity of qualitative research outcomes (Hsiung, 2008). For the researcher, reflexivity facilitates a process of introspection to reflect on, and subsequently recognise, the myriad of possible influences between the research aim, the research participants and the researcher (Hsiung, 2008; Kitto et al., 2008). This self-examination calls for a recognition of possible biases, as well as an evaluation of how these may influence both the interview and the research process overall (Berger, 2015).

4.8.1 REFLECTING ON THE ROLE OF SILENCE

Power is omnipresent and transcends all interactions, which includes the engagement between the researcher and the participant (Daley, 2010; Prilleltensky, 2008). For the researcher, the construct of power seemed more prevalent while interviewing younger participants. This could be attributed to their age and their positionality as university students; or may have been related to the researcher's age, as well as the participants' perception of her positionality within the university context.

Daley's (2010) reference to the passive voice appears to be an appropriate description of the researcher's experience with the student participants. Many provided brief responses to open-ended questions, and waited in silence to be prompted, or for further questions from the researcher (Daley, 2010). During the debriefing sessions, or in the interactions after the interviews, discussions with these students would often culminate in conversations in which they looked for reassurance around their current academic struggles. It is possible that they perceived the researcher as more knowledgeable than themselves, and capable of providing insight or offering a prognostic view of their academic futures.

Silence is recognised as a significant sign of communication (Kawabata & Gastaldo, 2015). The participants' interactions with the researcher after the interviews, as described above, may provide a context for the periods of silence experienced during the interviews. According to Bengtsson and Fynbo (2017), silence may be an expression of perceived power relations between the researcher and the participant. Therefore, the significance and possible meaning making of the silence should not be discarded, given that it may indicate an avoidance of the broader societal context from which the researcher and the participant originate (Bengtsson & Fynbo, 2017). It is suggested that if the researcher's social construction in terms of gender, race, age, socio-economic status and culture influences the data collection and analysis process, so the participant's social construction influences the interview dynamics (Hewitt, 2007; Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009).

The researcher was mindful of the participants' perceptions of positionality and power throughout the data collection process. Usual recommendations to address unequal power relations have included creating a non-threatening interviewing environment aided by a conversational and unstructured interviewing approach (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). Although this was attempted here, it may be argued that this type of approach is too simplistic. The researcher's and participant's socially-constructed worlds are based on countless personal experiences, and it is not possible for the interview space to become a contextual vacuum.

This perception of the researcher's "power" did not seem to affect the older and employed participants. They appeared confident during both the semi-structured interviews and the debriefing sessions. There was no indication that these participants needed guidance through the interview process, or considered the researcher to be an expert more capable than themselves. Instead, a few of these participants' post-interview discussions with the researcher included critically conceptualised comments and contributions, looking beyond their own

historical experiences, and advancing thoughts around the broader South African historical experience and its implications for the Black South African family.

Taking the above into consideration, it would be deemed a misrepresentation of the research phenomenon to disregard the views of participants based on their silence while giving more weight to the views of those more verbally expressive (Kawabata & Gastaldo, 2015), given that qualitative research is supposed to be representative of contextual material rather than communication style.

4.8.2 PRE-STUDY PERCEPTIONS

The researcher was aware of personal pre-study perceptions and suppositions based on her previous occupational experiences. Although these beliefs were not directly concerned with the specific participants and their possible experiences, they had formed as a response to the concept of kinship care and the role of primary kinship caregivers. Founded on this, the researcher was cognisant of the many socio-economic barriers faced by Black primary kinship caregivers, particularly grandparents. The researcher recognised that she perceived this group of individuals to be mostly resilient, industrious and solution-seeking, and simultaneously she was sympathetic to their emotional stressors and financial constraints. Consequently, the researcher remained mindful throughout the research timeframe that she did not influence the data collection process in a manner that focussed just on the protective factors offered by kinship care.

The researcher aimed for the process to be sufficiently fluid to allow for the unfolding of any relevant information. As the data collection process evolved, the researcher became less concerned with the possible influence of her earlier experiences. This altered view was motivated by considering the diverse experiences shared by the participants. Despite the commonality of themes derived through the analysis process, the personal stories of the

respective participants encouraged a viewpoint that recognised the variability across primary kinship caregivers.

CHAPTER 5: PILOT STUDY FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

A preliminary study was conducted to assess the use of the semi-structured interview schedule. No language difficulties were evident during the pilot phase of the study. As such, no further amendments were applied to the interview schedule. However, during the study, the word “ethnicity” was not always well understood by select participants, and so the concept of race was also introduced.

As explicated in an earlier chapter, considerable prompting was required during the pilot interviews. Despite this, the themes that emerged from the pilot study were of considerable interest. A brief overview of the themes and possible risk factors has been provided, since some of the findings may signal the necessity for further research. Given that this is the pilot study, the identified themes have merely been highlighted and not comprehensively integrated with the relevant literature.

Pilot Study Themes
Involuntary social isolation
Desired reparation of attachments
Alternative childhoods desired
Divergent levels of life satisfaction

Table 5.1.1 Pilot Study Themes

The above-mentioned themes appear to be driven by specific risk factors. The themes illustrate the implications of maternal migration for labour, and child migration for school opportunities. The macrosystemic landscape driving these exosystemic influences are acknowledged.

However, the macrosystemic landscape is not unique to the pilot study, and it may be argued that engagements within the microsystemic contexts could have offered alleviation to these complexities. The risk factors identified specifically engage with the quality of the microsystems, and with the quality of social engagement and support the participants were exposed to in their immediate contexts.

Pilot Study Risk Factors
Deprivation of perceived affection and nurturance
Isolation from family during childhood and adolescence

Table 5.1.2 Pilot Study Risk Factors

5.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS AND PROFILES

The profiles of the pilot study participants have been provided to give context to the pilot study findings and discussion. The table below explicates demographic as well as socio-economic information. To ensure participant anonymity, each participant has been allocated a number, preceded by the word “Participant”.

Pilot Study Participants	Demographic Information			Socio-economic Indicators	
Participant Number	Race	Gender	Age	Highest Level of Education	Education/ Employment Status
Participant 1	Black	Female	19 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student
Participant 2	Black	Male	19 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student
Participant 3	Black	Female	19 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student

Table 5.2.1: Demographic Information

The following table provides an overview of the number of kinship care placements, as well as the participants’ primary caregivers during their time in kinship care. The table indicates parental contact, although the level of parental involvement would have differed per pilot study participant.

Participant	Kinship Care Context				
Participant Descriptor	Kinship Placements	Primary caregivers	Other Adults	Other Children	Parental Contact
Participant 1	2	- Mother’s friend - Mother’s friend	- No - Yes	- No - Yes	- Mother - Father
Participant 2	2	- Extended family (m) - Mother’s friend	- Yes - Yes	- Yes - Yes	- Mother
Participant 3	1	- Grandmother (m)	- No	- Yes (childhood) - No (Adolescence)	- Mother - Father

Table 5.2.2: Kinship Care Context (m: maternal, p: paternal, *: deceased)

5.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF PILOT STUDY PARTICIPANTS

- Participant 1 is a 19-year-old student. She describes herself as having been “given” to her mother’s friend as an infant. She resided with this caregiver until she was in the first grade, while her mother was working in a different province. She then briefly went to stay with her mother in the second grade, but was soon sent back to her kinship caregiver until she completed fourth grade. Taking into consideration that she spent the initial years of her life with the first kinship caregiver, she considers her to be her mother and still calls her *mom*. Participant 1 explained that the reason she did not reside with family was because her maternal grandmother was still working and could not take care of her. Moreover, although her father resided in the same city, it was not deemed appropriate for him to care for such a small child. The participant’s mother moved to the same province, and then the participant lived with her mother during fifth grade.

However, during the sixth and seventh grades, at the ages of 11 and 12-years-old, she was sent to stay with a second kinship caregiver, who was one of her mother's maternal figures although not biologically related. The reason for this placement was so that the participant could be in closer proximity to school. The participant resided there with another slightly older adolescent. They rarely saw the kinship care provider and spent most of their time together. The participant started residing with both of her parents later during her adolescent life stage. She currently resides on university campus, but ensures that she goes home every weekend to see her parents.

- Participant 2 is a 19-year-old male who is currently in his first year of tertiary education. He explained that he has never lived with his mother. His first experience of kinship care was when he was sent to stay with his maternal extended family at a young age. However, during middle childhood, he was sent to reside with someone more familiar to his mother, so he would have improved access to education. Many other children resided there as well for the same reason. The participant found this experience to be unpleasant, and he would annually ask his mother to find him alternative accommodation. However, this request would be ignored based on the mother's relationship with the caregiver. The participant spent most of his time in the company of peers, and his caregiver did not provide him with any source of affection and guidance. The participant appeared to have a better relationship with his soccer coach. The participant conveyed the various ways that his experiences may have influenced his challenges in engaging with others.
- Participant 3 is a 19-year-old female who is currently completing her first year of tertiary education. The participant resided with her grandmother for most of her life, given that her mother worked in a different province. The participant visited her mother bi-annually throughout childhood during school holidays. This is a trend that persists

as a university student. The participant's father resided near her grandmother, and he visited her on occasion to bring his financial contribution. However, the participant perceives her grandmother's role as being more significant in her life than those of her mother and father. The participant's emphasis throughout the interview was on the values imparted to her by her grandmother, given that her grandmother raised her in accordance with strict Christian values. Christianity appears to be foundational to the participants' outlook on life and her social engagements.

5.3 DISCUSSION

Participants 1 and 2 experienced kinship care with people who were familiar to their mothers, but less familiar to themselves. Furthermore, these participants experienced two kinship care placements each, while intermittently residing with their biological parents or family; and did not experience placement stability. Conversely, Participant 3 was raised solely by her maternal grandmother. Nonetheless, they all experienced parental involvement to varying degrees, and their parents were primarily financially accountable for them. Participants 2 and 3 saw their parents twice a year during the June and December holiday periods, whereas Participant 1 saw her parents bi-monthly. This was specifically during their adolescent life stages.

The experiences of the participants who were in kinship care with nonrelative caregivers were in sharp contrast to the experiences of the participant raised solely by her maternal grandmother. Consequently, although kinship care is not limited to those related to the child and includes people familiar to the child and the family, it appears that residing with relatives may offer additional protective factors. Despite the small sample, this finding appears to correspond with research that indicates that caregivers not related to the child may be less invested in their wellbeing compared to related caregivers (Farmer, 2009).

The following themes have been highlighted in response to the experiences of Participants 1 and 2, to highlight possible risk factors. The experiences of Participant 3 are illustrated as a point of contrast. Despite the small number of participants, it remains critical to call attention to these factors, as they may benefit from further research.

5.3.1 INVOLUNTARY SOCIAL ISOLATION

The engagements between the researcher and the participants appeared to be marked with the need for considerable prompting. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the influence of power and positionality, and the subsequent power relations evident between the researcher and the participants, have been acknowledged. However, beyond the possible influence of power and positionality, comes the recognition of how the participants' own internal conflicts may have contributed to the way they engaged with the researcher.

This hypothesis could be supported by the participants' descriptions of themselves, as well as of their interactions with others.

*If I am in a new environment I can be introverted, but once I adjust can get used to the people. [...] I think one thing I could have changed, it's still difficult for me to make friends, especially girls. I do still today. I always told myself that I would have this big group of friends and that we were gonna laugh together. When it comes to actually getting into an environment, it doesn't come naturally for me. **It takes some time for me to get used to a person, open up and be myself.***

Participant 1

Participant 1 provided clear communication of the general discomfort she experiences within new contexts and with new people. The engagement between the researcher and participant

could have presented a discomfoting social scenario such as she alludes to. Moreover, she specifically remarks on gender, indicating that her interactions with females are more challenging. This indicates the likelihood that the researcher's gender may have increased the level of discomfort experienced. However, beyond the research-participant interaction, the participant's expression of general social discomfort provides an understanding of how she is likely to engage in most new social settings. Her use of the words "*it doesn't come naturally for me*" speaks not only of hesitation, but suggests that a social setting may be experienced as lacking in stability and security.

*And my thing is, it has affected, in a very big way, cause **the way I interact with people, is not the way I maybe wanted to interact.** [...] I don't know why, but I do care a lot about others, then I don't get to express that. I'm like antisocial, because of those things that has happened to me. Ya, I don't have a chance to be like open, cause there is always there is always thinking about those experiences, what they meant to your life and all of that, so. Ya, but I do love people a lot, but then I don't express that.*

Participant 2

The ways that Participants 1 and 2 engaged with the researcher, as well as their descriptions of how they react when exposed to new people or new social situations, provide context of their psychosocial wellbeing. Both of their narratives offer a perspective on their own dissatisfaction with how they view themselves, and how they engage with people in general. Despite their apparent desires to engage socially with others in a more intimate manner, they appear to be confounded by their internal conflicts.

It makes you to not want to interact with people, because you are thinking of those memories.

Participant 2

It may be argued that the participants' narratives extend beyond interpersonal relations, also providing views of a world that holds uncertainty. As related to Erikson's theory, it is suggested that their outer realities are crafted by their inner realities (Marcia & Josselson, 2012).

Erikson postulated the criticality of trust in both infancy and adolescence (Marcia & Josselson, 2012). Moreover, the trust developed during adolescence is dependent on the trust amassed during infancy; and in the case of Participants 1 and 2, their early maternal separations may have negatively influenced their trust and sense of security. Through the lens of attachment theory, this would in turn have hindered their comfort in exploring their internal worlds, and subsequently their external worlds.

These accounts differ from the narrative provided by Participant 3:

It's great actually, I'm really good with people. It's okay, it's better than what I expected.

Participant 3

The contrast between these participants' experiences represents perspectives of a world that holds the probability of both security and insecurity. For Participants 1 and 2, the hesitation in their social interaction implies that they may view the world as an unsafe space. This lack of interaction evokes the essence of attachment theory and the role of the secure base in facilitating exploration (Bowlby, 1988). This recalls the participants' experiences as infants and their separation from their primary caregivers and its probable influence on their current psychosocial wellbeing.

5.3.2 DESIRED REPARATION OF ATTACHMENTS

The following theme identified the participants desire to repair their original attachments with their biological parents. Participants 1 and 2 were both separated from their biological mothers at an early stage:

*From a young age **my mother gave me to a friend** cause she gave birth and then we moved to N. And when her maternity leave ended she could not stay with me. And my grandmother was working so she **gave me to a friend**.*

Participant 1

*I was born in M, but **at a very young age I went to stay in the E**, at my mother's friend, or my mother's family at least.*

Participant 2

This separation infers the probable experience of primary trauma for these participants as infants. Mahler (1968) refers to the implications of premature separation, and along with it the premature awareness of separateness. It is suggested that this is a distressing experience, given that separation occurs before the infant has the internal regulation necessary to cope with the realisation of being separate from their mothers (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975; 2000).

*She just told me about the day her friend came to fetch me from the N and **when they took me from my mother how I cried and cried the whole four hours**, so I was like a baby and I see her (first caregiver) as my mother.*

Participant 1

Participants 1 and 2 both appear cognisant of their need for attachment with their biological parents. Although Participant 2 did not apply a term related to attachment, he made use of the term *connection*, which may be likened to the sentiment of attachment; “... ***My mother, there is not a big connection, because I have never stayed with her***”.

I realised now that I am more attached maybe because I didn't get to spend much time with them. Most people now on university, they enjoy their own space. Every weekend I ensure that I have to go home. If I don't, I can sense that there is something I didn't do. It only makes sense to me now, I feel like, maybe because I didn't get to spend that much time with them now I am more attached to spending as much time as I can with them. Now, I realise I'm a student, when I am done, I'll have to move out.

Participant 1

Participant 1's description of her peers as enjoying “*their own space*” indicates her acknowledgment that they are interacting with the world independently of their parents and families. Their social exploration beyond the family context is characteristic of resolving the psychosocial stage of *Identity Resolution* (Niehaus, 2017; Sacco, 2013). However, the participant's expressed desire is to spend more time with her parents, before the time comes for her to physically separate from them as an adult. Thus, she is expressing a deep desire for the attachment she needed much earlier in her life.

We interact a lot, we call each other, maybe once or twice a week depending on time and things. So ya, we do call each other, we talk a lot. [...] Now we're like building that relationship which we never had.

Participant 2

Although Participant 2 can visit his parents only twice a year during the university holidays, it seems evident that he is in the process of building a relationship with them. It appears that he hopes to form the attachment that may have been absent when he was younger. It may therefore be surmised that irrespective of the passage of time, the hope to recover a lost attachment remains.

It may be surmised that both Participant 1 and Participant 2 are aware of the possible implications their premature separations from their parents may have had on their internal worlds. Furthermore, they also seem to be overly aware of their need to repair their relationships with their parents, and as such repair their primary attachment relationships.

5.3.3 ALTERNATIVE CHILDHOODS DESIRED

Participants 1 and 2 were transparent in their yearning for an alternative childhood, in which they would have resided with their parents:

I don't know... I always wonder if I had lived with my mom how things would have been different. Or how I could have been a different person. Or if my personality was different. I honestly always ask myself, but never have an answer. I don't know. [...] Well, I ask myself how it could have been different if maybe I lived with my parents, or if

I didn't at all. Or if like my sibling, like my cousins, I was close to my grandmother and lived in L for example.

Participant 1

Participant 1 not only deliberates on the possibility of a different childhood, but also questions how it could possibly have influenced her identity. This indicates uncertainty with regards to the internal representations she holds of herself, given that an individual's internal working model is founded on one's childhood experiences with caregivers (Bowlby, 1990; Bretherton, 1997).

*When you are away you know that your parents are growing, time is going, if you don't like have all the time in the world. **You wish you had stayed with them, your whole life so**, so those moments, were very like, special to me. [...] I think, I think, it would have been better if I stayed with my family or staying closer to them, maybe gone to see them every weekend or something. That would have been better.*

Participant 2

Again, the experiences of Participants 1 and 2 are in contrast with those of Participant 3:

*Okay, really it was, okay, if I can say in comparison with my friends who grew up with both parents, **I feel like it was, it wasn't bad, it was actually good.** [...] I feel like I had the best teenage years.*

Participant 3

Various protective factors may be attributed to this divergence. Firstly, Participant 3 had placement stability with her maternal grandmother, was frequently visited and financially

supported by her father, and had regular contact with her mother. Thus, her placement stability provided her with the opportunity to form an affectionate bond with her grandmother. Also, although her parents were no longer in a relationship, they remained in contact with each other.

It may be suggested that the quality of kinship care relationships, parental involvement and the affectionate bonds formed during kinship care may also have influenced the way the participants experienced their childhoods.

5.3.4 REFLECTIONS ON LIFE SATISFACTION

The participants indicated varying degrees of uncertainty related to their life satisfaction. It appeared as if this was a construct of the future and not recognised as an expectation of their current reality.

*I'm, I'm getting there. I think everyone wants to grow up, have a family, have a nice job. For me, a big word for me is content... I need to be happy, be satisfied. In everything that I do, I know not everything will go my way. **Nor will I be able to happy, smile or laugh every day, but as long as I am content with who I am and the place in my life.***

Participant 1

It may be argued that Participant 1 is applying a realistic lens towards future life satisfaction, although it seems that she anticipates the possibility of complete life satisfaction as being unattainable.

*I think it's not that bad, I think I am satisfied, **but if things would have turned the way I wanted maybe I'd be somewhere else, not here, maybe where I wanted to be.***

Participant 2

The initial component of Participant 2's response conveys his uncertainty about his life satisfaction; and the latter part of his response indicates an overall sense of dissatisfaction and a yearning for an alternative life.

Uhm, actually I feel like I'm satisfied about like certain things. Like the person I am, I feel like I, like in terms of how I handle myself, handle situations, my behaviours, I feel really ok with that yeah. [...] I mean, obviously, like, I'm trying to build towards a better person, because I am still very young. I'm still trying to accomplish thing like my goals and all that. But pretty much at this point I feel like I have achieved adequately.

Participant 3

Participant 3's response regarding her life satisfaction is not overly positive, although she is indicating her ability to engage with her current context as well as her future aspirations. Moreover, her response also conveys a level of satisfaction with herself from the perspective of her identity and personality. This may be attributed to the fact that she had adequate exposure to her grandmother, mother and father during her childhood. Based on the participant's description of her life, her grandmother provided her with the necessary availability and responsiveness required from a caregiver. As such, when constructing her

own identity, it is likely that she selected her grandmother as the model to represent her internal representation of herself (Bowlby, 1990; Bretherton, 1997).

I feel that my grandmother is the main contributor to who I am

Participant 3

It is evident that missed experiences from childhood and adolescence has considerable influence on the resolution of life stages later in life. The impact on identity resolution is particularly evident, given the importance of an internal working model that provides the foundation of how individuals value themselves, engage with others and view the world in general (Bowlby, 1988; Bretherton, 1997). This uncertainty with regards to self and the world in turn negatively impacts life satisfaction and psychosocial wellbeing.

5.4 RISK FACTORS

The highlighted themes are intended to provide context to a particular theme that emerged around risk factors. As previously mentioned, these risk factors are confined to engagements on a microsystemic and mesosystemic level in response to the specific accounts shared by Participants 1 and 2, which stand in contrast to the experiences of Participant 3.

5.4.1 DEPRIVATION OF PERCEIVED AFFECTION AND NURTURANCE

There were varying levels of perceived deprivation of care among the two participants who resided with adults' familiar to their parents but less familiar to themselves. It was evident that during adolescence, while the participants had been provided with shelter, the caregivers did not necessarily offer guardianship, mentorship or emotional care. Instead, these participants appear to have been left to fend for themselves, and became dependent on the company and mentorship of their peers. Beyond the apparent lack of supervision, neither

participant mentioned any details with regards to receiving affection or nurturance from their respective caregivers.

The person who could have impacted me, she was older than me. Not in terms of grades, but in terms of age. When I met her, she was pursuing boyfriends, go out, get drunk. I was never that curious to try, but I always thought she had a colourful life. When I grew up I realised that was not my scene. Most of the time we were together, we had to clean, chores, walk to school. We were just together, because M (caregiver), we'd only see her after work. And when she came back from work she would always go somewhere else and then come back late.

Participant 1

I broke my arm and I stayed in the hospital for about a week and she (caregiver) didn't show up. It was only my coach that came...

Participant 2

The experiences shared by Participants 1 and 2 are in sharp contrast to those of Participant 3. Whereas Participants 1 and 2 were left to attend to themselves, Participant 3's caregiver provided clear guardianship and mentorship.

It's going to reflect back to my grandma actually, cause I'm so grateful that she actually taught me all these things. Going back to values and all those things, I really, really appreciate that cause now I see, I see some of my friends back then, or now even, I'm not saying they grew up in a bad home or anything, but if you see their behaviour

and how they handle certain situations. I feel like maybe their childhood was different, made me realise somebody could have learnt them how to handle situations and ya.

Participant 3

Bronfenbrenner (1994) conceptualised the microsystem as the setting most immediate to the developing individual. As such, while in kinship care, the most direct interaction that a child may experience is within a family context (Hong et al., 2011). However, the patterns of engagement relayed by Participants 1 and 2 during adolescence indicate an absence of the interaction usually expected within a familial setting. Given this, concerns are raised when there is no form of adult social support for the child to rely on.

5.4.2 ISOLATION FROM THE FAMILY

Participant 1 and Participant 2 were not only isolated from their biological parents, but were also isolated from their extended families. Extant literature acknowledges the protective factors offered by the extended family (Lee et al., 2016). Their experiences may therefore be viewed in relation to their isolation from their extended families, and subsequently the absence of protective factors that could possibly have been offered by their extended families.

When I was growing up, I didn't get to spend any time with my mother's family or my father's family. The only people I knew was my aunt's daughter and she was a person I was close with. Other than that, I also didn't get to meet my grandmother until I was older.

Participant 1

*My family members, **there was not that much connection, because I never grew up with them**, so. Even with my mother, there is not a big connection, because I have never stayed with her.*

Participant 2

These accounts are dissimilar from the experiences of Participant 3, who resided with her maternal grandmother throughout her childhood and adolescence; and was consequently afforded the opportunity to be acquainted with respective family members.

It was my sister, my cousin and I, but then later on, my cousin went to stay with her parents, and my sister went to my mom, and I remained with her (grandmother).

Participant 3

Although, Participant 3 has had placement stability throughout her life, it is interesting to note that her family's movements seemed fluid in response to the needs of respective members of her family. Although this fluidity could be considered detrimental to stability, it appears to have served as a protective factor for her as a young adult. Due to her grandmother's advanced age, Participant 3 could no longer reside with her during university holidays. However, instead of being displaced, or having the responsibility of caring for her grandmother during her university holidays, she has different visitation options.

I go to either my dad's or my uncle's house actually, cause my cousins are all there. Or I go to my mom in N.

Participant 3

Participant 3's experiences are more reminiscent of how extended family support may be offered within the Southern African context (Block, 2014; Roelen et al., 2016). This is specifically in relation to the extended family's fluidity and flexibility in response to the child or adolescent's needs in relation to the respective extended family members' capacity to satisfy needs.

5.5 PILOT STUDY IMPLICATIONS

The pilot study comprised of three Black adults, each of whom was 19 years of age as well as a first-year university student. During the data collection process extensive probing was required, suggesting that it was not easy for the participants to reflect on their kinship care experiences spontaneously. The researcher considered various suppositions to explain this researcher-participant engagement. These included the possibility that the participants' kinship care experiences were too recent to their current ages and life stages. This may indicate that they had not yet either processed these experiences, or formed an understanding of their own meaning making of these experiences. In turn, this may have influenced their capacity to comprehensively reflect on their kinship care experiences, as well as the ways that these experiences may affect how they view themselves, interact with others and the world at large.

The pilot study comprised of a small number of participants, and thus no certainty became evident around the reasons for the extensive probing required. Therefore, in the final study, the researcher deemed it appropriate to include not only young adults, but also some older participants. The participant age criterion, previously 18 to 24-years-old, was subsequently extended to between 18 to 45-years-old. This decision required a change in the recruitment process to facilitate access to older participants. This process has been further explicated in the *Research Design and Method* chapter.

5.6 PILOT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite cognisance of the small number of participants, commonalities across two of the narratives indicate a need for further research on kinship care amongst individuals who have previously resided with caregivers not related through consanguinity. Of importance is the apparent indication of fewer protective factors in place throughout this type of care, particularly during adolescence. This may be supported by Farmer's (2009) postulation that a nonrelative caregiver may be less invested in the child's or adolescent's wellbeing, compared to familial caregivers. This may consequently present a greater need for intervention, since these participants appeared to be at greater risk.

These themes also highlight the lack of accessible resources for parents who have no extended family to depend on as a source of social support. Accordingly, the pilot study demonstrates the critical role of the extended family as a resource. However, it also implies that, even when resources are limited, parents are still more inclined to seek out nonrelative kin for assistance, rather than the official state systems. This suggestion is supported by international literature that calls attention to familial resistance towards state involvement with regards to the care of children (Gleeson et al., 2009; Harnett, Dawe & Russell, 2014).

The following chapter will elucidate the findings relevant to the final study's participants.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The intent of this chapter is to provide an in-depth account of the qualitative data gathered in response to the study's aim to investigate Black adults' recollections of kinship care and exploring its probable influence on their current psychosocial wellbeing. A further intent was to examine how kinship care experiences may have influenced the way the participants view themselves, their interpersonal relations with others, and their outlook on the world in general. These aims guided both the thematic analysis process, and the subsequent themes highlighted for further discussion. The analysis and discussion components have been combined to provide a rich and in-depth account of the qualitative data collected. The findings will be discussed in relation to the integrated conceptual framework, with a critical analysis of the relevant literature.

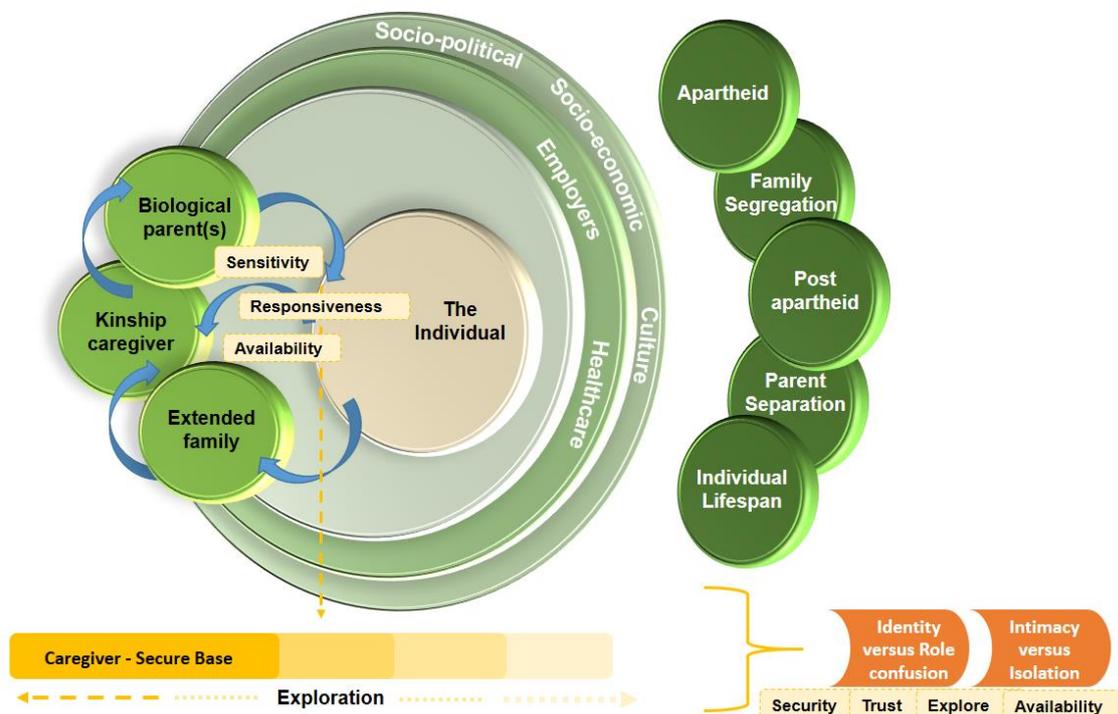


Illustration 6.1 Integrated Conceptual Framework in Context

The discussion will comprise of the six most pertinent themes that emerged from the data analysis process. Although associations became evident across the themes, the way in which participants may view themselves were found to influence how they interact with others and engage with the world in general. The elected themes indicated commonality, although age skews were apparent for certain themes. These are highlighted as relevant.

Some of the predominant themes comprise of sub-themes, and consequently, the discussion per theme will also represent the sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes are as follows:

Overarching Theme	Sub-themes
Gendered parental discourse	Understanding maternal separation
	Unresolved need for maternal attachment
	Tiered emotional response to paternal involvement
Compounded search for identity	Challenges to identity resolution
	Possible routes to resolution
Over-reliance on self	Poverty and material deprivation
	Physical and emotional accessibility of caregiver
	Mandatory maturation and independence
Parental involvement and financial provision	
The role of an external Sovereign on psychosocial wellbeing	
Desired cessation of the kinship care cycle**	

Table 6.1 Themes and Sub-themes ***Theme relevant only to participants who are parents*

6.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS AND PROFILES

Prior to commencing with the discussion, further contextualisation of the participants will be provided with a brief overview of their profiles. Although each participant resided in kinship

care for some period during their adolescence, most of the participants had resided in kinship care since early childhood. Similarly, many of the participants had been in the care of multiple caregivers at different stages of their childhood and adolescence.

The following table provides descriptive information of each participant. The participants are ranked in the order in which the interviews took place. Given the application of a qualitative approach, the researcher serves both as the primary data collection tool, and as a subjective participant. Consequently, it became inevitable that each interview influenced the researcher in some way, and it may be surmised that previous interviews would have had an influence on the interviews that followed. Therefore, the researcher deemed it more appropriate to rank the participants in the order in which the interviews took place, rather than by a demographic criterion.

Participant Descriptor	Demographic Information			Socio-economic Indicators	
	Race	Gender	Age	Highest Level of Education	Employment Status
Participant 4	Black	Female	19 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student
Participant 5	Black	Female	19 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student
Participant 6	Black	Female	23 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student / Employed
Participant 7	Black	Male	22 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student
Participant 8	Black	Female	42 years	Diploma	Employed
Participant 9	Black	Female	32 years	Degree	Employed
Participant 10	Black	Female	23 years	Grade 12	Tertiary Student
Participant 11	Black	Female	34 years	Grade 10	Employed

Participant 12	Coloured	Female	40 years	Diploma	Employed
Participant 13	Black	Male	29 years	Degree	Employed
Participant 14	Black	Female	35 years	Degree	Employed
Participant 15	Black	Female	35 years	Degree	Employed
Participant 16	Black	Male	36 years	Diploma	Tertiary Student / Employed

Table 6.2.1: Participant Demographic Information

To ensure participant anonymity, each participant has been allocated a number, preceded by the word participant. Overall, the study included 13 participants, of whom 10 were females and three were males. The participants ranged from 19 to 42 years of age. Of the participants, 12 identified themselves as Black, whereas one participant identified herself as Coloured.

Several of the participants originate from lower socio-economic contexts, which is consistent with South Africa's legacy of apartheid and its influence on the lived experiences of many Black South Africans (Sibanda, 2011). As such, most of the participants were raised in rural areas or urban townships. However, the current socio-economic contexts of the participants are diverse. This is mostly true for the older working sample, since some of them have managed to attain greater financial stability. Their occupations ranged from administrative roles to corporate positions. For the younger participants, financial insecurity continues to be a critical component of their current reality.

Participant	Kinship Care Context				
Participant Descriptor	Kinship Care	Primary caregivers	Other Adults	Other Children	Parental Contact
Participant 4	1	- Grandmother* (m)	- Step Grandfather	- Uncle	- Mother - Father
Participant 5	1	- Grandmother (m)	- None	- Cousin	- Mother* - Father
Participant 6	4 (6 moves – 2 with father)	- Aunt and uncle (p) - Aunt (m) and uncle - Grandmother (m) - Grandmother (p)	- None - None - Several - None	- Cousin - Cousins - Cousins - Own son	- Mother* - Father
Participant 7	1	- Grandmother* (m)	- None	- None	- Mother (limited)
Participant 8	2	- Aunt and Uncle (m) - Grandmother (m)	- None - None	- None - Cousins	- None - Mother
Participant 9	2	- Grandmother (m) - Aunt (m)	- Aunts - None	- Cousins - Brother - Brother	- Mother - Father*
Participant 10	2	- Great-grandparents (m) - Aunt (m)	- Aunts - None	- Sister - Cousins	- Mother - Father
Participant 11	1	- Grandmother (m)*	- Uncles	- Brothers	- Mother (limited)
Participant 12	1	- Grandparents (m)*	- None	- Aunts and uncles	- Mother - Stepfather
Participant 13	1	- Grandfather (m)	- Aunts (Occasional)	- None	- Mother
Participant 14	4	- Grandmother (m) - Aunt (m) and Uncle* - Grandmother (m) - Aunt (m) and Uncle*	- None	- Sister	- Mother
Participant 15	1	- Grandparents (m)	- Occasional	- None	- Mother
Participant 16	2	- Grandparents (m)* - Grandmother (p)*	- Uncles - None	- None - None	- Mother - Father

Table 6.2.2: Kinship Care Context (m: maternal, p: paternal, *: deceased)

The comprehensive nature of the participants' narratives seemed to be dependent on their age, despite the themes being mostly consistent across the group. Some of the older participants could share greater depth in terms of detailed experiences, as well as appearing to be more spontaneously reflexive about their learnings from their kinship care experiences. As such, less prompting was required by the researcher.

All the participants had resided with caregivers who were related to them, with a tendency towards maternal relatives. The caregivers mostly comprised of maternal great-grandparents, maternal grandparents, as well as aunts and uncles related to the participant's biological mother, either through consanguinity or marriage. The participant profiles aligned with the literature available, highlighting the pertinent role of maternal kin (Block, 2014; Niehaus, 2017). Moreover, the findings support the assertion that grandparents are more likely to provide childcare compared to other relatives (Beegle et al., 2010). Two of the participants resided with paternal grandmothers during late adolescence. However, one of these participants maintained the financial and domestic duties.

6.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

- Participant 4 is a 19-year-old female and is currently in her first year of tertiary education. She resided with her grandmother for most of her childhood and early adolescence. The participant had an exceptionally close relationship with her grandmother, and was returned to her parents' care during her adolescence only after her grandmother's death. Her mother and father are married, although the participant has conflicting feelings towards her father, based on the nature of her parents' relationship. The participant has a younger brother who was raised by both of her parents. She considers her mother and younger brother to have a much closer bond, while she has a less compatible relationship with her mother.

- Participant 5 is a 19-year-old female who is currently completing her first year of tertiary education. She was raised by her grandmother because her mother worked away. During her childhood and adolescence, she saw her mother approximately every fortnight. Her mother passed away one year prior to the interview. The loss of her mother, as well as her grandmother's advanced age, has encouraged the participant to become more independent. Although the participant is familiar with her biological father, their relationship appears to be restricted based on his current marriage. Subsequently, she has no relationship with her half-siblings from her father's marriage. Although she loves her father and perceives that he loves her, she recognises that he has not played an integral role in her life. Despite being raised primarily by her grandmother, she considers her mother to have provided her with the necessary nurturance, as well as with financial provision.
- Participant 6 is a 23-year-old female who is currently at the beginning phase of her career. She resided with her mother throughout her childhood and has had consistent contact with her biological father since birth. Her mother died when the participant was 15-years-old. The participant fell pregnant two years after her mother's death; and she recognises that her behaviour may have been influenced by the loss of her mother. She is unsure of whether she would have had a child had her mother still been alive. Participant 6 experienced the most frequent number of moves, being exposed to township life with fewer resources and her extended family during her adolescence. While having had a secure and stable childhood, her adolescence was marked with considerable change and a need for adjustment. However, Participant 6 appears to have become accustomed to change, which may have been facilitated by the continued presence of her biological father, as well as her supportive extended family.

- Participant 7 is a 23-year-old male who is currently a tertiary student. He was raised by his grandmother, who has recently died. However, she had been elderly throughout his childhood and adolescence, and was unable to provide him with the necessary guidance he required. He participated in high risk activities during his childhood and adolescence. He attributes this to the township environment, as well as his need to boost his own confidence and self-esteem. He felt that this had been necessary since he did not have a male figure in his life, and so wanted the acceptance of his peers. He recollected that during adolescence he had many questions about the reasons why his parents were absent from his life. His father had died before his birth, because of his own participation in high-risk activities. He has had minimal contact with his biological mother during his childhood and adolescence, although he has started working towards building a relationship with her after his grandmother's death. Participant 7 attributes many of the changes in his life to his religion. He was exceptionally forthcoming about feelings of bitterness towards his mother, although he is trying to overcome them. However, he believes that this will be possible only once he understands why he was abandoned as a child.
- Participant 8 is a 42-year-old female. She is currently working in an administrative position and has two adolescent children. She was raised by her mother during infancy, but given to an uncle within her extended family when her mother decided to get married. This decision was made by the extended family. Her uncle was married, but he and his wife had no children. The participant accepted her uncle's wife as her mother, despite experiencing a difficult childhood due to her aunt's substance abuse problem. When her uncle decided to separate from her aunt, the participant was taken back to her birth town, where she was temporarily reunited with her mother. Her mother took her to stay with her grandmother in a rural area. The participant was exposed to aggravated

living conditions, not only due to the responsibilities that accompany living in a rural area, but also because she was ill-treated by the other adolescents living at her grandmother's home. She was reunited with her mother during her adolescence, once her grandmother grew ill. The participant continues to have unanswered questions of her mother, and considers herself to have a very different approach to parenting.

- Participant 9 is a 32-year-old female. She is a university graduate who initially had a moderately successful career in the corporate industry, but has recently started up her own company to follow her artistic aspirations. The participant originally stayed with her mother and brother in her maternal grandmother's home, along with her maternal aunts, nieces and nephews. She indicated that her grandmother occupied a maternal role over them all. As such, when her mother married her biological father, she decided not to move away with them, but rather to stay with her grandmother. However, her grandmother also moved away, leaving the participant and her brother with an aunt. Her aunt was not a maternal figure, and life became difficult. During this time, the participant took on a more maternal and protective role over her brother, a situation she continues to struggle to let go of as an adult. Although the participant did not directly engage with the possible influence of South Africa's legacy on her own upbringing, during a discussion after the interview, she did discuss the continued implications of apartheid on many South African families.
- Participant 10 is a 23-year-old female, who is currently in her final year of tertiary education. She was removed from her mother's care by her great-grandfather, because he considered their living situation to be unfavourable due to her mother's lack of financial security. She resided with her great-grandparents, until her great-grandfather remarried after her great-grandmother's death. Since the participant and the rest of the extended family members were no longer welcome in her great-grandfather's home,

she moved away under her aunt's care at the age of 17. At the age of 18, her mother returned to her life, saying that she would like them to live together. However, during this time, the participant's mother would leave her to care for her younger brother for extended periods of time. The participant preferred this arrangement, as she found it frustrating to reside with her mother on a full-time basis. The participant has tried to have a relationship with her biological father, but maintains that her stepmother does not want her to visit their home. She has developed a relationship with her biological father's extended family instead, which appears to have facilitated her identity formation and sense of belonging.

- Participant 11 is a 34-year-old female and is currently employed as a teacher's assistant at a nursery school. The participant has three children, and receives financial support for them from their respective fathers. The participant and her two male siblings were raised by their maternal grandmother. Her mother left to find work, but never returned. Consequently, the participant had no contact with her mother during childhood or adolescence. She reconnected with her mother after her grandmother's death, although they appear to have a volatile relationship and are unable to reside together. She is currently not on speaking terms with her mother, although she has expressed a sincere need to reconnect with her mother. The participant has an equal desire to know who her father is, in the hope that she may have a better relationship with him.
- Participant 12 is a 40-year-old female who is currently occupied in an administrative position within the corporate industry. She is married and has three children. The participant was raised by her maternal grandparents, as they considered her mother to be too young to raise her. Her grandparents ensured that she had a relationship with her mother during her childhood. However, during her visits to her mother's home, she was physically abused by her stepfather. The participant is a Christian, and believes that her

religion has played a pivotal role in her healing process; though she acknowledges that she is not fully healed, and has confronted her mother and stepfather about their behaviour towards her during her childhood and adolescence. It is evident that the participant is attempting to have a relationship with her mother, while still harbouring some resentment towards her.

- Participant 13 is a 29-year-old male who is engaged to be married and has a one-year-old child. He is a university graduate, and is currently occupying a management position at a corporate organisation. The participant resided with his maternal grandfather throughout his childhood and adolescence, because his mother had to work away. His mother visited the participant once a month. Although there were often other adults residing in his grandfather's home, they too left once they found employment. As such, his grandfather was the only consistent caregiver in his life. The participant reflected on how his childhood has influenced his current parenting style and his aspirations for his child. He continues to make a conscious effort to have a relationship with his grandfather, his various aunts and uncles, as well as his mother. Although he met his biological father when he was older, he is in the process of trying to build their relationship. The participant reflected not only on his own familial dynamics influencing his childhood, but engaged with South Africa's legacy of apartheid and its continued influence on the Black family, with specific emphasis on the male psyche.
- Participant 14 is a 34-year-old female who was raised by her maternal aunt and her husband. She considered them both as her parents. She had frequent contact with her biological mother, although she perceives her biological mother to be her aunt. Although she resided with her maternal aunt and uncle for most of her childhood and adolescence, she was also in her maternal grandmother's care during early infancy, as well as for a period of three years during childhood. The participant has a young son

who is currently residing with her biological mother, although he also resided with her maternal aunt at an earlier phase in his life. The participant's own emphasis around parenting focuses on fostering independence and responsibility at an early age.

- Participant 15 is a 35-year-old female who is married with two children. She was raised by her maternal grandparents, because her mother worked away. She started residing with her grandparents during infancy, and resided with them until she married. She described her grandparents as harsh disciplinarians, and did not regard them as approachable and nurturing. She saw her biological mother during school holidays, and this was initially a painful process. She had no contact with her biological father during her childhood and adolescence. Although she considers her relationship with her mother to have improved since childhood and adolescence, it does not seem to be close. Based on her experiences, it is evident that the participant intentionally set out to ensure that she would attain a more traditional family structure; and her parenting and disciplining style is in direct opposition to the style applied by her grandparents.
- Participant 16 is a 36-year-old married male, who is employed and studying part-time. He grew up with his maternal grandparents, since his mother had to leave to complete her tertiary education. He saw her frequently when she returned to her parental home. Although he knew that she was his mother, he did not experience any significant excitement during her visits. His father had greater flexibility in terms of time, and would visit him occasionally. Based on his account, he appears to have been closer to his two maternal uncles, who also resided with his grandparents. They would often travel away from home for political reasons, but would always spoil the participant upon their return. Towards the end of his adolescence, the participant went to reside with his paternal grandmother. However, the intent was for him to care for her, rather than she for him. He received no financial support during this time, and worked part-

time to provide for them while completing his high school education. His mother and father married, and he subsequently resided with them during his early adulthood. He enjoyed the experience of getting to know them, and continues to have a positive relationship with both parents. He contacts them telephonically daily, and visits them over most weekends. Although the participant did not make any reference to religion during the interview, he discussed the church he attends - as well as his involvement in church work - in great depth during the debriefing session.

6.3 THEME 1: GENDERED PARENTAL DISCOURSE

The following section has elucidated the struggles participants experience in making meaning of their separation from their biological parents. There however appears to be increased emphasis by participants on wanting relationships with their biological mothers. The participants' concrete understanding of their biological mothers' separation appears to have done little to address their internal conflict, whilst they appeared less distressed by their fathers' absence or separation. The theme serves to explore what appears to be an unresolved need for maternal attachment, followed by an exploration of understanding paternal involvement.

6.3.1 UNDERSTANDING MATERNAL SEPARATION

Why did she leave me, why did she not take care of me?

Participant 10

A sub-theme underlying several of the narratives, is a need to understand the reason for maternal separation that gave rise to the need for kinship care. However, many of the participants have a concrete understanding of why they were placed in kinship care. The reasons for kinship care placement varied across participants. Moreover, these differed considerably from the precipitating factors highlighted in international studies, illustrating the distinctive

macrosystemic factors of the South African context (See Gibson & Singh, 2010; Gleeson et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2016; Maaskant, et al., 2016).

Only one of the participants was placed in kinship care due to the death of her biological mother, prior to which she described her childhood as being very stable.

I lived with my mom my whole life, my biological mother and her fiancé and then they were involved in a car accident in 2009. My mom died instantly, and he died a month later.

Participant 6

Extant African and South African literature has placed considerable emphasis on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its role on the increasing prevalence of kinship care (See Beegle et al., 2010; Block, 2014; Bryant & Beard, 2016; Grant & Yeatman, 2012; Hosegood, 2009; Karimli, Ssewamala & Ismayilova, 2012; Roelen et al., 2017). This study differed from other African and South African studies, thus providing an opportunity to review the impact of alternative macrosystemic influences.

Select participants resided in kinship care due to maternal labour migratory patterns, which recognises female labour migratory patterns as a contributor to kinship care (Rabe, 2016). Despite leaving their children to be raised by their grandparents, these mothers remained financially responsible for their children.

I grew up in L, and then my mother was working far from home. I was living with my grandmother and cousin. From since I started schooling.

Participant 5

*And at that time my mother was a domestic worker, so she says, **she can't stay with me**, because of where she is working, it's not allowed.*

Participant 8

***My mom, who is a single mom had to go at work**, and as such, when she was at work, I grew up mainly with my granddad.*

Participant 13

Participant 11's mother appears to be an exception. Although it was explained to the participant that her mother left for job-seeking purposes, her mother did not provide for her financially. Moreover, unlike the other mothers who would visit monthly, Participant 11's mother remained mostly absent throughout her childhood and adolescence. The participant only met her mother again during her early adulthood, due to her grandmother's illness and eventual death.

You know my mom, I don't know why she go, but my granny told me that my mom go in 1983. When she go to, I don't know that place, but where she go to look for the work, a job. Then after that she's not coming back again to see us.

Participant 11

Pregnancy at a young age or outside of marriage was also highlighted as a reason for kinship care. Extant literature recognises the contribution of declining marital patterns to kinship care (Rabe, 2016). The latter is likely to be associated with teenage pregnancy, given that South Africa continues to have a high incidence of unplanned pregnancies (Mkhwanazi, 2010). It is proposed that traits within intergenerational relationships contribute to the incidence of teenage pregnancy in post-apartheid South Africa (Mkhwanazi, 2010). Though no direct inferences are

made to attachment, it may be suggested that attachment styles between adolescents and their parents may to some extent influence the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

When my mom was 18, she (grandmother) took me in, and my mom went back to D to go study further.

Participant 4

And my mom because she got pregnant when she was doing matric. So, she was, she wasn't mature enough, so she left me with my grandma at the age of three.

Participant 7

When she had me and my brother she was still quite young. Uhm, I think she was 19 when she had me, [...]. And she was also the baby of the family, she was the last born.

Participant 9

My mom had me out of wedlock, she was still young by then, and, well she had to go and work, so there was nobody else to take care of me so I had to stay with my grandparents.

Participant 15

My parents then, things were tough for them, my mom was still in varsity and my dad still living with, uhm, his mother, and uhm, I had to be put with my mom's mother.

Participant 16

The participants' narratives indicate that their biological mothers were considered either too young for childcare responsibilities or were encouraged to complete their educational pursuits. It is recognised that pregnancy at a young age contributes to perpetuating the cycle of poverty due to the premature termination of education (Jonas, Crutzen, van den Borne, Sewpaul & Reddy, 2016; Mkhwanazi, 2010). It may be suggested that many of the participants' biological mothers may have been encouraged to complete their studies, to terminate the cycle of poverty.

The extended family has always been acknowledged for its supportive role in response to parental absence (Roelen et al., 2016; Seekings & Moore, 2013). However, some of the participants narratives suggest that the extended family has a more hierarchical role in the decision-making of childcare, and thus the prevalence of kinship care. These findings appear to correspond with research that recognises the implementation of cultural kinship models when negotiating childcare within certain African contexts (Block, 2014; Niehaus, 2017). The narratives do however convey the decision making to have been more familial versus cultural, which makes it difficult to ascertain whether decisions were driven primarily by family hierarchy or cultural kinship models.

*The way the story was relayed to me, my mother had me out of wedlock, ok so, and there came a point where she, she, she, she had to get married. Now I was there, and there was an uncle of mine that stayed in B, who did not, him and his wife did not have kids. So, **the family then decided that they should, I should go and stay with them, because they did not have kids.***

Participant 8

*I guess, **my grandmother was the matriarch of the family.** She was with my cousins, so all of my cousins, so my mother's sisters and*

brothers whose kids stayed with us, we all saw our mom to be our grandmother, and not necessarily our moms. [...] We found, I guess, by the time I was born, because I had all the cousins, my brother and I were the two younger ones. That was the status quo, so we just fell in line.

Participant 9

*Yes, you (biological mother) seem to blame my grandparents, saying that they forced you, **they forced you** to, to, to, to keep me behind. They, forced you and said you won't be able to raise X, so that is why we are raising her.*

Participant 12

***Even the person that actually advised** for you to go stay with your aunt is no longer around so some of the things I cannot talk about. So basically, I never got to understand basically exactly, exactly why, I was placed with another family*

Participant 14

Within the parameters of this study, the factors contributing to maternal separation and kinship care are inclusive, but not limited to female labour migratory practices, teenage pregnancy and a decline in marital relationships, as well as the influencing role of the extended family. These factors correspond to those identified by previous research (Collinson, 2010; Rabe, 2016; Sibanda, 2011). From an integrated conceptual framework perspective, it is evident how the construct of time has had considerable influence on the developing individual's lifespan. This relates specifically to the phenomena of female labour migratory practices and declining marital

patterns, based on its emergence in response to the practices of apartheid and its emphasis on family dissolution (Collinson, 2010). Given the numerous direct and indirect influences of these historical practices, it may be argued that the developing individual is subject to multifarious factors influencing the individual's probable psychosocial wellbeing.

The aforementioned section has been provided to elucidate that the participants have some concrete understanding of maternal separation. However, despite the participants' understanding of maternal separation on a cognitive level, on an emotional level the concept of being *left* by their biological parents remains poorly understood or accepted. The concrete reason for separation therefore appears to be immaterial in relation to the participants' experiences, its influence on their internal reality and psychosocial wellbeing. As will be elucidated throughout later themes, many of the participants expressed a need for their biological mothers to have surpassed their own difficulties to ensure that the participants were accommodated as children. The macrosystemic factors of the South African context and its socio-economic influences are thus unintentionally disregarded by some participants in their meaning-making process. This suggests that their psychosocial wellbeing cannot be rationalised or negotiated on a cognitive level, but is strongly influenced by their seemingly unmet need for attachment with their biological parents.

6.3.2 UNRESOLVED NEED FOR MATERNAL ATTACHMENT

So even now I want to fix things between me and my mom. I don't know how I am going to fix it.

Participant 14

A commonality amongst several of the participants was an unresolved need for a relationship with their biological mothers. This supports Bowlby's assertion that the initial accessibility of an individual's primary caregiver is likely to influence them in adulthood (Wallin, 2007). This theme was evident irrespective of the quality of their relationship with their kinship caregivers and the level of nurturance received during their childhood and adolescence. This may be explained by Shaver and Mikulincer's (2009) research that postulated that a child may have a secure attachment with one parent, while simultaneously sharing an insecure attachment with the other parent. This is of particular significance since premature separation from a primary attachment figure is recognised as a possible trauma (Hong et al., 2011; Mahler, 1968). It may be suggested that irrespective of whether participants had secure attachments with their kinship care providers given their availability post the trauma, their attachments with their biological parents were most likely insecure.

While the presence of the biological mother during the participant's childhood and adolescence influenced the quality of their current relationship, it did not appear to influence the extent of the participants' current need for maternal attachment. The need is emphasised in relation to the biological mother, with less emphasis placed on the biological father. This highlights a gendered discourse which may either be based on a biological need or developed through social or cultural learning constructed on exposure from family, friends and society overall.

I also feel like I need to make an effort to try and connect with my mom. [...] I don't know, I think, I wouldn't change anything, I wouldn't, but I would have liked to live with my mom. I feel like she would have gotten the opportunity to understand me, vice versa. But other than that, I wouldn't have changed anything.

Participant 4

Although Participant 4's grandmother died approximately four years prior to the interview, it was evident that the participant remained deeply bereaved; and her emotional state appeared to be aggravated by the troubled relationship she had with her mother. Her response may represent the internal conflict she is experiencing. Despite asserting that she would not have wanted anything to have been different, she is simultaneously stating that she would have liked to have lived with her mom. These statements seem somewhat contradictory, given that residing with her mother may have changed the dynamics of her relationship with her grandmother. It is likely that the participant may be experiencing guilt given her desire for a relationship with her biological mother, despite her close relationship with her grandmother.

The narratives shared by Participant 5 and Participant 10 seem to indicate a recognition of the possible implications of separation from their mothers, but also an intent to focus on the more favourable aspects of their relationships.

A mom is just a mom, if ever she goes to wherever she wants to, but she's still my mom. Even if now she's gone, but then she's still my mom no matter what the situation is.

Participant 5

My mom and I are slowly becoming close, and I really like that. Cause I had so many issues, why did she leave me, why did she not take care of me.

Participant 10

The emphasis by many of the other participants remained skewed towards their expectations of their biological mothers. Many of the narratives indicate the need for attachment, but is accompanied by the participants need to have many of their unanswered questions addressed. The participants' accounts therefore appear to be conflicted given that it indicates both their need for attachment as well as their internal conflict that seems to be indicative of anger, resentment and pain.

*I was bitter, but through God's help I am learning to let go and forgive. But I still have questions, because some things don't make sense. **I don't understand why she decided to leave, knowing that she left a kid...***

Participant 7

*There is just one thing that I don't understand about my mother and then **why she did it**, because... If, even my siblings, the ones that she got when she was in the same marriage, what happens is when she separated from my stepfather she did not take my sister and my brother with. They stayed with my father, which, **I always asked her, why do you do that, why is it that when things are tough, you never take your kids with as a mother would do.***

Participant 8

*... **She is not a mother, she's really not a mother to me.** I'm trying very hard to get close to her, it's not easy, but I am doing it. [...] She has failed me as a mother, she has failed me tremendously and she never protected me, she never, she was never there for me, uhm, and I have to come to terms, to understand...*

Participant 12

*You know what, I forgive you, for maybe not giving me, because **at some point I would want you to be a mother to me.** But you wouldn't, because of your history I don't know. But, I'm very grateful that you love my son, and **that love that you are supposed to be projecting to me,** you are actually projecting it to my son. And I'm very grateful for that and I'm happy about it. But I've made peace with the fact, that I don't think that I will get to the level where you are with my younger brother.*

Participant 14

*I think she (biological mother) could have been more open like you know what, uhh, this is just a temporary thing, **maybe I'm going to try and move back, you know, maybe raise you up,** you know or you know, maybe do more, unlike she where she was, ya.*

Participant 15

Many of the participants had more contact with their biological mothers compared to their biological fathers. Though several of the participants had some contact with their biological fathers, others had absent fathers. The participants' accounts however convey a specific

parental expectation from their biological mothers. This is supported by Moore's (2013) postulations that there are particular cultural and social expectations of mothers. As such, many of the participants indicated increased expectations of biological mothers as opposed to biological fathers. The concept of maternal separation as opposed to paternal separation may thus be regarded as socially unacceptable. This may however be attributed to an acceptance of low levels of paternal involvement, since the incidence of absent fathers appears to be increasing in South Africa (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). It may be suggested that less involvement is expected from biological fathers as participatory caregivers, since their absence has been accepted as a phenomenon across generations, whereas biological mothers have had to continuously evolve their role in response to changing societal dynamics (Moore, 2013).

6.3.3 TIERED EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT

As previously discussed, several of the participants emphasised their expectations of their biological mothers, whilst they appeared to be more lenient in respect to their expectations of their biological fathers. Furthermore, those who were familiar with their biological fathers were more accepting of the fact that they could not have had a closer relationship, since it may have negatively influenced his current family dynamics.

Participant 5 had knowledge of her father, although she does not have an intimate relationship with him. Her narrative appears to provide an immediate justification for his exclusion from her life.

My dad is not that close because, he has another wife. [...] So, if his wife could see me with him, it would cause, cause maybe she could feel jealous.

Participant 5

The accounts presented by Participant 6 and Participant 10 are quite similar, which suggests that it is acceptable that when a man marries and has a new family, his responsibility towards his new family is of greater priority.

*My dad was married with two other children, so I have two sisters, biological sisters. **It was never going to be an option, staying with my dad.***

Participant 6

*My dad was like a walking ATM, so he would just come and just drop off money and go. He never like spent time with me. Ya, he never did. So, that's how it was always then, and then, uhmm, now I don't have any sort of communication with my sisters. [...] **So ya, I don't have a relationship with my sisters, cause my stepmom does not like me, she will not stand me...***

Participant 10

The indifference towards paternal absence appears to be contradictory to the literature available from a global perspective (Dolbin-Macnab & Keiley, 2009). This may be attributed to an adjustment to South African norms where most households comprise of a single maternal figure (Hollborn & Eddy, 2011). Given the prevalence of paternal absence, the participants may have considered paternal involvement to be an unreasonable expectation.

It is pertinent to note that the sample comprised of mainly female participants, and that previous South African research has indicated that absent fathers have greater implications for male children (Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012). Of the three male participants, Participant 13 was

raised by his maternal grandfather, whereas Participant 16 was raised in a home with his maternal grandfather, as well as his maternal uncles.

*He (grandfather) would be the one that is there to make sure that if something goes wrong, **he's like my dad and my granddad at the same time***

Participant 13

Whilst Participant 13 emphasised the values his grandfather imparted with him, Participant 16 focussed on the mentorship roles of his uncles.

*It prepared me in terms of dealing with peer pressure and I guess when you reaching puberty that's when you are learning about your adult body and how your adult brain thinks. I think then **I was fortunate enough I had a chance to be with my uncles to see and learn** how when you reach that stage what you need to do, what you need to guard against.*

Participant 16

Moreover, Participant 16 was also frequently visited by his biological father. It is suggested that the presence of male figures addressed their paternal needs. This postulation is supported by research findings that indicated that many South African men with absent fathers recognised being fathered by uncles and grandfathers as social fathers (Clowes, Ratele & Shefer, 2013; Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012).

Participant 7 was raised solely by his maternal grandmother, with no other adult caregivers present during his childhood or adolescence. He indicated that he needed a male figure in his life, and felt that the absence of a male figure in his life significantly influenced his life course.

*At home there was, **there was not that male figure, somehow to show me and guide me the right way.** So, I learnt stuff on my own and I did things just to get the approval of my friends and nje positive remarks from people [...] I think when I introspect and, and these questions come to my mind... Why, why don't I have maybe someone to guide me, why don't I have a, like my parents next to me. Any child... But some of the things I did, I did unconsciously, I wasn't thinking at the time, but **I think if I had a male figure, or that strong hand to guide, I would have avoided some of the things***

Participant 7

A close examination of Participant 7's narrative indicates his application of the words "male figure" which suggests that he would have appreciated even the presence of a social father, as postulated by Clowes, Ratele and Shefer (2013). Moreover, his register of a "strong hand" suggests that a male figure represents power and strength that cannot be represented by the maternal figure (Clowes, Ratele & Shefer, 2013). It may be suggested that the desire for the transmission of masculinity may be greater amongst males in relation to females.

Participant 13 however introduces a view that considers South Africa's socio-political legacy and its probable influence on individuals, but more specifically on men.

*What apartheid to this world is, it will take generations to repair. And sometimes people don't realise the damage. They don't realise the extreme to which it has went. **They just don't realise that the psyche of men in particular. Women have had their fair share. But of men in particular it is something else, because most men, and I'll say African men again grew up without that father figure.** In fact, even women as*

well grew up without a father figure as well, and that's had its own challenges. Now as a man, sometimes as a man, you don't sometimes know what it means to be a man.

Participant 13

Participant 13 provides a perspective on the socio-political legacy and its influence on South African men and their capacity to parent. Despite introducing the probable impact on women, he placed continued emphasis on the male psyche. This highlights the perception that masculinity bears greater complexity. Moreover, his views on the socio-political landscape, may to some extent influence the way he perceives his own biological father's absence.

*So, I grew up without my father, he was never in the picture. I, I just knew he existed, but there was never any relationship. Its only now when I'm only that I can really meet with him to understand what was really going on. **Some of the things I do understand why he was never part of my life.***

Participant 13

It is surmised that the view of paternal involvement is quite diverse in response to the respective participants' experiences. Though the male and female participants may view the subject from differing perspectives, it may also be attributed to the fact that many of the participants had different experiences in terms of varying degrees of paternal involvement.

6.4 THEME 2: COMPOUNDED SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

The following theme intends to elucidate how kinship care may have influenced participants' developing identities, the way they currently view themselves and their overall psychosocial wellbeing. Identity is recognised as a process that connects both an individual's history and

development with one's social and interpersonal engagements within a broader context (Pittman et al., 2011). Given the role of identity in an individual's *being* in the world, it has considerable influence on wellbeing.

Although there is consistency across many of the themes, the views that the participants held of themselves appeared to be dependent on their respective life stages. Additionally, though Erikson placed considerable emphasis on identity resolution during adolescence, he recognised that identity development occurs throughout the lifespan and that it was considerably influenced by the social world (Hoare, 2002; Sokol, 2009). This supports the lifespan approach represented by the integrated conceptual framework and its emphasis that development continues throughout adulthood and is influenced by culture and context (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Hoare, 2002).

6.4.1 CHALLENGES TO IDENTITY RESOLUTION

Identity may be understood as a construct that has been socially and culturally developed over time (Fivush, 2011). Many of the participants, specifically those who had limited contact with either of their parents, seemed to have experienced great difficulty during their adolescence, particularly with regards to their identity resolution. According to Erikson, identity development and resolution is preceded by the process of identification (Sokol, 2009). This process involves admiring the traits demonstrated by the child's parents or other significant adults. The latter allows the child to develop their own set of expectations of who they would like to be someday (Erikson, 1968). This compliments Bowlby's suppositions on internal working models, since it is based on internalised relational patterns that has provided an archetype for interpersonal and social interactions (Bretherton, 1997; Fonagy, 1999).

It is postulated that given the partial knowledge of their biological parents in combination with their exposure to their kinship caregivers, the participants may have felt conflicted about whose

traits to admire and thus adopt. Identity formation commences when the individual develops a cohesive foundation of identifications that they can build on (Erikson, 1968). It is suggested that for some individuals in kinship care it may be a more complex process to develop a sound base of identifications.

Participant 7's account conveys the confusion individuals may be presented with during identity development, when they have knowledge, yet no real experience of their parents.

My dad passed away before I was born. I was born in '94, he passed on in '93. He was a gangster. He was shot 13 times and then he passed on. And I think that somehow contributed to my personality, because I thought maybe if he was this type of personality, maybe that's the right route...

Participant 7

The participant also had limited exposure to his mother during both his childhood and adolescence. His account conveys that without the opportunity to make sense of being parented, a struggle emerged for his own identity development.

In addition to the apparent difficulty in resolving the stage of identity, several of the younger participants referred to themselves as either shy, introverted or being hard on themselves. Moreover, their perceptions of themselves appear to be entangled with the way in which they socially engage with others; and seem to impact their outlook on the world.

Participant 4's account not only portrays a personality trait, but she immediately adds to it by mentioning that she does not like being around many people. The last component of her narrative suggests the construct of psychosocial wellbeing and the probable influence of her internal conflict on social interactions.

I am very shy, I don't like being around a lot of people

Participant 4

The participants descriptions of themselves as *shy* suggests that their sense of security and comfort in the world may be lacking. Security and confidence in the world and an individual's own capacity to be competent in the social world is embedded and provided for by the initial attachment relationship (Fitton, 2012). It may be suggested that for these participants, the experience of their primary attachment relationships was characterised by insecurity.

Similarly, Participant 7 refers to a personality trait and immediately relates it to his engagements with others. His narrative not only links with social interaction, but his propensity to keep things to himself.

I think, most of the time, I'm an introvert, you know, so I keep most of the things to myself.

Participant 7

The participants' narratives signal levels of uncertainty, both in themselves, as well as in the safety and security of the social world. The concepts of safety and security are congruent with the concept of exploration promoted by attachment, thus bringing to the fore the recognition of attachment in the manifestation of their adult behaviour (Bowlby, 1988; Wallin, 2007). Whereas Participant 4 appears to be concerned about the safety the social group may hold, Participant 7 seems uncertain about the social world's capacity to hold and contain elements of his internal world. In response to this doubt, the participant instead manages those parts of himself on his own.

Trust is recognised as a critical requirement for attachment as well as identity resolution in adolescence. It is thus an element that needs to accumulate across a lifespan, commencing

during infancy (Marcia & Josselson, 2012). It is suggested that the participants' segregation from their initial primary attachment figures may have influenced their capacity to trust, given the lack of availability of their original primary caregivers (Wallin, 2007).

Participant 5 mentions her traits of being both shy and quiet, whilst her reserved demeanour was also evident in her interaction with the researcher.

*I'm passionate about everything I do, and **I'm shy. I'm quiet**, I'm not the type of person who just go around, just go without knowing where he's going. I have respect, and I know my stand, **I know where I am and where I am going**. I'm not the type of person that goes back one step, I go forward, and go.*

Participant 5

Despite mentioning being shy, Participant 5's narrative reflects her agency, strength and determination. Her narrative is reminiscent of Bronfenbrenner's (1994, 2005) emphasis on the individual as an active being within the system. As such, even though circumstances may occur that influences the individual, the individual has agency in responding to those circumstances.

Similarly, Participant 6's account represents a desire for self-improvement. Despite her emphasis on being hard and critical of herself, her narrative also reveals a self-belief that she can in fact do better.

*I'm very critical of myself I think. I'm always trying... when I do things, could you have done that better. So, **I'm always trying to beat up myself. I think my criticism to myself is always to one up myself, not anybody else, but myself.***

Participant 6

It may therefore be suggested that despite mentioning features indicating lower self-esteem, Participant 5 and Participant 6 are both cognisant of their agency to influence their identity development and consequent life course.

The integrated conceptual framework however encourages a perspective beyond internal conflicts. The macrosystemic landscape is thus acknowledged, along with the probable challenges these participants may have experienced in terms of attachment and subsequently their identity resolution. In understanding their narratives related to their perceptions of themselves and their consequent engagement with the social world, the probable influence of what being a Black individual in South Africa may mean cannot be ignored. Despite the demise of apartheid, there has been insignificant socio-economic transformation for most Black families (Leibbrandt, Woolard & Woolard, 2009). As such, the influences across the Black individual's lifespan relates to their socio-political placement in the South African context. A study by Gradín (2013) indicated that Black people remain subject to intensifying barriers around access to education, area of residence and the lack of redress of historical racial inequalities.

A few of the older participants seemed to be quite cognisant of the probable impact of South Africa's socio-political landscape, though few brought it into the actual interview process, but made mention of it more informally thereafter. It is likely that the participants may have perceived it to be inappropriate, as was apparent with Participant 13 who initially seemed hesitant to discuss the legacy of apartheid and its impact on the family; *What apartheid, and I am not trying to be political whatever ...*

What apartheid to this world is, it will take generations to repair. And sometimes people don't realise the damage. They don't realise the extreme to which it has went. [...] And it becomes a challenge for some

people, who don't have those role models you don't have those people that you can say, you know my dad was doing this so I need to do this better, or I need to be like my dad, or I need to be like that and, that will take generations to fix.

Participant 13

His narrative however provides an appropriate illustration of the integrated conceptual framework, highlighting the sustained influence of socio-political structures over time, and its continued influence on families. Moreover, his narrative speaks specifically of the impending impact on internal working models and how the lack of internal representations impacts an individual's identity. The recognition of its intergenerational influences also highlights that the difficulties to be addressed cannot be isolated to a microsystemic level.

The implications of broader macrosystemic influences are in many ways illustrated by Participant 7's account of his initial experiences at university, which indicates a recognition of the differences between himself and his peers.

*I think I am improving... getting there. I'm not there, but I'm improving. I used to look down upon myself when I got here, got to Wits. Seeing all these brilliant people. I used to look down on myself, because **most of them come from good families, they went to good schools. When I see those differences, I used to look down upon myself.***

Participant 7

The participant's narrative demonstrates how this knowledge of his own personal history, in terms of family, socio-economic status and quality education, influenced his perceived identity and self-esteem. His account subsequently highlights the influence of the construct of

time, not only in terms of his own lifespan perspective, but also in relation to the socio-political and historical placement within the South African context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The challenges experienced seem to have influenced the way participants perceive themselves. Moreover, a lack of understanding of parental separation or absence further convoluted the participants' capacities to reconcile the crises of identity resolution. While reunification with biological caregivers may be expected to offer a sense of conciliation, it is instead preceded by conflicting parent-child identities. Parent-child conflict may be considered a natural phenomenon during the adolescent stage of development. It may therefore be suggested that the incidence is delayed amongst those who only have contact with their parents later in life.

6.4.2 POSSIBLE ROUTES TO RESOLUTION

Many of the older participants could spontaneously reflect on how their experiences may have influenced their current way of being, as well as its probable influence on their interpersonal engagements. This coincides with Fivush's (2011) postulation that adults should be able to easily recall their lifespan narrative, as well as spontaneously reflect on the probable influence of past experiences on the present. Many of the participants believed engaging with their parents on the reasons for separation would provide them with greater clarity. However, few were afforded this opportunity. It therefore appears that many of the participants had to rationalise their childhood, their experiences and its contributions to their identity and the meaning thereof.

Participant 9 was one of the few participants who were provided the opportunity to have more in-depth conversations with her parents with regards to their parent-child separation. It appears to have provided her with greater confidence in terms of her self-esteem and identity. Participant 9's account indicates that she recognised how her kinship care experiences, as well as the lack of a relationship with either of her biological parents, influenced her own internal

world and her capacity to engage with others. The participant proactively approached both of her parents to gain clarity on their parent-child relationships. It is proposed that this process facilitated the participant in reconciling the psychosocial stage of identity resolution, thus enabling a solid foundation for her adulthood (Kasinath, 2013). Prior to this, the participant recognised her inability to be vulnerable in relationships, a factor which resonates with the crises of intimacy to be resolved in early adulthood (Sadock, Sadock & Ruiz, 2015).

*I think, hmmm, I think there probably was a time where, whether it was work relationships, personal relationships, friendships, family, where I, I wasn't as forthcoming, with emotions, thoughts or feelings, because of whatever had happened in my younger years, where I almost had a protective layer. Uhm, not wanting to get to close to people. But I think, from around my, early twenties, twenty, twenty-one, I, I think that's when I think was completing my journey with my parents. I grew quite a bit emotionally, and, and, was able to make sense of the some of the decisions I'd taken, but also be aware of situations and relationships that I, that were not necessarily good for me, and be able to let those go. Uhm, and then, **it also gave me some form of confidence in that, in in who I was, in in, and also, in, in my being tolerant of a lot of people and a lot of situations, then not feel guilty to walk away from certain things.***

Participant 9

The steps taken by Participant 9 seem necessary for progression across the respective life stages. It is important to recognise that Participant 9's steps to resolution was most likely experienced as satisfying, because of her biological parents' *openness* which allowed for a

corrective experience. The importance is therefore not placed on the concrete details, but the relational process permitted. This openness may thus have satisfied some of the participant's needs remaining from infancy, childhood and adolescence given the criticality of parental sensitivity, availability and responsiveness throughout these life stages (Ainsworth, 1985; Erikson, 1980).

Several of the participants have expressed the need to follow a similar process, though they described their parents as being less open. This is likely to have left the participants feeling as if their experience of loss remained unacknowledged, and thus insignificant.

Participant 7 and Participant 8 linked their biological mothers' dismissiveness to race and culture respectively. It is likely that this may in part have been done to make the interaction less personal. Attributing their responses to race or culture may therefore excuse their behaviour, with the intent to lessen the likelihood of experiencing a repeated loss or trauma.

You know how black parents are. If you question them, they resort to whipping you because they think you are disrespectful and stuff. And she was very harsh. [...] That's why I feel like we need to talk about these things. Me and her, we need to talk. She has to explain some things to me, because I don't understand. I am learning to forgive, but we can't just carry on as if nothing happened.

Participant 7

*And at times I would look at my mother and ask her why. Ask myself. I never really confronted, because **you know culturally also, in our culture, if you start asking your parents those kinds of things you are disrespecting them.** And digging deeper into your life and all those...*

it's like you are disrespecting. So, us Africans, you ended up being with this questions that are not answered.

Participant 8

Participant 10 is still endeavouring to have similar discussions with her mother.

*That was last year, so I spoke to her about it, how I feel about it, and she sort off slowly, **she was very defensive, she didn't say anything about it**, and she was like I don't like this, and I don't like that, and I don't want you to... I didn't understand because I asked so many questions and she never gave me any answers.*

Participant 10

She has however found some resolution by connecting with her paternal family, although she does not have a personal relationship with her father.

*And so many things finally made sense, cause why am I this different. Cause I am very different compared to my mom's family. **It made so much sense cause now I see these people look like me, behave in a certain way that I behave. It was a complete puzzle, so I understood why I was like that.** Ever since then I would go to X and see them, for holidays. [...] I have never been so happy in my life. When I just land in that house, I am at peace. Home, you know it's so comfortable, full of love and warmth, it's beautiful.*

Participant 10

Participant 10's narrative suggests that her connection with her paternal family during her adolescence addressed many of the questions she was struggling with during this life stage. In terms of the function served by attachment, it is likely that her connection with her paternal family may have provided her with greater clarity in terms of her internal representation of herself. Whilst adolescence is characterised by social exploration beyond the family context (Erikson, 1980), it appears as if the relationship with Participant 10's paternal family provided her with the required assurance of "parental" presence and availability to form relationships with both of her biological parents (Niehaus, 2017). When this proved unsuccessful with her biological father, she was guaranteed of the paternal family's presence to support her.

*It was so much drama, there was so much drama. And then, **she's like my dad must take me back wherever he found me, I must just go back where I come from.** Then my dad took me, oh, I called X, and asked her when is she coming back, and she's like she's only coming back on Monday. So as soon as she came back I went to X, so I explained the situation, and what happened, my aunt got so angry, and X and Y, just embraced that situation and just took me in as one of their own. I am content when I am with them. It's safe, it's a safe environment. **There's people who love you so much. After so much rejection, you know it was comfortable.***

Participant 10

Participant 10's relationship with her paternal family therefore seems to have provided her with a sense of clarity with regards to her identity development, as well as a different relational experience. Whereas the participant never felt prioritised by either of her biological parents or by her original kinship care providers, her narrative suggests that she finally feels

recognised within her paternal family. It is proposed that this different experience may also have been a corrective experience given her exposure to an adult who was both available and responsive, thus evoking within her a sense of safety (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009).

Many of the older participants seemed to speak about themselves with greater clarity, recognising the parts of their identity that was reminiscent of their kinship caregivers.

*Whenever people speak to me, they will always speak so highly of them and say you were raised by such wonderful grandparents. Ooo **it makes sense where you come from, because I know your grandparents, I knew who they were.** So, they've definitely left a rich legacy behind, you know and it's definitely something I am going to carry on. I'm regarding their surname very highly, I don't carry it anymore because I'm married. But definitely, I will leave the same legacy behind.*

Participant 12

Participant 14 made frequent comments about the similarities between her own and her aunt's personalities, who she has accepted as her mother. She seemed very confident about her identity and mentioned particular personality traits she gained from her aunt. Her narrative thus comprised of several "we" comments; *Remember I told you that we're the same, and we're stubborn and the same; Once we believe in something we stick to it...*

But I'm my mother's daughter anyway. Anything that would accommodate grey would always be wrong to me. But I still relate more to my mom. My mom understands me more than my biological mother.

Participant 14

For many of the younger participants, it appears that that during adolescence and early adulthood, their decisions with regards to identity appeared to have been compounded. This appears to be largely attributed to the lack of clarity with regards to the participants' internal working models. This uncertainty appears to have had a considerable impact on the participants' sense of self, their ability to allow levels of intimacy with others and their general view of the world as a safe and secure place. Furthermore, many of the older participants indicated greater clarity in terms of their identity and self-esteem. It was evident that those who had stability in terms of kinship care, identified with their kinship caregivers.

6.5 THEME 3: OVER-RELIANCE ON SELF

Several of the participants' narratives reflected their reality of having to rely on themselves during childhood and adolescence, and how it has influenced how they currently engage with the world as adults. In reviewing their narratives, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development provides a clear framework to identify how these participants and their families have been influenced on a macrosystemic to microsystemic level, and how it has intimately influenced them at the core.

6.5.1 POVERTY AND MATERIAL DEPRIVATION

The accounts shared by many participants highlighted that poverty and material deprivation was central to their experiences in kinship care. Poverty is recognised as critical dilemma in South Africa. It may be argued that poverty was in many ways enforced on Black South Africans during the apartheid era and remains a remnant of the continuous construction of poverty (Gradín, 2013). Given that most of the participants were raised by their grandparents it is important to recognise that grandparents are amongst the poorest of the social groups and that the participants are likely to have resided in households faced with considerable financial constraints within already impoverished environments (Beegle et al., 2010; Roelen et al.,

2016). Moreover, cognisance of the possible implications of poverty is critical given the recognition that poverty is a significant threat to wellbeing (Beegle et al., 2010; Roelen, Delap, Jones & Chettri, 2016)

The narratives shared by the participants reflect the reality imposed by financial difficulties. Participant 4 specifically reflects on a time during which her grandmother could not afford to pay for her school fees.

*My deputy principal at boarding school, he was, **even if my grandmother couldn't pay for my school fees**, he was that father figure at school, and he used to provide and he believed in me a lot.*

Participant 4

In contrast, whilst Participant 4 is able to reflect on the support system available to her, Participant 13's narrative highlights his isolation and responsibility to provide for himself.

*At a young age, you find that they need money at school so **if you don't save that money, or that two rand, you won't have it**. So, from that perspective I do think as much as that helps, a child should not have to go through that at that age.*

Participant 13

The accounts provided by Participant 4 and Participant 13 confirm that their grandparents were exposed to more impoverished circumstances, whereas those residing with aunts and uncles seemed to have less financial concerns.

Participant 14's narrative provides context to how her uncles and biological mother were able to adequately provide for their family.

It was him (uncle, kinship caregiver), my biological mother and my uncle. They would buy like a cow, and pork and chicken and all that, we always had meat for about six months. Then the second month they go to the abattoir, take a whole cow and pigs and sheep and whatever.

Participant 14

This divergence in material deprivation is further highlighted by participants who experienced kinship care with aunts, uncles and grandparents. This is illustrated in Participant 8's narrative when she reflects about her challenging childhood when residing with her maternal grandmother in comparison to her previous residence with her aunt and uncle.

*You are staying somewhere in a rural area, things are tough. **At times, you go to school with no food**, ay, it was quite a difficult one, and I think, this is where I am staying, growing in that way and not having everything, not having waking up and getting cornflakes.*

Participant 8

Participant 6 highlights the stark contrasts in residing with her aunts and uncles in comparison to her grandmother.

*My grandmother was more of a township kind of environment. And I wasn't the only one, I had all these people in the house. It was just too many. I had uncles who don't have jobs, I had nieces who has children... you know how your grandmother's house. Everyone is there... So, from being in a house with running water and electricity, somebody drives me to school, I come back home, someone does my laundry for me, and now it's just flipped on my head. **Now you're going***

to take care of yourself, no one is going to do that. If you need water you are going to the tap outside. Oh, my gosh.

Participant 6

These narratives provide support to the findings by Lee et al. (2016), which indicates that aunts and uncles are not as negatively impacted by childcare responsibilities as compared to grandparents, because the act of caregiving is more relevant to their life stage. It may also be appropriate to suggest that from a financial perspective this may be attributed to the fact that given their life stage, aunts and uncles are more likely to be employed and have access to financial resources compared to grandparents.

However, Participant 7's account, highlights a pertinent component embedded in the construct of poverty and material deprivation within the context of kinship care. This refers to the recognition that participants in certain contexts are often required to provide for themselves financially. As such, beyond the threat of living in a home with less financial resources, is the concern that some of the participants had to take responsibility for providing for themselves.

*Me selling cigarettes was a way of funding some of my school projects, buying clothes for myself, because **my grandmother was not monied.** So, some of the things I had to do for myself.*

Participant 7

For others, the boundary of providing for themselves may have become blurred in terms of having to provide for their grandparents as well. This appeared to become more relevant during adolescence, when some participants were expected to manage more adult responsibilities. This difficulty in differentiating becomes clear in Participant 16's narrative

when he discusses his responsibilities of earning an income during his final year at school to ensure that he could provide for himself and his paternal grandmother.

*I used to think in seven days, so I would plan for the following seven days. Whatever I make, it has to sustain us for seven days and I didn't, she got pension fund payments, but I didn't see that money. **I had to make sure that whatever I do out there, it will sustain the both of us.***

Participant 16

These findings align with those of Roelen et al. (2016) which indicate that grandparents accept the responsibility of kinship care despite their socio-economic contexts. However, as expressed in the narratives, the experiences of those residing in kinship care emphasises the financial constraints these individuals are subject to (Beegle et al., 2010). The experiences shared therefore support the supposition that children and adolescents raised by grandparents may be considered as increasingly vulnerable given that poverty is a significant threat to wellbeing (Beegle et al., 2010; Roelen, Delap, Jones & Chettri, 2016). This does however not only relate to the grandparents' difficulties in providing adequately for the children, but how acutely aware many of the participants were as children of their financial difficulties and how they had to take on a greater responsibility to mediate it during adolescence. Although research adequately emphasises the implications of poverty and material deprivation on wellbeing in terms of access to education and health services (Gradín, 2013), cognisance of the psychosocial wellbeing implications are pertinent in relation to feeling socially excluded and different (de Witt & Lessing, 2010). However, knowledge of the responsibilities carried by children and adolescents within their households presents learnings in terms of spaces for intervention.

6.5.2 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ACCESSIBILITY OF CAREGIVER

The previous sub-theme emphasised the implications of the macrosystemic context in South Africa across time, its impact on the family and subsequent impact on the individual. Much of the research linked to kinship care has focussed on caregiver wellbeing (Gibson & Singh, 2010; Gleeson, Hsieh & Cryer-Coupet, 2016). The following sub-theme highlights the possible influence of the caregivers physical and emotional accessibility in response to the needs of the participants, with specific emphasis on the adolescent life stage. Though the sub-theme of *Poverty and Material Deprivation* provided one lens indicating how the struggles of the caregiver influence the children, the narratives indicate the importance of other factors. This includes how the life stage of the caregiver is likely to influence the extent to which they can relate and engage with the caregivers, but also how they are regarded in terms of the physical and emotional accessibility.

Participant 6 and Participant 16 were both exposed to younger caregivers within their kinship care contexts.

*They are 35 now, but when I moved in they were in their 30's. So, they understood me much more than you would assume that people at that age would. So, it was a very easy transition for me from my mom to them. Because my mom also had me at a young age. So, **they understood me**. They understood the 16 year, and that you are going to lose your mind. I genuinely always felt at home. It was always nice; it was always fun. [...] So, it was like a homely environment. They understood everything I was going through. I legit, liked, loved living there.*

Participant 6

*I'd say it prepared me in terms of dealing with peer pressure and I guess when you reaching puberty that's when you are learning about your adult body and how your adult brain thinks. I think then I was fortunate enough **I had a chance to be with my uncles to see and learn** how when you reach that stage what you need to do, what you need to guard against. Ya, it's more like knowing yourself before puberty and all that, knowing what you want.*

Participant 16

Their narratives illustrate that the participants felt understood by their caregivers and this may be considered critical during adolescence. It may therefore be suggested that within these microsystemic contexts in which the participants were faced with the psychosocial crises of identity resolution, these aunts and uncles served a critical function in providing parental support for crises resolution (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl & Zumbo, 2011). It may be argued that even when caregivers are physically available, adolescents may not perceive them to be accessible if considerable differences in life stage, values and beliefs are evident.

The narratives by Participant 5 and Participant 15 provide a perspective of this.

***I was just hiding things**, if ever my phone rings, I will just go outside. Or maybe I will put my phone on silent, at least, maybe someone can call me and then she will ask me, who was that, ya. So, I was just hiding and then sometimes I will just tell back I am going to the shop, whereas I know, I am going to see someone first. Ya, cause if she knew that.*

Participant 5

*There were times when it when painful you know, I mean you don't live with your mom, you have to live with somebody else that has to be a guardian. So, uhm, ya, there were challenges, you know. Sometimes you couldn't ask your grandparents certain things, I mean, **they couldn't understand times had changed between them and the current times.** So ya, there were challenges.*

Participant 15

Although the progressed life stage of caregivers, such as grandparents, may limit their accessibility in some respects, it does not serve to diminish the love and nurturance some of the participants experienced.

***She was the one person that I knew that I could always depend on, rely on.** Even when I, she heard what I do bad stuff, she didn't lose hope. She was always positive, encouraging me. I feel I wasn't ready to lose her, because my plan was to show her, maybe through, when I start working and everything. To show her grateful I am, how much I appreciate her contribution. She was wise, most of the things I learnt from her. She was that one person I was close to. She was more than just a grandmother... She was my mother, she was my father. Everything, almost everything. A friend even. Because we talked, tell her about girlfriends and stuff. She was a friend... she was a friend.*

Participant 7

My gran was somebody who was neutral, somebody that loved all of us as her grandkids. She, she never really took sides, and when she

sees somebody is being mistreated she would like she would try and come in between. But she was old, she was old, I think she was about, at that time, she was about seventy something. So, it was quite difficult for her to be after us, to see who's doing what, and who's not doing what. So, you had to be on your own, you had to defend yourself.

Participant 8

This sub-theme has highlighted the variability of factors that may influence overall psychosocial wellbeing, specifically pertaining to interpersonal relationships. Given that the respective experiences of participants are likely to have been unique, a weighting cannot be placed on the probable impact of the many influencing factors.

6.5.3 MANDATORY MATURATION AND INDEPENDENCE

Taking into consideration the various challenges many of the participants have faced, several of them felt that they had to make various adjustments and had to grow independent at an earlier age. This was particularly evident amongst those who grew up with older grandparents who were unable to provide them with the necessary nurturance or care. Beyond the concern of caregiver wellbeing, is the recognition that the South African context, and the application of kinship care introduces a multiplicity of constructs.

*Like now I don't care if a person care about me or what because I'm an adult I have to be strong. I'm on my own, I don't have a sibling, I'm the only child. [...] I feel like I'm an adult now, so I need to be responsible, my mother is no longer, and then my grandmother, it's just my grandmother, **I cannot depend much on her, cause she's old** [...] I don't want to depend on her, I just want to lean on my own, cause I*

once depend on my mother, for money what what, and then now, so look. [...] Like physically I may look young, but in the mean time I feel old enough to handle situations. To be responsible for my own actions. Ya, whatever I do, I should take responsibility. Instead of saying, what should I do now, should I call my grandma, should I call my pastor

Participant 5

Participant 5's mother passed away one year prior to the interview, prior to which her mother worked away from home. Moreover, she had minimal contact with her father, because he is married and has a new family. She is overly cognisant that she must depend on herself, because her grandmother is aged and cannot provide for her financially. Moreover, she never experienced her grandmother as nurturing, and has therefore had to mature at a younger age. The participant's narrative conveys her isolation with regards to having family she can rely on. Despite demonstrating her acceptance of accountability, it was in many ways forced upon her. Similarly, Participant 13 is very cognisant of the fact that he had to become more mature at an older age, given the lack of nurturance he received during childhood.

From childhood, you rely on yourself.** You have had to do everything by yourself. You've had to do homework by yourself. Some of the loopholes, they'll ask your parents to sign, but your granddad is not there or whoever is not around and you learn to fake that signature. Write it with your left hand so that you can say that your mom has signed it, your parents has signed it. So, you almost, have to be on your own. You always, for things to happen, you have to make it happen. Unless you do anything, it won't happen. Same thing with the emotions, you're not going to rely on anyone. **The other kids can be crying, and

they go home to their mom and their mom tells them it's going to be ok. But you don't have that, you have to do it on your own. You have to cry, but you know that no one is going to come and tell you it's going to be ok. Tell yourself that and then brush up and get up.

Participant 13

The accounts provided by Participant 9 and Participant 10 indicates their reality of not only having to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, but also for their younger siblings.

*When my gran left, I think, I understood that okay, my whole mind had to shift about what I wanted out of life and who I was and what the situation was. And the situation was that I had a little brother that I had to protect from this woman who had screaming matches. Uhm, who as much as she had her screaming matches, still had the heart to open her house to us. Uhm, but I then had to adjust, **I think it forced me to make decisions, a normal 12-year-old, 13-year-old shouldn't have to make, or normally don't make.** Uhm, but it made me, to think of the next person first before thinking of myself because I understood, if I needed to make sure my brother was still fine. The job that my mom had of making sure he's clean, cause boys don't like to shower, and all that stuff, that then fell on me by default, cause she, my aunt wasn't very maternal.*

Participant 9

*I had to stay with my little brother. I think at that time he just started Grade 1, so **I took care of him, that was fine, I didn't struggle with***

that. [...] Just the two of us ya. So, I would do the usual, and then my stepdad would come pick him up and take him to school and then bring him back home later when I come back from school.

Participant 10

The narratives of many of the participants are indicative that some of the participants did not necessarily feel emotionally supported during kinship care. As such, despite the physical presence of some kinship caregivers, the participants did not necessarily perceive them to be accessible in relation to their needs. This was however compounded for participants who had to take on additional responsibilities to provide for themselves and others.

6.6 THEME 4: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FINANCIAL PROVISION

Parental involvement and financial provision is a fundamental theme given that it likely serves as a protective factor during kinship care. The theme comprises of both elements to appropriately reflect the way it was relayed by the participants. Most of the participants had some level of parental involvement. This aligns with the findings by Greene and Goodman (2010) that demonstrates that informal kinship care encourages increased parental involvement. Moreover, parental involvement has shown to positively influence child wellbeing (Dolbin-MacNab & Keiley, 2009; Washington et al., 2010). It is further postulated that parental involvement provides the opportunity for sustained attachment relationships.

Only three of the participants had limited parental contact. Whereas one of the participants had increased contact with her mother from adolescence onward, the other two participants only had increased contact with their biological mothers as adults. Relative to the remainder of the participants, these two participants seemed to be exposed to more detrimental factors given the lack of both physical, emotional and financial support received.

Participant 7's account reflects how he perceives the lack of parental involvement to have influenced many of his life choices during adolescence, his self-esteem and overall life satisfaction at that point in his life.

I grew up in the township in K, and so most townships are known for their violence and corruption. It's rare for, for, a male child to escape those things. So, me, I was once involved with those things. Corruption, violence, I, I, I used to sell cigarettes and weed at school you know. [...]
*I think when I introspect and, and these questions come to my mind, why, **why don't I have maybe someone to guide me, why don't I have a, like my parents next to me.** Any child... But some of the things I did, I did unconsciously, I wasn't thinking at the time, but I think if I had a male figure, or that strong hand to guide, I would have avoided some of the things.*

Participant 7

*You know, it was hard for me at that time, when my granny passed away. I stayed with my mom and then my mom chased me away, and at that time I was not working. **Then I usually sleep in the street and that time I got two kids.***

Participant 11

For many of the participants increased parental involvement and financial provision were perceived positively. It is likely that these elements signalled the parents' continued interest in the child.

If ever, she was not caring about me, she wouldn't have come to see me, she couldn't have phoned me, ya. Sent money for me, want best for me.

Participant 5

My dad has been in my life since 1993 (birth), since forever, so I've always had a relationship with my dad. He paid for all of the things that I needed. If you are going to take your daughter to go stay with other people, the least you can do is to contribute. So, I was always in contact with my dad and for holidays I would come to J.

Participant 6

Greene and Goodman's (2010) research findings suggested that parental involvement can be beneficial during kinship care and opposes literature that promotes kinship carers, particularly grandparents, as sole providers. This theme suggests that varying kinship care types exists, given that mothers often move away to financially provide for their children as well as the extended family.

As previously mentioned, the elements of parental involvement and financial contribution are presented together, to represent the way participants conveyed them. Madhavan, Townsend and Gary (2008) postulate that men do not alternative between providing financial support and not providing financial support. As such, children who receive paternal support are likely to continue doing so across their lifespan and this support is likely to positively influence their overall wellbeing (Madhavan, Townsend & Gary, 2008). Within the context of this study, it is however difficult to ascertain the protective weighting of the respective

components. It also raises the argument that financial support does not equate intimate involvement.

The account provided by Participant 10 does however present a perspective that parental involvement may supersede financial contribution. Despite acknowledging the fact that her father supported her financially, the way the participant articulates his contribution appears negative. It is evident that for the participant her father's time may have been more greatly appreciated.

*My dad was like a walking ATM, so **he would just come and just drop off money and go. He never like spent time with me. Ya, he never did.***
So, that's how it was always.

Participant 10

Findings by Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012) emphasise that according to adult children, fatherhood is not defined by the father's capacity to provide financially. It is however acknowledged that the criterion of financial provision is critical to the actual fathers, given concerns with regards to their masculinity.

Participant 13 offered a perspective regarding this, although not based solely on his own personal experience, since he received no financial assistance from his father throughout childhood, but only from his mother.

*I mean I have some of my peers who don't have any relationship what so ever with their parents. I being one of them, not having any relationship with my dad. My mom is only fortunate, because she is a woman, she tries. But if my mom were not around, and I only had my dad, I would be talking completely different things, because **African***

men don't communicate. You see them like once a month, they are just the money providers and that's where it will end.

Participant 13

Participant 13's comment highlights assumed cultural influences with regards to the way paternal and maternal roles are perceived. In addition to these cultural influences, is the acknowledgement that fatherhood in South Africa is shaped by its socio-historical context. As such, fatherhood cannot be divorced from the country's socio-political and socio-economic complexities (Makusha & Richter, 2014).

6.7 THEME 5: THE ROLE OF AN EXTERNAL SOVEREIGN ON PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING

The following theme suggests the pertinence of religion or spirituality, its probable influence on amending attachment styles, identity resolution, as well as overall psychosocial wellbeing. Several of the participants referred to God, Christianity or church during their narratives. Many different religions are practiced in South Africa, which includes African Traditional Religion, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism (Chidester, 2014). Most of the participants made mention of Christianity, which may be influenced by it being the dominant religion in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

Taking into consideration the themes discussed to date, which includes a continued need for attachment, as well as emphasis on a compounded search for identity, the relevance of religion raises the question of how the adoption of religion may influence interpersonal engagement as well as identity resolution. Erikson (1958) had similar questions with regards to religion and identity crises, which he relayed in his writing of *Young Man Luther*. Several of Erikson's postulations with regards to the psychosocial stages of human development have been linked

and applied to religious studies (See Capps, 2012). Similarly, attachment theory occupies an integral role in the psychology of religion (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Schnitker, Porter, Emmons & Barrett, 2012).

At the core of the attachment theory is the importance of an individual's internal working model. It is suggested that an individual's capacity to engage with others and the world in general is dependent on their internal representation of themselves, which is founded on experiences of their parent-child relationships (Counted, 2016). As explored in previous themes, many of the participants have expressed a desire to have improved attachment with their biological mothers. Furthermore, the theme focussing on *Compounded Search for Identity*, suggests the probability of unclear internal working models and thus uncertainty with regards to the identity an individual may hold. It may be suggested that in response to this uncertainty, the acceptance of God as an attachment figure, permits a level of safety and security that the attachment figure as a secure base is intended to serve. Kirkpatrick (2012) states that this relationship with God is defined as an attachment bond, where God is perceived to be the attachment figure, particularly in the absence of a human attachment figure. The acceptance of God as an attachment figure is hoped to remedy what was lacking in the relationship with the original attachment figure, such as security and nurturance (Counted, 2016).

God as an attachment figure is not limited to a specific religion, although there appears to be a skew towards research focussing on Christianity (See Granqvist, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Schnitker et al., 2012). The premise of God as an attachment figure is however recognised across all traditional religions where there is a God deity, which includes Judaism and Islam (Granqvist, 2014; Miner, Ghobary, Dowson & Proctor, 2014). Moreover, even with spirituality, where there is no God deity, and thus no dependence on a central God figure; links have been made with particular attachment styles (Granqvist, Broberg & Hagekull, 2014). With

these attachment styles, the adoption of a belief without a central God figure appeared to have been driven by attachment behaviour.

Given the emphasis on Christianity by the participants, the theme will be explored with an emphasis on Christianity. Counted (2016) postulated that individuals who may have experienced insecure attachment relationships may perceive the God, as epitomised in Christianity, as a haven of security. This safety and security therefore acts to redress the presence of internal conflict (Counted, 2016).

For some participants, the centrality of religion emerged within their immediate contexts throughout childhood and adolescence. These participants closely linked their emphasis on God with their values, their way of engaging with others and their outlook on the world in general. Thus, their emphasis on God and their beliefs played a core role in their narratives and the way they live their life.

Both Participant 4 and Participant 5 referred to attending church as a social activity with friends, linking it closely to their values in terms of activities they would or would not participate in. Participant 5 specifically emphasised that she does not follow any specific culture, given her religious affiliation; *“I don’t practice, as I said I’m Christian”*. Participant 14 made several references to God from a helping perspective. This is in line with God being a *source of help*, which is one of many different roles espoused to God as an attachment figure (Counted, 2016).

Participant 13 and Participant 15 highlighted that their kinship caregivers, namely their grandparents, were religious. The participants subsequently maintained the religions teachings they were exposed to during kinship care, as adults.

*Ok, so my granddad is a preacher, a priest, one of the senior priests at the church I went to. So, typical, from when I was still young I started going to the church, then you eat, go to the church. [...] **I grew up in a church and I've always maintained that.** Even me and my fiancé, we met at church.*

Participant 13

*Our beliefs, I think that also played a part. Cause **they were very religious people**, so I think that also played a part in my life and I also think that's also important for me to impart those uhm, uhm things that I've learnt from my grandparents to my kids as well. [...] Okay, uh, my grandparents were Jehovah's Witnesses, and **I took their beliefs as well because I was raised by them.** And I think whenever they wanted to discipline me it was through, Bible based, so I think I also want to try and impart that with my kids.*

Participant 15

Counted (2016) suggests that in response to the loss or separation from an attachment figure, individuals may respond with different coping mechanisms. Participant 7's mention of his parents' absence illustrates that he believes that his behaviour may have been in response to their absence; *"I think if I had that structure. There's a mother and a father. I wouldn't have done some of the bad things I've done, because, I wouldn't go out to seek, approval from friends and stuff because I'd get that at home"*. This includes negative coping styles in response to an attachment separation. This form of coping is what Counted (2016) refers to as negative coping. Individuals implementing negative coping mechanisms in response to attachment separation may however be receptive to accepting a God attachment figure in hope

of change. This appears to be true for Participant 7; “*God’s great. I think it’s through God’s grace. I got saved when I was doing matric. And mje, and my understanding of the world changed, took a different turn*”.

Participant 7 and Participant 12 placed significant emphasis on God and it was evident that their beliefs had a considerable influence on the lens they applied in viewing life in general.

*I used to look down on myself, because most of them come from good families, they went to good schools. When I see those differences, I used to look down upon myself. But **I’m learning to love myself through God’s help**, I’m learning to appreciate myself more and that influences my confidence and how I relate to people.*

Participant 7

Participant 7 made references to positive changes that has manifested in his life through “*God’s help, God’s grace*”, emphasising his gratitude towards God. His narrative therefore expresses an affectionate bond with God. This resonates with Counted’s (2016) postulation of God as a secure base, given that it is God’s presence that provides Participant 7 with improved confidence, which relates to exploration and security.

Participant 12’s emphasis on God shows a perspective of God’s intervention in her life and kinship care “*I can honestly tell you, being raised by the two of them is the best thing that God could have done*”. Her narrative about her grandparents and especially her grandfather indicated the role she believed God has played in her life “*I realised that I couldn’t have asked for anyone better. God couldn’t have given me anyone better, if He wanted to give me someone else, I don’t know, but He has given me the best*”.

The language used by both Participant 7 and Participant 12 corresponds with what Counted (2016) refers to as God attachment language, indicating an enduring affectionate bond. According to Kirkpatrick (2012), Christians often perceive God as an attachment figure and therefore a provider of love, nurturance and safety. Participant 7 however went beyond talking about the impact God has made in his life to speaking about his ambitions to positively impact others and the world in general through Christianity.

I want to make a positive contribution, not only to the people around me, but to the world. At some point, I want to maybe start a Christian school, since I am doing education. Where we teach not only the school curriculum, but life principles, leadership skills, all those things. You know, don't just focus on the intellectual side of man, but also the emotional, spiritual.

Participant 7

Similarly, Participant 12 has also adopted an approach of wanting to influence others, thus looking beyond the role she believes God to have played in her life.

*I go and I minister now at women's conferences, churches, events, etcetera, I MC and I minister to a lot of people, I help. [...] I would love to help a child, who has gone through what I've gone through, I'd love to help the fatherless children, the daddy-less daughters, to the environments that they grew up in. I'd like to be there for them and help in every way possible that I can. [...] **To what God has borrowed us.***

Participant 12

According to Kirkpatrick (2012) people do not often feel compelled to focus on the advancement and wellbeing of other people, except of those they are related to. It is suggested that this may however be different amongst those who accept God as an attachment figure who provides love and nurturance with no expectation of sacrifice (Kirkpatrick, 2012). This recognition of God as a giving sovereign may encourage these individuals to behave in accordance with the same principles of love and nurturance towards others. This is likely to be in response to creating clarity for themselves in terms of the internal representations they hold of themselves, thus providing some sense of resolve in terms of identity resolution.

6.8 THEME 6: DESIRED CESSATION OF THE KINSHIP CARE CYCLE

If it's a chain, I need to make sure that it ends with me.

Participant 13

This theme examines the perceptions held of kinship care by some of the participants who are parents themselves. Their narratives convey their aspirations in terms of parenting their own children. Despite the participants' subjective emphasis on their roles as parents, their accounts demonstrate how they are comparing their roles as parents in relation to the actions of their biological parents. It may be suggested that these participants are in some way trying to compensate for their own childhood experiences by providing their children with a parent-child relationship they perceive to be more desirable. It is therefore likely that their parenting styles are strongly influenced by their own attachment histories. There is however a dearth of literature available that has focussed on parents raised in kinship care, their views on kinship care and its influence on their relationships with their own children.

Participant 8 and Participant 12 recognised that their separation from their mothers were partly in response to the implications of their socio-economic status. Both of their mothers were

employed as domestic workers in urban areas, whilst the participants resided in rural areas with their respective grandparents.

... I remember I wrote a letter to my mother, saying that I want to come stay with her. And at that time my mother was a domestic worker, so she says, she can't stay with me, because of where she is working, it's not allowed.

Participant 8

My mom, who is a single mom had to go at work, and as such, when she was at work, I grew up mainly with my grandad.

Participant 13

Despite the participants' awareness of the probable socio-economic factors that influenced their mothers' migratory labour practices, their narratives explicate that financial deprivation would be insufficient to separate them from their own children. The participants' accounts therefore suggest that they do not consider financial difficulties as a permissible reason for parent-child separation.

*I've been through difficult times in life now, but I never ever thought of giving my kids away, or letting somebody else raise my kids. I've just told myself, **even if I have to sleep under a bridge, I'll sleep with them.***

Participant 8

*I always told myself that one day when I become a parent I will try and ensure that I live with my child, wherever they are. **And it doesn't matter whether I've got any financial security or not.** Of course, what*

I did tell myself was that I need to make sure education-wise I make it a point that I can provide for my kids...

Participant 13

Participant 8 and Participant 13 both appeared to be cognisant that their perspectives on parenting stemmed from their emotional reactions of being separated from their mothers. Both participants seemed to have envisioned that residing with their mothers would have been more beneficial for them irrespective of the financial deprivation they may have been subjected to.

*You know, I try by all means to protect them, **I don't want them to go through what I went through. It's not a nice, growing up without your parents.** No matter, no matter what, your parents are, no matter of who we are, but I know, if you are struggling and suffering, but you are with your mother and she is giving you that love, you know it is much better than for growing up with somebody else. [...] **I would never** give away my kids for anything. And, no matter how hard things are, **I think the only thing that will separate me and my kids will be death.***

Participant 8

*...and I don't ever want to be separated from my family. **Because I think it's torture.** So, from that perspective, what it taught me was the fact that it's important to always be there for your kids. Important that every day, your child comes back to your home. [...]. From the moment, my child, I learnt that my fiancé was pregnant, I made sure I was there from the very first moment. Go to every consultation with her, and even, I was even in the labour room, and I've been there for my child ever*

*since. And I mean even now, I think my child is more closer to me than her mom. But it's all because of the upbringing. I don't know, maybe it might be psychological or whatever it is but I, it's just something that I told myself. **But you know what, that void, that longing for your parents to be there doesn't ever happen again. If it's a chain, I need to make sure that it ends with me.***

Participant 13

The participants' narratives thus illustrate their expectations for their parents to have transcended beyond their socio-economic circumstances. Though these participants were born into an apartheid state, there is no immediate recognition of the possible implications this may have had on their parents' agency in terms of managing their parent-child living arrangements. It may be suggested that although the participants are cognisant of the socio-political implications on a conscious level, their pain in response to the loss of their aspired parent-child relationships does not permit them to take this into consideration. It is noteworthy to recognise that whilst these participants believe that no financial constraints could separate them from their children, Participant 11 had to put these beliefs into action.

*She told us that I'm not listening to her, so this is her house, I must go. I said okay, its fine, I'm going. At that time, **I'm sleeping in the street with two kids for two weeks**, then I get my own place. And at that time, I wasn't work, because one of the residents said, please take the children, then that one you can chase away. **I said no I can't.***

Participant 11

Participant 11's narrative refers to a time when her mother put her out of the house, in response to their conflicting identities. Whilst her mother requested that the participant be removed from the property, she advised that the children could remain. The participant was however adamant that she could not leave her children behind, and as such, they were homeless for a period of two weeks.

Participant 12 and Participant 15 demonstrated similar levels of internal conflict with regards to whether their separations from their mothers were justifiable. However, it seems that these participants felt that their mothers had greater agency to change their living arrangements, but that their efforts were not sufficient.

*I said to my mother them, this is what you've created, you've created this and now somehow, I need to put little pieces together, to fix this. And the sad part is you're in denial. That you've done absolutely nothing wrong. **Yes, you seem to blame my grandparents, saying that they forced you, they forced you to, to, to, to keep me behind. They, forced you and said you won't be able to raise X, so that is why we are raising her. I said there is no such thing.***

Participant 12

*I think she could have been more open like you know what, uhh, this is just a temporary thing, **maybe I'm going to try and move back**, you know, maybe raise you up, you know or you know, maybe do more, **unlike she where she was, ya.***

Participant 15

The participants proceeded to separate themselves from their parents' decisions by emphasising their divergent approaches as parents. It may be suggested that they are highlighting their selected identities as parents, thereby rejecting the models presented to them. Alternatively, by highlighting the distinct differences, they may be defending against the possibility that they could behave like their parents under similar circumstances.

*I have three children **I would never** give my children off to anyone, and let someone else raise them, or grandparents raise them. **I would never** leave them in the care of you as my mother and say that you have to raise them. I'm going to have a better life and greener pastures and live my life while you are taking care of them. **I would never** do that, so you have a choice, and you always had a choice. And I said to her, **you made the choice** very clear, that you would take care of my sister and not me. And that you would be able to love her unconditionally and love me less.*

Participant 12

Whereas Participant 12's narrative suggests her internal conflict about being separated from her mother, Participant 15 appears to be emphasising a different perspective. Her emphasis appears to be on the relational experience she wants to provide her children, which conveys the importance of attachment in terms of accessibility and availability.

*For instance, as I have kids, I don't want them to be raised by my mom. I want to raise my own kids so that they know, **so that they can be close to me, because I never had that relationship with my mom.** So, it's that kind of thing, I want them to know me, I want them to feel as if I'm their friend, that I'm there for them all the time. [...] I want them to be more*

open to me, unlike the relationship I had with my grandparents and my mom.

Participant 15

Many of the participants' accounts were relayed with emotional intensity. It may be suggested that their intensity is underpinned by residual internal conflict in response to having been left as children and the implications it had for their own life course. This becomes evident, because despite talking about their aspired parenting style, they link it back to their own experiences.

It is important to recognise that despite the participants' determination to parent in a different way and be more involved with their children, a different parenting style does not necessarily mean that the intergenerational attachment styles are different (Brisch, 2011). Although the narratives cannot provide clarity on whether the intergenerational attachment difficulties have been resolved, it remains hopeful that some of the participants emphasise the physical as well as the emotional components of their relationships with their children. Their narratives are thus not limited to focus solely on living arrangements, but also on the affectionate nature of their relationships. It is essential to hold in mind that attachment is not static, but in its complexity, continues to change over time (Fitton, 2012). It may be suggested that it is this change these parents aspire to, to remedy their own attachment styles, for themselves as well as for their children.

CHAPTER 7: LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUDING SUMMARY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to conclude the research paper. An overview of the research limitations will be provided, along with suggestions on how these limitations could be addressed in future studies. Possible implications and recommendations for future research have also been explicated. The chapter is concluded with a summary on the most pertinent research findings.

7.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The emphasis of qualitative research is placed on the quality of the interviews and not on the quantity of the participants (Flick, 2009). As such, as a qualitative study, the number of participants included was small. While the research findings may resonate with many, it is recognised that the research findings cannot be generalised to the universe of Black adults who have resided in kinship care within the South African context.

The intent of the research was to focus on the influence of kinship care, with specific emphasis on the adolescent life stage. However, the recruitment process indicated that individuals residing in kinship care are likely to have been placed in kinship care during infancy. It was consequently difficult to evaluate the influence of kinship care solely on the adolescent life stage. Thus, the cumulative influence of kinship care during the earlier life stages could not be disregarded.

The researcher served as the primary data collection tool as well as the primary analysis tool. Irrespective of the researcher's application of reflexivity, the likelihood of the researcher's subjective influence cannot be disregarded (Daley, 2010). The research may therefore have benefited from further triangulation in the form of a second researcher. Adding to this, it may

be beneficial for future research to apply a mixed methodology approach. This approach could provide a further opportunity to understand psychosocial wellbeing, as well as measure the construct of psychosocial wellbeing.

The integrated conceptual framework, as conceptualised and proposed by the researcher is likely to benefit from an external appraisal by peers. This process may facilitate the validation and possible efficiency of the framework within the South African milieu.

It is imperative to recognise that none of the participants were placed in kinship care based on abuse, negligence or parental involvement in illegal activities. This differs from the reasons provided in several international studies (See Gibson & Singh, 2010; Gleeson et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2016; Maaskant, et al., 2016). Thus, many of the participants included in the aforementioned studies have had unfavourable or even traumatic experiences within their parental relationships prior to kinship care (Maaskant, et al., 2016). It is surmised that these initial parent-child relationships would have been marked by insecurity, which is likely to have influenced the findings with regards to their wellbeing. This research study therefore excludes individuals who may have been subject to overt abuse, although the concept of neglect is debatable across participant experiences. An attempt was made to access individuals who were exposed to possible forms of parental abuse or neglect, but this proved unsuccessful. The latter is likely to indicate that individuals exposed to more unfavourable life circumstances may be more difficult to access or more likely to have been placed in formal living arrangements.

The researcher attempted to specifically recruit male participants when an evident gender skew amongst the participants became evident. This proved to be a difficult process since male participants appeared less willing to participate. The research must therefore be reviewed by taking the gender ratio into consideration. The gendered discourse with regards to the need for a maternal attachment figure may have been driven by the largely female sample.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The participants' narratives conveyed the complexity of their kinship care experiences, which extends beyond the dynamics representative of the kinship care context. Kinship care is not a starting point, but an implication of broader macrosystemic structures that permeates its effects across the various systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; 2004). The recruitment criteria of the study were broad, thereby providing a comprehensive view of the possible variables influencing the experience of kinship care. Given the multiplicity of variables that influence kinship care, it may be beneficial for future research to limit the variable set that may be included.

Most participants included in the present study were knowledgeable of their parents' location and had a degree of parental involvement throughout their childhood and adolescence. Based on the research findings parental involvement during kinship care may be regarded as a protective factor. It is therefore critical to explore frameworks that can support parental involvement to ensure that that it is sustained, and where possible, improved.

The research findings highlighted the critical role of grandparents and the extended family in the kinship care decision making processes. Whereas research on families in South Africa has placed a lot of attention on fatherhood and absent fathers, it may be argued that the area of motherhood has been neglected (Rabe & Naidoo, 2015). The current body of literature may therefore benefit from a focus on motherhood related to factors such as mothers separated from their children, female migratory labour practices, and mothers' perceptions of the influence of the extended family on kinship care practices. This research may provide insightful perspectives with regards to the aid these parents may prefer and find more accessible in terms of state support.

Two of the three male participants had significant paternal figures that were central during their childhood and adolescence. The only male participant who lacked a significant paternal figure

throughout both his childhood and adolescence noted that this was a central absence in his life and believed that it had a critical influence on his life choices. Future research would do well to explore meaning making of paternal presence and involvement amongst male research participants.

Adding to the above, there is a dearth of research available on the perspectives of parents who were raised in kinship care regarding the perpetuation of kinship care. The theme *Desired cessation of the kinship care cycle* provides a valuable perspective that may benefit from further exploration. This is particularly relevant given that not all parents holding this particular view, may have the necessary agency to mediate their parent-child relationships. Moreover, there remains a difference between selected parenting styles and inter-generationality of attachment styles (Brisch, 2011).

Socio-economic circumstances have proven to be a significant contributor to the prevalence and quality of kinship care. Literature recognises that kinship caregivers are likely to have less financial resources in relation to caregivers participating in official forms of alternative care (Beegle et al., 2010). This may be attributed to the fact that grandparents are most likely to accept the responsibility of kinship care despite being amongst the poorest of social groups (Roelen et al., 2016). Moreover, given the familial nature of these interventions these caregivers have less access to state resources. According to international studies, it is the caregivers' preference to guard against state intervention (Gleeson et al., 2009; Harnett, Dawe & Russell, 2014). Taking into consideration the scope of this study, the research did not explore how state intervention and services are understood or perceived by caregivers within the South African context. Future research may therefore do well to specifically focus on the understanding and perception of state services by both biological parents as well as kinship caregivers.

In the absence of state support, an interim measure could be to mobilise agencies, such as non-governmental organisations. These organisations may be perceived as neutral bodies and deemed more accessible in response to the needs of biological parents, kinship caregivers, children and adolescents. Research would however be required to ascertain whether these organisations are deemed more accessible and approachable by parents and kinship caregivers.

Female migratory practices continue to grow in incidence (Collinson, 2010). It is recognised that there are various vocational opportunities connected with migratory practices. One of these include migration in response to domestic occupations (Philips & James, 2014). Mothers and grandmothers employed as domestic workers often reside on the premises where they work, but are not permitted to reside on the premises with their children. A state-subsidy that remunerates employers for allowing children to reside on employers' premises may encourage a shift in employer flexibility. This recommendation is founded on the recognition of migratory labour practices as a key reason for driving kinship care (Sibanda, 2011). It is not known how this recommendation may be experienced or accepted by employers, extended families, biological parents or children. Research and analysis would therefore be required to evaluate how feasible and probable this recommendation could be.

7.4 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

To conclude, the focus of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of Black adults' accounts of their kinship care experiences and its probable influence on their psychosocial wellbeing. The intent was thus to understand the possible influence of kinship care on the way Black adults view themselves, their interpersonal engagements with others, as well as their general outlook on the world. The research findings highlighted that the foundations of the self, interpersonal engagement with others and the world are very much interconnected and inter-dependent.

Viewed separately, Black adults' perceptions of themselves appeared to be dependent on their life stage. This is not unexpected given that the integrated conceptual framework acknowledges that development occurs across an individual's lifespan. Moreover, an explication of this discourse inferred the significance of macrosystemic influences on the exosystemic realities of families, and the resultant implications on the individual's immediate settings such as the micro- and mesosystems. The integrated conceptual framework thus provided a means to view the phenomenon holistically. The approach allowed for cognisance of the influence of attachment on security and exploration, the influence of the latter on the level of trust and security, as well as internalised representations required for the psychosocial stage of identity resolution, while concurrently acknowledging the context in which these processes were taking place.

The research findings highlighted an unresolved need for attachment, although a gendered discourse was evident. Many of the participants accounts reflected the desire for a relationship with their biological mothers', while the absence of biological fathers appeared to be more readily accepted. However, the latter finding may be a consequence of the participants' gender demographics as well as the availability of social fathers. This yearning for a relationship with the biological mother persisted even in the light of mother-child conflict. The findings highlighted that parents often return when those raised in kinship care are in late adolescence or older. Given the variations in the kinship care microsystem from the parent-child microsystem, contention often arise due to conflicting identities, beliefs or value systems.

Those residing in kinship care are often exposed to a myriad of influences that results in an over-reliance on themselves. This does not only have implications in terms of independent behaviour, but also regarding an individual's capacity to allow vulnerability in other relationships. Although primary attachment relationships play a critical role in the development of self-reliance, microsystemic as well as contextual influences are also of significance. This

includes the lack of a secure attachment during childhood, the caregiver's capacity to provide physical nurturance and emotional understanding, as well as the socio-economic landscape that impacts the family and individual in terms of poverty and material deprivation.

God, Christianity and the church appeared to influence some participants in terms of their values and general approach to life. Amongst these participants, God appeared to be an important attachment figure, thus influencing their view of themselves as well as their perspectives on how to engage with others and their general outlook on the world.

A pertinent theme amongst some participants who were parents, was the determination to cease the cycle of kinship care with their own children. Moreover, many of these participants appeared to implement an over compensatory schema. In verbalising their aspirations for their own parent-child relationships, they were in many ways verbalising their own unreciprocated desires and wishes regarding love, nurturance and caretaking by their biological parents or other caregivers, whilst growing up.

In conclusion, the application of an integrated conceptual framework permitted a view that recognised that the developing individual cannot be understood without acknowledging broader macrosystemic factors influencing families and individuals. In the aim of encouraging improved psychosocial wellbeing, change cannot merely be stimulated on a family or individual level, but emphasis is required on the implications of macrosystemic forces. The perpetual influence of the political and socio-economic landscape of South Africa on the dissolution of family therefore compels an urgency to review policies and structures that can provide greater support to biological parents, kinship caregivers, children and adolescents.

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systems scientist

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APPENDIX A – ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/16/005 IH

PROJECT TITLE:

The self-reported accounts of young Black adults of their adolescent kinship care experiences and its probable account on their current psychosocial wellbeing.

INVESTIGATORS

Goldschmidt Lynne

DEPARTMENT

Psychology

DATE CONSIDERED

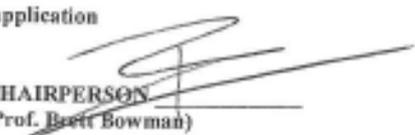
31/05/16

DECISION OF COMMITTEE*

Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 31 May 2016


CHAIRPERSON
(Prof. Brett Bowman)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Daleen Alexander
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2018

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (ON CAMPUS)



School of human and community
development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa,*

Tel: (011) 717-4500

Fax: (011) 717-4559

Dear Participant,

My name is Lynne Goldschmidt. I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. The purpose of the research is to explore the current psychosocial wellbeing of young Black adults who were raised in kinship care during their adolescence. This would require reflecting on a period of your life, between the ages of twelve and eighteen, during which your biological parents were not your primary caregivers and during which you resided with other family members.

Participation in the study will require you to partake in an individual interview. The duration of the interview is approximately 50 to 60 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place of your convenience. During the interview, you will be asked to recollect experiences from your adolescence and asked to reflect on how these experiences may have contributed to the manner in which you view yourself, interact with others and the world in general.

With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. Recordings and transcripts will be saved in a password protected laptop and will only be accessed by my research supervisor and I. Both the recordings and transcripts will be destroyed approximately six years post the research. Participation in the study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw, without penalty, at any time should you no longer wish to participate. You will in no way be advantaged or disadvantaged by choosing to participate or not participate in this study. During the interview process, you need not answer any questions you consider to be too personal in nature.

Your responses in the interview are confidential and your identity will at no point be evident in the research report. Any direct quotes will be reported in a manner that ensures that it cannot

be linked to a particular participant. A one-page summary may be provided, which will provide an overview of the trends found in the study.

In the unlikely event that the interview unearths recollections that you would like to discuss further, you may seek counselling at the Counselling Careers and Development Unit (CCDU) situated on the University of Witwatersrand's campus. The service will be made available to you at no charge and the contact details are provided at the end of this letter.

Kind Regards,

Lynne Goldschmidt

Student Psychologist

Tel: 082 307 5174

Email: goldschmidtlynne@gmail.com

Dr. Daleen Alexander

Research Supervisor

Tel: 011 717 4526

Email: Dinah.alexander@wits.ac.za

Counselling Centre: Counselling Careers and Development Unit

Tel: 011 717 9140

APPENDIX C – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (OFF CAMPUS)



School of human and community development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa,*

*Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax:
(011) 717-4559*

Dear Participant,

My name is Lynne Goldschmidt. I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. The purpose of the research is to explore the current psychosocial wellbeing of Black adults who were raised in kinship care during their adolescence. The term Black is used inclusively and refers to those who consider themselves Black, Coloured or Indian.

Participation in the study will require you to partake in an individual interview. The duration of the interview is approximately 50 to 60 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place of your convenience. During the interview, you will be asked to recollect experiences from your adolescence and asked to reflect on how these experiences may have contributed to the manner in which you view yourself, interact with others and the world in general.

With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. Recordings and transcripts will be saved in a password protected laptop and will only be accessed by my research supervisor and I. Both the recordings and transcripts will be destroyed approximately six years post the research. Participation in the study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw, without penalty, at any time should you no longer wish to participate. You will in no way be advantaged or disadvantaged by choosing to participate or not participate in this study. During the interview process, you need not answer any questions you consider to be too personal in nature.

Your responses in the interview are confidential and your identity will at no point be evident in the research report. Any direct quotes will be sanitised prior to being included in the research report. A one-page summary may be provided, which will provide an overview of the trends found in the study.

In the unlikely event that the interview unearths recollections that you would like to discuss further, you may seek counselling at the Emthonjeni Centre situated on the University of Witwatersrand's campus. The service will be made available to you at no charge and the contact details are provided at the end of this letter.

Kind Regards,

Lynne Goldschmidt

Student Psychologist

Tel: 082 307 5174

Email: goldschmidtlynne@gmail.com

Dr. Daleen Alexander

Research Supervisor

Email: Dinah.alexander@wits.ac.za

Counselling Centre: Emthonjeni Centre (EC)

Tel: (011) 717 4513

APPENDIX D – CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEW



School of human and community
development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa,*

Tel: (011) 717-4500

Fax: (011) 717-4559

I,,
consent to being individually interviewed by Lynne Goldschmidt.

I understand the following conditions:

- The duration of the interview is approximately 50 to 60 minutes
- My participation in this study is completely voluntary
- I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way by agreeing to participate
- I may withdraw my participation at any time
- I need not answer any questions I consider to be too personal
- The interview will be treated as confidential
- Any direct quotes will be will be reported in a manner that ensures that it cannot be linked to a particular participant
- No identifying information will be included in the research report

Signature

Date:

.....

.....

APPENDIX E – CONSENT FORM: AUDIO RECORDING



School of human and community
development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa,*

Tel: (011) 717-4500

Fax: (011) 717-4559

I,,

hereby provide consent for my interview with Lynne Goldschmidt to be audio-recorded.

I understand the following conditions:

- The interview will be treated as confidential
- The purpose of the recording is to ensure that my experiences are accurately captured
- The recording will be saved on a password protected laptop
- Transcripts of the recordings will be stored in a locked cupboard on the university campus
- The recordings and transcripts may be accessed by both the researcher and the research supervisor
- The recordings and transcripts will be destroyed approximately six years post the research

Signature

Date:

.....

.....

APPENDIX F – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



School of human and community
development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa,*

Tel: (011) 717-4500

Fax: (011) 717-4559

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. I'm going to be interviewing you about your experiences during adolescence, and how those experiences may have contributed to the manner in which you view yourself, interact with others and the world in general.

This interview often takes between 50 and 60 minutes.

Section A: Biographical Information

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Gender: (Will not be asked directly)

How would you describe yourself in terms of ethnicity?

Please confirm whether you are able to recollect your adolescent experiences in kinship care?
(Yes/No)

Section B: Social context during adolescence

Q1. Can you start by telling me a little about your life during your adolescence?

Q1.1. Who were your caregiver(s) during adolescence?

Q1.2. Can you recall any experiences whilst residing with your caregivers that were particularly significant, whether positive or negative?

- Q1.3. Why do think these incidents transpired in that manner?
- Q2. Tell me more about other people present during your adolescence and how you experienced their interactions towards you
- Q3. How often, if at all, did you see your biological parents?
- Q3.1. How did you feel during these interactions with them?
- Q3.2. How did you feel after these interactions with them?

Section C: Social context as an adult

I would now like us to focus on the current realities of your world.

- Q4. Are you currently staying on your own or with others?
- Q5. What are your current interactions with your caregiver(s)?
- Q5.1. Have there been any recent significant experiences that you would define as either positive or negative?
- Q6. Do you think your relationship with your caregiver(s) have changed over the years?
- Q6.1. In which way do you think your relationship may have changed?

Section D: Psychosocial wellbeing as an adult

- Q7. How do you think your adolescent experiences has shaped who you are today?
- Q7.1. How do you think it could have been different (better/worse)?
- Q8. How would you describe your general attitude towards yourself?
- Q9. How satisfied do you currently feel with your life overall?
- Q9.1. How do you think it could have been different (better/worse)?
- Q10. How satisfied do you currently feel with what you have achieved in life thus far?
- Q10.1. Going forward, how would you like things to be different?

Section E: Closing

- Q11. Taking into consideration everything we have discussed today; do you have anything that you would like to add?