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# To wake up every morning and see that life is okay...": the everyday experiences of women who are grant recipients in South Africa

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# “To wake up every morning and see that life is okay...”: the everyday experiences of women who are grant recipients in South Africa




A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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## Abstract

In South Africa, social security grants are one way of redistributing the country's wealth to the "legally" marginalized groups, the majority of whom are black people. Grants have been made available to improve the recipients' precarious economic situations and reduce hunger in poverty-stricken homes. With democracy, there was hope that black people would be in a better social and financial standing. However, political liberation did not mean better opportunities for many, and South Africa's democratization only saw a small percentage of black people escape the hands of poverty (Bahre, 2011). This research report addresses the caregivers' experiences[1] of the Child Support and Old Person's grant recipients. It focuses very intimately on the participants' personal lives while also drawing from my perspective of being raised by a woman who was a grant recipient herself, my grandmother. The question explored is "How have the caregivers of the grant recipients navigated their everyday lives, and how do they perceive their experiences?" There have been numerous nuanced outcomes from the interviews: grant recipients report being sustained by the grant funds while expressing that the funds cannot cover the beneficiaries'[2] basic needs. Some participants said that they are entitled to the states' funds, while others feel that the grants are given as a gift from the state.

Furthermore, the research report argues that social support grants enter and circulate within existing and gendered networks of care and reciprocity. An analysis of their impact cannot solely focus on the beneficiaries when the rest of the family needs financial assistance. There needs to be more understanding of the recipient's circumstances as income poverty is not the primary type of unfreedom recipients experience. I flesh out my argument in chapters that focus on; the network of the


[1] The caregivers are the mothers and grandmothers of the grant beneficiaries.
[2] The beneficiaries or recipients are the children and not the mothers, which is why I refer to the mothers at the beneficiaries' caregivers.

intergenerational relations that women have created, the entitlement that citizens have to these funds, and state violence.

## Acknowledgements

This research was inspired by the shared moments with my late grandmother, Mma, Elizabeth Maphelela.

My late grandparents, Mapula Welhemina Letlalo (robala ka khutso Mokwena) and Albert Mahlodi Letlalo (robala ka khutso Kolobe). Their unwavering support and belief in my dreams continued to push me through the most challenging days of producing this thesis, especially because I lost them one after the other in 2020. I thought I would not have the strength to finish, but each day that I broke down, I could hear my grandfather's voice and the words he spoke upon my life when I was a teenager, "ngoana wa ka, o bale di buka tsa gago, go fitlhelela ma felelong".

Little did I know that the end he was talking about was the one wherein he would no longer be able to utter these words to my face. I had hoped that they would hold my hands in front of the Great Hall again like they did in 2017 after my first graduation.

My most heartfelt gratitude goes to my deeply kind, supportive teacher and supervisor, Dr Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon. Without his guidance, I do not imagine that I would have completed the vision I had in my mind. Your patience and constant recognition and awareness of my humanity throughout this process kept me sane.

Above all else, I thank God for giving me the strength to do this work. His word, Psalm 35 and Psalm 91, kept me moving.

# Dedication

This is for you, my beautiful niece, Omolemo Theto Maphelela. I finally decided to do a Master's Degree after learning that you will be joining us here on earth.

## Thobela: Mathomo[3]

When COVID-19 started spreading in South Africa, the government enforced hard lockdowns, which meant we were aggressively required to change our ways of living. The hard lockdowns left most of the South African population stuck between death and death. Staying at home for many families has meant suffering from the hunger "pandemic", and going outside has meant being killed by the COVID-19. The poor people felt the brunt of the hard lockdowns, and the lockdowns destabilised their lives. This research report explores the impacts of how the grant recipients perceived the changes made by the state when the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns started in March 2020, however, this is not the primary focus. The research mainly focuses on the long-term experience of grant recipients before, during, and what may be post-COVID-19. In it, I seek to understand how state care through the Child Support Grant (hereon, CSG) and the Old Person's grant (hereon OPG) has been received and interpreted by its beneficiaries before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants were put in place to improve recipients' precarious economic situations and reduce hunger in poverty-stricken homes. However, when South Africa transitioned to becoming a democratic country, social ills were exacerbated, and liberation did not mean better opportunities for many black people. Few black South Africans could escape the hands of poverty after South Africa's democratisation (Bahre, 2011), as work, for most black South Africans became even more precarious (Kenny, 2007). African people's work was not stable in apartheid South Africa, and the "double-transition" of democracy and liberalisation of the economy further compromised the South African working-class (Webster and Adler, 1999).

[3] Introduction. I write the headings in Sepedi, as this has helped me better understand my work in the free-writing process, and I have decided to keep the headings in Sepedi in my final research report as a statement of how it is possible to write in my native language. Though done minimally, I do hope to do more writing in ways that my people can relate to me from the beginning. Thobela means to humble oneself and it is used as a greeting amongst the Pedi people and mathomo means the beginning.

The Department of Social Development (hereon DSD) manage the grants, and they are made available through the South African Social Security Agency (hereon SASSA). In South Africa, grants beneficiaries increased by 14.1 million since 1994, moving up to 17 million by 2017, and 12 million of the 17 million were CSG beneficiaries (Mackett, 2020). Grants like the CSG are available to people who earn less than R4000 a month if they raise the child alone and R8000 combined if the parents stay together or if the caregivers stay with a partner (Department of Western Cape, 2020). The number of CSG recipients significantly increased from a baseline of below 1 per cent in the 1990s to over 70 per cent in 2008 (Mackett, 2020). The high percentage of CSG recipients not only shows the high rate of the vulnerability of South African children, but it tells a story about the precarity of the working-class people in post-apartheid South Africa. It reflects on the number of caregivers or parents who form part of the working class.

This precarity of working-class South Africans was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and was reflected in state policy. President Ramaphosa (2020) announced that there would be an increase of R300 for the CSG as of May 2020 but then later changed to giving caregivers an amount of R500 from June 2020 (SA Presidency, 2020). However, unlike before, when the grant followed the child, it was given to caregivers of CSG beneficiaries without considering the number of children in each household. All other grants were increased by R250 as of May for the same duration as the CSG (SA Presidency, 2020).

In this project, I look into the everyday lives of grant recipients taking care of CSG beneficiaries. The everyday includes, but is not limited to, the challenges, coping mechanisms, the joys and sorrows families share as they live through each month, and the local networks of support they mobilise. The everyday also includes the desire to participate in what has become celebratory social norms, such as buying Christmas clothes for the children. Ries (2002) has looked at the everyday as journeys starting today and as a continuation from the past, from an individual's familial history. It is not a stagnant or

fixed part of our social life. Therefore, it needs to be understood from familial and social class perspectives and the country's history (in this case South Africa) (Ries, 2002).

The everyday life is not detached from the abovementioned factors. I look into whether or not the experiences of grants are shaped by caregivers' employment status and how their efforts to make ends meet work to help them ration the grants money to live through each month. I look at what had governed their decision-making when spending the grant money and how it had or had not improved their financial situations in some instances. The grant money was for the entire household, and there was no way of separating it from the household income. Finally, I explore their perceptions of state care, how they understood the purpose of the grants and the changes during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Di putsisho tsa dinyakishisho[4]:

Main Research Question:

How have the grant recipients, or their caregivers, navigated their everyday lives, and how do they perceive their experiences?

Sub-questions:

How do child support grant beneficiaries' caregivers ration the money they receive on behalf of their children?

How are grants circulated and interpreted within existing gendered networks of care?

How do grants reshape perceptions of the state?

[4] Research Questions

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the everyday lives of grant recipients in South Africa, and how have they perceived these changes?

I chose to look into state care through grants for numerous reasons, and I will tell a story about my personal lived experience to introduce some of the dynamics of care that I will explore in this report.

## Modende wa Mma[5]:

When I was growing up in the first decade of the new millennium, in what seemed to be a fresh start for my family and neighbours as the government was building RDP houses for us and my grandmother, may God rest her soul, was receiving *chelete ya modende*[6]. After having washed our eyes and brushed our teeth, we were excited about the events to follow. While we all sat around Mma[7], I rushed through my favourite breakfast, *motepa wa mabele, ting*.[8] For Potego, Mothabeleng, Keoarabile, Lethabo, and I, this was our favourite day. We would walk down to the community hall to stand with Mma in the queue, for her to receive chelete ya modende (on school holidays). Later, on she would gift us all freshly baked and uncut white bread from Spar when we got back home from school. She also liked adding R5 coins to each of our loaves of bread. Excited as ever, we knew that Mma had received her grant money on that day, and we would go out of the house during the week with her to buy a few things for the house.

I was the youngest girl, and that came with the perks of being pushed on the wheelbarrow we would use for the food we would buy because it was pretty far, and plastics would not help us carry what we were going to buy. When we got to the Supermarket, we would get 10 kilograms of sugar, Canderal sweetener for Mma, three live chickens, two 5 litre bottles of Oros juice, and a 25-kilogram sack of

[5] We refer to the grant money as Modende.
[6] Grant money
[7] We referred to our grandmother as Mma, meaning mother, as my grandmother felt that the white people had changed so much about us that we no longer called our mother's mothers, our mothers. She refused to be called "Koko" which means grandmother.
[8] Fermented soft porridge made from sorghum meal.

White Star maize meal. Mma was very particular about which maize meal we needed to buy because of the way we cook the maize in Lebowa (Limpopo); it is supposed to be soft and smooth. It was usually the happiest day for the five of us because we only got to do this once a month[9], and it would be on this day that we would add money to our piggy tins.

So, as I was growing up, reading and hearing about SASSA grants and how inappropriately they were being used was quite frustrating because I saw how my grandmother (who once made and sold traditional beer in our neighbourhood until her body could no longer suffer through standing for long hours due to an injury she got while farming) used her SASSA money to make sure that we, her grandchildren, were happy and taken care of. This personal narrative has motivated this research as I have first-hand experience of how grants take on complex meanings within the families of recipients and that the voices of grant recipients are frequently absent in media representations about them.

## Mathata a di nyakishisho[10]:

In recent years, the media and many South Africans have stigmatised women receiving childcare grants for allegedly misusing their grant money (Khosa and Kaseke, 2017)[11]. On the 17th of April 2021, SASSA 'reminded' Child Support grant caregivers of how they are violating the children's rights by not using the money solely on the child's needs (South African Government News Agency, 2021). The stigma is not extended to other beneficiaries of the grants, and this has made me question what constituted "misusing" the funds? Efforts to join food stokvels and "ho hodisana"[12] contribute to the

[9] This depended on whether it was school holidays or not. However, if Mma got her money during the week we would find the fresh bread waiting for us at home, thereafter we would go to the Supermarket on the Friday after school. We enjoyed this more on school holidays as we would have a full day of being out with Mma.
[10] Research Problem
[11] In Khosa and Kaseke's work, they did research in Limpopo as a result of the people claiming that the child support grants are being misused. They had found that yes, in some cases, women have been reckless in using the grant money as they would gamble, buy alcohol and in other cases buy their personal needs.
[12] Ho hodisana is like a stokvel. A group of people agree to pay one of the group members a specific amount from each of them. It usually boosts people every 3 months depending on the groups agreement.

child's needs. Still, according to Khosa and Kaseke's research findings, these efforts are seen by society as misusing the funds (2017).

## Go baneng? [13]:

Race has been one of the significant factors for the disproportionate poverty levels in South Africa and has been a legacy of apartheid South Africa. When social assistance was established in 1913 under the Children's Protection Act, it was not made available to Africans in the bantustans. Though made available to Africans in "urban" areas, they were denied access to the grants (Bahre, 2011). In 1928 the Old Age Pensions Act was established, but it was only made available to Africans in 1944, and Africans received an amount that was five times less than that of the whites (Bahre, 2011). Today the social assistance amounts are appalling. They make caring for the beneficiaries even more difficult as there is an assumption by the South African government that there is a form of income. But that income is not enough to help a caregiver and the dependent on a month-to-month basis, especially in a country where unemployment is high. Grant funds are, in many households, the only form of income.

When the African National Congress (ANC) party came into power, they made decisions that directly affected the working class, most of whom are black South Africans. The ANC led government adopted neo-liberal policies, and state institutions were privatised (Webster and Adler, 1998). By adopting neo-liberal policies, the ANC compromised labour, which put black South Africans in a disempowering position. The neo-liberal policies did not speak to the majority of the people of the country. As a result, there was an engagement with a contradictory ideology to expand social welfare in a country that had liberalized its economy (Scully, 2019; Ferguson, 2015). The liberalization of the South African economy brought about the rise of informal work and unemployment (Scully, 2019).

[13] Rationale

Literature about grants in South Africa focuses more on the type of impact grants have on the recipients and seek to determine whether they alleviate poverty or not (Mackett, 2020; Goldblatt, 2005). Ferguson (2015) has documented that the DSD and SASSA claim that the grants have successfully reduced poverty. My research will, in contrast, explores how care is viewed by the recipients and not whether grants have had a positive or negative impact on the beneficiaries. My research adds to the existing literature by focusing on the everyday lives of the beneficiaries. I look into how the beneficiaries survive each day using these grants and the relationships established in communities to form tight knits of care.

CSG recipients receive less than half of what other grant recipients receive (Bohler-Muller, 2017; Case, Hosegood and Lund, 2006). With many relying on unstable work for an income, the announcement of grant increments gave recipients hope, and that was taken when the government announced how increments would work. For the CSG, the increment no longer followed the child but the caregiver. Caregivers were to receive an amount of R500, which meant that an additional R500 was expected to feed a variable number of children in recipients' households (Webb and Vally, 2020), meaning that a person with three children would get the same amount as someone with one child. This report aims to contribute to a better understanding of the long-term dynamic systems of the care of people on Child Support and Old Person's grant. It provides an insight into the needs of grant beneficiaries and how the grant caregivers use the money within their households. When revisions are made to the grants, the DSD should consider whether caregivers are employed or unemployed, especially with the high unemployment rate in South Africa.

## Bangwadi ba re eng ka di nyakishisho tje ki? [14]:

Grants and precarity in post-apartheid South Africa

[14] Literature Review

Literature shows that most of the grant beneficiaries are black South Africans and that over 70% of the recipients are those on the CSG (Mackett, 2020). Literature has also focused on how grants are used as a poverty reduction instrument in South Africa (Patel, 2012). Though there have been different shifts in the growing literature on grants, much of the literature has focused heavily on grants' impact on the lives of female-headed households in rural areas of South Africa (Satumba, Bayat and Mohamed, 2017). There has been little literature analysing how unemployment and precarious work impact the lives of grant beneficiaries and their families. Vally (2016) has written work that has contributed to the shift in focus on grants in South Africa. Vally's work focuses on the insecurities that have been created by the national grant systems being privatized in 2012 and how multiple insecurities were created by this. Following this and from the research itself, it seems pretty clear their lives remain precarious.

The literature used will help my research make the connections between the history of labour and poor black South Africans. It will focus on how that relationship has not seen its end post the apartheid era. The precarity in the labour of the grant recipients in South Africa should make us question whether grant recipients use the funds as a top-up or if the grants are the only source of household income for the families. Vally's (2016) findings ascertain that the grants are the only source of income in many of the grant receiver's households. Barchiesi (2011) has also shared the same findings as Vally and has further questioned how there is no existing support system for those who have low paying, unstable wage work and those who are in a permanent state of seeking decent work.

White control of the economy and capital persists in the post-apartheid era (Webster, 2019). Wolpe (1988) in the apartheid era and Mackett (2020) in the post-apartheid era have reflected how several black people are categorised as unskilled workers concluding that there is a small and struggling petite-bourgeoisie. Southall (2014) has argued that a black middle class exists not primarily through ownership of the means of production like their white counterparts but through a connection to the ANC. The black middle class exists through what Southall (2014) refers to as 'state managers', those

in high paying positions in corporate positions and the petty-bourgeois, the civil workers. However, this is a small fraction of the black society.

Post-colonial South Africa continues to be violent in its systems. The violence is seen in how grants and recipients continue to experience objectification when interacting with government officials (cf. Mbembe, 2001). We live in what von Holdt (2013) terms a 'violent democracy', which can be attributed to the widening insecurities experienced by poor South Africans. The idea of a better life for all, when South Africa transitioned from the apartheid era to post-apartheid South Africa, was only an idea as the black working-class people did not get to experience the idea of a "better life for all". The black petite-bourgeois continue to secure a better living for themselves and not for all (cf. Fanon, (2008 [1952]), most of whom are government officials. The post-apartheid South African government continues to perpetuate the creation of an "Other" in how they continue to give the least to poor black people in the country (Mbembe, 2001). Such a system has its functionality rooted in oppression through cheap labour and has further contributed to the poverty rate and the black working class's precarious economy, which is grounded in undignified work that is not decent (Barchiesi, 2011). The high dependence on grants has been partly due to how post-apartheid's leadership continued to compromise labour and continued with systems they did not understand.

Post-colonial South Africa continues to mimic the apartheid state and systems to alleviate poverty and continually fails the black community. In the apartheid era, black people were included in grants on paper but were, in reality, denied access to these availed grants (Bahre, 2011). Today, black people are given close to nothing by a government that seeks to alleviate poverty by including the poor in the economy and creating economic redistribution through grants (Webster, 2019; Bhabha, 1994; Mbembe, 2001).

Thabethe and Usen (2012) showed the dire situations in most African communities since the HIV/Aids pandemic: many children had been orphaned. As a result, care had been provided to the children by

their extended kin. Though South Africa was doing better than Nigeria as a developmental welfare state, Nigeria did not categorise itself as a developmental welfare state (Thabethe and Usen, 2012; Hassim, 2006). Policy-wise, South Africa had promised to do more, and the living conditions of the poverty-ridden families living in South Africa may not have been seen for what they indeed were. Therefore, it is fair to say that the state underestimated the genuine efforts needed to alleviate poverty in the country beyond a vision of what a democratic South Africa needed to look like.

Webster (2019) makes a critical point relevant to this discussion:

"White people are more likely to find work. And once they do, they also earn better. Between 2011 and 2015, a white person earned R24 646 per month on average, more than three times the R6 899 of their black counterparts. Female workers earned around 30% less than male workers during the same period, and workers in the countryside earned less than half of what urban workers did." (Webster, 2019).

Webster's information shows the harsh conditions of those who live in post-colonial South African townships, villages, and essentially those of black South Africans. Women possibly earn R4832 a month, if not less, and since the minimum wage law took effect on 1 Jan 2019, the monthly income stood at R3500, though many continue getting lower than the minimum wage (Omarjee, 2019). The demand for the minimum wage law to be put into effect by the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) suggests a struggle with cheap labour in South Africa.

The CSG has mainly aimed at alleviating the hardships of children who are beneficiaries. Assistance has been provided by paying out R445 to CSG beneficiaries, children 18 years and below (South African Government, 2014) – an amount that all caregivers who qualify receive regardless of their age. Grants are meant to help bridge the gap of caring for a child and are created to not exist as a substitute for income. However, those who regulate the grants have not looked at households that do not have an

income or have unstable work, and neither has the efforts to alleviate child poverty been thought of nor of how the child would be cared for beyond the age of 18 (Goldblatt, 2001).

The history of exclusion of the African and Coloured children not having access to the grant funds that could have reduced child poverty was not considered when grants were made available to all South African (Bahre, 2011); instead, the focus by the DSD and SASSA officials shifts to the possibilities of how the caregiver may be misusing the money (South African Government News Agency, 2021). Hassim (2018) has written on the South African society's oppressive ideas about women having children to access grant money. Before her, Goldblatt (2001) also critiqued how women in South Africa can access grant money only through their children. Women cannot possibly be having children to access R445, which does not begin to cover the costs for their children. The increase in numbers is not due to women having many children to get access to state funds but is partly an indication of the high poverty rate in post-colonial South Africa. It is an indication of the discriminatory history of this country. The increase over the years has also been because of the information about the access to social assistance funds being cumbrous and numerous caregivers, especially grandmothers, not being able to read (Goldblatt, 2006). Those who do have access to the information have had to deal with an incommodious process due to ill-trained social assistance staff and some officials' sexually offensive behaviour (Goldblatt, 2005).

Caregivers of child support grants have mainly been women, partly because of the sexual labour division looking to women as nurturers or caregivers (Goldblatt, 2009). Women have greatly been affected by the socio-economic challenges (Thabethe and Usen, 2012) that have come with the passing years of a democratic South Africa, more than men have been. Thus, post-colonial South Africa has exposed how women have been vulnerable and in a state of poverty. This is based on the number of women who are caregivers of the CSG beneficiaries in the country compared to men across the CSG and OPG (Goldblatt, 2009).

In reconstructing and reorganising the state institutions and eradicating racialisation that existed and continues to exist within the state institutions, the post-apartheid government has not seen gender and race as intersectional issues (Hassim, 2019; Goldblatt 2005). The post-apartheid government viewed the partial elimination of racial discrimination as a victory for all, regardless of gender. With the Constitution emphasising non-sexism and gender equality, the new government did not do more than having it written as a law to tackle the disease of gender inequality and racial discrimination within the new South Africa. The government understanding and acknowledging that gender and race intersect will help begin a conversation that will lead to an understanding that we need to move beyond having policies that are not executed to help care for the South African population.

The abovementioned authors have shown how the struggles of black people are stratified under the umbrella of grants. Following these discussions, the thesis will argue that grants and care need to be looked at through a different lens: that of the everyday experiences of claimants of the grants. Considering the government's efforts to see whether there is an understanding of what it means to assist those in need, especially now, during the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is critically important for this project to examine the concept of care.

## Re kwishisha tlhokomelo bjang [15]?

In an attempt to give an account about the self, Butler (2001) explores how the self exists to the Other, an existence that comes with questions about oneself and one that problematises the temporality of the self and the Other. I will use her theory of how one cannot live life in isolation and how this links to understanding care. My conceptualisation is informed by the African Proverb of "Motho ke motho ka batho", which means you are because I am; the "I" cannot exist without the "you". Butler (2001) takes us through the relation between the "I" and the "you" by making us aware of the empathy of individual

[15] Conceptualisation of care

experiences that can exist between the two. The relation through empathy may not forge a "we" existence, but it creates solidarity for human life. The created normality of the black people's struggles has created a wounded attachment to the black society (Brown, 1993); people in society[16] have become desensitised to these struggles.

This research will be guided by concepts of care that leans on the everyday. Authors such as Hobort and Kneese (2020) have recently conceptualised care as a radical term that cannot be separated from how inequality operates and navigates itself through systems of power and those who hold it together. Care exposes itself through the cracks of neglect of different state institutions, through which the vulnerable continually fall whenever there is a hiccup in the body of the state. The ideas of what care is and is not have helped me understand how care can be applied to the present context of grants in South Africa.

Han (2012) conceptualises care as actively waiting, an idea connected to hope – hoping that things will change for the better (Han, 2012, cf Vally 2016). Looking at poverty and how it has captured exchange support, care operates through "borrowing, selling, buying, listening, or visiting" their kin or neighbours (Han 2012, 38). Han (2012) expresses how kin and neighbours ally their "active waiting" care through solidarity developed by small communities through these gestures. In her study of Chile, the idea of care lends an eye to intimate domestic issues of neighbours and kin, the way these neighbours and kin defined care as temporary, circulating through material resources, and as social support (Han, 2012). Though temporary, it was constant, and individuals in a community knew that they could always count on one another.

[16] The society I am referring to is not limited only to South Africa, when it comes to how desensitised people have become of the struggles that black people live through. It has become a normal thing to look and move on, and this does not mean that there are not people trying to do things here and there but that is currently not my focus, and I do not want to water down these experiences because of the very few people who not only empathize but who actually help in finding solutions.

The above formulations fit well the conditions of post-apartheid South Africa. These forms of solidarity in economically precarious communities have, through wage work, exposed the gap between the state and its people. In the state's attempt to repay the social debt caused by the apartheid regime, the state has not allowed itself through its poverty programs or development programs to understand the type of solidarity needed with different communities to overcome and bridge the gap of this social debt.

In exploring state care through grants, this research used two ways to view care: how it is recognised and understood by society and, secondly, how the state values it. State care through grants has been based mainly on poverty (Patel and Hochfeld, 2011). In so doing, it dismisses the idea of poverty being an issue of income and being a multifaceted lived experience. The recipients of grants are given these grants with the assumption that it is supplementing a form of income, a stable one. The state neglects instances wherein wage work, which is in many ways unstable work (Standing, 2011). Illness can disrupt a worker's monthly wage, even if it does not result in them losing work.

Society often sees care as a feeling that cannot be discussed intimately when discussing politics or even looking into social ills. Yet care provides us with a lens to see its potential to aid our thinking and views on disadvantaged people. I have used it to aid my research on grants in South Africa, their functionalities, and the attitude with which solidarity is preserving life and how it is positioned in relation to welfare in South Africa, and carried out in the fight against the hands choking disadvantaged. I have explored how this solidarity is used to reduce the precarious positionality of the disadvantaged in society (c.f. Hobart and Reese, 2020) in related (family and friends) as well as unrelated (state) relations to the grant recipients.

## Ke di re le di nyakishisho ka mogwa oo[17]:

[17] Methodology

I sought to understand how grant recipients secured food for their families and how they rationed the grant income to survive through this period. For the recipients who received food parcels, I looked at how they sustained themselves using what they had received and the process of getting these parcels. Using a qualitative approach enabled me to be explorative as I engage in interviews about their everyday lives. Their lenses helped me search for meaning in the participant's lived experiences as a grant recipient world (Welman, Kruger and Mitchel, 2008). This approach concerns textual "rich data", giving me the platform to capture raw and meaningful data.

Some authors have described the qualitative research approach as associated with "soft data", meaning that the data is "in the form of impressions, words, sentences, photos and symbols" (Neuman 2006, 150). Using the qualitative approach online through WhatsApp voice notes was not without its challenges and frustrations of doing such sensitive research using a very casual platform instead of perhaps using phone calls or Zoom. I heavily relied on my ability to speak a lot, and often I imagined myself speaking to someone I knew and had not seen in a long time for me to maintain a healthy conversation online. However, this came at the cost of not observing their body language and earning the participants trust from them using their senses, and not being able to observe my body language.

I needed to develop new ways of ensuring that I maintained ethical and safe spaces through online interviews for the participants (Hine, 2005), like being in a room by myself and having them hear that I am by myself. As I write about how I made sure, with my supervisor's guidance, that this project continued even through months of being stuck, I will also reflect on my personal journey of this project. Different aspects of the research will be discussed thematically and through a narrative analysis of the data collected.

I had not imagined that I would need to do research the way I had to do it, via WhatsApp and through voice notes that took longer than the forty-five-minute interviews I had hoped to have. Physical contact with the participants would have put our lives at risk, and it would be unethical for me to force them

to meet in person, as the virus is deadly. Meeting in person would have meant putting our lives at high risk of contracting the virus. Conducting research this way was not without its challenges. A single interview took two hours with voice notes amounting to forty-seven and fifty minutes. As I listened to my voice notes and, in turn listening to the participant's voice notes for me to transcribe, I realised that it was the process of having to record a voice note and sending it. Then the participant listening to it, recording their response for me to listen to, which took time. At that moment, I realised that I had underestimated how having a conversation where listening happens simultaneously saves time for the people engaging in that conversation.

The interviews were the least of my problems. It was finding participants that proved challenging. Initially, my plan was to look through the relevant posts and comments section of the posts published by the DSD and SASSA News Pages to identify, select, and negotiate to chat with the potential participants via Messenger. Finding people who were keen to be a part of my research project through the platform mentioned above, in the way I had hoped to, did not work well. Some people, though clearly stated that I was an MA student at the Wits University and that I was not associated with SASSA or the DSD, would see me as someone they could make requests or ask for clarity on the grant delays and time overlaps of the grants. Instead, what worked better was the snowballing method (Salkind, 2018).

The snowballing method also took longer. As there were months, I was frustrated because I would not find participants. It was always in a set of threes, and only one or two would stick to the plan. I emphasised that should they no longer want to be a part of the project, they should let me know. However, I would have to ask after participants had postponed the interview three times if they were still interested in participating in the project. It would only be then that they would be honest about no longer being interested in being a part of the project. It was frustrating, and I felt overwhelmed because nothing was going according to plan. I had ended up needing to repost my request to find people on

CSG several times. Through that, I would get three or four people from friends of friends and then end up with one participant.

I was always searching for participants, even at family events, and one of these events was my sister's wedding. I did this in-between serving the bride and groom with their food, a role only one person could do as, within the African community, there is always fear that someone will poison the bride and groom. I would be pointed in the direction of a grant recipient by one of my aunts or uncles. I have had to explain my research to family members constantly. They have always been confused about how my study is connected to Law because I wanted to be a lawyer like my uncles as a child. At times, I would be advised to do journalism as "from the time you were young, you always liked asking people too many questions". So, there was no moment where I have had time to breathe, but in some way, this helped me understand my research more, and if I were lucky, I would have an interview with someone either before an event or get their numbers for us to have an interview at a later stage.

Most interviews took place telephonically, except for one interview, which took place in person. I used the questions in my interview guide to have semi-structured interviews that started off as a conversation about the participants day and how they felt about their day and what they had done, and with who. This also helped them to ask questions about me and for them to also feel free to have the interview. I often referred to the interviews as my supervisor would do when we were going to have our weekly meetings, which made me feel relaxed and somewhat excited about the meeting, as the act of having "a chat". We had our interviews after sending voice notes explaining my research and how the information they were to give me would be used if they chose to continue. Once the participants consented, we had our "chats".

The questions were framed around getting to know more about the participants' lives before and during the lockdowns or rather the pandemic. In having these chats, I understood how they lived their lives before and through the year 2020, as well as the start of 2021. From the data collected, I understood

the participants living situation and the art (methods) of surviving the harsh lockdowns as people who depended on the state for care.

The data collected in the interviews was analysed by making use of content analysis. Using the raw data, I created in-text memos that later helped me weave out nuances and recognise the recurring themes more clearly (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011). I also did this when selecting the media text I will use as part of my data collection. The themes mirror the everyday challenges and coping mechanisms of the participants. The themes were both broad and specific (Flick, 2009). Participants also spoke about their lives as a whole, a factor I appreciated as it allowed me to be imaginative in how I analysed the data. I interviewed six participants, five of them being mothers of the CSG and one being on the OPG.

## Tlhokomelo ya banyakishishwa [18]:

Researchers must respect the informants' rights, needs, values, and desires (Salkind, 2018). At the start of every interview, I was meant to introduce myself and explain to the participants that the research is being conducted as part of the requirements to complete my Master's degree. But due to the conditions that the interviews were conducted under, this was done from the onset of explaining the nature of the research project. When I did that, I discussed how consent works and my reasons for conducting the research. I then sent the participants the soft copies of the participant information sheets to further understand the purpose, nature, and the reason I was conducting the research and what was required of them. Potential participants were informed that they could withdraw from participating in the research without explaining why. Consent to use the information they shared with me was given verbally and by text.

[18] Ethics Appraisal

Using WhatsApp allowed the participants to send voice notes or text me, and it allowed more access to the information when it was time to transcribe the interviews. The information collected using WhatsApp was transcribed and stored safely in a password protected device. All participants identities were hidden, and pseudonyms were used. To further protect the participants' identities beyond using pseudonyms, I wrote in a way that does not expose their identities. I ensured this by removing and changing identifiable features about the participants from the research report.

## Report structure

In the next section of the report, what you will read are participants life narratives and their lived experiences as caregivers of child support grant beneficiaries. I have also interviewed a recipient of the old person's grant, and her experience helps us understand how other recipients of the social support grant use their money.

Chapter 1:

The first chapter of the report focuses on the idea of women being the sole caregivers of their children, which is why I titled the chapter "Ngoana ke oa mosadi". An interesting dimension, one I had not been actively giving attention to, as women being the sole caregivers. You will get to see the intergenerational support care systems that women have been formulating for themselves.

Chapter 2:

I will then start the second chapter titled "free money". The title for chapter two came through nuances and said it is "free money". In this chapter, the reader gets introduced to the ambivalence the participants are caught up in, feeling grateful for the help they receive through grants and feeling that the money is not enough for them to care for their children.

Chapter 3:

The third chapter, “Re dlaloa mokou”, focuses on the state and how the grant recipients experience state violence in their everyday lives. In this chapter, I discuss the different ways that caregivers explore to try to make ends meet, and how they get trapped in a system that has been set against them.

# Chapter One: "Ngoana ke oa mosadi"[19]: gendered networks of care

"He does what he wants, whenever he wants, so he will come in 6months to bring those things, and we won't see him again." (Malethabo)

## Introduction

The analysis for this chapter draws on Han's (2012) conception of care, which is premised on hope in the sense of actively waiting for things to get better while sustaining social relations and survival amid adversity. For the women in my study, it is the hope that the fathers will turn around and start taking responsibility and for the government to understand them better as unemployed caregivers of the CSG beneficiaries. The chapter also draws on the Black feminist conception of communal love, as articulated by bell hooks, who conceives care as a love that circulates beyond the nuclear family. We can give and receive love by extending the feeling of hope and endless possibilities of life, as life issues can give one a sense of hopelessness (hooks, 2000). It is when we (both men and women) take it upon ourselves to nurture life through love that we show care, even in situations that we may not have lived through, our spirits (hearts) know how to be empathic in other's feelings (hook, 2018). These concepts will develop my understanding of care as an idea that goes beyond the mother and the child and as an act of love through a helping hand. This chapter argues that grants are received, and circulate, within intergenerational networks of care among women.

[19] Ngoana ke oa mosadi directly translated means, a child belongs to the woman. I have put this phrase in inverted commas, as a way of saying that black women do not have the choice whether or not they can choose to be mothers. There is a constant invasion into their lives to play the role of a nurturer. The phrase is used as a phrase that speaks to the idea of not relying on a man to care for your child. The phrase is not one that is said with joy and understanding of being the only parent of the child who takes on the responsibility of taking care of the child, it is used once a woman (even married) start sensing and experiencing disappointment. Women use this phrase also to encourage other women who feel the pain of raising their children alone, to say that they should not despair but rather remain faithful to their children as after all, it is them that carried them for nine months in their womb, the children are seen as more of a part of you than the man's. I do not like the phrase, as it is one that has conditioned me and many of my friends to not have children until we are financially stable, although that would not mean that we automatically escape the pain of raising children by ourselves, whether in a partnership or otherwise.

The idea of care is presented in this report through the actions and relations of the grant beneficiaries' kin. It is seen in how individuals carry each other, from one being unable to provide for themselves to those around them stepping in to stand in that gap of lack. Care is shared between a mother denying herself food so that her young ones can have something to eat and through and aunt and grandmother using their time and resources to raise "their" children. Though painful, gestures of sacrifice represent the idea of one's love of the other and that love translating itself through care. I have seen what care is through participants' lived experiences and the help they receive from their mothers and aunts. Care through an intergenerational network between women in families who share their experiences as women who were also held through their journey of motherhood and share the responsibility of raising the children as the second parent.

Ngoana ke oa mosadi is a phrase I grew up hearing from women in my community and one that I had read as I wrote down in-text memos in the transcribed interviews I had with my participants. I will start the discussion of this chapter using three life narratives and ethnographic excerpts which express intimately the choice that does not exist in being a mother once the baby is born. One of these life narratives, in particular, expresses these nuances: Malethabo, a 20-year-old mother of one child who feels she has disappointed her mother by falling pregnant before completing her tertiary education, while she still depends on her mother to care for her. She feels that her "baby daddy[20]", through his actions, has shown a lack of responsibility towards his daughter. After six months of her birth, he brought with him something that cannot begin to quantify the expenses, emotional and mental labour that went into caring for the baby: a tin of milk.

Relebogile, a 37-year-old, unemployed mother of four who lives with her mother, children and two other family members, experienced the same incompetency Malethabo experienced with the father of

[20] When one refers to someone as a baby daddy, they usually mean that the father of the child is either no longer a part of the mother's life (they are a part of their lives only through the child and for the child's sake) in the sense of a romantic relationship and at times it also means that the mom is not married to the dad.

her last two children. A government official who earns more than R15 000, the father decided to reduce the child support money to R500. To him, each child can be taken care of using R250. For Relebogile, a mother who gave birth in early 2020, has to take it upon herself to make means as to how she will care for all four of her children. Relebogile's situation of her baby daddy having previously been committed to her and her children and suddenly leaving after between three and five months of her giving birth to her fourth child made me fear for Mogau. Mogau is a mother 26-year-old mother of three girls. Her last baby, Tenya being four months old and like Relebogile before her current situation with her baby daddy, Mogau receives help from her baby daddy. However, despite all that Relebogile's baby daddy dwindling support, she has no desire to take her children's father to the Maintenance Court as she firmly believes that "God and Karma will get him". Leaning on this belief helps keep her sane when she has to complain about the children not having food or clothes and shoes. Mama oa Bontle[21], a newly single parent[22] of three children, had no one but herself. Not even karma could soothe her mind of the pains of not getting support in raising her children.

In her work, Hassim (2006) states that poor women are, in numerous ways, the most vulnerable group of people in South Africa. When they are mothers, their vulnerability increases to great lengths. Women are trying to secure the bag[23], as said today – the bag that may provide security. Some end up becoming sex workers, work that society shames women for doing, shaming which is persistent in making women's existence uncomfortable. I will delve into the discussion of "ngoana ke oa mosadi" by letting you into the lives of women who use different methods and coping mechanisms to get by. I see their ways of doing things as an art that separates them from women who have the means to care

[21] I refer to this participant as Mama oa Bontle, as though this is used to refer to her by her first child's name, I used to show how her life became defined by motherhood through her search for aid after the passing of her husband.
[22] I refer to Mama oa Bontle and not the other women as a single mother as she was married to her husband before he passed on. I cannot relate to the idea of a single mother in the sense of the women not ever being married, as that is used a tool of shaming women who are without partners, and this is regardless of whether they are raising their children alone or with someone by choice or not.
[23] To secure the bag means to find a form of financial security by working, doing business, and even marrying into a wealthy family. It is doing anything to ensure that you are not living in poverty.

for their children without wondering where their children's next meal will come from or if manna can fall from heaven.

I will show the traumas that women encounter as the primary caregivers to their children and being without a stable household income, if any at all. The loss involved in this lifetime is like that of being a slave on a plantation as they labour a lot to ensure that their children are well taken care of and feed the country's labour system, but they are not recognised for that. Each day comes with its different challenges that rip away from their dignity, sanity, and humanity. In this chapter, I argue that women struggle to care for their children using their children's amounts from grants. Though they get support from their mothers and aunts, the responsibility of caring for the children has been solely on them as parents of the children. The new man in their lives and father to their children, the state, continues to perpetuate women's subjugation by not assessing their needs and capabilities as caregivers of child support grant beneficiaries.

## Malethabo's grant-focused personal narrative

It was about five minutes before our scheduled interview when I texted Malethabo on WhatsApp to check if she was ready and still available for the interview. She immediately responded with a voice note, her fruity voice carrying through heavy winds and loud noises. The blares of multiple taxis hooting were nearby, as were people talking about tiredness. The sounds around her were thick and overpowering her voice. I had hoped that she was not in Johannesburg CBD. However, hearing a woman shouting commands to a child to come back home and with the taxi sounds slowly fading away, I clearly heard that she was passing a place where someone was buying ekota. I remember thinking that the manner in which I needed to conduct the interview was strange. Surprisingly, the busyness of her background calmed my nerves. I, too, was ready to chat.

Though her background sounded busy, I did not want to ask about her whereabouts because I enjoyed the ambience created for both of us, but I had to ask where she was coming from. Malethabo was

returning from town as she was looking for a part-time job. Our interview was like having a conversation with a friend out in the streets and quite vibrant without fears of the looming virus. Malethabo said she did not feel entitled to the grant. However, she needed it. She did not want to feel entitled "we are not entitled to that money, we are not (pause), we shouldn't feel like we are entitled to that money and demand more, no, whatever the government is giving us is enough, you know we should appreciate." When she expressed that she did not want to feel entitled, I immediately wondered why a 20-year-old, unemployed and actively searching for work, would have such a belief.

Many people in South Africa, like Malethabo, have not been able to have access to waged work, and like many others in the country, without her mother's assistance, the grant would be her only source of income (cf. Vally, 2016). When she found out that she was pregnant, Malethabo became more aware of the difficulties that would pile up for her and her family. Her single mother works as a security guard in KwaZulu Natal, where she earns between R5000 and R6000. She knew that it would not be a comfortable journey for her. Applying for the grant was not only for her to get the money to take care of her daughter. "The reason I applied for the SASSA grant", she said, "is to help my mother out since she is the one financially taking care of my baby, and my baby daddy is not so helpful. I applied for the SASSA grant to help her along the way with some of the things you know."

Malethabo felt she had burdened her mother more with an "extra mouth to feed" and that she had disappointed her mother by falling pregnant before acquiring a degree and having a job. It was her way of helping her mother take care of her and her baby as she still depends on her mother for a living.

Her "baby daddy" is the type of guy "who does what he wants when he wants", the type of guy many black South Africans refer to as sperm donors. When I asked Malethabo about the baby daddy's employment status, she said that he works at Home Affairs and though she does not know what he does there, only that she knows that he is not a security guard who gets paid peanuts. Nevertheless, this man only brought a tin of milk when the baby was six months old. Malethabo says that she was

shocked that he was an employed father yet practically did nothing, so I asked Malethabo when he got employed, and she said, “in 2018, I think two or three months after my baby was born”. When he brought the milk six months ago, Malethabo was surprised that he even knows that her baby is his daughter and was still alive and breathing, “I begged him many times to help out with the baby, but he does not, so why keep asking when he does not want? He will come back in 6 months or whenever he wants.”

Without the grant money and her family's help, she would not have been able to take care of her daughter, and it is for this reason that she has felt that though it is the government's “job to take care of us”, they can only do this to a certain point. Without the grant money, many children would be going hungry “because most mothers, most parents depend on the grant to look after the baby and take care of them.”

Malethabo’s story resonates with the chapter’s theme of mothers being the sole caregivers of their children, though within intergenerational networks of women. Her story also gives you a glimpse of how she leans on her mother for her and her baby’s upkeep. I used her story, which has become a norm in many South African black communities, and it pains her to lean on her mother to help her raise her child instead of the father. These feelings come to us because, like hooks (2000) says, we feel that children should only lean on their mothers and not move beyond this relation. The idea of not sharing the responsibilities weighs heavily on the mothers, both young and old. Malethabo had begged the father of her daughter to take responsibility. Still, he saw that as a part-time commitment even with him being aware that Malethabo is unemployed as she was meant to start her university studies when NSFAS dropped her halfway through the year. It is painful to these mothers to be left with the responsibility to care for their children alone, and by alone, I mean without the help of the children’s fathers. These fathers behave like the state,  as like the state which will later want to claim the labour of the children when they are adults. These fathers will want to be supported financially by the children they did not raise (Koch, 2018). These pains disturb their mental and emotional health.

## Ke bophelo

"To wake up every morning and see that life is okay" (Relebogile).

This section will focus on the trauma's which mothers face to make ends meet and the shared responsibilities that children desire to take to relieve their mothers. I titled this section ke bophelo because when people say "ke bophelo", people usually do not know how to relay the devastation they have experienced through their life journey to the next person. After hearing it said in different interviews and in different languages, I chose to use the phrase. The saying brings more meaning to the idea of holding onto life after being disappointed multiple times by life itself. They are saying, in a way, that they have given in and have accepted their situation. Mama oa Bontle, a 46-year-old unemployed mother receiving the CSG for her three children, is a widow abandoned by her friends and family after her husband's passing. A woman who could not properly mourn her late husband finally received the CSG for her children after a year of struggling with not knowing where their next meal will come from. It pained her when her eyes were opened to seeing that her children can see her pain. She expressed that her children expressed how "umama a ka jabulanga,"[24] and then she continued to say, "they wanted to share this sadness with me". The desire to relieve her was also impacted by them not being able to go to school, "being around their mother throughout the day made them see my pain". Their school had now started depriving Mama oa Bontle's children of an education by denying them access to school[25] enabled and worsened a transference of the depression that was already lingering in the household.

On the one hand, having a mother wonder if her young children will ever return to school or whether this was going to be "a vicious cycle", Mama oa Bontle said, and on the other hand, having a

[24] Our mother is not happy.
[25] As unconstitutional as it is, this frequently happens in South Africa.

grandmother and mother see her children and granddaughter being "*abo Mahlalela"*[26]. This, being beyond their control, made matters worse for the children and their mother's mental health - the mentally exhausting state of searching for work. The young children who were denied access to school were also deprived of having a social life, a childlike childhood, as children their age ought to have; this became a double mental exhaustion for them and their mother.

When thinking through Mama oa Bontle's trauma, her pain was to her, proof that she was alive, but she did not take it in the same way for her children. The family would often go to bed hungry after eating only a light maize meal porridge. Mama oa Bontle would go to bed without eating just so her children can have enough, doing this while hiding it from her children. Even she and her children being failed by the state, she did not want to extend that to her children, so she continued to beg. Before receiving the grant, she never got tired of returning to the same state, which violates her each day by denying her access to food parcels since the grant was off-limits. She did not let pride get in the way in her search for help. She continued to knock on more doors for help. She knew well that they discussed her neediness from the time they saw her entering through the gate. The support she would have imagined from her fellow women did not exist, and unlike other women, she did not have her grandmother or mother to lean on as they had passed on. When one has enough, one would imagine that they can spare a little to give to those in need.

When children see the struggles in their families, their development changes, and they become adults before their time. Mama oa Bontle said, "they would also want to share the depression, they would want to come up with ideas they did not even know what to do". The idea of Mama oa Bontle's children wanting to share the depression, which I got to later understand from our interview, is that her children do not necessarily want to become sad and hopeless in their situation. They wanted to help get their mother out of the mental state they saw her in. Her children wanting to share in her depression alerts

[26] Individuals who do not work and because this was not by choice are in a constant melancholia state.

us to the changing mental state they were in. They were already aware of their changed circumstances. In wanting to share in this depression, Bontle (17 years of age), Mama oa Bontle's eldest daughter, worked on weekends, and this money was what helped them through the year that they were unable to get the grant, after being told that they should wait for Bontle's late dad's pension fund money. Bontle became a babysitter for their neighbour, where she got paid R50 a day. The R100 that she earned on weekends was money for her family and became a stable income that carried them through the week. This helps us see how the precarious situation her family was in and how easily children can fall into child labour. However, this no longer became the only money that carried them through the year. They did not have access to the grant. Mama oa Bontle would get laundry washing gigs here and there, which enabled them to buy the maize meal that they lived on without *seshebo*. Living on maize meal pap is not a new thing for South African black families as it is our staple food, but living only on maize meal porridge is a sign of needing help and, even more, the society's further move from ho ba le botho[27]. Mama oa Bontle's experience shows us the limitations within these gendered networks that we hope will be there when we are in need.

The gendered networks of care also bring out a sense of how people get tired of having to uplift the other, which is why I emphasized in the beginning that these intergenerational networks of care are familial. They are not the type that is built from wider communities. It has become difficult for people to give a helping hand, especially when the needed type of help seems like the long-term type of help. Her experience also shows how, though communal love is desired by those who, like myself, admire hooks' (2000) work and her expression on care, there are limitations in how our kin have learned to interact with us. In the following sub-section, you see a different type of network compared to that of Mama oa Bontle.

[27] To show one's humanity, having ubuntu.

## Mogau's personal narrative

With a piercing and nervous laughter, dead silence in her background, Mogau realised that she had not begun processing why the contraceptive she was using did not work after the condom they were using broke, leading to her pregnancy. "It was teenage pregnancy (giggles)," she said. At only sixteen, she normalised the pregnancy and started laughing at her pregnancy. When her classmates talked and laughed at her, she imagined that they wondered many things. How could she have possibly fallen pregnant? They were taught so much about sex, contraceptives, and condoms in Life Orientation, but even more damning was the thought that she was having sex. How dare she opens her legs at her age?

Mogau expressed that her mother was quite disappointed and sad when she found out about her pregnancy. Her mother felt that her dreams of seeing her daughter become the best version of herself were stolen. However, like a mother would, she held Mogau's hand through the pregnancy and told her that she would need to complete school regardless of this situation. Her mother's support stood out for Mogau, as she knew that someone would be by her side as she walked her journey of being pregnant at sixteen.

Mogau, like many young girls, did not imagine that she would have had her first child at such a tender age, let alone in her mother's house. The famous phrase that puts God's fear in many females who want to abort a pregnancy says, 'children are a gift from God'; for Mogau, there was no other way to deal with her pregnancy. At her age, pregnancy was shameful, but her community had seen her, so aborting the pregnancy would bring even more shame upon her and her family.

Without a plan, she kept her pregnancy. However, for Mogau, it was only the beginning of a dreadful road to apply for her child's Child Support Grant. Unlike other grant recipients' caregivers, she could not immediately apply for the grant due to birth certificate issues they were confronted with. The Department of Home Affairs had had mix-ups that delayed her from applying for the Child Support Grant. Mogau's birth certificate had gotten lost in the process of her moving from the hospital back

home after giving birth, and she had needed a new one. However, for over five years from the time she needed it, she had not been able to get another one from the Department of Home Affairs.

The Department of Home Affairs had told Mogau and her mother that another child belonged to her mom and was her age, too, meaning that they could not process her birth certificate for her. They suspected that something illegal had happened. Their suspicions were confirmed when signatures were checked on the birth certificate application forms, and they found out that the other signature was not her mom's but rather one that almost looked like hers. They left the situation without pressing charges against the Department of Home Affairs. All they wanted was to get the birth certificate for them to apply for the Child Support Grant for Mogau's child.

Mogau's daughter, Soraya, only became a Child Support Grant beneficiary at the age of five. A time through which I had wondered if her father could have not used his details to apply for the grant, as her mother was trying all she could to get her on the grant. But Soraya's paternal grandmother did not see the need for her son to be associated with the Child Support Grant. The responsibility of being active in getting his child the grant was removed from him by his mother, as his mother saw him as a child and not a father. Mogau was not seen as a child by her baby daddy's mother.

Through her relationship with her aunt, who cares for her daughter, Soraya, Mogau has revealed nuances of her understanding of power dynamics that flow through the family, which supersedes the state in the family's decision-making regarding money that came from the state. When Mogau's late father decided to take his granddaughter and raise her with his sister, Mogau's aunt, Mogau tried several times to give her aunt the SASSA card. But her aunt returned the SASSA card after a month of receiving the grant money. She expressed how they fought about the card, as her aunt did not find the funds useful for her, as she had enough to care for Soraya. Mogau expressed that she then gave into the fight as even when she tried sending the money to her aunt, her efforts proved futile as her aunt would return the money to her. As a result, her aunt said she should use the money to care for

herself or save it since she was not employed. For some time, Mogau felt guilty as this was not money from her aunt but the state. Nonetheless, she felt that she had received permission from the one person who can have a say in the whole situation to use the money.

## The extent of a mother's care

The women in this research project have been doing all they could to ensure that they can care for their children. As I read through our interviews, there were many times when I felt that some of their responses could be written on cardboards in a protest. I imagined each of them is holding up a cardboard board, shouting to the people of their nation what they try to do to keep their children and themselves safe. These are some of the expressions they used to express what they have done and would do to care for their children:

Atlehang: "umunthu uvela a yenza into ezi snaaks ngoba ufun'imali and awusebenzi nje (sighs) ngivela ngi jole nabanthu for imali ene, eish uhm, angazi ngiganthini, I did not want to do that, but we must live and my son kumele adle"[28]

Relebogile: "Nginga yentha[29] everything, except sell my body, to make sure my kids are happy."

Mama oa Bontle: "After struggling for years, uhm I do laundry, I collect it from students, wash them and deliver them back."

As many people usually say, becoming a parent changes a person a lot, especially when present in their children's lives. These women have thought through what they could do and what their circumstances have led them to do to care for their children. Most women have seen their mothers and

[28] One ends up doing things they do not want to, disgraceful things (sighs) I end up dating men for their money, eish uhm, I don't know what to say, I did not want to do that, but we must live and my son must eat. Please note that mixing English with vernac is a very common thing that many South Africans do, I am not in any way putting in English words in the quotes, it is their own doing.

[29] I would do everything.

grandmothers stand in the gap of the non-existent help from fathers. The core help for these women has been the women in their families.

I have heard my mother complain many times, being a single mom, that if she did not have my older sister and me, she would have stopped working at Correctional Services a long time ago, as she was in a constant state of anger and frustration. This leads me to think about how, when someone has power over the next person, they can persuade them to do what they would have otherwise not have done.

These mothers are confronted with the reality of having brought a human being to the world whom they must care for. As Relebogile had stated in our interview, it is not easy to tell a child that you cannot provide them with what they need in saying that "kumatima…abantwana asibo abantu abafanele bakfune ba khala"[30], especially their need for food. If a parent has the strength to do so, the children cannot comprehend what they are being told. hooks (2000) and Han's (2012) idea of care in the love that is shared with children beyond the mother and the idea of actively waiting is expressed in Relebogile's situation. When I asked Relebogile if her mother would help on such days, she undoubtingly expressed this, "if you don't have other options, so yeah, I did ask for help from my mother, and she was doing it. Obvious, it's her grandchildren, so she helps". The communal love sustains these women as with most of them, like Relebogile, their mothers raised them by themselves, without their fathers. Their mothers, Relebogile and the others, have known the difficulty that came with thinking that they were raising their children by themselves. Now and then, they were helped by aunts and uncles to ensure that their children were cared for.

Being a mother has made them think of ways to make money to care for their children, ways they would not have otherwise decided to go with had they not been mothers. In some of their disappointments to witness the limitations of the type of communal love, they were able to look to

[30] It is difficult to tell children that they cannot get what they need.

other avenues of getting a form of income. Mama oa Bontle had never been employed full-time by anyone, but she had not imagined that she would one day be doing laundry for people, for her to get income. Neither had Atlehang thought that she would engage in relationships looking to get money so that she and her son could have food and live without worrying about food. Relebogile says that she would do anything that did not involve her selling her body. The women I interviewed are putting together what they can to ensure that they have done something. For individuals like Mogau who are employed and currently on maternity leave, she has been quite fortunate (and I say fortunately cringingly, as I have come to unconsciously see this type of help as abnormal) to have her boyfriend quite active in caring for their children. Though she is the breadwinner and cares for her mother, who still does not qualify for the Old Person's grant, she still receives her mother's help in looking after her children with her and to care for her while she tends to the wounds of having given birth.

Relebogile, like Mogau, has had her mother's support in making sure that they are all okay. Though she feels it is a shame for her mother to be responsible for her last two children when their father is still alive, she is grateful that she has her mother doing all she can to ensure they are okay. It helps in reassuring them that they are not alone and that their children will not suffer when they can be loved and supported by their grandmothers and aunts. Most of the participants have expressed without a doubt that their mothers will help with getting stuff for their children and that they knew they could count on that more than hoping that the fathers will help.

After Mama oa Bontle had been denied help from those she believed would have helped her meant she had now stopped doing that. She could have her dignity; she no longer needed to open her home up in relaying to them their struggles and how her children do not have food. The details of her family's struggles now remained between her and her children. It was about having the relief of not having to walk into anyone's yard and feel like they are already laughing at your pain and how your pain was now, no longer something they gathered around to discuss. Mama oa Bontle wanted the grant so that her children can eat, which was the most important thing to her, having her children well fed. She also

shared something that moved my heart, that "with the grant, I feel that I still have my dignity, I do not have to go around begging people for food". In his work, Ferguson (2015) expresses that without these cash transfers, the poor of the country get nothing; thus, like Mama oa Bontle has said, the money gives them a form of dignity. Mothers share in this desire, wanting their children to be well-fed. Relebogile struggled with this for a while.

When Relebogile's work contract was not renewed in 2019, she knew that things would change drastically. As before, she had applied for a grant to add to her salary to care for her children. But now, things are different, she does not work, and her mother has now become a pensioner. The grant money was now for food for her children, just as it was for Mama oa Bontle, only that now for Relebogile, it also became for the whole family. She tried looking for work, and when she got one, a few months later, she found that she was pregnant with her fourth child. After a few months, she realised that she could no longer do the work she was doing as it was too taxing on her body, and she made a choice to leave the job. It was devastating for her, but she could not imagine her children losing yet another parent, as the father of her first two children passed away, and he was to her, a man who did above and beyond for his children. Something which Mama oa Bontle had also experienced, so for her to start all over again on her own, was a foreign concept that almost made her eldest daughter deter her dreams to help her.

It was painful for Mama oa Bontle that Bontle's father passed away when she was sixteen. It was even more painful for her and her children to suffer through a year, as they got the grant a few months after Bontle had turned seventeen. She feels that this experience has made Bontle a responsible person. However, to Bontle, their struggles almost led her to not want to go to University but to work to continue sharing her mother's responsibility of caring for them. She later realized that it was not her responsibility, at least in the sense of her not pursuing her dream of attending University. Through her being a university student, she realized that there was an opportunity for her mother to start her laundry

business. However, after years of working on weekends through her undergraduate life, all this was to lessen her mother's worries about whether the NSFAS money was enough.

## Conclusion

Grandmothers continue to be part of the core of raising their grandchildren along with the grandchildren's parents. Historically, there has been a continued intergeneration of women working together to raise children in a family, and my family, I mean it in the African sense. As Africans, we regard our cousins as our brothers and sisters, our grandmother's sisters, as our grandmothers. This had before been seen as a factor contributing to young women's numerous pregnancies, as they then give the children to their parents to raise for them. I have always disagreed with this statement, as this was often done to help young mothers get on their feet. Building their career is sometimes a way of unburdening the mother from looking for a nanny when that money could be sent home for the family. This brings me to how women do not see caring for a child as unpaid labour, as they do ensure that they send extra money home as an addition to the money they already send to their parents.

The mothers see the intergenerational network of women working together to raise children as the most reliable network. When participants were asked their reasons to apply for the Child Support Grant, those who are unemployed mentioned that it was to help their mothers. It was to lessen the burden of them taking care of them and their children, and in some cases, it had been to make lighter the burden of caring for them, their children, their siblings and their sibling's children. Within this network of relations, sisters who worked would send money home for their mother, and because money in the household is not such, that is dedicated to one person, it is used to take of the whole family.

When mothers found themselves in doubt about receiving financial help from their baby daddy's, they immediately, in turn, expressed their mothers guaranteed and unfailing assistance in taking care of their children. Again, as they expressed without any hint of doubt in their voices, ngoana ke oa mosadi, they indeed belong to the woman. As through the struggles of raising these children, the fathers, if

present, come in as visitors whom no one necessarily shames for not taking responsibility for their children. Instead, what would be said is “indzodza ayi tsembakali”[31]. So, in putting together means to ensure that children do not lack, we see women holding onto their mothers and aunts to do this and having faith that they will not suddenly get left to face the challenges of raising children all by themselves. My findings go against the state perception of Child Support Grants as directly concerning the child and their guardian. Instead, the money circulates within existing and gendered networks of care and support.

[31] You cannot trust a man.

# Chapter Two: "Free Money"

"… it's not much, but because it's like free money, so we are grateful you know, it's not like we can complain or anything you know" (Malethabo)

## Introduction

As my research found, the grant is sometimes interpreted as a gift and, at other times, an entitlement. The focus of this chapter is the ambivalent approach by the participants towards the grants and the state. This reveals the complex relationships to the state and the obligations the state confers. The analysis for this chapter draws on Carrier's idea of what a gift is, and in this chapter, I will lean mainly on what Carrier (1991) terms as an obligatory transfer. However, it is not a forced obligation but rather obligatory because it reaffirms the giver and receiver's relation. The receiver then accepts this gift and is not monitored in how they use the gift. I use this concept as the grant recipients receive an obligatory gift from the state. It is obligatory because the South African state is categorised as a Welfare Developmental state. However, the receivers of this gift are aware that the gift is meant to be used for the child. The receivers of the gift know their needs more than the giver does. As a result, the gift circulates within the family, as discussed in the previous chapter. What remains profound is that the recipients feel that they are gifted in a measure that has not been thought through. However, it cannot be returned because it is a needed gift.

The money that caregivers receive on behalf of their children gets policed by society, which has created the ambivalence experienced by grant recipients. This ambivalence is, knowing that the money is not enough while also not being able to raise such concerns. In this chapter, I will unpack the idea of "free money", a commonly used phrase that kept reoccurring in different interviews. I argue that recipients understand the grant money in an ambivalent way as both 'free money' from the state and as an entitlement. I draw on the Constitutional Right of the South African citizens to be entitled to social

security. It is their right to feel entitled to these funds. Additionally, these entitlements are also based on the capabilities of each human being able to live a dignified life (Nussbaum, 2003).

I start the discussion on “free money” with a narrative that ties the chapter on care and the idea of “free money”. Speaking on the idea of “free money” in how the money being “free” makes grant recipients perceive the state officials as demigods when they have been entrusted with serving the society. Participants feel that, since the government officials live comfortably, they know to a certain extent that what they give them to care for their children is not enough. In some cases, they had expressed that before SASSA cards were created, the SASSA officials would steal half of the money. However, regardless of how much grant beneficiaries’ caregivers receive, they still ration the money based on their needs for it to carry them through the month. Their needs are what I will use as the basis of what is enough and enough changes with different age groups and the number of people living in each household.

The discussion will then delve into “The Art of Rationing”, the section will focus on how the gift is used in families where there is no other form of income. This is required by families wherein the grant is the only form of household income and in families with income, but too many people for whom the income is responsible. I call it an art because a lot of creativity and technique goes into rationing the “free money”. I will then continue the discussion with another quote that the participants said with much guilt, “it’s not enough”. This section will focus on the idea of not having enough, and as I have mentioned previously, to determine “enough”, the needs of the grant recipients need to be considered. In this sub-section, I will unpack how the recurring statement “it’s not enough” means to different participants and what participants mean when they say it. After that, I will discuss entitlement using Sen’s understanding of entitlements and Nussbaum’s merging of entitlements with capabilities, as capabilities are the most important entitlements (Nussbaum, 2003). Capabilities include but are not limited to the ability to live a life wherein one is healthy, can participate in politics without being emotionally manipulated by their needs, to have decent work, not having to perform one’s state of

poverty to show their need for aid (Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1982). In my research, I relate capabilities and entitlements to the participants' experiences of the unfreedom of not being able to provide care to their children in a Developmental Welfare State. Furthermore, Nussbaum (2011) argues that a lack of capabilities may contribute to mental and emotional issues and be a form of violence. To do this, I will also use ethnographic material to elaborate on participants' confusion when it came to the grants and the feeling of not tending to your thoughts to ensure that you do not sound "entitled" or "ungrateful".

## Lift your eyes to the hills to stay sane

*Koko Grace* pointed at the music video that was playing on the One Gospel channel while asking me to turn up the volume as she lifted her hands to sing a section of the song,

Ha le phirimile (When the sun has set)

O nnehe boroko (You grant me rest)

Ke lala ke mo tshepile (I have placed my trust in You)

Ntate ya lerato (My loving father)

Ho dula le Ntate (To abide with God)

Ho dula le yena (To dwell in Him)

Ho molemo ho monate (It is important, it is pleasant)

Ke monyaka ho nna (It is enjoyable to me)[32]

As though seeing help come down from the heavens, wagging her index finger, she continued to say, "nna ke pedisa ke modimo ka thapelo"[33]. Thereafter Koko Grace shared her contradicting thoughts of

[32] Lyrics and translation found on the Spirit of Praise website.
[33] It is God and prayer that sustains me.

who the government is and who works at the municipal, "government wa mpha, a ke nyake go mo sotla, mara ba ba maspala ba tlhetsi ka metlolo"[34]. Koko Grace, a 79-year-old woman beneficiary of the Old Person's grant, referred to the government as a human being. She used her words and later removed the local government from being part of this human she spoke of. She referred to the people who worked in the local government as nonsensical people, which probed me to ask why she made that distinction. She refers to the municipal government and the SASSA people as one. She does not make a distinction between them, as for the longest time, they received their grant money from people she believes were from "masepala", meaning the municipal. She expressed that, before her husband passed away, there were times when they stole his Old Person's Grants money as he had already started losing his eyesight. She paced about looking for help to get that money back, but she was never given the money.

The people working at "the municipal", who are in reality the SASSA officials, know her family's living conditions as it is a small town and people know each other's situations. Yet, they still felt the need to steal from them. She explained, "mo kgalabe ka tsatsi le le ngwe, ne ba mo ropile, ba tsheri chelete, nkare R200 mo cheleteng ya modende. Ne ke kwatile thata, ka re today, ko ba tshwarisha he ba ka se refe chelete e ba e otswitseng, he re fitlha ko masepala, ke ba boditshe go re ke tloya mapodisheng. A yintsha ka mo potleng ya hae a re fa yona "[35]. This lady taking the R200 out from her pocket for Koko Grace symbolized the filth and the disregard for people that the officials at the local government level had for people who do not have the power to fight for themselves.

[34] The government does provide for me, I do not want to speak badly of the government, it is those who are at the municipal who are problematic.

[35] The SASSA officials, had taken about R300 of her husband's grant. I was very angry on that day because it was not the first time that they were stealing our money, I told him that we are going to get the money from them. When they got to the building coincidentally next to the municipal building, she threatened to go to report this incident to the police and the SASSA official took the money out from her pocket.

During the COVID-19 level 5 lockdown, food parcels were given to elderly people whose children work for the government and connections. She said they did this before their eyes, and it was in doing this that she saw no moving forward in this country. Koko Grace expressed that none of her children worked and took care of the three of them and her one grandchild. It would be a relief for her if the government could come and take one of her sons and let them work for the family. She reported that while they try to find work, people with tenders hire them but never pay them. It breaks her heart because she feels that they are trying but that their efforts will waste.

## The Art of Rationing

> "So, there were times I asked my mom before month-end to help out in buying another pack of nappies because a pack of nappies, you know at Mopane on Wednesdays, there's specials R179, and the formula is R234. So as little as it is, the baby, they eat so much hehe (giggles), I am telling you, I was giving him eight to nine sometimes ten bottles. It was too much of him eating." (Relebogile)

Targeting specials is what mothers did a lot for them to buy their children's needs. For the two mothers from the Mpumalanga province, targeting the weekly Wednesday specials from the Mopane Shopping Center was important to get nappies for their toddlers. They had their ways of rationing the money, in how they stretched the length of their children's breastfeeding period before they could introduce solid foods to them. Although the mothers interviewed, as mentioned, shared that when babies are still on formula and still wearing nappies, their maintenance is quite expensive. Trying to save the grant money to buy a size two-pack of 96 nappies for R190, size three of 88 nappies for R179 comes with its own challenges. Every cent counts, which is why mothers try to breastfeed their children for as long as they can. However, this comes with its challenges.

They frequently need to eat for them to produce enough breast milk for their babies. Malethabo often laughed about how she had to force herself to drink rooibos tea throughout the day to produce enough

milk to feed her daughter. Luckily, drinking rooibos tea to produce milk was not an issue for Mogau and Relebogile. Although, Mogau had to stop breastfeeding within three months because she knew she only had a few months at home to be on maternity leave and did not want her child to be a problem to her mother. For Relebogile, it was not the frequent consumption of rooibos tea that was a problem. The household would run out of rooibos tea as it was for everyone to drink. This, in turn, made me wonder how then she is meant to feed her child, as solid foods had not yet been introduced to the child by their mother. And by the time this happens, it is towards month-end, the grant money like the household income would be finished. At the early stages of caring for the child, the mother also needs to be taken care of to give her child the necessary care.

By asking the grant caregivers to take care of their children on R445 a month, they were asked to perform miracles. Should the mothers hope that their babies would not eat each time they are hungry or not pee and poop as much to save nappies? Even with the targeted specials, the amount does not carry them through the whole month, even with the special pandemic grant. Though nappies are the main priority, small babies quickly grow out of their clothes. Relebogile struggled a lot with this as an unemployed mother of four children who does not get much financial assistance to raise her children. She eventually had to decide to use her other children's grant money to add onto the youngest child's grant money so that she can buy him three packs of the nappies when they are on special as well as milk. The nappies get very wet very quickly, which means she cannot leave him in one nappy for too long. She needs to keep checking it. Otherwise, her son's bum would get burnt by his urine's acidity, which would mean spending more money on getting extra Vaseline to cover his bum. Malethabo also had her own way of seeing how she can go about having enough nappies for her daughter throughout the month.

Malethabo said that her uncle once bought one pack of the Huggies nappies to add onto the other nappies from the Spaza shop around the corner, the latter being the ones she used every day. Huggies were for "special" days. She felt that because she could not frequently change her daughter's nappy

like she usually would when they were home all day, she felt that she would need to have stronger nappies for when they went for the clinic check-ups or if she randomly got sick and at times if she had to travel to Kwa-Zulu Natal. I am not a mother, so I wondered why she needed to buy lots of cheap nappies and then the Huggies nappies when she could use the Huggies ones throughout. Malethabo expressed that when her daughter was young, she peed a lot, and the nappies from the Spaza were many, though weak, they were cheaper than when she would want to buy the same quantity of Huggies nappies.

For Mogau, because her boyfriend buys clothes and toiletries for her two daughters, she focuses on stocking up on nappies and taking care of her mother. Since she has three daughters and receives the grant money for all three of them, though she stays with two, Mogau uses part of the money she receives for her first daughter to add to their household needs. As I had mentioned in her narrative, her daughter lives with her aunt in a different city and province. Mogau being the one person in my study, both working and receiving help from her partner, still needs to care for her mother. She sees the grant money as an addition to the money she works for and finds it challenging to separate it from her income, as she is the only one who works in her household. When she knows that school holidays are nearing, she will look to save at least half of her first daughter's grant money, so she can buy her stuff that she takes an interest in, if not take out the clothes she had lay-bought from the store.

## "It is not enough"

> "Ba kona a banthwana aba khula ngayo'khupela le mali, abanthwana abakhuliswa abo gogo. Yona iyasitha, net incane and angyathi ukhutsi why bangangboni, ngoba into thiyakupuka ethitolo, umnotho uyawa inthotiya dura[36]" (Relebogile)

[36] There are children who are raised using only the grant money, especially children being raised by their grandmothers. The money helps, it's just that it's little, and I don't know why they don't see it. As things get increased in the stores and the economy gets weaker, and things get more expensive.

To express that the grant money was not enough, participants used expressions like, "you buy bread and its gone (giggles)" (Mogau), "you'll buy milk, and it's finished (laughs out loud)" (Malethabo), "it is not enough for an infant I mean like for babies who are still using nappies and formula" (Relebogile), and "our lives a dependa ku le mali kodwa incane[37] (sighs)" (Botselo). Their expressions imply different things for each of them. Mogau works and gets much assistance from her loved ones, yet still sees this money that one would see as a "top-up" to her salary as not being enough. Whereas for a person who still desires to return to school like Malethabo, she would want to leave her daughter with someone while she fixes her school issues and eventually goes to school. Staying with her extended family members has made Relebogile want to participate in financially helping around the household actively. For a person like Botselo, a 23-year-old mother, this is all she has and all she can hold onto.

Though used to the idea of taking care of her mom, Mogau admits that it gets too much at times, as she wants to have the freedom not to feel guilty about getting her hair and nails done. As a working person, she is not afforded that, as she is the breadwinner and is accountable to the house's head. Both her and her mother wait for the day that her mother starts receiving the Old Person's Grant so that some of the weight can be lifted from her shoulders. Hence, Mogau refers to bread and not milk when speaking of the social grant money not being enough.

Relebogile, who does not work, feels guilty now and then when the money her sister has sent to her mother ends up being focused on her last born. She battles with wondering why it should be okay for the other children to suffer because the newborn needs stuff, and it hurts her to have to explain that, "akna'mali ngoba ugogo utenge amapampers a Andile, or akna'mali ngoba gogo utenge eskotela saAndile[38]" when the children tell you that they are hungry. "You stress because eh you know

[37] Our lives depends on this money but it is little.
[38] There is no money because your grandmother had to buy Andile nappies and sometimes its, there is no money because your grandmother had to buy Andile a baby bathtub.

abantwana asibo abantu abafanele bakfune ba khale ngasosonke eskhati, they must just be happy, ukhuti bakuthole loku bakfunawo nga leso'skhati[39]." The money is not enough because her other children get deprived of their needs because another child has more needs. Her children are then forced to understand what children should not be worrying about.

Botselo does not have a support system like the other participants, as she was disowned by the only family she had left when she fell pregnant. She has had to wonder what her late parents would have done and reflects on the type of parents they were to take some guidance from her imagination about the type of parent she could be. In her efforts and what she provides for her child, she leans more on her being able to provide him with the shelter he needs. She does this at the expense of the person she thinks she should be, as she judges herself by saying, "umunthu uvela a yenza into ezi snaaks ngoba ufun'imali and awusebenzi nje (sighs) ngivela ngi jole nabanthu for imali[40]". For her son, she saw it fit to provide shelter and food by moving in with a man she did not love when she decided to move in with him so that she too can be seen by her family as someone who also no longer needed them. It is not enough because she and her son would not be able to survive on it alone. Doing this shows that she does not have the capabilities to live a life she deems dignified.

It is not enough because the money caregivers receive on behalf of the beneficiaries cannot begin to give the children their basic necessities. The money does not allow mothers like Botselo to not rely on shaky and mentally abusive relationships because you cannot begin to speak your mind as you are at the mercy of a man who took you and your son in. Alone, she would have not been able to care for her son, let alone herself. The idea of taking care only of the beneficiary with the grant money is saying that you do not need to be well to care for someone. All you need to do is just care for the grant beneficiary. If that were possible, a mother who was left ill and in intensive care due to childbirth

[39] You stress because, it is not fair for children to have to cry all the time because they are not able to get what they need.
[40] One ends up doing quirky things so that they can get money and because they do not work. I date men for money.

complications would be able to care for their child. Though entitled to the grants, when thinking of capabilities, Botselo cannot independently care for her child as she does not have the capabilities to care for the child, neither would a mother who has had childbirth complications and is recovering in a hospital's intensive care unit. The verbally unspoken assumption of the government that mothers do not need to be cared for, for them to perform the act of being good caregivers is abusive. It gives no slight sense of the assistance that they are being told they are being given. I showed how Relebogile expressed her frustration when she asked, "angathi ukhuthi why bangangboni[41]", she does not know why they do not see it, why they do not see that it is not enough.

## Entitled?

Rhetorically, I ask the question in the title of the section, as South Africa is a developmental welfare state that has promised to supply aid to its citizens in need. When transcribing the interviews, I came across several nuances about participants not wanting to feel entitled and not being entitled while also expressing that the government is responsible for them. This prompted me to write about the recurring theme. Through this research report, I am saying that South Africans are entitled to these grants, and it is a right that they are entitled to simply because they are citizens of a Developmental Welfare State. It is their right to have access to the funds. I am aware that the idea of rights is quite multifaceted. As Nussbaum (2003) stated, rights are multifaced and often seen as agreed upon when they have philosophical disagreements ingrained and hidden from the layman. In the context of this research, I consider the Human Rights and the Bill of Rights of South Africa, which speak to ideas of human dignity and the state's support through social security of both the adult who cannot care for themselves and their dependents (SA Bill of Rights, 1997).

[41] I don't know why they don't see it.

Sen (1982) shows us, using dire situations such as famines, how entitlements work. I will refer to the part where he speaks on the economic change that takes place and further compromises those already in poverty. In South Africa, with the COVID-19, we moved to be in a State of Disaster, and this was also for the state to have access to the State of Disaster funds. This was to be used to relieve the society economically and aid in reducing the already problematic hunger crisis that existed before the losses of employment due to the pandemic. To return to what Sen (1982) says concerning entitlement, based on their need, citizens of a country are by all means entitled to social security benefits, even more so when there is a natural disaster. It is not a favour that the state is rendering to those in need. It is their responsibility to do so. Cutting their salaries[42] in half to donate money was no kind gesture when considering how corrupt the government is. I am explaining this also to show how some parts of a Developmental Welfare State work. The majority of my research participants felt uneasy by wanting to demand more and for their needs to be understood in relation to what is needed at what age of the CSG beneficiary's lives.

I was feeling a little unsettled by how most participants felt they were undeserving of both the CSG grant and the special grant funds and that "the government is trying to do something nice for us and meet us halfway", Malethabo said, also explicitly saying, "we shouldn't feel like we are entitled to that money and demand more, no, whatever the government is giving us is enough you know we should appreciate." It is only a way of being polite and to not sound ungrateful for what is being given to them, which is essentially their right. Thinking that you are not entitled to state resources is the type of thinking that is informed by many things that happen around one and also having to hear government officials advise that people look for work instead of looking for "handouts" (Vally 2016, 967) is verbally abusive to people heavily depending on the state for assistance. Such talks suggest that

[42] On the 9th of April 2020, President Ramaphosa announced that he and his cabinet would take 33% of their salaries cut for the three months to come from the day of the announcement, as a way of trying to reduce the economic impact that the COVID-19 would have on the country (South African Government News Agency, 2020). These 33% cuts of three months (R100 000 000) were supposed to be added to the Solidarity Fund that the government initiated to help the poor.

unemployment and looking for these grants is because of laziness. You begin to see certain things as asking for too much when you are not given the bare minimum.

Malethabo had, in our first interview, said that she and other grant recipients are not entitled to the grants. In our second interview, she later showed how conflicted she was about the grants by saying, "it's the government's job to look after us…" but then quickly 'corrects' herself from sounding ungrateful by saying "…(short pause) no but only to a certain extent, because the social grant is not something that they have to have to give us", it shows the ambivalence that exists in grant recipients. She does not stop there but continues to compare South Africa to other countries, "in some countries they don't even get grants, I think it's not a must for them to give us that money."

## Conclusion

This chapter merged theory and rich ethnographic data to discuss citizens' ambivalence in accessing the grant funds. In doing this, I used Sen to explain how they are entitled to the grants in this context. Using Sen and Nussbaum's understanding of how entitlements work, I explained their entitlement through different written legal documents. The chapter discussion started with a personal narrative of Koko Grace about her encounter with Government officials who regularly stole their money from them as grant beneficiaries. I then continued to discuss what I meant by "The Art of Rationing" and that "It's not enough", how mothers to the beneficiaries are always in a constant state of seeking ways to spend less of the grant funds, so they can be able to get more for their children.

What also came through is the impossibility of separating the grant funds from the other forms of income in different families. The impossibility is not based on merely setting aside the money only, but having to use the older children's money to add to the youngest child's grant money as they have more needs. Though the younger kids have more needs, taking money from the other children's grants to provide the youngest kid with their needs translates into a deprivation of the needs of the older children.

In discussing what was meant by “It’s not enough”, I showed how different participants said the same thing differently and how the saying also had a different meaning to each of them. Their narrated lived experiences have explained why the money they get is not enough for the beneficiaries themselves. Especially for the unemployed mothers, which was most of them as only one mother was employed. The ambivalence between the experience of the grant as a gift or entitlement speaks not only to the conflicts of grant recipients but also to the complex nature of their relationship to the state, which will be explored in the next chapter.

## Chapter Three: Re dlaloa mokou

The power dynamics within society are experienced differently by each individual. These are affected by who you are in society and, more importantly, your needs and how attainable they are from where you stand. You live through these power dynamics, based on whether, as you stand in the centre and reach out your arm towards your needs, how the barriers before you react to your outstretched arm. It is up to these power dynamics whether your arm can move through the barrier before you or if your outstretched arm stays within the barrier. Your stance in society determines how these power dynamics hear and relate to you as an individual. I see power dynamics in the participants' everyday lives through how they relate to the society around them, how they feel others see them, and how the state itself sees them. They live through violence and a further internalization of their home situations and the condemnation by the government's ministers about their burden to the state.

This chapter is framed around power and violence. The type of violence I am using to frame this chapter on is the violence experienced within participants' everyday lives, which depends on their social class for this violence to be upon them. On power, I will draw on Foucault's (2003) idea of biopower. One which focuses on the idea of power over life and the power to "make live and let die" (Foucault 2003, 239). I will also connect biopower to how structural violence is used to express how CSG recipients are being pushed to the corner to find work and stop claiming grants. This will speak to what has already been discussed about grants not being enough. Farmer (2004) explains that structural violence is indirectly practised upon those in lower classes who experience the extremities of social inequality. It is embedded within societal structures. It manifests itself in inequality and not being granted the opportunity to create capabilities for oneself (Galtung, 1971). It operates on oppression and further translates into symbolic violence that affects their emotional and mental beings. I argue that the grants are limited in relieving this structural violence and that the grants, in some ways, reinforce elements of structural violence.

As I write this chapter, I frequently look back at my childhood, especially when describing my research participants and their relation with the state. I discuss the relation between the state and the research participants by using a game that most black children across South Africa have played in their childhoods. In the town I grew up in, we call it mokou. I will analyse the power dynamics between the mothers of the grant beneficiaries and the state using the game. I will start by discussing the violence experienced by mothers through a discussion of "Re dlala mokou", and here I unpack how there is no rest for mothers in fulfilling their role. They are constantly trying to be a part of a system that has already been set against them. After "Re dlala mokou", I will then continue with a theoretical analysis using some of the ways participants felt and how they expressed their feelings to show a type of biopower.

In this chapter, we speak of the violence of the state, and by we, I am referring to Mogau, Soraya, Tenya, Buhle; Mama oa Bontle, Bontle, Khutso, Kamogelo; Relebogile, Siya, Andile, Lethabo, Bongani; Malethabo, Phindile; Botselo, Sibonelo; Koko Grace, and I. I write about how each of them has and continue to experience state power as grant recipients. Their experiences of being grant beneficiaries' caregivers have seen them through feelings of distrust in SASSA officials. For some, it has been experiencing excellent and compassionate service for a short while, and for others, it has been the frustration of not being heard by these state officials.

## Re dlala mokou

"Re dlala mokou" is a game that we used to play as kids either with just a ball made from bread plastic covers or shopping plastic bags, with a bit of soil in the centre to help the ball move speedily. People call it dodgeball but saying dodgeball would reduce the idea behind the politics that existed in playing the game and the mediums that went into making the ball and the game being something we all played after doing our house chores as black children raised in villages and townships. This research symbolizes not only the idea of running away and being alert to make sure that you do not get knocked

out of the field of life. It speaks to the idea of the 'survival of the fittest', whether your game partner was knocked out of the game or still playing with, or if you were always alone. Moreso, it speaks to the game the state is playing with women in South Africa.

As one plays mokou, its participants do not have many chances to show that they can jump, duck, move intentionally and quickly while focusing on the ball that targets them. In moving at a fast pace and continually looking to jump over the mounted tins on the other end, you may land on an unnoticed sharp tin or glass, and at times you may see it just as you are about to let it cut through you. You may fall in a way that the stern end of the soil scratches your flesh, leaving behind painful marks and even scars. Alternatively, you might be lucky and have a free jump.

[43]Sometimes, depending on how focused the shooter is, you may get hit hard by the ball and have to sit and watch others play. Sometimes, depending on how much money they want to loot, you may have to wait for them to come driving big cars to make fun of your sorrows by giving you something to help you "forget" that you have been hungry. The shooters in the game usually start with those they see as weak and slow. The state does little for those who cannot speak for themselves. They start with easy targets. The government exercises biopower in manipulating mokou (Foucault, 2003), as it is as if they are wondering why they should let the players of mokou enjoy the game. The game is not meant to be controlled by anyone, but Foucault (2003) makes us aware of how the state has been penetrating ordinary citizens' lives to control their lives with what the state chooses to give them and what they choose to withhold from them. The state wants to control the lives of everyone. This need for control of life is exemplified in how they exercise their power by giving the vulnerable mothers a taste of their lives but still holding back from giving them the whole sack of grain (Foucault, 2003). Vally (2016)

[43] I write a sentence about playing the game and then immediately after that switch to my analogy. I am doing this to show the opposite ends of the conversation between the grant recipients and the state, that is not being had.

had taken note of this in her interaction with grant recipients, that the government performs what I call 'acts of care' towards elections to get votes.

Now that is how mothers lose themselves in trying to care for their children on nothing. They are being played with. They are given a grain a month while they slave away in the merciless scorching sun. Sometimes, they get knocked out, but unlike most players who would tend to the parts of their body that were hit, they do not have that time. Mothers force themselves into the game and play by themselves, begging the shooter to see them, to recognize them. To give them a chance at returning to prove their abilities. Abilities they need not prove because they survive on a grain for the entire month.

Mothers feeling the need to return to the game is a violation that they cannot escape, as though wounded, they are still required to perform the act of being a "good" mother. They experience the type of violence that disarms them, they are violated in experiencing structural violence through powerlessness (Kleinman, 2000; Galtung, 1971). Not being able to feel what she is feeling and letting herself get through it while helping herself heal. But she cannot do that because being a mother is a full-time job. The extremities of the inequality she lives through each day result from structural violence (Galtung, 1971).

## Loss through motherhood

The caregivers of the grant recipients, as mothers, lose themselves in being mothers and having to perform the role of being a 'good mother'. The loss I discuss here is that of a mother starting a new job, titled childcare, without getting any form of compensation. She does her job so well that, in the end, her uncompensated work pours into the compensated labour system of society and back into the country's economy. She is tirelessly working to raise her children and lives to experience seeing the father come in as a detached entity from their child. By embracing her new role as a mother, Malethabo had not imagined that she would suffer the loss of not only her freedom but of her child losing a father who is still alive. For Mama oa Bontle, her loss was caused by nature, death. For Relebogile, it was

first the death of her first partner and father to her first two children, then an absent father and later, her retrenchment.

Scattered pieces of their being lie everywhere. Relebogile was reminded harshly of a betrayal she had hoped she would not have to experience. She was being reminded of her loss; through an exhale, she said, "as for the father, you know how they are, when they hear that oh there's a little one coming, they are with you for maybe three or four months, after they are born then phew, they are gone, they go away." This betrayal makes her constantly ask herself what she had done wrong and why this responsibility was left for her to get through without the man who should be responsible. Once again, the man can explore his choice, and he can say that all the responsibility was too much for him and leave. Whether he stays or leaves, he would have exercised his free will to choose. Women and women like Relebogile do not have that choice. If she decides to drop off the children at their father's house, she is an irresponsible parent who is out of her mind, a *straat mate*[44]. The worst that can be said about the man is that he is a sperm donor, even then, society does not rebuke his absence, and if or when he decides to return, to report for duty, he will be applauded. He is applauded for what is essentially his responsibility to the child, not to the mother, but the child.

Circumstances had made Mama oa Bontle turn to the state, and her reasons for doing that were the loss of her husband, which also meant that they no longer had an income, stable income. In engaging with the state and not receiving any form of help, some losses were incurred. She lost the dignity she felt was all she was left with. After months of begging, pleading with her in-laws and her friends, her eyes were opened to the reality of being a beggar. People avoided her like a person with leprosy, and she expressed it like this:

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[44] She has no direction in life.
A straat mate is someone who was not raised well, a person who exercises their will without caring about what others may say.

“So, I knew that even if I call people, sometimes they won’t answer my calls, and sometimes they would not answer my text. When they saw my call when they answered, they would be the first ones to ask for money from me knowing well that I do not work, so it was like they were saying that I must not ask.”

This betrayed her sense of understanding of the intimate relations she believed she shared with her family members and friends. Turning to the state was her last option. She had not desired to interact with the state, but she did because she wanted to escape a different form of dehumanization, as the grant “makes you human because no one has to know your problems, you can go and buy your own food and have your food”. She was a woman who was still mourning the sudden death of her husband. She could not tend to her wounds. With a troubled spirit, she had to rush back to participating in mokou, while three hands are holding onto her and six eyes are looking to her for direction. The state, too, played mokou with her, an injured mother looking for a solution so she could feed her young ones.

The government's incentives are the only reason people “forget” that the government is only trying to buy their votes; citizens are aware of the performances that take place during the time in which different parties’ campaign. At times, and I have heard people ask, “who will then give us grants?” and “who will now build RDP houses?” for them, and the biggest of all statements “, we will go back to apartheid”. Depending on the people in your circles, you may have heard similar questions being asked, and I do not blame them. These are real fears. These questions make me think a lot about how important the journey towards decolonizing the mind is for those who are descendants of those who were and continue to be oppressed, as the internalization of the lived oppression continues and cripples one in how the suffering has now been normalized. We continue to face the harshness of political and economic powers because we are people still living in poverty (Kleinman, 2000). It is our people who continue to beg at the robots.

## Violence

It is important to understand the relation between women receiving grants for their children from the state and the state structures. It is essential to understand and acknowledge that social and state structures see women as nurturers and caregivers. It is also vital to understand this relationship through the participants' lived experiences as black women[45] to the state. As I show these, imagine the state as the capitalist systems' most treasured and privileged being who stands at the top of the list of gender and race, the white man. The one who sees poverty as a result of people's own doing, their laziness. The white man who does not acknowledge the existence of a black woman[46] as anything but burdensome and only sees her as a nanny or maid to his children, a dehumanized person who does not feel her emotions. The administrators of the state are desensitized to the cries of the black community, and this desensitization is a form of normalization of their struggles (Foucault, 2003). As Foucault (2003) explicitly expresses, a society that normalizes unequal conditions often allows racism to precondition this desensitization. This is a type of power that operates hand-in-hand with structural violence. As you read through this report, I hope that you got a sense of the everyday acts of violence that these black women experience. Experiences I will continue to show and discuss the violence thereof.

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[45]In this chapter, I refer to the participants as the state and society relate to them, as black women. Referring to them as black women enables us to better position them and know the type of woman we are speaking of. I am not in any way trying to scream my lungs out regarding the struggles of black women. I am a black and a woman, and I am telling a story I can relate to, a story that tells you, if you were paying close attention, about what was around me and about my upbringing. I am also telling you this story based on my lived experience as a black woman in the world; a black woman in South Africa, its provinces and its towns, and as a young woman who was introduced to what the reality of growing up in one of the countries most racist provinces (Limpopo) after the Free State and Western Cape, feels like. I see how acts are adjusted by both black men and women and by white men, women, and their children. The former adjusts their act based on the light they can view me in, in relation to how much closer to purity (whiteness) they can see me. The latter adjusts their act based on my bold body language and the tone and accent of the first few words I say in response to the one quest I hate the most; they do not recognize me in the isles until they need help. They see me as an accessory to them in the store even when they see me pushing a trolley. The state also relates to black women as accessories to their image when they need their votes and likes. Their officials relate to black women as nagging people who truly are an inconvenience to the state. They disrespect black women because they fail to see themselves in us.

The process of receiving SASSA grants is violent to the grant caregivers, both in the structural sense of violence and through the exertion of power through 'positive' incentives from the state, the grants. How SASSA relates to the women who want to apply for the grants shows that they are not concerned about the caregiver's well-being. SASSA does not show care to women who enter the motherland, as after they give birth, they still need to look for SASSA. Women needing to wait to recover before they can begin having their children in the SASSA system is violent to these women. It is violent. They have to push themselves to feel better because they need the money to care for their children. Relebogile mentions that it is difficult to perform duties when pregnant "…when you are pregnant you do not want to do certain things, moods everything nje (giggles)". These feelings and emotions are exacerbated by the physical pain of having pushed a baby out of your body and, for some, being cut open. Their bodies do not recover immediately or as quickly as a month, as they are neither sleeping during the first few months to almost a year. But, as a mother who needs money to help care for her child, you cannot wait to recover a little before you can start the application process. Malethabo could not wait long, "I applied for it just after giving birth, uhm after giving birth, and you get it a month after because you have to wait for the month-end". The need to rush their healing is a form of an exercise of power, a power that is violent to the bodies of these women, and reminds them that because they do not have the means to provide for their babies, they need to get through the pain and go stand in queues to apply for the grants.

SASSA does not try to make an effort to ensure that since the caregivers would have just given birth, to help them through the process. Through the Home Affairs, the state takes the initiative to base themselves in both public and private hospitals to help mothers register their newborn children onto the South African system[47]so that they can get recognized. Still, the same or similar is not done to help

[47] "We have expanded online birth registration at hospitals, so that people can register the birth of their children and receive unabridged birth certificates before leaving the hospital. If we can register all hospital births before leaving the hospital, we will come that much closer to universal early birth registration" (Department of Home Affairs 2015, 2)

mothers get their children onto the grants. If SASSA cared about the recipients, they would identify spots where parts of their system can be synchronized in hospitals to help the mothers easily access them. Rather than putting a woman who just gave birth in a position wherein they need to find the SASSA offices and stand in the queues before having their children put onto the grant. Mogau expressed that she had not yet applied, as at the time of the interview, her baby was a month and a few weeks old. She said, "yoh uhm, those are the worst, the worst worst worst, I still have not applied for the grant". Mogau only applied for the grant when her baby was around four months old, "uhm I will go after the maternity leave ba too much", to say "ba too much[48]" was her referring to SASSA, and it also expresses her reluctance to start the application, which she had expressed she needed. But for her, unlike Malethabo, she has a responsible baby daddy whom she says, "he usually spends around R3500 a month on her, Tenya", Malethabo had to go within a month to SASSA. The state interacts with people based on how loudly their voices push through to different hierarchies within their bureaucratic offices.

The state does not fail to operate using the historical context of its relation to the black woman; here, I am referring to it as a whole, and I do this because all the different agencies and departments that form part of the state behave in the same way toward the poor. The state's central and sometimes decentralised power operates in different institutions through the government officials who represent the DSD and SASSA. The state shows its different and numerous faces differently to each group of people. It is in how the relationship between the violent aspect of the state brings out the sense of fearfulness, burdensomeness, and restrictive language in how participants like Malethabo would say that they cannot ask for more. There is no service consistency but rather consistency in the attitude towards the vulnerable individuals.

[48] They are too much, in the sense that, SASSA officials make her spirit tired.

The many hats of services are switched throughout SASSA, from one official to the next. Mogau, at age 16, through her interaction with a lady from SASSA, says, “I went alone to the SASSA offices to find out what they needed, and the lady there was very, very kind to me, and she helped me apply for the grant”. At age 24, she experiences the extreme opposite, “having to apply for the grant makes you feel like you are poor, you queue for the longest time ever, and the people working there are not nice, it's painful, especially when it’s the only thing”. This is a queue that not only makes you feel poor, but the treatment you get there also makes you feel like the least important person in that space. As I processed this data, I wondered if this could have motivated Mogau to keep the SASSA card after trying multiple times to give it to her aunt, who cares for her child. If this was why her guilt subsided, as she only uses the money on her first daughter four times a year if she comes home for the school holidays. The services dehumanize you, a person looking for help, already feeling helpless. If you are like Relebogile and Malethabo, you waited in the long queues while still in the pain of having given birth.

Suppose you are a widow with no alternative to receiving help and are looking to the state like Mama oa Bontle. In that case, you are a person who, after sharing your woes with the SASSA officials, you are only heard after a year of severely struggling. After a whole year of begging and pleading for your case to be understood as it is when she finally received the money, she felt that “with the grant, I feel that I still have my dignity, I don’t have to go around begging people for food, whether you are going hungry whether you are eating, you still keeping your dignity”. Though dehumanized by her constant pleading for a year, she felt that “it makes you human because no one has to know your problems, you can go and buy your own food and have your food. Then you can have your struggles here and there”, with good reason, she felt abandoned by her relatives, and thus did not consider how the state dehumanized her. How they had violated her being. Mama oa Bontle continues to use the grant, even though she now has her own small business. She had now realised that she is on her own. She needs

to do what she can to put food on the table. After all, she is a mother who toiled for a year to get onto the SASSA system.

The SASSA officials are meant to serve the people. But in some cases, the SASSA officials have been stealing money from Koko Grace's now late husband, "mo kgalabe ka tsatsi le le ngwe, ne ba mo ropile, ba tsheri chelete, nkare R200 mo cheleteng ya modende[49]". She had expressed that this was not the first time, but that on that specific day they, "ne ke kwatile thata, ka re today, ko ba tshwarisha he ba ka se refe chelete e ba e otswitseng, he re fitlha ko masepala, ke ba boditshe go re ke tloya mapodisheng. A yintsha ka mo potleng yah ae a re fa yona[50]".

During level 5 lockdown, elderly people were receiving grants, but the ANC people's parents received these food packs, according to Koko Grace. She and her neighbours did not receive anything. It got to a point where the youth had started rioting and calling the ANC people out for giving their families the food packs when they already have food because they stay in big houses and just retired from working for the government.

In asking for more, where would one begin to express their needs to the state officials that the "free money" they are receiving is not enough? Would their children suffer the consequences of a query about other ways they can be assisted? Violence exists in not being able to say a word about how you feel and not being able to explain to your children why there is no food. Explaining how your children's needs are not being met because you have other children who need that money "more" than they do, it pains Relebogile to think that she can explain that "lo R500 lowo, instead of ukuthi ihelpe lababoyi two ihelpa lo omncani, ngoba beasadla iformula[51]" and the use of the older children's grant money for the youngest child became even more frustrating when the grandmother is unable to buy bread because

[49] The SASSA officials, had taken about R300 of her husband's grant.
[50] I was very angry on that day because it was not the first time that they were stealing our money, I told him that we are going to get the money from them. When they got to the building next to the municipal building, she threatened to go to report this incident to the police and the SASSA official took the money out from her pocket.
[51] The R500, instead of helping my to children, actually only helps my youngest child because he still drinks formula.

Relebogile did not have enough money. As a result, her mother had to buy her youngest child more of his needs, which meant they would not be able to buy bread for the house.

It is a violation of the caregiver that expresses acts of violence to the children. Their violations create a form of powerlessness that constantly reminds them of the poverty that is always before them and that they live in. Not being able to have hope for a future concerning possible employment. The violations are harboured in instances of constant reminders that, well, you did not die. You still pulled through, sleeping in hunger. The attitude expresses that other African countries do not have what you have as a South African, as Malethabo once expressed, so be grateful. This is how silence is curated by internalizing what you have been seeing and hearing around you.

The saying, "as long as", expresses their violations, they no longer feel disappointed and neither do they have hope for change, maybe in their unconscious, but it must be conflicted. In saying that, all they hope for the following day is to see that their lives are okay. What is meant to symbolize a fresh start and a new day to make things better is that they are caught up in what Mama oa Bontle mentioned that she had had fears for her children, a vicious cycle. To say life is okay for them is hoping that no one is sick because there is no money to go to the hospital. Free hospitals still need one to get into a taxi, pay something for them to get there. It requires that certain foods be eaten for there to be life. No money can be spared for that, so they demand that they stay healthy. The hope for health is not the same for them. This saying suggests a relief that you do not have too many issues to worry yourself about because tomorrow itself is constantly worrying you. These are the acts of violence of the everyday and of everyday life.

## Conclusion

To conclude this discussion, I would like to say that the state, in this case, the DSD through SASSA, has been violating the child support grant beneficiaries' caregivers, emotionally, mentally and physically. In this chapter, I expressed how the state relates to individuals based on how loud they can

get and how far their outstretched arms can reach, which speaks to the amount of power they have. The women I interviewed are not only victims but people who defy the bureaucratic systems in their own ways. They deliberately disobey the rules which govern SASSA's requirements for one to be assisted with grant funds. They do this by considering their home situations and making the conscious decision to continue receiving the money for their children even when, like Mogau, they do not stay with them. The violences that they experience were not only violences that stayed only with the caregivers, but in some cases, extended to the children, not being able to have what they need due to their households not having enough. To further show how the violence is continuous, I discussed the sufferings of the caregivers in how they are in a game they are always being forced back into by their circumstances and how the state is constantly playing with their woes. The state is ever clowning with the lives of the vulnerable, in all the faces they reveal to the society through different departments, agencies and institutions, ba dlala ka ditlhogo tsa rena[52].

[52] They are playing with our heads.

## Final Conclusion

This research is not only about grants that the state gift to those who cannot care for them on the income they receive, if they receive any at all, and as discussed in this research report, most of the participants are also unemployed. They do not have an income but rather depend on the grant as the sole income source. The research was about real people with real everyday challenges and experiences that make me think a lot about the purpose of doing research beyond creating awareness. When I started with my research, I was shocked and, at times, angered by what I was finding. At times it felt like I was the subject matter, and seeing how nonchalant the state has been about the child support grants, has made me wonder if there will ever be a time when not all families are grouped under one umbrella where child support grants are concerned.

The first ethnographic chapter of the report showed the complexities that exist for women in being mothers. I argued that grants are received and circulated within intergenerational networks of care among women, and as a result, they are not completely focused on the children. Fathers come into the lives of their children as distant people who have no responsibility to their children. The mothers are always in the act of active waiting in the way Han (2012) speaks about it; they have experienced being able to provide care for their children through receiving care from those around them. The mothers are the ones who have had to see to it that their children are cared for, as they cannot like men relinquish their responsibilities to their children. Instead, what happens is, the responsibility of raising these children was taken up by the women in the family. The women coming in to help raise the children has helped me lean on hook's (2000) idea of communal love, which advocates for care to go beyond nuclear families as the children need to experience love beyond their own parents.

Women in the families did not start helping the mothers care for their children without reason, and they could see that their help was needed. In some cases, it became visible that not having any support was traumatizing to these women. Their experiences have been normalized, and I problematize this

normalization in the third chapter, as the normalization of women's suffering is an issue that continues to perpetuate women's objectification. These ideas are promoted by the social construct of women being tough for them to be seen as worthy of some form of praise.

In the second chapter on free money, I focused on showing how participants are torn between expressing that the money they receive to care for their children is not enough and being grateful that they receive money. I argued that recipients understand the grant money in an ambivalent way as both 'free money' from the state and as an entitlement. Some participants felt that this money they receive should not be something they feel is theirs to make demands on and feel entitled to. I objected to the idea of them not feeling or not wanting to feel entitled to the money because South Africa is a Developmental Welfare state. They have felt that they should be grateful and be aware of how many children have been raised using only the grant money and that they should see it as a gift from the government. I used Carriers (1991) idea of the grants being obligatory gifts from the state for the care of the children.

They have had to develop different ways of using the money in the household and target specials to ensure that they have what is needed for the month. However, because the money is not enough, there have been times when the other children's needs were not met because the youngest child needed to be prioritized. The money is often focused on the whole family and not only the child, which shows that having grants based on the assumption that there is a stable income in these families overlooks the unemployment status of the families.

In the third chapter, I focused on the violence that the grant recipient's caregivers experience, which is then transferred to the children by the children not having their needs provided to them when there is a newborn baby in the family. I argued that the grants enter already vulnerable families, and because of this, they are limited in relieving structural violence in the lives of these families; instead, what happens is that it reinforces this violence. The caregivers are unable to escape this structural violence

as it reproduces itself because they live through poverty and have not been able to have formal university education, and are thus waiting for their children to reach a level in education that they have not. I drew from Farmer (2004), and Galtung's (1971) idea of structural violence as their conceptualization of structural violence enabled me to see that structural violence operates and thrives on oppression.

The grant beneficiaries and their families continually fall through the cracks of bureaucracy. They are not just people in a state system. They are resistant people. Once they have access to the grant, they navigate through the bureaucracies of the distant and detached social security agency, and this is what I discuss after "Re dlala mokou". It is true that suffering, violence, and vulnerability preoccupy their lives, but do not only see them as abused or violated, acknowledge that they are people, and are also aware of their sufferings. They resist the standing bureaucracy in many different ways. One of those ways is, when they find employment, after a long time of not having this opportunity, and it is work that pays above what the DSD requires you to earn for them to no longer pay your grants, as a Child Support Grant caregiver, R4000, they remain within the system.

Mothers give care to their children as an act of service of their love for them. Mothers need more support to care for their children and themselves. Additional support can be made by receiving monthly monetary support from the Department of Social Development or monthly food parcels. However, what is more, important is for DSD to better understand the needs of the grant beneficiaries, and this is not to suggest that they get an amount that replaces or stands in the gap of unemployment. But that the gifter needs to understand the gift they are giving to the recipients is both inadequate and imposes burdens and unreasonable expectations while also considering the climate of the unemployment rate in South Africa today.

The grants are given to recipients by the state as gifts welcomed and accepted by the recipients as they are needed gifts. Mothers are violated by the unreasonable expectation of playing the role of a nurturer

without the same expectation being directed to men and the policing of how they should use the grant to care for the children. These acts of violence get transferred to the children in what they need to give up as children for the whole family to care for themselves. Though not explored, it is essential to look into the sacrifices that children and their mothers need to make for them to survive and the impact and state in which caregivers were left when the R500 grant ended in December 2020. Many families were left devastated by this change.

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