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The child support grant: the reported experiences of child support grant recipients

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the new South Africa this is post 1994, there were several strategies that were initiated by the government in an effort to alleviate poverty to the previously disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of our communities. As part of the strategies to alleviate poverty the Child Support Grant which replaced the maintenance grants that was previously in effect in South Africa commenced in 1998. It has been said from the commencement date that the Child Support Grant has proven to be successful as it has been able, according to the then ministry of social development to reach over 11 million beneficiaries in 2013.

The Child Support Grant is founded on the Bill of rights that prescribes that children ought to get a full measure of security and basic services (Leatt, 2006), thus the child support is given to the caregivers of the child in order for the basic needs to be met on a monthly basis. To elaborate on the prescription of the bill of rights, The Child Support Grant was founded on the basis of section 27 of the constitution which specifies that ‘‘(1) Everyone has the right to have access to (a) health care services; (b) sufficient food and water; and (c) social security, which includes, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance should be given to them, and (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights’’(Constitution, 1996).

Section 28 of the constitution stipulates the specific rights for children (Seekings, 2007). These and other rights are said to be based on the ‘democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom’(Barrientos & DeJong, 2004). The Constitutional Court has stated that the socio-economic rights are necessary, if citizens are to enjoy the other rights enshrined in the

constitution and also if South Africa is to become a society based on the above values (Seekings, 2007). Over and above the Constitutional provisions, South Africa is obliged by international law to give effect to the right to social security in terms of convention on the rights of the child(Friedman & Bhengu, 2008). This is an obligation that developing countries such as South Africa have in ensuring that the basic minimum standards of living for the people are catered for; this is also an agreement that developing and developed countries have about the importance of social security and as mentioned above for poverty alleviation. This above sections of the revised constitution enabled the introduction of the Child Support Grant and the abolishing, or rather phasing out of the State Maintenance Grant (SMG).

There have been different studies that were done on the Child Support Grant and amongst the available data there are evaluations of the grant. These include quantitative evaluation of the Child Support Grant in communities about the beneficiaries of the grant beginning in 1998, which is part of the government's policy evaluation to determine the success of the grant as a poverty alleviation strategy. It can be concluded that the grant has been reaching more people in the last 16 years (Neves, Samson, van Niekerk, Hlatshwayo, & du Toit, 2009). The literature review will explore the studies that have been done in relation to the Child Support Grant. The literature review will explore the different factors such as Child Support Grant in households, the impacts of the Grant and the role of authority in social grants. There has been research done on the myths surrounding the Child Support Grant, the effectiveness of the Child Support Grant and the extent to which it is poverty alleviating strategy.

The Child Support Grant research done has explored the issues of poverty. These issues included the definition of poverty, poverty in different contexts in South Africa, and the influences it has on households.

Studies have explored the Child Support Grant as a poverty alleviation strategy as mentioned above, thus the Child Support Grant is designed as a means of poverty alleviation in the country directed at meeting the basic standard of living for children under the age of 18. Democratic South Africa was born amidst high hopes for the reduction of income poverty and inequality from their high levels under apartheid. The reality almost two decades in has been reportedly disappointing (Seekings, 2007), as there are reports of millions of South Africans still living in poverty, although poverty alleviation strategies like the Child Support Grant have been put in place. In light of the continuing prevalence of poverty, it is important to examine the experiences of people who are recipients of the poverty alleviation strategies.

The research that has been done in the past has been heavily on the economic, development and political fields of the Child Support Grant. There have been specific gaps that have been found some of which are the focus of this project. The challenge of the study was to get the participants to openly report on their experiences, thus moving away from what past research has contributed on this topic. The study looked at the reported experiences of the participants' as well taking note of some of the difficulties involved in doing research about the social grants because of participants' reluctance to share their experiences or factors that affect the responses that participant give about the Child Support Grant.

The problem all through the receiving of the grant is that not a lot of research has gone into finding out the experiences of the recipients in terms of the grant. There have been different talks from the public and on some literature about the perceptions that they have of the Child Support Grant. Literature tells us of how effective and how it has immensely improved the lives of the child grant recipients. There is also reported myths around the experiences of Child Support Grant recipients amongst the public (Solomon, 2013) and evidence in what people were

saying led to the interest in finding out the experiences of grant recipients meaning, how they make sense of the receiving of the grant and to find out whether there are other factors in their experience of receiving grant.

From the above text, the gist of the basis of the child support grant has been given. The attention of this study was to know the experiences of the child support grant recipients. This is to add to the knowledge economy on how they make sense of their experience as recipients. The introduction also highlights some of the factors that determine research participation from this community.

The research questions of the study were as follows:

a) What are the reported experiences of the Child Support Grant recipients

    i. How do these participants make sense of the impact and importance of the Child Support Grant in their daily lives?

    ii. How do these participants make sense of their position in society as recipients of the Child Support Grant?

b) What are some of the challenges involved in conducting research with Child Support Grant recipients as participants?

    i. How do these participants engage with requests for them to participate in research?

    ii. How do these participants co-operate with or resist questions about their experiences as Child Support Grant recipients?

In the following section, I will present a literature review that will discuss the following focus being on the Child Support Grant; the background, the policy, the beneficiaries and other related studies of the Child Support Grant and also reflexivity. The literature review will be followed by the methods and data section, for the purpose of this study qualitative interview design was used and thematic analysis was used as a method of analysis of the data collected. Then in the findings and discussion section the themes that emerged from the data collected are discussed for the purpose of answering the research questions and the link to literature. The conclusions are informed by the findings and the discussion and the relation to the research questions. The implications of the findings of this study are towards knowledge in this topic and be discussed in the conclusion of the research report.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review focuses on previous studies that have been done similar to the current study and also examines related topics that are relevant for consideration of this particular study. In this section, the focus will be on Child Support Grant as a poverty alleviation strategy that has been implemented now for 16 years. This section will look at the background of the Child Support Grant, the segments in the constitution that have guided the Child Support Grant policy and beneficiaries to the Child Support Grant, including the reported impacts in the last 16 years. The section will discuss some of the research studies that have been done in relation to the Child Support Grant. The section will look at the perception of authority in Child Support Grant and reflexivity of the researcher in terms of actively participating in the study and conducting research.

2.1. Poverty and Poverty Reduction Policies

This section aims to give a contextual view of the Child Support Grant, with the section beginning from defining poverty and the relation to children as well as the Child Support Grant as the context.

Poverty is defined as the inability to get a minimal standard of living, measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them (Triegaardt, 2005). Poverty in South Africa is not a new material reality for many people that came with the wake of democracy; it can be traced back for decades. It remains one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa amongst other Southern African countries, as such there are alleviation strategies like the Child Support Grant that are being implemented in the country.

As this study was focused on the Child Support Grant, poverty as discussed in this literature review will be used in view of the effects on children. Reported statistics indicate that the majority recipients of the support grant are women. This is supported by statistics on women that illustrate their supposedly inferior position in the labour market, which makes them even more vulnerable than South African men to poverty, and more dependent on other sources of income, such as the Child Support Grant and child maintenance grant (Patel , Hochfeld, Moodley, & Mutwali, 2012). Hence, it is reported that grant beneficiaries due to lack of information and perhaps knowledge deficit or the lack of employment choose the child support grant as the only strategy to deal with child poverty (Patel et al., 2012). The Child Support Grant if used as the only means to support children is at times insufficient to cover up for all the beneficiaries' needs and their children's needs (Mkhize & Ntombela, 2009). The above information implies a conclusion that women and children feel the effects of poverty most, the children because the parents do not have the means to care for them and women because they are most often unemployed and taking care of the children directly.

Despite the poverty alleviation strategies like the Child Support Grant, according to Du Plessies and Conley (2007) it is a situation where children do not have enough resources to grow healthy and strong. To get education, this part of poverty effects are currently being dealt with in recent years by the government providing free primary education from public schools (or fully government funded schools). The poverty affects the children from to living in a good and safe environment. Affecting the children to fulfil their potential and where children are deprived of the resources needed to grow and develop, they are living in poverty. Their definition for child poverty is based on income and expenditure in households because, in the society we live in, money gives power to purchase many things that are needed (Du Plessies & Conley, 2007).

Social security is seen as covering a wide range of public and private measures that provide cash and/ or in-kind benefits. Firstly, in the event of an individual's earning power permanently stopping, being interrupted, or never developing. The individual's earning power exercised only at unacceptable social cost and such a person being unable to avoid poverty. Secondly, in order to maintain children (Leibbrandt, Wegner, & Finn, 2011). The domains of social security are poverty prevention, poverty alleviation, social compensation and income distribution (Leibbrandt et al., 2011). This relates exactly to the Child Support Grant, as it has been designed to give some sort of security to the beneficiaries. However, sometimes it is said to fall short.

The social security system for children in South Africa is inadequate in its capacity to address the socio- economic realities stated above fully (Leibbrandt, Wegner, & Finn, 2011). It is governed piecemeal in various acts, including the Social Assistance Act 59 of 1992, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, and the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and various other acts and is by no means comprehensive (Leibbrandt, Wegner, & Finn, 2011). For the purpose of this study the focus will be on the Social Assistance Act and the child care act. Each act that forms part of the foundation or basis of the child support has objectives. The objectives of the social Assistance Act 59 of 1992 are firstly to provide for the administration of social assistance and payments of social grants; secondly to make provision for social assistance and to determine the qualification requirements in respect thereof; thirdly to ensure that minimum norms and standards are prescribed for the delivery of social assistance and finally, to provide for the establishment of an inspectorate for social assistance (Constitution, 1996).

The child care Act 74 of 1983, which was amended in 2005 states that whenever a person does something that concerns or affects a child; this must be done in the best interests. Hence, the child support grant is continually put in place as a way of ensuring that the interests of the child

are met in every household, thus the grant money is expected to be used by the recipients in the best interests of the child. In light of this Act, the Child Support Grant is presently an entitlement to every child in South Africa, this is to encourage independence and self-sufficiency and to ensure that the interest of the child is considered and fulfilled (Constitution, 1996).The Child Support Grant was founded on the basis of section 27 of the constitution which specifies that ‘‘(1) Everyone has the right to have access to (a) health care services; (b) sufficient food and water; and (c) social security, which includes, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance should be given to them (Constitution, 1996), and (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights’’ (Constitution, 1996).

Section 28 of the constitution as published in 1996 stipulates the specific rights for children (Seekings, 2007). These and other rights are said to be based on the ‘democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom’ (Barrientos & DeJong, 2004). The Constitutional Court has stated that realizing socio-economic rights is necessary if citizens are to enjoy the other rights enshrined in the constitution and if South Africa is to become a society based on the above values (Seekings, 2007). Specifically section 28 (1) (a) of the constitution states: ‘ Every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services’ (Chapter 2: Bill of Rights, 1996). This was adapted from the Child Care Act 1983, there were reported concerns to the 1983 act as such when the first democratic elections took place in 1994, and a new government voted in the revision of the act was put in place leading to the above mentioned 1996 bill of Rights child act section (Lund, 2011). Over and above the Constitutional provisions, South Africa is obliged by international law to give effect to the right to social security in terms of convention on the rights of the child (Friedman & Bhengu, 2008).

The new democratic government of South Africa established the Lund Committee in 1996 to evaluate the existing system of state support and to explore new alternative policy options targeting children and families (Makino, 2004). In 1998 the Child Support Grant (CSG) replaced the existing State Maintenance Grant (SMG) (Aguero, Carter, & Woolard, 2006), which was initially established during the apartheid years to benefit mostly the white population of South Africa at the time (Lund, 2008), post-apartheid South Africa saw increased access and real benefit levels for Africans and reduced real levels of benefits for white pensioners (Makino, 2004), The Child Support Grant was introduced as a continued, however improved version of the SMG.

The new government in stopping the State Maintenance Grant (SMG) immediately understood the role that the SMG played and that it would be disastrous to instantly terminate the SMG as there were people who were receiving and relying on the grant (Lund, 2008); and both the old and new governments had an understanding that grants like the SMG and ultimately the Child Support Grant are important interventions to poverty alleviation (Lund, 1993). As such, the SMG was not instantly terminated instead it was slowly stopped as it was being replaced by a different policy that was being worked on by the government.

The Child Support Grant started on the 01 April 1998 and it was somewhat notionally set at a level linked to feeding a child (Lund, 1993), this is after the Lund committee was established so as to work out the significance of supporting children and families (Lund, 2008). This was that the welfare supports the poorest South African children, and especially for those in the rural areas, whose welfare programs or support was considered almost non-existent (Lund, 1993). There are four objectives that the Child Support Grant has which are as follows; (i) to ensure greater access for poor children to an integrated and sustainable security system in the country;

(ii) to provide a child grant on an equitable basis to those in need regardless of family structure, or tradition or race; (iii) prevent children from unnecessarily entering or remaining in statutory substitute care; and (iv) to keep children off the streets and out of juvenile detention centres (Triegaardt, 2005).

The grant has been increasing with the inflation rates over the years, from R100 in 1998 when the Child Support Grant started to currently R315 in 2014. There is a test that is conducted before the child grant can be awarded; this is called the means test. This test states that the child's primary caregiver must not earn more than R34 800 per year for single parents and R69 600 per year for married couples. The other requirement is that the child and caregivers should be citizens or permanent residence of South Africa (Coetzee, 2013). The means test has remained unchanged in nominal terms since 1998 (Barrientos & DeJong, 2004), however despite this increasingly stringent means test, about half of age-eligible children are recipients of the grant to date (Aguero, Carter, & Woolard, 2006). At the start of the Child Support Grant, the age limit was 7 years, however the government has increased the age limit for eligibility in recent years to the age of 18; the amount granted has also changed since 1998 and the increases have correlated with the inflation as mentioned above (Aguero, Carter, & Woolard, 2006).

The means test is used to ascertain who can obtain the Child Support Grant, the notion used is "follow the child" which is via the primary caregiver (either biological parents, or legal guardian) (Case, Hosegood, & Lund, 2005). Thus legally, the children are the benefactors of the grant, however the grant must be paid over to an adult and it is the intention that the person to whom the grant is paid, is the primary care giver of the child for whom the benefit is intended. In cases where the applicant is not the biological parent of the child, a sworn affidavit from the parents or guardians is required to confirm that the applicant is indeed the primary care giver

(Samson, MacQuene, & van Niekerk, 2006). In practice, the designation of the primary care giver as the grant recipient has effectively targeted women and when the Child Support Grant (CSG) was introduced it was intended to cover the poorest (Aguero, Carter, & Woolard, 2006). There have been reports that the means test excludes some of the poor people of south Africa who do need the Child Support Grant to assist in their living, thus forming part of the question of whether the policy of the Child Support Grant is achieving the goal that has been set from the beginning or from the establishment of the poverty alleviation project over the years not just on the policy front but from the reports of the recipients of the grant at different times (Lund, 2008). This study does not directly deal with this particular question; however this is an important question that contributes to the experiences of the recipients.

2.2. The Child Support Grant in Households

There is a current challenge that has been discovered by research, which is that most grant beneficiaries are challenged by the lack of education and information (Coetzee, 2013). There is a challenge for means to access early childhood development for their children, poor health facilities, lack of food and nutrition. Challenges being faced by households also include poor service delivery from the government departments which results in lack of houses, water, sanitation and electricity, unemployment and lack of emotional support and dignity (Delany, Ismail, Graham, & Ramkisson, 2008). The majority of Child Support Grant beneficiaries face challenges of skills deficiencies, especially in communication skills, basic reading and writing skills, technological and mathematical skills which are critical for consideration in preparing them for training for self- employment or inclusion in the labour system (Patel, 2011). Many South African women are unemployed and even if they are employed their status and earnings are often lower than those of their male counterparts. This is despite the implementation of the

Employment Equity Act; it remains a challenge for most women to break through the glass ceiling (Patel , Hochfeld, Moodley, & Mutwali, 2012). According to Budlender and Moyo (2004), many factors explain this. For example, 18% of African women aged 25 years and older have no formal education, compared to 13% of African men and even smaller percentages of other groupings. This lack of education has affected economic status of women, with respect to employment. According to Budlender and Moyo (2004) a smaller proportion of women than men in the age group 15 - 65 years are employed and a larger proportion is not economically active.

The unemployment rate is also higher for women than men. Women are discouraged to seek employment as a result of lack of time, finance, transport and other constraints (Patel , Hochfeld, Moodley, & Mutwali, 2012).Thus, women and children, as mentioned above are, the main beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant. The grant, as will be discussed below, does not only benefit the children but the entire household because of the poverty and the unemployment rate amongst women who are the main caregivers of children in South African society. The perspectives that people have which have been voiced out as unlikely though pervasive belief that teenage girls were falling pregnant in order to access the Child Support Grants appeared to contribute to stigmatising grant applicants (Solomon, 2013). There are potentially negative impacts on the mental health of young mothers, as such young mothers opt to send their elder guardians to receive the money on behalf of the child or some would have to endure the stigma that comes with the receiving of Child Support Grant. This could affect the participants on how they communicate with the researcher about the Child Support Grant. It is my opinion that the stigmas no matter how untrue they are, could affect the way in which participants speak to the researcher at the assumption that they might share in the same stigmas as well, as will be seen in the role of authority.

2.3. Impacts of the Child Support Grant

According to Lund (2008) it was too early in the years 2006-2008 to measure with any confidence what the lasting impact of the Child Support Grant would be. There have been impact evaluations that have been released by the social development department, and in these assessments there have been a lot of mention of increased reach of the grant, from approximately 11000 in 1998 to approximately 11 000 000 in 2013 (Coetzee, 2013).

In 2009, there was an impact evaluation conducted by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and UNICEF on the Child Support Grant. Various impacts of the grant were reported and it was found that there were previously problems with the receiving of grant for caregivers without identity documents or children with misplaced birth certificates. Although that has improved in recent years it is still an issue is in the process of being sorted within the people and the government (Hunter & Adato, 2007).

In an effort to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty, (poverty which "lays its own eggs," in the words of an informant quoted in the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (2004) (Aguero, Carter, & Woolard, 2006), the policy was created. The other goal was and still is to ensure that the rights of the child are not tumbled on, but are upheld.

There have been reports that adolescents are at an array of risks, the greatest being sexual relationships for girls with holder men to obtain cash, food, clothing, gifts and/or transport which might ultimately lead to pregnancy, STD's or even HIV/AIDS (Unicef, 2010). However recent reports have shown that the risk has been reduced in the receiving of the grant, allowing for the decrease in the risks that the adolescents are faced with (Kubheka , 2013). Moreover there are also reports that the receiving of the grant has allowed for the same adolescents to go back to

school and restores some dignity in impoverished families (Cluver, et al., 2013). In recent times questions have been raised about whether the strategy is serving its proposed intentions within the South African community or only increasing the people's dependence, with guardians making no effort to provide for the family or the children (Triegaardt, 2005).

A number of other studies have investigated outcomes associated with the Child Support Grant since its introduction. There have been studies that focus on the links between schools going and Child Social Grant recipiency. It has also been reported that children miss days of school, or drop out altogether, due to many economic and social drivers (Khumalo, 2003). A quantitative impact assessment was done and it was found that children who were enrolled in the Child Support Grant at birth went further with their schooling than children who were enrolled at age six, and achieved higher marks in mathematic tests (Sassa, 2013). Impacts for girls were particularly significant, with early receipt of the Child Support Grant increasing girls' schooling achievement compared to those receiving the grant only at age 6. Additionally, the receiving of the Child Support Grant by the household was found to reduce adolescent absences from school, referring specifically or particularly to male adolescents, even when the household does not receive the grant specifically for the adolescent (Sassa, 2013).

There have also been studies on the relationship between nutrition and the receiving of the CSG; those were conducted as part of the impact assessment of the Child Support Grant in 2012 (Coetzee, 2013). The impact assessments report that caregivers are better able to get food that is nutritional for the household as opposed to households that do not receive the Child Support Grant being vulnerable to malnutrition (Friedman & Bhengu, 2008). There have been reports that state that with the receiving of the Child Support Grant, children are more likely to stay with their `biological mothers or parents (Case, Hosegood, & Lund, 2005).

There have been reports of popular outcries against the grant based on an empirically untested argument that the grant does not benefit children because teenagers deliberately give birth in order to access the money for their personal use (Makiwane, Desmond, Richter, & Udjo, 2006). Although this research project will not attempt to provide objective answers on whether or not teenagers get pregnant on purpose, perceptions of this sort may suggest that there might be stigma surrounding being a recipient of the grant. This is relevant for the research's focus on how grant recipients make sense of perceptions such as this.

The Child Support Grant as a poverty alleviation strategy that has been adopted by South Africa is internationally recognized to be an innovative intervention to reduce poverty and promote child well-being. Previous studies that have been done further report that the reasons that most beneficiaries of the grant are women is because while some households receive private maintenance from the fathers of the children who are not living with them, there are however many fathers who do not pay maintenance (Patel , Hochfeld, Moodley, & Mutwali, 2012).

As such, previous research suggests that although the grant is small, it plays a key role in reducing income poverty among the very poor and especially in woman headed households. The gendered nature of poverty and the increasing financial and care burdens are increasing (Patel , Hochfeld, Moodley, & Mutwali, 2012). The Grant monies are mainly used for food and some basic non-food items such as school fees and uniforms, health and transport and to some extent to reduce indebtedness and to build up savings (post office savings or stokvels) to protect them against risk (Delany, Ismail, Graham, & Ramkisson, 2008). It has also been found that almost all Child Support Grant children were enrolled in school and attended school regularly with the majority having never failed a grade (Neves, Samson, van Niekerk, Hlatshwayo, & du Toit, 2009). The children appeared to be in good health, were immunized and lived in households with

very good access to basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity. It has been found that beneficiaries spent grant monies on health, transport, electricity and water that should be freely available to them (Mkhize, 2009). Such expenditure erodes the value of the grant which is largely due to inefficiencies in the delivery of public services and in gaining access to some of the free services (Coetzee, 2011).

Qualitative interviews indicated that Child Support Grants acted as a psychological safety net, but that negative stereotypes of grant recipients could detract from the positive mental health outcomes of the grants. It was concluded that poverty alleviation programmes such as cash transfers could have both positive and negative impacts on mental health (Plagerson, Patel, Harpham, Kielmann, & Mathee, 2011).

There is reportedly growing concern that, despite its apparent benefits, social assistance provision might nevertheless weaken work motivation and create a dependency culture amongst the people in South Africa especially the youth. Thus, there was a study done to explore attitudes about the relationship between grant receipt and paid employment in South Africa. This particular study found that both individuals in and out of the workplace placed high value on paid employment, concluding that joblessness has not become normal or has not been normalized in the country (Surender , Noble , Wright , & Ntshongwana , 2010). It was further reported in the 2008 Human Science Research Council warned about dependency, that the country ought to be cautious about culture of dependency amongst people of South Africa, continuing that the concerns are that beyond poverty alleviation, interventions must seek to develop exit programmes that capacitate households and communities to empower themselves (Noble & Ntshongwana, 2008). Grants must not create dependency and thus must be linked to economic activity. Many of these households and communities remain trapped in poverty, thus

they are dependent on the state (African National Congress (ANC), 2007). This study did not aim to find out details of the capacity in which they are getting out of the receiving of the grant; however this speaks to the experience of the Child Support Grant. The research questions in this study did not directly aim to find out dependency however examines how recipients might be making sense of this type of suggestion and whether they agree or not. The experience of the Child Support Grant might speak to dependency.

In South Africa, there are things like support of each other in times of grief, for example often women use some of the grant money to assist their whole families with food because that's the most stable income that they have (Udjo, 2013). They will also contribute to societies or stokvels as they are known by south African so assist with events like funerals or other months contribute to assisting each other with certain needs as months to a year keep going, some women would also use some of the money to put it away for the children's future studies with the stokvels as a means to try and ensure better lives for their children who are the main benefactors of the grant. The societies not only give the participants a sense of security in that the money is often used by the participants to secure better futures if the children in their care. The impact of the Child Support Grant is important to the recipients affecting their actions and their sense to protect the Child Support Grant that they are receiving.

2.4. The role of Authority in Social Grants

Authority is defined as the result of a relationship between two or more social actors, in which one exerts an influence over the other as a consequence of social status. Thus, authority is an everyday phenomenon characterized by the influence that one of the social actors can exert over the other members of a group or a community (Passini & Morselli, 2009).

The concept of authority has pivotal importance within the social sciences, being a fundamental element in the organization of social life. Every type of collective life is based on one or more systems of authority that regulate the everyday life of group members (Morselli & Passini, 2011)

Past research has used qualitative research on Child Support Grant recipients in relation to psychological health; it was found that the long-term nature and reliability of the grants emerged as a key aspect of grants' potential to provide psychological support. Theme emerged depicting the government as provider in the absence of supportive relationships, and defining the role of the grants in filling the caring gap. It was also found that Greater control over resources gained through grants was associated with an increased sense of control over one's life and household prospects, constituting a strong link between the grants and the mental health. The role of authority is occupied by the government as given by the recipients affects the decisions that the participants and the actions thereafter.

The grants often reduced recipients' dependence on strained and insecure relationships. Grants were perceived to address causes of mental ill-health experienced to a greater extent by women, such as the burden of responsibility of caring for children in the absence of reliable resources. There was a greater stigma attached to the grants for men, seen as underlining the reality of one's inability to provide for children, in the context of unemployment, this is also because since grants were predominantly accessed by female caregivers (Marais, 2011).

As part of the study by Plagerson et al. (2011), it was found in the semi-structured interviews that poor treatment by officials was sometimes associated with negative emotions and aggravated mental distress. Inability to access required documents for bureaucratic or relational reasons (such as ex-partners withholding necessary documents) was described by those affected as

stressful, leading to non-uptake or delayed uptake of the grants (Paxson, 2007). As a result of the possibility that participants/ grant recipients could be distrustful of authorities and this could be a challenge for researchers if the participants/ grant recipients see the researcher as being associated with the authorities who participants do not trust or participants believe that the researcher is part of authorities and their receiving of the Child Support Grant is in jeopardy.

2.5. Summary of Gaps in the Literature Review and how the current study addresses them

The above explored literature shows that there is a need for investigating the experiences of the grant recipients as there seems to be a label or category that defines or can be associated with the child support grant recipients in society; this is to understand how the individuals make sense of the categories associated with receiving child support grant.

There cannot be a denial of the importance of the policy in the country especially in the conditions in which people are still living, which can be described as extremely below the mean standard living. What is brought forth is to understand the experiences of the people and linking it to the established and guiding policy, so as to know how they make sense of receiving grant in an in-depth manner.

Following concerns of unemployment, there are currently concerns of social assistance dependency, with a study reporting that is increasingly characterised by concerns about rising expenditure and ‘hand outs’, and the language of ‘welfare dependence’ has resonated more vigorously in recent years. Despite its constitutional commitment and policy initiatives to ensure income security (ANC, 1994; SADC, 2003), criticism of the government for spending too much on social grants (recurrent social assistance) has grown, and there are calls from within and

outside its ranks to resist further expansion (DSD, 2006a). In his 2007 State of the Nation Address, President Thabo Mbeki emphasised the importance for government to be ‘continuously focused on the task to ensure that as many of our people as possible graduate out of dependence on social grants (Surender , Noble , Wright , & Ntshongwana , 2010).

What this research project aims is to get the reported experiences of the recipients of the grant, this including how they make sense of the requirements of the Child Support Grant including the means test (Lund, 2008); the value of this is to learn the experiences of the people from them. As seen the gaps that have been identified are that of the reported experiences of the recipients or the assumed increased dependency of the people thus increasing poverty amongst the most poor of the South African people, which plays into the aim of the project.

From this statements above there is a clear need to research on the experiences of the people in terms of the child support grant, thus moving away from the past research that has been done on this topic. It is also to add knowledge to this specific field from a psychological stance because most research done in the past it has been heavily on the economic, development and political fields (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 2013).

The aim of this project as mentioned above was to investigate the reported experiences of the grant recipients and compare those reported experiences to the stated aims of the grant as a poverty alleviating strategy not in the figures as suggested by previous studies. This does not take away from the information or rather knowledge that previous studies have provided in this field; rather this project looks at the experiences of the people, which to knowledge of the research has been touched on by previous studies however this is to pick up on the experiences

currently and also some of the themes that may come out that have not been studied by past studies.

The other aim of the study is to find out what are the challenges/ potential issues of recipients. There are issues of authority, some of the stigmas that surround the Child Support Grant recipients as such there might be challenges to interviewing participants who might not totally be trustful of the researcher, thus saying what they believe the researcher would like for them to say in order to not jeopardize their receiving of the child support grant. The impact and the use of the Child Support Grant in households also might pose as a challenge/ potential issue in the interviewing of the recipients because of the great importance that the Child Support Grant plays in their daily lives.

3. METHODS AND DATA

This section presents the procedure that was followed by the researcher in conducting this study:

3.1. Research Design

Qualitative research was used in this research project. The process of gathering data was in the form of interviews which were semi-structured and ethnographic field notes, thus forming the research design that the study undertook. In so doing I was able to engage with the experiences of the recipients in their own words, thus giving in more depth to the experiences that participants reported. Including being able to also reflect on the research process and the challenges that emerged from it based on the encounters between me and the participants.

3.2. Sampling and Data

The sample consisted of ten (10) individuals receiving the child support grant and snowball sampling was used. The initial participant was one of the people I knew that received the CSG because she was open about receiving the grant. This meant that the initial interviewee was used to provide names of other grant recipients who were invited to participate in the research; snowballing is a method of sampling that is widely used with qualitative research, taking advantage of social networks providing sets of escalating potential contacts (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2009) .

This was a convenience sample as it is based on the accessibility of the individuals (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2009) who participated in the research project. It was a non-probability sample (Lund, 2008), however can also be described as a purposive sample because the research focused on the grant recipients and will look for participants in specific areas at a specific time so as to access

the participants. These individuals were above the age of 18 years receiving the CSG for their children or for the children for whom they are the main guardians/ caregiver. This fits with the research questions and the aim of the study which was to investigate the reported experiences of the grant recipients and how they make sense of the child support grant and the challenges of doing research with grant recipients as participants.

3.3. Profile of the participants of the research studies

As mentioned above, there were 10 participants who agreed to be interviewed for this project. It was a snowballing method of attaining participants. Participants were interviewed in their homes for their convenience. All the participants were mothers and were recipients of the grant for more than one child. All participants live in the same area. Six out of ten of the participants were living with a partner and eight out of ten of the participants lived with the external family member(s). Participants interviewed were all unemployed.

This information above supports the literature that shows that the majority recipients of the grant are female and because the females are unemployed the Child Support Grant becomes as a stable survival tool of their daily lives. The recipients of the grant are the primary caregivers of the children that they are receiving the grant for as such they were able to speak about their experiences first hand. The participants all lived with the children that they are receiving the Child Support Grant in the household.

I firstly obtained ethics clearance, and then approached the first potential participant to invite them to participate in the study. There was an information sheet that explained the aims of the project and what would be required from them as a participant using the participant information sheet shown in Appendix A. Appointments were set with individuals who were willing to

participate in the research process. Each participant was given a consent form to sign as seen in Appendix B. Ethnographic field notes were taken at each interview; this was to capture some of the important aspects of the data and the process of data collection, which were not necessarily captured in the interviews. Following the interview, each participant was asked to recommend someone they know who is a recipient of the Child Support Grant to take part in the research. This procedure was repeated for each new participant, thus implementing the snowball sampling strategy.

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow for direction of the interview, while also leaving room for the direction in which the participants wanted to take the interview. Four main questions were used to guide the interview (see Appendix A), but additional questions and probes were used based on the experiences that were reported by the participants during the course of the interview. This was also to allow for patterns to emerge from the reported experiences. According to Holstein & Gubrium (2004), by viewing the interview as active, we can recognize and also appreciate how the interviewer participates with the respondent in shifting positions in the interview so as to explore alternate perspectives and stocks of knowledge. For the purpose of this study the interviews were mainly directed by the participants in order to get their experience of the Child Support Grant. So the interviews were not active as according to Holstein & Gubrium. The researcher definitely in their presence had some effect on the responses of the participants however the interview was left to the direction of the participants. This is discussed above in terms of the researcher seen as an authority by participants.

The interviews were done in the participants' home language so as to allow for the participants to fully express themselves and their perceptions. For the study, the participants all spoke in Sepedi.

This language is my home language and my proficiency in this language (particularly in reading and writing) was adequate for the purpose of translating extended qualitative interviews into English for the purposes of analysing them. However, there were a number of issues around translation in qualitative interview research. For example, according to Larkin (2007), the translator has the potential to influence the research analysis significantly by virtue of his or her attempt to convey meaning from a language and culture that might be unknown to the researcher. As mentioned above Sepedi is my home language the translations of the interviews may be deemed adequate. The information sheets and consent were not translated into Sepedi, initially because the language in which participants were comfortable with was not known, however in the interviews each part of the information and consent forms were explained in person in Sepedi to the participants. The implications of translating Sepedi to English is that although translation may be adequate there might be some phrases that are not easily translated into English. All interviews were done in the participants homes as part of the snowballing sampling. The interviews were audio recorded, for the purpose of transcription and acquiring the information as given by the participants in the interview as close to accurate as possible.

In entering each household, there was a demand to know who I am; who I work for and why I was asking them about the receiving of the Child Support Grant. There were a lot of actions that alluded to researchers being authorities over them as such the some potential participants were not trusting and refused to participate. And while some agreed to participate in the research it appeared that they did so because the recommendation to participate came from someone they knew and trusted and that no other information besides their name and signature was needed. There seemed to be a fear in the participants to talk to someone they did not know about their experience as child grant recipients. Thus, this issues/ challenges are addressed in the research as

part of the aims. The observations turned from being a problem for the research to being one of the main things being focused on in the study. The patterns of research amongst the participants will further be discussed in the findings and discussion section below.

3.4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used as the analytic approach for this study. It is a method of analysis that is used in 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). Thematic analysis is known as the most common method of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or themes) within the collected data. It is performed through the process of coding in multiple phases to create established, meaningful patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover knowledge using patterns or themes. It provides a systematic element to data analysis as mentioned above in the text (Marks & Yardley, 2004). This will confer accuracy and intricacy and enhance the research's whole meaning. Qualitative research requires understanding and collecting diverse aspects and data. Thematic Analysis gives an opportunity to understand the topic that is being studied in depth and more widely (Alhojailan, 2012). According to Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson (2008) thematic analysis moves beyond counting clear words or phrases from the data to focusing on recognising and describing both the implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes are then applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for code co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships. Thus, it allows the researcher to

determine precisely the relationships between concepts and compare them with the replicated data (Marks & Yardley, 2004). By using, thematic analysis there is the possibility to link the various concepts and opinions of the participants and compare these with the data that has been gathered in different situation at different times during the project (Alhojailan, 2012).

The phases are *familiarization with data*, which is achieved by transcribing the recordings and then reading and re-reading the transcripts in order to become familiar with the data, giving attention to patterns that might emerge in the interview (Braun & Clarke, 2006). *Generating initial codes* involves a process of data reduction where the researcher collapses data into labels in order to create categories for more efficient analysis; this involves the researcher making inferences about what the codes mean (Patton & Cochran, 2002). *Searching for themes* among codes, involves combining codes into over-arching themes that accurately depict the data: it is important at this stage for the researcher to clearly define what the themes mean and what is missing from the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fourth step is *reviewing themes*; here the researcher focuses on how the emergent themes support the analysis of the data and the theoretical perspective (Patton, 2001). The fifth step is *defining and naming themes*: this is the actual themes that have emerged being defined, that is which aspects of data are being captured and what is interesting about the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally *the final report* must be written: this involves reporting on the themes that are making meaningful contributions to understanding what is going on with the data (Patton & Cochran, 2002).

There were ethnographic field notes that were taken at all the interviews as mentioned above. The role of the ethnographic field notes is that they were used to inform and supplement the thematic analysis, thus adding greater depth and insight than would have been available from the

interview data alone. The themes that were found in the thematic analysis and supplemented with the ethnographic notes will be seen in the findings and discussion section below.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

There is a suggestion by Barnes (1979) that ethical decisions in social research are those which arise when we try to decide between one course of action and another, not in terms of expediency or efficiency, but by reference to standards of what is morally right or wrong. There have also been reports that moral standards of right and wrong seem to be specifically applicable when qualitative methods are used in research with powerless or marginalized population groups (Cloke, Cooke, Cursons, Milbourne, & Widdowfield, 2010). This was taken into consideration by the researcher in the research process.

The first ethical principle is that informed consent was secured from each of the participants that were interviewed. Informed consent means that participants were told enough which enabled them to choose to participate in the research or not(Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2009). The participants were given a consent form to sign when they had decided to take part in the research study. There might be issues of stigma around receiving grant, therefore for ethical purposes of this research the participants remained anonymous as their names and their children's identities were mentioned in any part of the study. This was done maintain confidentiality of the participants and their families(Myers, Abell, Kolstad, & Sani, 2010). The participants were told about the fact that the interviews were recorded and all recordings kept confidential and only the researcher and supervisor had access to the recordings. Participants were told of their right to withdraw from participation in the research project at any point(Willig, 2008).

The researcher in maintaining ethics protected the participants by making no mention of their names in the research report and no harm came to any of the participants. This included not divulging any biographic or personal information, and also not revealing any of the information that the participants shared with the researcher outside of the research project meaning before the consent form was signed. There were no positive or negative consequences that arose from participation or non-participation in the study.

All the data upon collection was saved in a password-protected computer and all the documents pertaining to the identity of the participants were stored in a secure place. All identifying information was removed from the data during the process of transcription, in order to ensure that the anonymity of the participants was protected in the reporting of the findings as mentioned above.

There were ethical concerns in terms of going to participants' homes however due to the snowballing sample that occurred meant that there is knowledge of the individuals participating in the research, which alleviates the risks of going to the participants' home.

3.6. The role of Reflexivity

There is no single definition of reflexivity (Lynch, 2000), the argument in past studies that have been done was that reflexivity identified different aspects those including identifying mechanical, substantive, methodological, meta-theoretical, and interpretative, including ethno methodological versions (Buckner, 2005). Some studies that have been done previously report of common denominators in researchers' definition of reflexivity, and according to Cutcliffe (2003) There appears to be a clear perception among methodological researchers that the purpose of reflexivity, at least in part, is to enhance the credibility of the findings by accounting for

researcher values, beliefs, knowledge, and biases. The relevant methodological literature indicates that reflexivity appears to involve accounting for oneself in the research (Buckner, 2005). This study is a reflexive study in that the actions of the participants towards me are addressed as part of the aims of the study. To a certain degree my actions in connection to the actions of the participants are accounted for in the research.

It has also been reported that in qualitative research, there is the presence of subjectivity and thus the concepts of reflexivity and the efforts to account for researcher influence abound (Buckner, 2005). This is also an important aspect of the study in that I as the researcher is reporting about the themes that have emerged according to me which shows subjectivity, there is an influence that is exerted in the research process as well as the reporting of the themes that emerged.

A lot of the researches that have been done in the past have not included reflexivity of the researchers; however there have been a lot of research that has been done on reflexivity. It is said that the process of engaging in reflexivity is full of muddy ambiguity and multiple trails as researchers negotiate the swamp of interminable deconstructions, self-analysis and self-disclosure (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity has moved from introspection towards critical realist and subjectivity accounts, and more recently towards highlighting the socio-political, post- modern context through deconstructing the research encounter. The concept of reflexivity is often explored in terms of social positioning (Buckner, 2005), this could be viewed as how the researcher views themselves within the social positions or how participants view the researcher in the social position. This also explains how the researcher and the participants location influences the process and outcome of the research, furthermore when studying reflexivity they measure the researchers emotional response to the participants as this would shape the rest of the interaction between the researcher and participants while later influencing the interpretation of

the researcher of on the participants' accounts (Cutcliffe, 2003). For this study one of the main focuses is the challenges/ issues that emerge when CSG recipients are asked about their experiences and the response will be indicated in the section below.

It is the understanding of researchers that meanings are negotiated within particular social contexts so that another researcher will unfold a different story. There is no need to eradicate the researchers presence-instead subjectivity in research is transformed from a problem to an opportunity. There is also argument based on what research has stated above that researchers do not question reflexivity any longer, the only question is how to do. In so saying, reflexivity does not dissolve ethical tensions, but it opens up possibilities for new ethical and moral maps with which to explore ethical terrains more appropriately and more honestly. Researchers currently would draw on their experiences in undertaking research in specific areas, this is usually for the purpose of contributing to new understanding of why people respond to questions a certain way. This happens to be one of the main focuses of the study. The challenges that would be expected in the research process for participants like this is used as a positive and the researchers presence as a source of acquiring information to add to understanding of the experiences of the CSG recipients in this current time.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Tensions and Paradoxes

There seems to a number of pressures and pulls that are involved in the experiences of receiving the Child Support Grant. The recipients according to their reported experience have or are currently facing this tensions and paradoxes. This was found to be one of the main themes that came out from the interviews and ethnographic data collected for the purpose of this study. The theme as will be seen below has been divided into three subsections. It was found that participants both believe themselves to be entitled to the Child Support Grant as such they are dependent on it. The entitlement and dependency is justified by the participants in that it gives them a sense of empowerment and independence for economic activity, hence there are fears that participants have in regard to the Child Support Grant. All of this is discussed in this section.

4.1.1. Entitlement and dependency

There is an expectation that there would not be any negative views of the Child Support Grant from the recipients and the findings of this study show no such negative views of the Child Support Grant in their experience. The participants report positive experiences in terms of the actual money in the alleviation of poverty for their households on a monthly basis. The responds that were used by the participants are as seen below:

```
I   :  What are your experiences as a grant recipient?
P1  :  Eh, this children's money helps women, I don't want to lie to you.
       It helps me; I see it as helpful a lot
P2  :  It helps us… Oh yes, the experience is good
P3  :  No, we just see it being helpful
P4  :  it is helpful. I can buy the children stuff with it
```

The notion is that the money that is received by the participants is duly helpful and the phrases used show the general experience of the recipients in terms of the Child Support Grant and "helps". Past studies show that the Child Support Grant has reached a lot of beneficiaries in the country. The experience of the participants as shown in the extracts is that the Child Support Grant is positive and this is explained by the participants by the fact that it has brought about increased purchasing power to meet needs that previously were not met or not be met. This will further be shown in below sections of the themes on the use of the Child Support Grant of the participants. The participants used similar phrases of the Child Support Grant being helpful; this is shown to be a positive experience of the money in terms of the usage. And this could also be seen to ensure that they make it known that they are grateful for the Child Support Grant for their households and that although allocated for child support, the participants informally implied that they used for more than just the children but for the household as a whole. The participants informally after signing the consent forms made a point to express their appreciation for the Child Support Grant and as we talked about the Child Support Grant, they expressed gratefulness of the Child Support Grant and the need for the security that the Child Support Grant offers them.

However, there were participants who although consider the Child Support Grant helpful expressed a balanced view that shown appreciation while at the same time describing some of the challenges associated with the amount they get from the Child Support Grant;

P1 : Mmh, even though it is not enough and we get short of money, but it is not the same because if it was not there. How would we live...?
P5 : Yes, because at times it is not helpful or enough for clothes. Eh, it is small we don't know what to say. Mmh, but it is not the same, it's definitely not the same as nothing
P3 : Me, myself. I see it as helpful with food but it gets short because you find that they have bathed but I'm unable to buy them clothes. It's just small. It ends at the throat (means food). When you pay the stokvels then it's finished

The above extracts show that although the participant is grateful for the receiving the Child Support Grant and that it has been a positive experience for the household, the Child Support Grant can only provide for her basic necessities and that is it completely. So the participants are saying that although it's not enough to do much more than basic needs, she emphasizes that it's better than living without it. The participant appears to protect the receiving of the Child Support Grant while letting me know some of the frustrations she has about the money itself. The participant happens to imply that it is great to be receiving the Child Support Grant as it assists in getting the basic needs that they need. However, the participant would like more than just getting the basic needs.

The complaint is perpetuated by the fact that participants as homemakers want the best for their children and want to get them everything that they want.

```
Participants tell me that they want to do more for their children,
participant point at items in the house that she would like to do to better
the children's lives. The participant points at a fence, the children's toys
that are outside the house (field note 009, 15/09/14)
```

There is the issue of dependency amongst the Child Support Grant recipients. According to an article in the business day article of 2008, which the then financial minister Trevor Manual, warned about dependency, that the country ought to be cautious about culture of dependency amongst people of South Africa, continuing that the concerns are that beyond poverty alleviation, interventions must seek to develop exit programmes that capacitate households and communities to empower themselves. Grants must not create dependency and thus must be linked to economic activity. Many of these households and communities remain trapped in poverty, thus they are dependent on the state African National Congress (ANC), 2007). This is discussed in the literature review above and further emphasized here because one of the other

themes that came out during the interviews of the participants is the dependency that the participants, as seen here in the extracts below have towards the Child Support Grant. It is that although the aims of the Child Support Grant are not to create dependency amongst the recipients, the lack of any other income has created such an experienced by the recipients.

I : Specifically, how do you make sense of the CSG in your experience
P5 : It does help us… According to me, this money helps us. It helps in our home, like now we are not working (unemployed). We only rely on this money… It's the one that helps us
cope daily
P3 : Yes, because there is no other income, we live on this one
P4 : I am scared of debts because I don't have money to pay. I trust and depend on the CSG
P1 : Oh yes, the experience is good. We are depending on it […] It's the one that we live by

So the participants report that the Child Support Grant is helpful in getting some the basic needs for their households, some of the participants take it further by reporting that they are explicitly depending on it while some participants imply that they depends on the Child Support Grant for various reasons. For some of the participants the Child Support Grant is the only income that they have for themselves and their children. Literature as mentioned above states that there should be caution not to create dependency culture amongst the people of South Africa, for the participants although they appreciate the Child Support Grant, there is no form of income for them as such have come to completely rely on the money. There seems to be a gap between the grant policy as experienced by the participants and what the then minister of finance mentioned about the grant.

The participants are dependent on the state grant in that for them to participate in economic activity, the Child Support Grant is the only means in which the participants can participate in the economy. Hence, there appears to be a gap between the understanding of the experience the participants have to engage in the economic activity and the caution that the finance ministry is

talking about. There appears to be no other option that is available for the participants to ease away from the dependency of the Child Support Grant and they seem to feel that way as they mention that it's their income and they are unemployed. So, in other words despite government warnings about being dependent on grants, at least some participants openly acknowledged their dependency. However, they noted that there are no other options (no other sources of income) for them, suggesting that the warning about dependency are not going to prevent dependency in the absence of sufficient opportunities for people to bring other money from other sources. This doesn't mean that people want to be dependent on grants. This is seen in the extract below:

```
I   :   experience as CSG recipients?
P2  :   According to me, this money helps us. It helps in our home, like now
        we are not working(unemployed). We only rely on this money.
P6  :   lady, there are no jobs around, so we rely on this money for the
        household. For my children to survive because no one is hiring.
```

The participant emphasis during the informal chats that we had before and after the interviews, they agree to the notion that they depend on the Child Support Grant to keep them going on a monthly basis. The coping of the households for the participants is dependent on the Child Support Grant. Participants asked also what I would like for them to say when the recording started because they wanted approval and they at the very beginning mention that they depend on the Child Support Grant as such they do not want any threats or threatening situations that might lead to them losing the Child Support Grant. They implied that if everything they said is what I wanted them to say, there would be no threat to their receiving of the Child Support Grant. When I gave the explanation that there is no wrong answer, all that I wanted to find out about their experiences they seemed to be hesitant to belief that I was being honest with them. This showed the extent to which participants would like to protect the Child Support Grant for their households and that they depend on it. More than this it showed that participants were distrustful of me as a researcher and were seeing me and their participation in the research process as a

possible threat to their continued receipt of the grant. This distrust challenge is further discussed below.

Following concerns of unemployment, there are currently concerns of social assistance dependency, with a study reporting that is increasingly characterised by concerns about rising expenditure and 'hand outs', and the language of 'welfare dependence' has resonated more vigorously in recent years. Despite its constitutional commitment and policy initiatives to ensure income security (ANC, 1994; SADC, 2003), criticism of the government for spending too much on social grants (recurrent social assistance) has grown, and there are calls from within and outside its ranks to resist further expansion (DSD, 2006a). This is seen above when participants show from the data collected that there is a level of dependency on the Child Support Grant. However, there is also an element of entitlement because legally they are entitled to get the Child Support Grant according to recommendations and qualification by SASSA to receive the Child Support Grant. The participants did not all mention the legal right that they had to receive the grant; however they seemed to be aware that they (on behalf of their children) were entitled to the grant. In his 2007 State of the Nation Address, President Thabo Mbeki emphasised the importance for government to be 'continuously focused on the task to ensure that as many of our people as possible graduate out of dependence on social grants (Surender, Noble, Wright, & Ntshongwana, 2010). As mentioned above on the dependence section, participants experienced that the only income that they can rely on is the Child Support Grant on a monthly basis. It was also indicated in the interviews with the participants that there is a type of entitlement that the participants feel towards the receiving of the Child Support Grant. This shows an element linking dependency and entitlement, so there is appears to be a contrast amongst the participants in that some participants as seen in the extracts below resist the suggestion that unemployed people

should be entitled thus dependency and entitlement being challenged as not problems. Other participants however recognise the potential objections that could be made against grant recipients being entitled to the money as they are entitled by law.

I : What would be your response to a person that says that grant recipients who do not vote for the ruling party are stealing from the state?
This was in the Sowetan online newspaper on the 09-04-2014
P5 : They are receiving the grant from the tax. So the money comes from the tax that is taken from the employed people. So the person is getting grant from the government they are voting for. I don't see it as a problem
P4 : But because they love us, they know that we are their children we sitting here where is nice. This income (money) here just comes we don't work. Next week I'm going to get the R900, who would give you

The participants once again reiterate the importance of the Child Support Grant in their daily live. The Child Support Grant is considered an income instead of a grant by the participants. They imply that because they do not work, they have to get this kind of income in order to survive or cope on a daily basis. There is knowledge as to where the grants comes from, and as such still believe that they are to have this income because of their circumstance. For the participants who are married, they believe that they are entitled to have the Child Support Grant money because the money is taken from their husbands tax as such they should get the money or rather the Child Support Grant as dubbed the income. It can be interpreted that the grant is like a return of the tax that is taken from their husbands. This shows both the need for the money for the households while further showing dependence and entitlement to the Child Support Grant.

The participants that were interviewed for this project are unemployed as mentioned in the sample/ sampling section. It seems that the concerns that were stated in the 2007 state of the nation address are could have a basis according to the comments or rather the responses of the participants on their receiving of the Child Support Grant. However, this could be as a result of

feeling that there is no other option that they have been given showing the very link of this theme between entitlement and dependency to the Child Support Grant. The reason that the participants are dependent on the Child Support Grant is that there is no other possible financial means for them as they have mentioned in the extracts above, as such they tend to feel entitled to get the Child Support Grant for their households. That goes back to the fact that although the experience is positive in general views of the participants. Although the participants are dependent on the Child Support Grant, it is also a way for the recipients to have some independence to have some participation in the economic world. This is said to be having some purchasing power or the using of the Child Support Grant are discussed in the next theme below.

4.1.2. Empowerment and independence

The impact assessments report that caregivers are better able to get food that is nutritional for the household as opposed to children or rather households that do not receive the Child Support Grant mostly being malnutrition which is what the government has been addressing since 1994 (Friedman & Bhengu, 2008).

I : what is the CSG used for in the household or for the children?
P2 : I can buy the children stuff with it… In other places the grant cannot do everything in the home
P3 : I can take her to school. It will add to where I am short according to how much I will have. Another thing that I pay for is transport to go to school. It is the one that assists in its own way. It helps here at home
P4 : I am going to eat from it; it buys potatoes, maize meal
P5 : The money is important for the building of a home with the children. And then you thank yourself for it, you can build a 3-bedroom house, building the house with the CSG money

There is a material need to gather for the children when it comes to the Child Support Grant. So the Child Support Grant is mainly used for the basic needs of the children and the entire

households. The main use according to the participants is to buy food which agrees with the malnutrition issues that the government has been working on since 1994.

Participants mentioned that homes can be built with the Child Support Grant money as such some of the money from the Child Support Grant was used to assist in building of the homes. The reason is that shelter is very important for each of the participants and for their children.

There have been reports that state that with the receiving of the Child Support Grant, children are more likely to stay with their `biological mothers or parents (Case, Hosegood, & Lund, 2005). As such, it is said through previous research that although the grant is small, it plays a key role in reducing income poverty among the very poor and especially in woman headed households. The gendered nature of poverty and the increasing financial and care burdens are increasing (Delany, Ismail, Graham, & Ramkisson, 2008). The Grant monies are mainly used for food and some basic non-food items such as school fees and uniforms, health and transport and to some extent to reduce indebtedness and to build up savings (post office savings or stokvels) to protect them against risk (Delany, Ismail, Graham, & Ramkisson, 2008).

The above section gives evidence to what the literature reports about the Child Support Grant recipients' use of the money, access of the basic needs and building up savings for their households. This is also shown in the extracts above. As expected, most of the participants spend their money on basic needs of the households as described in the literature above. Furthermore, the extracts below show that the Child Support Grant has enabled the participants to be able to cater to the basic needs of the households. The decisions about how the Child Support Grant is used in the households are left to the mother.

I : anything you would like to add on the experiences?
P8 : Me, myself. I see it as helpful with food but it gets short because you find that they have bathed but I'm unable to buy them clothes. It's just small. It ends at the throat (means food)
I : Household experience of the CSG? How do you make sense of it?
P5 : Yes, their father doesn't even want to see it (referring to the grant money), he doesn't want to see it. He knows that it is Cynthia's mom, it is the children's. He says "do what has to be done or how you see fit to use it". So he says do it the way you want to use it

When the woman receiving the grant for their child is a single parent like the majority of the participants in the study, they make all the decisions regarding the use of the Child Support Grant on a monthly basis. However, there are exceptions like one of the participants who is married she still gets to make the decisions on the use the Child Support Grant because of the agreement that her and her husband have concerning the Child Support Grant.

According to Hunter & Adato (2007), the Child Support Grant recipients will contribute to societies or stokvels as they are known by South Africans to assist with events like funerals or other months contribute to assisting each other with certain needs as months to a year keep going. Some women would also use some of the money to put it away for the children's future studies with the stokvels as a means to try and ensure better lives for their children who are the main benefactors of the grant. Below are the extracts of the response of the interviews with the participants.

I : what are some of the uses of the CSG for the households?
P10 : Oh, it helps us with food, paying for stokvels. It ends at the throat(means food). When you pay the stokvels then it's finished And then the next day, early in the morning I wake up and take it to the bank. R100 for each of them is deposited to their accounts, they each have accounts. I can show you their accounts. I put in R100 every month, I don't make a mistake. I know that it is going to help tomorrow ((implying the future)). It is going to help them

Participants depend on the Child Support Grant for their daily lives; however participants are making arrangements according to their ability to make better lives for their children. The participants realise that there is a need for savings to secure their children's future as one of the participants states that she started a savings account for each of her children from the month she started receiving the grant so that it may assist in the future of the children. This sheds a light on the need that participants have which is to have some independence in the future for their children and to make sure that they get a great future.

The participants mention that the money is not enough for the household, however most of the participants were part of a stokvels, or had a savings account or even both to ensure that they secure better financial circumstances for their children. The stokvels create a sense of community amongst the members of the group because they assist each other as well as get to understand each other's situations. This creates a place where recipients know that they belong and offers them some security to know that they will be helped in a desperate situation.

In the interviews in hearing the savings in which Child Support Grant recipients make to ensure the secure future of their children. There seems to be a gap between the savings and the daily life of the recipients, so although the savings to secure a better future or assist in the future of their children is great, what happens on a daily basis when the money is not enough for the use for the children during the month. The reason for the concern is that while some participants have husbands who work which would assist on a monthly basis, the majority of the participants are single mothers who are unemployed and have no other income outside of the Child Support Grant.

This shows the link between the fears of losing the Child Support Grant, the suggestions to increase the Child Support Grant as it not only caters for the children but for the entire households and the participants relying on the Child Support Grant for their lives. Participants show that they are concerned about the future and are also concerned about the present which would be explained by the savings that they do and the fears that the Child Support Grant being cut off from them. The savings can also be described as a forming a sense of security of their household.

4.1.3. Fears

The fears of losing the Child Support Grant appear from the very beginning as I enter into the yards to speak to them. There is apparent hesitation from the participants and suspicions on my intentions in asking about the Child Support Grant. This is seen as participants clean their children and ask the children to go into the house while the interview happens outside. The participants found it better to speak to me about the Child Support Grant without the recording device than with it, the fear being that if they are recorded and it is found out they could seemingly loose the grant, while without the recording they could deny it.

The concept of authority has pivotal importance within the social sciences, being a fundamental element in the organization of social life. Every type of collective life is based on one or more systems of authority that regulate the everyday life of group members (Morselli & Passini, 2011) this is one of the themes that have emerged within the interviews of the CSG recipients. There are seemingly different authorities that the recipients have mentioned in the interviews that are fundamental to their survival and use of the Child Support Grant.

The South African Child Support Grant and the previous state maintenance grant stem from the South American cash transfer project called Progressa (Udjo, 2013). The new democratic government of South Africa established the Lund Committee in 1996 to evaluate the existing system of state support and to explore new alternative policy options targeting children and families (Makino, 2004). In 1998 the Child Support Grant (CSG) replaced the existing State Maintenance Grant (SMG) (Aguero, Carter, & Woolard, 2006), which was initially established during the apartheid years to benefit mostly the white population of South Africa at the time (Lund, 2008). Post-apartheid South Africa saw increased access and real benefit levels for Africans and reduced real levels of benefits for white pensioners (Makino, 2004). The Child Support Grant was introduced as a continued, however improved version of the State Maintenance Grant.

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I   :   do you ever get scared that the CSG will be taken away from you and
        your households, when speaking to researchers like me?
P7  :   The lord will help
P5  :   I want to please God and I pray
```

The participants have mentioned different dynamics that surround the authorities in their life. The participants talk about higher power in that God will help them and how they would like to please God. This would be seen as a hope that things will get better from how they are at the current moment. It also suggests a sense of having lost hope in the authorities who could be expected to facilitate a better life for them. There seems to be an appeal to God for help, suggesting that more earthly sources have not helped them. It also shows how the decisions of the use of the Child Support Grant in the daily lives of the participants. The belief in the higher authority seems to play a fundamental part of the participants' daily lives as seen in the extracts above.

There is also the idea of the researchers who are coming to them as authorities over them, in that one participant comments as follows:

> The participants after completing the interview asks if I believe that she saves money for her children, she then proceeds to go into the house and comes back with documents exclaiming that "I can show you their accounts…" (Field note, 15/09/2014, 16h15)

This is a comment by one of the participants who wanted to prove to me that she does have savings accounts for her children, which she keeps some of the Child Support Grant money that she receives for the future of her children. This is because the participants considered me as a researcher to be an authority and that determined how they responded to the interview questions and their behaviour all throughout the interview. This relates specifically to the participants seeing me as a kind of authority that threatens their continued access to the grant. These are some of the mannerisms that were displayed:

> "…Before she agrees to be interviewed, she calls her children to show me that they look good and well taken care of by her. She emphasizes on how she does not want loose the money she gets for her children. She offers me a chair and she sits on the floor. She remarks that I don't look like a person who is from the area; I am not like one of them. Offers water and cleans the chair…" (Field note, September, 2014)

To offer water and a chair is a polite thing for people to do to welcome someone into your home. And more than this it shows they are going out of their way to make sure that I was comfortable, even at their expense, from the extract above with them giving me a chair and her sitting on the floor. The participants seem to have associated me with the authorities that govern their receiving of the Child Support Grant as such aimed to impress and make sure that I have witnessed them in a positive in order them to keep their Child Support Grant. From the remark from one of the participants that I do not look like one of them already gave the participants an

impression to behave in a way that might not be how they behave on a daily basis. However, this supports the notion that there are dynamics to authority that the participants feel as evidenced in how they treated me as I got into their homes for the interviews.

Each of the participants was asked a question on the fears they experience surrounding the receiving of the Child Support Grant and here are some of the responses that the participants gave to the questions:

```
I   :   Do you ever get afraid that the CSG will be taken from you?
P1  :   No, not me. I'm not afraid… Yes, but they must not take the CSG
P3  :   Yes, I see it that happening, it could happen because last year when
        I went to SASSA to apply for this child I found people complaining
        that their grant was taken
P4  :   If I don't trust the person I won't speak to them. I will take it
        that they will take it […] I do not speak to people that I don't
        know
P6  :   Eish, yes. Because we just hear people saying that the CSG might be
        taken
P8  :   To be afraid, I do get afraid. So please don't take it from me. And
        If you take it I'm going to go to the lady who directed you to me
        and take the money she has for her children to use for mine
```

The participants from the very beginning show that they are appreciative of the Child Support Grant. They have a positive experience of the Child Support Grant, however through the interview on and off the record the participants commented that they had certain fears. As seen in the extract above show that they are afraid that the Child Support Grant might be taken away from them, this supports the fact they believe that Child Support Grant is important for their daily lives as well as the fact that they depend on the Child Support Grant so the thought of the grant being taken away from them is distressing as is captured in the words that the participates used. One participant used the words "So please don't take it from me" this evidencing that there is a fear that participants have about losing the Child Support Grant and that they want to protect the fact that they receive it. More than this it adds to the notion that some participants

viewed me as an authority or related to authorities as a social position. Participants above talk about the government and God as authorities that determine the receiving of the Child Support Grant, there seems to also be an assumption by participants that there is continuity between my authority and the authority of the government.

The participants have not been seemingly exposed to any form of security about them receiving the grant. There were participants who feel entitled to get the Child Support Grant however they remain feeling under threat that at some point they might be stripped of the Child Support Grant. According to the participants talks amongst the Child Support Grant recipients there is a collective fear that the Child Support Grant might be taken from them. The other people who were not interviewed for this project cannot be spoken for however from the response of the participants in this study there appears to be insecurity that they feel about the Child Suppose Grant.

Theme emerged depicting the government as provider in the absence of supportive relationships, and defining the role of the grants in filling the caring gap. It was also found that Greater control over resources gained through grants was associated with an increased sense of control over one's life and household prospects, constituting a strong link between the grants and the mental health. The grants often reduced recipients' dependence on strained and insecure relationships (Marais, 2011). This links the theme of dependence and entitlement as well as empowerment and independence. This is because by the government being viewed as a provider it breeds dependence of the participants, however it is justified by the participants because the government has a responsibility towards the people of south Africa, this showing the entitlement aspect of the interviews. In receiving the grant participant appear to be empowered in that they can attain some basic needs of the household, thus creating an independence factor for each of them.

I : What would be your response to a person that says that grant recipients who do not vote for the ruling party are stealing from the government?

P1 : Ee... They must vote for the ruling party… Yes the party has brought us these things that are good

P2 : I see it as a problem. Other political parties have their tax, yes. So it means that they receive from those taxes

P3 : I vote for our party. The party we know helps us. The others are stealing from SARS

P4 : Eish, according to me I don't know how to put it. I don't know How to put it. I don't know

P5 : It is their husbands, they say it is their husbands' tax money, they are taxing their husbands. I don't know what it means to tax their husbands and what happens there. The money was introduced by a particular party, our party ((of the record she says the current ruling party))… I don't even desire any other political parties. I
don't desire at all. I vote for only one party… Ya, until I die, even after I have died my children are told by me that they know their political party; it is the one that fought for us here in our land so that this CSG we can receive. It is by this government. When it comes to other political parties they should not lie to you

P6 : There is no party that is coming to change. I vote for one party. It is…it's the one that I rely on, the one where I'm staying ((implying loyalty)), even if they say people are getting shot I know that they are fighting for me in that are

Participants had a hard time with the responding to the question about the government and the Child Support Grant. One of the participants refused to answer the question stating of the record that she was scared of the implications of talking about the government when the Child Support Grant means so much to her and her family. Most of the participants showed in the interview that there is a loyalty to the current ruling party because according to the participants the Child Support Grant comes from the ruling party and they are the ones who have given them this great income without them having to do much.

There was a lot of hesitation when it can to responding to the issue of the government in terms of the Child Support Grant. However, the participants view the government as a hero to poverty alleviation, according to the participants there is no other that can come do what the current ruling party has done for them. There is no negative view of the government in terms of the

Child Support Grant in that regard. There is a participant who raised the fact that the Child Support Grant comes from the taxes of the employed people and specifically for some their husbands. The suggestion of that being that government gives it back to them, and they view as positive as it helps meet their basic needs on a monthly basis.

Literature states that government serves as a provider to the Child Support Grant recipients, this part of literature is fully shown in the extracts as the participants view the Child Support Grant as a provision from the government. When discussing the issue of the government in terms of the Child Support Grant the participants, state clearly that they vote and will continually vote for the same party as they are providers to them. The participants' exact control in that they also state that even their families including the children that they are raising will continue to vote this particular party as it has provided for them. With all of this the participants seem eager to remain loyal to the ruling party or their personal choice government in order to retain the receiving of the Child Support Grant.

The positive view of the government in terms of the Child Support Grant as given by the participants would seem to give them self-control and the control of their households as seen that they want to protect their households and believe that the party that they are voting for is best to service their needs. One of the participants mentions that there is no other political party that can come to change as such she stands on this one particular party. There is a participant who viewed the current government as more than just a provider more like a father providing for his children, she says:

```
I   :   So the government is providing for you currently?
P5  :   because they love us, they know that we are their children we
        sitting here where it is nice
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The participant in discussing her experience of the Child Support Grant and the government relates to the Child Support Grant as an income that is provided by the government. The receiving of the Child Support Grant is interpreted by the participant as love and care shown by the government towards her, her children and the rest of her house hold so that their basic needs on a monthly basis are met. It seems to the participant to the participant to be personal to her.

In speaking about the government in terms of the Child Support Grant, in addition to participants being hesitant to discuss, they appear uncomfortable in discussing this element. Participants stood up and walked around while some stopped giving eye contact in the discussion of government and the Child Support Grant. The participants were much more at liberty to speak about their thoughts on the government off the record. The views are as discussed above and show the loyalty of the participants to specific beliefs they have of the government and the understanding they have of the Child Support Grant in their lives.

The perspectives that people have which have been voiced out as unlikely though pervasive belief that teenage girls were falling pregnant in order to access Child Support Grants appeared to contribute to stigmatising grant applicants (Kubheka , 2013), with potentially negative impacts on the mental health of young mothers. Thus, young mothers opt to send their elder guardians to receive the money on behalf of the child or some would have to endure the stigma that comes with the receiving of Child Support Grant. The participants that were interviewed for this project were all older females and when they discussed the issues around the myths or stigmas surrounding the Child Support Grant recipients that they know of, some of the participants seemed to not want to entertain the enquiry that I put forward for them while some of the participants spoke about the issues that they know. This relates to the fact that all participants interviewed for this project are all older and some of the children are not biological but related.

This suggests a level of defensiveness and sensitivity around this issue. It also suggests that the participants are aware of some themes/ myths, but are resisting and challenging it by declining to speak about it.

I : What are some of the myths that are out there about the experience you have as a grant receiver?
P2 : They say that some people take the money to taverns for alcohol you see
P1 : Ai, I have not heard anything
P9 : I can say that those who do such stay with their parents and those parents buy everything for them. Their parents tell them to do something else with the grant money. So they do all those things to be beautiful with the money […] According to me, I take it that it is like that. I haven't seen it but have heard of people speaking about it. I cannot say a specific person because I have no proof. No, I just take it that there are others who have more than an extended hand (in terms of money)

P5 : Playing cards, what what? I don't play cards my sister, and I don't even desire. They hurt my feelings too much because that money…that money, because I just don't know well. When they finally gave it to us they told us to help the children with it, they didn't say that we must do our hair, go to gamble, wear clothes that we want. It happens that you find the child not dressed at all, or the pants torn with no shoes. A young child of 3 years having cracks on their feet, looking like an old person. I don't allow my children…you can call them now so!! I can buy them shoes with the money, yes they dress well and they don't have a problem. The card gambling even to desire them I don't. They say that there is a machine somewhere here in the neighbourhood, I don't even want to know them or where exactly it is. Those people once they receive the grant, they take the money and go to those machines and by the time they come back from them the person doesn't have anything. When I receive the grant, I run home and say to my children here is the money I have received for you and they see it

Some of the participants said that they did not know of myths or stigma that surround the recipients of the Child Support Grant, while some of the participants although knew some of the myths and stigma that surrounds the Child Support Grant recipients they made it known to separate themselves from those actions. Showing that the Child Support Grant is really important for their households and by any means they do not want to be associated with the stigmas. The participants appear to have their own opinions on the stigmas surrounding the Child Support

Grant recipients, they also appear to have their own opinions on the reasons people use the grant money for non-basic needs or why it is used for their personal basis instead of the households.

Participants want to protect the Child Support Grant for their households, as such everything surrounding the negative things that people are allegedly doing, the participants spoke of them externally and did not want to be associated with them going further by explicitly saying that they have no interest in those actions and that they love the Child Support Grant.

4.2. Researcher and Research Process

During the interviews participants mentioned some of the changes that they would like to see in terms of their receiving of the Child Support Grant. Not surprisingly, nearly all of the participants want the amount of the Child Support Grant to be increased, with one of the participants suggesting the Child Support Grant should be increased to at least R600 because the current amount of R315 is not enough for the participants to get all the basic needs of the households. This is implying that they will have more options and buying power when they have more money to use for their daily lives. This introduces the notion that the participants see the researcher as an authority that could cause the change to happen in regards to the Child Support Grant.

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I    :    What would you want to do that you cannot do now?
P3   :    So we can get more money some time and I will see
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While most of the participants want for the Child Support Grant is increase, there are also a number of participants who mentioned in the interview and informally after signing the consent forms that they would like for the Child Support Grant to be a continuous income that they get and it is not limited to a certain age point. This is seen in the extract below:

P5 : No, the children live well with the money, their money. You know what? I didn't stop at a certain time. We just get the income (grant) indefinitely because I will be sad when it ends. My children and I live well. The money helps us live in the home and we are short of nothing. The month can go by with me having some of the money and my children getting everything they want with it. I love this money a lot, I love it too much. I wish it didn't stop at all

Although this kind of change for the Child Support Grant would be an expensive undertaking on the government's side, it would definitely increase the positive experience that the Child Support Grant recipients have at the current moment. The suggestions of the changes as proposed by the participants might be as a result that participants mentioned that they are unemployed and the Child Support Grant is the only source of income that is stable in their lives. There is also the fact that the CSG is not used just for the purpose of the child but for the entire household as such participants would be much more appreciative of the Child Support Grant as the more the Child Support Grant the more that the household in entirety can benefit positively.

The change that the Child Support Grant should not end as suggested by the participants could be seen as way to preserve the income that they rely and depend on monthly. This could also be a way that would increase dependency amongst the recipients of the Child Support Grant which would counter the remarks that the finance minister and the former present to be cautious about breeding a dependency culture amongst the people. This could also be seen as a way for the participants to retain the security that is brought by the Child Support Grant. This is because for the participants the Child Support Grant is a monthly income that they get that allows for them to provide basic needs of their households.

Participants' report that because of the Child Support Grant, the differences amongst the neighbours has been lessened, however they desire to do more than they are doing now because

they are limited by the amount of the support grant at the moment. Participants would like to get more of what the children would like and also improve on their living environment. More of the details on the use of the Child Support Grant are discussed below.

Participants at the end of the interviews informally enquired about what I thought about the changes they would like from the Child Support Grant. Participants wanted to know whether it would ever be possible to get the changes that they mentioned on the Child Support Grant. They appeared to be eager to see the changes occur for them to better their lives. Thus, implying that I had some authority or was connected to the relevant authorities to implement or even discard the Child Support Grant.

There is mistrust about researchers asking the participants about their experience or their receiving of the Child Support Grant. Participants when I entered into their homes, the first question they asked are what I am doing there and why I am asking them about the Child Support Grant. The last comments after the interview would be that I should please not take away the CSG from them. This gave evidence what the participants say in the interview about their fear of losing the Child Support Grant and having no security or no secure insurance that the Child Support Grant cannot be taken away from them before the time it is stopped meaning when the child turns 18 years or other special circumstances. In other words, there is a suggestion that some of the things that have been said above by participants in the above sections, were said in order to specifically show me how important the grant was to them, and to appeal to me to use the power that I am assumed to have to improve the grant or atleast allow them continued access.

All of the above suggests that what participants say in interviews such as those conducted may have been shaped by what they are assuming about the researcher's authority and power. This poses challenges to the research process in terms of interpreting/ analysing of the data. And this was part of the research questions of this study.

In the discussion of the stigmas they emphasize the importance of the grant for their households. The participants in the interviews do not speak about their personal experience of the stigmas instead they communicate the ideas that they know as external to them. One of the participants gives details on what appears to be an experience she has seen around her community, she quickly assures that she would never allow for her children to look that way, as seen in the extracts above. The participants are not trusting of anyone that informally they ask that I don't mention that I have spoken to them as this might be detrimental to their receiving of the Child Support Grant, this could be because there are more issues associated to speaking to "officials" or individuals who are not from their community would be an issue of them in the community. However, the participants did not want to speak about the issues. There appears to be a mistrust of researchers in general and the research process.

All throughout the process of collecting data in the interviews and in collecting the ethnographic field notes. Participants in addressing the questions, answer them in corporate sense. The extracts below will show how the participants answered certain questions corporately and how some of the questions were answered in a personal sense.

Participants in answering most of the questions, answered their answers using "we",
"we see it as being helpful", "we just don't know"
"we like the CSG, it helps us" (field note, 2014)

There are however, questions in which participants answered as answering for themselves. These are found in the extracts below:

> There are questions when participants were asked, they answered with an I as opposed to a we, "I save for my kids", "I, myself I don't know" and " I do what is best for my household and the Child Support Grant is helpful for that"(field note,2014)

This showed that in the overall experience of the Child Support Grant, the participants have a sense of community or belonging. The generalizations of certain answers suggest that all those reported experience could be how each of the participants assumes is how everyone else in their state experiences the Child Support Grant including them. More over this suggests they are using "we" to represent everyone. This is to show that they are not the only ones who experience it in that way, showing that for the general recipients the Child Support Grant is important and very necessary for their daily lives.

As also seen in the extracts above, there are specific questions that participants used "I" to show that they are speaking for themselves, more than this it shows them removing or distinguish themselves from other by explicitly mentioning that it is themselves that is spoken. Mostly, this is seen in questions of stigmas with participants challenging the stigmas. All this could be motivated for the need to protect themselves and the Child Support Grant that they are receiving.

The participants mention that the only reason that they agreed to the interview was that the recommendation to be interviewed came from someone that they knew and they trusted. This is someone who is a Child Support Grant recipient just like they are indicates a sense of community and trust amongst the recipients. This is also suggesting the mistrust that participants even

though participating in the research project towards the researcher as they assume as mentioned above power in the Child Support Grant receiving.

5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to use themes that emerge about the experiences of the child grant recipients, to find out the factors that determine the recipients' response to research interview participation and/ or questions about their reported experience of receiving the grant. To understand how they make sense of the receiving of grant compared to others around and to compare the child support grant recipients reported experiences with the stated aims of the child support grant as stated in the child support grant policy documents.

As seen in the findings and discussion, the themes emerged showed that there are complexities to the experiences of the Child Support Grant recipients. The themes showed that although the general view of the experiences of the Child Support Grant are positive for the recipients and there are frustrations that they face on a monthly basis. The participants are grateful to be receiving this type of income. Trust appears to be a huge factor on whether the participants take part in a research interview or not especially when asking about issues like the Child Support Grant which are important to households, however trust is not the only factor.

The aim of the study which was to know how the Child Support Grant recipients make sense of their receiving compared to the others around them. The participants mentioned that they see any difference between themselves and the other people around them, concluding that the reason that the differences if any are not totally evident is because of the contribution of the Child Support Grant in their lives.

The aims of the study were meant to be achieved in the themes of the study that emerged from the interview and ethnographic notes of the participants. The participants did not reveal a lot about their experiences as recipients.

In concluding, the experience of the participants has been documented as positive and that there are different aspects as can be seen to determine whether they agree to be interviewed. The Child Support Grant is considered very personal and participants agree that they need the security and stability that the Child Support Grant offers to the recipients. There appeared to be some mistrust that participants had towards the research project, showing that the challenge of conducting research on this particular subject is centred on the perceptions of the participants about the researcher. The research produced that participants have to deal with tensions around dependency and entitlement of the Child Support Grant. This also includes that their fears surrounding the Child Support Grant because it is a stable income determine participation in a study like this.

The findings in this project also show that there are intersecting complexities in doing research, for the participants and for the researchers in different levels of the same context. The Child Support Grant recipients appear to have a lot of dynamics that affect their lives, the Child Support Grant seems to be intertwined with other factors such as education, unemployment, poverty and other social dynamics. The different complexities contribute participation in research and weave together the different themes that are highlighted in this paper. According to Lund (2008) writing about the lasting impact of the Child Support Grant in the earlier years of the Child Support Grant it was too early to confidently measure the impact. Although this study did not focus on the impact of the Child Support Grant, the themes speak to the impact of the

grant and assist in knowing the lasting impact of the grant on the recipients, including the other factors are present.

6. APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Title of research project: Reported experiences of child grant recipients

Name of Organization: University of Witwatersrand

Address: Faculty of humanities, school of Psychology

Name of researcher: Tshegofatso Seabi

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Kevin Whitehead

Purpose: To learn the reported experiences of the child support grant recipients

Deadline: 2014

1. What are your experiences as a grant recipient?

2. What are some of the myths that are out there about the experience you have as a grant receiver?

3. What would be your response to a person that says that grant recipients who do not vote for the ruling party are stealing from the government? This was in the Sowetan online newspaper on the 09-04-2014

4. How would you describe your life as a recipient of the grant? Is there a difference to the way of life in your experience to the others around you?

7. APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

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

Invitation to participate in research

Good day,

My name is **Tshegofatso Seabi** and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Master's degree in Research Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. I am currently doing research on people's experiences as child social grant recipients. Specifically I am interested in caregivers reported experiences of receiving the child support grant and how they make sense of these experiences. I would like to invite you to participate in this study by being interviewed at a suitable chosen location.

Participation in this research will involve being interviewed by me, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will be 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes. With your permission this interview will be recorded so that the correct information is captured. The recordings will not be destroyed after the research is finished, because they may remain useful indefinitely. However they will be securely locked in a room or in a computer protected by a password. Participation is voluntary, and no one will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and information that could identify you, like your name, will not be included in the research report. Direct quotations from the interview may be used but pseudo or false names will be used instead of real name. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will only accessed by me and my supervisor,

If you wish to participate in the study please sign the following consent forms and then the interview will be conducted. You may refuse to answer any questions that you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. This means that the recordings of the interviews can be destroyed even after the interviews have been completed. It is not expected that there are any risks connected with participating in this study. However if you have experienced any emotional or psychological discomfort, you may call **Lifeline's National Counselling Line at 0861 322 322**

There are no expectations that you will benefit directly from this study. However the findings of this research will help to better understand experiences of Child Support Grant recipients. This can possibly lead to better policies around the Child Support Grant. The results will be distributed in the researchers' masters' report, and in possible publications and conference

presentations. The participants can get access to the findings by contacting and requesting the findings from the researcher, at the email address given below.

Kind Regards

Researcher: Tshegofatso Seabi

tseabi@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Prof Kevin Whitehead

Kevin.whitehead@wits.ac.za

Consent to Participate in Research

I, _____, having read the participant information, hereby consent to participate in the ***Reported Experiences of Child Support Grant Recipients***. In doing so, I understand that:

a. My participation is voluntary

b. There are no expected risks or benefits for participating in the study.

c. I may withdraw from the study at any time by informing the researcher or her supervisor listed above.

d. I have a right not to answer any questions that I prefer not to answer.

e. My interview will be kept confidential.

f. Parts of my transcribed interview could be selected for analysis.

g. My words may be used in the reports of the findings from the research.

h. If my words are used, a false name will be used to ensure that nobody but the researcher knows it was me who said it.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Consent Form: Recording

I_____, consent to being interviewed by _____ for her study on _____ being tape-recorded.

I understand that:

a. The tapes and transcripts will only be seen or heard by the researcher and her supervisor.

b. My real name will not be used in the transcripts or the research report, but will be replaced by a false name.

c. Recordings of the interviews will not be destroyed, unless participants request that the recordings of their interview be destroyed.

d. Recordings will be stored secure in a locked cupboard or on a computer protected by a password.

Signed: _____ **Date: _____**

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