



The impact of family structure and its dynamics on street children phenomenon in the North West province of South Africa

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DECLARATION

I, Karabo Gloria Mohapanele, hereby declare that the work on “**The impact of family structure and its dynamics on street children phenomenon in the North-West province of South Africa**” is my own work, both in conception and in execution and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that this thesis has never been submitted at any institution for any purpose, academic or otherwise.

Karabo Mohapanele

June 2023

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late mother, Mosetsanagape Matilda Mohapanele, may your soul continue to rest in peace.

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ABSTRACT

A family as a societal social institution plays a fundamental role in influencing children's behavior, and it is a crucial factor in determining children's lives. A dysfunctional family is one of the factors for the street children phenomenon. This study aims to examine the impact of family structure and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon in the North-West province of South Africa.

Structural functionalist theory has been used as an umbrella theory for Symbolic Interactionist theory and Gender reform feminisms, and Attachment theory has been used independently. A qualitative research paradigm has been used for the study with non-probability purposive sampling. Data was collected from street children beneficiaries of the two drop-in centres called Kgakala and Letsema centres in the North West Province of South Africa. Fifteen (15) Children as well as their fifteen (15) parents were interviewed, which makes a total of thirty (30) participants.

As revealed by its findings, this study argues that poverty is not the sole or main cause for children to go to the street. There are other intervening variables in the family structures that also act as contributory factors in producing street children, this includes amongst others: parentings styles, child discipline and mistreatments. This study discerns four types of family structures of street children: single parent family, nuclear family, step family and extended family. Children from these four types of family structures provided various reasons that lead them to the street. The study also found some connection between the demographic characteristics (e.g. gender) of children's parents and the reasons for their children to be on the street in relation to their family structure.

Amongst other recommendations, this study suggests that there should be micro-finance and other support to the parents, as this will assist in preventing the migration of children to the streets, powerful familial bonds should also be built to maintain a nurturing family environment, finally, further research should be conducted to identify different community-based solutions to deal with the problems of street children.

Key words: Family, Family structure, street children, drop-in center

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics

ACRWC: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CRC: Convention on the Rights of Child

CSC: Consortium for Street Children

CV: Curriculum Vitae

DoSD: Department of Social Development

ECD: Early childhood Development

FHHs: Female-Headed Households

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

NPO: Non-Profit Organization

NCRC: National Children's Rights Committee

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

POPI: Protection of Personal Information

RDP: Reconstruction Development Programme

STDS: Sexually Transmitted Diseases

SES: Socio Economic Status

SA: South Africa

SASSA: South African Social Security Agency

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UK: United Kingdom

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UN: United Nations

WHO: World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

South Africa has a pervasive set of strong beliefs that a child's place is in his or her family. This has been the case in the past, even in the apartheid context (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114). A family is considered the primary institution to orientate children within the norms and morals of the society. A family as a societal social institution plays a fundamental role in influencing adult's behavior, and it is a crucial factor in determining children's lives. Children depend entirely on their families for care, nurturance and guidance during the course of their childhoods (Saelens & Kerr, 2008). According to Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155), society becomes more stable when the family institution is stable.

South Africa, like many other nations, is challenged by an ever-growing number of street children (Mahlangu, 2002; Malindi, 2009; and Vogel, 2001). During the 1990s, the number of street children in South Africa was estimated to be between nine and ten thousand (Swart-Kruger & Donald, 1994: 107–121). The latest statistics to have been reported of street children is approximately two hundred and fifty thousand (250, 000) (Hills, Meyer-Weitz & Asante, 2016). According to the 2019 Consortium for Street Children (CSC), a commonly quoted figure of street children is 100 million worldwide, however, given that this estimation is from 1989, it is considerably outdated. Therefore, the true numbers of street children are unknown. Kawala et al. (2020) also writes that street children are quite dynamic, and the exact numbers are difficult to establish.

There are a number of contributory push factors exacerbating the street children phenomenon in South Africa, and they include the following: an increasing level of instability and dissolution of parental unions, weakening family support systems for child care and monitoring, substance abuse, domestic violence that includes child maltreatment, a high prevalence of deaths related to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), (Coren et al., 2013: 1140–1172). Additionally, pull factors include money, peer pressure, food, freedom from family or parental control and discipline, which are all linked to the increasing number of street children in the country (Mokomane & Makoae, 2017: 378-387).

According to Ashoka (2004) the rise in the number of street children in South Africa was a result of rapid urbanization with its attendant economic and other social ills. Additionally, problems at the family level, such as family feuds, domestic violence, child abuse by parents as well as

phenomena such as societal conflicts and social disruptions have a great potential to undermine family socialization efforts, and thus increase the likelihood of the disorientation of children (Ashoka, 2004). Below is a section that fully explores how urbanization and migrant labor, HIV-AIDS and coronavirus (COVID-19) restructured families and ultimately gave rise to the street children phenomenon

1.1.1. The effects of apartheid, urbanization and migrant labor, HIV-AIDS and Coronavirus (COVID-19) on street children phenomenon.

Kilbride et al. (2000) argue that South African apartheid and racial isolation contributed to the phenomenon of street children. A strong motive for the presence of street children in South Africa is the social and political upheaval caused by the domination of one group over another, and in occupying a higher status over the dominated group. A high number of children who are in the South African streets are from the black population, and the situation is strongly tied to the circumstances that resulted from the urbanization process that took place in South Africa. Due to that, compared to other population groups (White, Indian and Coloured as per the apartheid classifications), black children became more vulnerable to poverty and to poor parent-child relationships (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114). Still, Malindi and Theron (2010: 318-326) thus found that street children in South Africa mainly come from the Black, Indian and Coloured populations, of whom 9 000 were black. This means that there are far fewer white children on South African streets, and this is historical as they were previously favored by the apartheid system.

Le Roux (1997) ascribed that the socio-political history of most South Africans resulted in the rise of a culture of violence and intolerance in families. The result of this was that quite a few households became intolerable to children, and this led such children to turn to the street. According to Ward and Seager (2010: 85-100) various children described their family environment as intolerable due to circumstances of domestic violence, abuse and poor family relationships in their home. These include girl-child sexual abuse, usually by their stepfathers or their mother's boyfriends. Boys thus described that they had unpleasant relationships with their step-parents, (Ward & Seager, 2010: 89).

"The family as an institution in charge of socialization, was thus exposed to historical processes that resulted in affecting its structure, roles and its functioning" (Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016: 309-321). Since the democratic elections in 1994, the applied socio-economic policies of the

government had also impacted the family in terms of its structural changes (Amoateng & Heaton, 2012: 37-58). Family processes are not uniform, nor do they operate in isolation from race, gender and class. Racial differences in attitudes towards the family have become academically popular in recent years. To the extent that race is an important indicator of cultural beliefs and socio-economic status, there is bound to be differences in the way different race groups socialise members in the formation of such identities and their impact on family patterns (Amoateng & Heaton, 2012: 37-58). Gender of parents is also an important aspect to explore within a family system in terms of how it has an implication on the child outcome or upbringing, it is for that reason that the Feminist Theory is appropriated to frame and guide the analysis of the findings.

South Africa's mode of production gave rise to an increase in urbanization (Gelderblom, 2004: 116-135). Budlender and Lund (2011: 925-946) argue that industrialization and manufacturing has resulted in many people turning into migrant labourers, which disrupted the lives of people in families. The fundamental denominator for the increase of street children has been the interference with the family structure through industrialization and modernization, that has adversely weakened the family institution and led to more individual forms of parenting.

According to Hall and Posel (2019), although some commentators caution against a narrowly causal interpretation of the effects of migrant labour on households, the deliberate disruption of households and families by the apartheid regime – or what has been referred to as the “state-orchestrated destruction of family life” – certainly had a massive and lasting effect on African family and household structure. The homeland policy was both an economic and political strategy. Hall and Posel (2019) further reveal that in 1970, anti-apartheid activist and Catholic priest Cosmas Desmond wrote: “More than 40% of the economically active men are absent from the ‘homelands’ at any given time. This enforced splitting-up of families, is probably the most evil of all the effects of the resettlement schemes. For the sake of the comfort of the White man, the Black man must be deprived of his right to live with his wife and family”.

Migrant workers were often forced to live in cramped and substandard conditions such as single-sex hostels that were not designed to accommodate families – although many attempted to do so illegally, and at great risk and discomfort to themselves and their women and children. African women who had permission to work in White areas, for example as domestic workers, often had to leave their children in the care of relatives. The live-in quarters of domestic workers were regularly raided to ensure that children were not cohabiting with them. Group Areas Act was amended over time and progressively eroded the rights of family dependants (mainly women and children) to live together with their men in towns and cities. Even when these rights could be

acquired, family residence was contingent on the availability of “suitable” family accommodation. From the late 1960s, housing construction in urban townships slowed and eventually ground to a halt, while single-sex hostel accommodation was expanded. The shortfall of family housing became an indirect way of preventing the urbanisation of women, children and other “surplus” Africans (Hall and Posel, 2019).

The breakdown of families therefore came as a result of Black migrant labourers who were forced to leave their homes without their families due to the restrictions placed on access to Black Urban Areas Act passed in 1923. Families dissolved because of such enforced separate areas legislation, and numerous men adopted urban values and that resulted in a general disintegration of traditional value systems. Children became the main victims, were most affected and became highly vulnerable, due to the structural changes in families, as a result of the circumstances of urbanization and migrant labour. It is under these circumstances that the first generation of street children, as products of urbanisation, made their appearance (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114).

Thus, South African urbanisation had emerged with a huge societal price, as the urbanisation process contributed to the prevalence of large, needy and fatherless black families both in urban and rural communities (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114). Some of the migrant laborers got into second marriages with urban women and started a second family, which too had to be taken care of. When a man is supposed to go back home to his original family, it was not possible for him to take along his second wife and their (newfound) children. It becomes evident that the migrant labour system not only interrupted the institution of the family unit in the rural areas from where the labourers came, but also led to a breakdown of the congruity of his secondary family in the urban area where he was located temporarily. It can therefore be concluded that it was furthermore problematic to establish a stable moral and emotional framework imperative for congenial family functioning and the creation of an environment supporting authentic child-rearing in either of the two families. Consequently, a fatherless and poverty-stricken family was left behind in the city (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114).

According to Magagula (2009), the social, political and economic conditions of colonization, urbanization and globalization have all affected South African families to some or other extent in general. The separation of livelihoods and activities led to family breakdowns. Family resources have been grossly affected by the said factors and have led to failure in the provision of care and support to its members.

In a study conducted by Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387), a shelter manager indicated that the recovery from the apartheid past is far from over. The effect has been a gap in parenting skills, and a family structure unable to carry itself or its members successfully through its traditional functions. The shelter manager revealed that parents of children in the shelters were raised poorly by their parents, being exposed to dysfunctional families such as having absent fathers and mothers due to apartheid's migrant labour system and through losses incurred due to the scourge of HIV/AIDS on households. Parents lack parenting skills in the context of such circumstances (Mokomane & Makoae, 2017: 378-387).

Kilbride et al. (2000) indicate that the street children phenomenon is also created by family tragedy, such as death, decline of indigenous family values and by the breakdown in families in instances of divorce. Some existing single parents families and blended families might have resulted from divorce or death of one parent in the family. Child-headed households may have resulted from the death of both parents, and children become orphans and often lack parental support and guidance, which may lead them astray. According to Le Roux (2001: 94-114) the HIV/AIDS virus, which is devastating the country, is also a contributory factor to the increasing number of street children. Child-headed households are more likely to be found in countries severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Mavise, 2010).

There are not enough institutions (such as provincial government, NGOs, shelters/centres or foster care programmes) in the country to care for these children. It is therefore expected that many children will opt for street life when they become orphaned and destitute through HIV/AIDS (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114). The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS came as a result of overcrowding experienced in squatter settlements. The latter mushroomed as people migrated to cities in search of employment. Poverty, lack of education and the inferior status of women are other contributory factors to the spread of HIV/AIDS (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114).

To further reflect on other contributory factors to the street children phenomenon, South Africa and most parts of the world were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged after December 2019, when discovered in Wuhan city, Hubei province, China. It is important to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic in detail and how it could have affected family structures. This is to consider that the data for this study was collected during the period of the pandemic in 2021, just a year after the discovery of the virus.

The two versions of the word Coronavirus and COVID-19 will be used interchangeably throughout this study. This virus has spread across many countries around the globe including South Africa,

with a high mortality rate. Governments in different countries including the South African government had to put their countries in various levels of lockdown, which has had an impact on many families too. Due to such unprecedented circumstances, some breadwinners in families have lost their jobs and some could not earn their salaries because of the “no work, no pay policy” in different companies or due to their employment contract conditions. As a result, some families have been or are affected negatively due to their lack of income.

Lebow (2020) adds that first and foremost, the COVID-19 outbreak is a great human tragedy. In the long progression of human suffering, there have been other momentous times of loss, ranging from wars to genocides to massive oppression to other pandemics, but never one so widespread across such an interconnected world. More people were critically ill and many have died. World economies and social structures were heavily impacted and with this comes the vulnerabilities to totalitarian and authoritarian politics in many countries (Lebow, 2020).

While children were not the face of Coronavirus pandemic, they remained at risk of being among its largest victims, as children’s lives were being changed in profound ways. Children of all ages were being affected, particularly by the socio-economic impacts and in some cases, by mitigation measures that may inadvertently do more harm than good. COVID-19 was a global crisis and, for some children, the impact will be lifelong. Furthermore, the harmful effects of this pandemic were not distributed equally. They were most damaging for children in the poorest countries, and in the poorest neighborhoods, and for those that were already in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations (UNICEF, 2020).

The drivers of family dynamics and children’s adjustment in economically vulnerable families during the novel coronavirus pandemic are not yet fully understood (Kalil, Mayer, & Shah, 2020: 6). In their study, Kalil, Mayer, and Shah (2020) examine how economic and social features of the novel coronavirus pandemic may be associated with key aspects of parental mental health and family dynamics. The family dynamics they focus on as outcomes capture three types of interactions between parents and children known to be central in the development of young children’s socio-emotional adjustment and anticipated to play a role in amplifying or mitigating the response to the novel coronavirus (Kalil, Mayer, & Shah, 2020: 6). These characteristics include parental mental health and stress, parents’ time investments in children’s development, and the quality of parent-child interactions. They also examine parents’ reports of children’s behavioral adjustment.

As families lost their sources of income due to COVID-19 and the global economy that has been

plunged into a recession, more households fell into monetary poverty (UNICEF, 2020). The COVID-19 crisis did not affect all families equally, but may have caused particular harm to children of low-income and less-educated parents, who tend to have lower academic and socio-emotional skills as compared to higher income or more educated parents (Attanasio et al., 2020). For the poorest families, including those who do not have access to social protection, the situation was dire. For some children, with the right support and resources, the situation was manageable, but for others the effects of the pandemic might have cast a long shadow over their lives. The COVID-19 pandemic harmed the health, social and material well-being of children worldwide, with the poorest children, including homeless children, that got impacted hardest. School closures, social distancing and confinement also increased the risk of poor nutrition among children, as well as their exposure to domestic violence, to increase their anxiety and stress, and to reduce access to vital family and care services (Thevenon & Adema, 2020: 1-41). The response by government to coronavirus already exposed the fragile situation that many children and young people live in (UNICEF, 2020).

The global socioeconomic crisis caused by the pandemic pushed millions of more children into monetary poor households in developing countries. Hundreds of thousands of children faced hunger, violence, ill-health and lost opportunities that could follow them into adulthood. The total number of children living in poor households globally could drastically increase in the absence of any mitigating policies (UNICEF, 2020). Immediate government measures need to ensure that children have access to good food, and receive protection against child abuse and neglect, with continued access to children's physical and mental health services (Thevenon & Adema, 2020: 1-41).

The cases and number of people infected with COVID-19 was also increasing daily, taking the lives of parents and breadwinners of families. With such a high increase in the mortality rate, the virus affected many families globally. It has surely had an impact on South African families that have lost their loved ones. Previously or during the first wave, the virus was a threat especially to adults or older people, as the older age group was prone to the virus and most vulnerable as compared to other population age groups in the society. As a result of that, it is likely that many youths or children were left orphaned or without one parent due to the pandemic's death. Therefore, new family structures that have existed in South Africa, including single-parent families, step-families and child headed-households, may have increased.

This is also substantiated by Lebow (2020), who states that not only have individuals and families been dealing with threats to their health from COVID-19, by trying to avoid and survive the

infection, but there have also been so many special meanings for families. Thus, for many, it is a direct effect, when there is the loss of family members (with such losses often occurring in ways removed from family contact, that are unusual in a society in which death is attended by mass gatherings).

Lebow (2020) further states that, beyond the direct impacts of the virus, there are also indirect effects. We are living through an intense period of family life, governed by a unique set of very strong external boundaries. Lebow (2020) explains how COVID-19 affected the family institution positively and negatively: the former is in the sense that the lockdown strengthened some families as members could spend much time together for long periods of time being locked in the same household or family environment; and negatively, in that, the lockdown contributed negatively to some families as family members could not 'stand each other' during lockdown when they spent the entire time together with their families. For Lebow, additional risks are evident in couples and families already at risk of violence, conflict or other forms of relational difficulty. Not surprisingly, early data from China point to an increase in divorce rates during their period of lockdown (Lebow, 2020: 310).

Lockdown measures could have also had an effect of exposing children to a range of risks. Several factors related to confinement measures are likely to result in heightened tensions in the household, added stressors placed on caregivers, economic uncertainty, job losses or disruption to livelihoods, as well as social isolation. These are well known risk factors for domestic violence, and as the risk of violence against children has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with child protection services weakened, due in part to measures implemented to control the spread of the virus (UNICEF, 2020).

The effect of family structure on human development and well-being has been an area of interest for many researchers (Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Manning & Lamb, 2003; Theron & Dunn, 2010). Studies such as Bronstein et al. (1993: 268-276) focus more on individual and interpersonal factors that may contribute to differences in child outcomes across various family structures, including parenting behavior, family conflict, gender of parents and of the child. The authors argue that the growing population of street children indicates an increase in a number of problematic families in the society at large. Street children are among the most deprived and marginalized groups in the society because they do not have what is considered an appropriate relationship with major institutions of childhood such as the family (Scanlon et al., 1998; WHO, 2000).

According to Doodson and Morley (2006: 109-130), many children in South Africa experience

childhood in broken families. Family breakdown appears to be a strong factor that leads to children spending more time on the street or leaving their homes entirely (Sorre & Oino, 2013: 153). Many children grow up living without one or even both of their parents. Makiwane et al. (2016) further specify that the family, in its different appearances, is the site of the numerous value systems affecting South Africa's children, and determines the future of the society. The structures of South African families are formed in a complicated manner of nuclear, multigenerational, extended and re-established families. Holborn and Eddy (2011) report the following astounding family statistics in South Africa: divorcees with children: 56%; children (0-17 years) residing with both biological parents: 35%; children (0-17) residing with their mothers only: 40%; children (0-17) residing with their father only: 3%; children (0-17) residing with neither biological parent: 23%, only 31.7 % of children live with both their biological parents. Such statistics reflect a structural and a societal-wide problem for South African children.

It is thus important for more studies to be conducted on the impact and outcomes of changing family structures and their influence on children. This study examines the impact of family structure and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon in the North-West province of South Africa. This is to consider that, when children leave their families and go to the streets, it is often assumed that there is a serious problem at home.

As it is a society-wide problem, the street children phenomenon also occurs in the North West Province of South Africa. Children in this country are faced with various challenges in respect to their demographics, which will be discussed later in detail in the literature review chapter. Based on such demographics, South African children are faced with various challenges including orphanhood, growing up from child headed households, growing up without either one or both of their biological parents. For example, in the North West province, there is about 20% of children who do not have biological parents, this makes the North West the 5th province in the country to have such a number of children who lack two biological parents as of 2018 (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220). Therefore, these challenges faced by South African children in respect of their demographics also form part of the contributing factors of street children phenomenon in the country and particularly in the North West province.

What also sets this province apart as the area of this study, is its geographic location and its economic conditions, considering that the province is also dominated by rural areas or villages. Thus, this justifies for more street children studies to be conducted in the province in respect of the family structures where the street children are coming from. This is because, there are few studies or reports addressing the problem in the province as indicated by Idemudia et al. (2013:

161). They conducted a study on street children in Mahikeng in North West Province, and found out that it is a global issue of concern. They suggest that South Africa has to deal with the phenomenon, considering that many of those children need urgent support and are crying out for assistance. They also find that some of the reasons why children go to the street are poverty, orphan-hood, disobedience, conformity, child neglect and abuse. Their study also revealed that children have the desire to abandon street life to go back home and to school, and they also seek to enroll in rehabilitation shelters. They, therefore, recommend that there should be psychological interventions for street children, and that there is a need for further research to be conducted about the phenomenon (Idemudia et al., 2013: 161).

This study, therefore, examines the impact of family structures and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon, focusing on the two drop-in centres that provide services to such children. The two centres that deal with the street children are Kgakala Drop-in Centre in Leeudoringstad, and Letsema Drop-in-Centre in Ventersdorp. Both these institutions are located in the North West Province, South Africa.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Strobbe, Olivetti and Jacobson (2010) indicate that there is an increasing body of studies that explain the circumstances of children residing on the street. Street children face further challenges when they are on the street, in that they are vulnerable to unhealthy living environments, viz., children lack parental supervision and find themselves exposed to risks that threaten their mental, social and overall well-being. According to The World Health Organization (WHO, 2000), street children do not have access to good nutrition and also experience different health problems such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDS), HIV/AIDS, and the novel Coronavirus, and they also face the dangers of rape. They may also be involved in substance abuse and glue sniffing (WHO, 2000). Some are usually not in contact with their families, which leaves them bereft of parental guidance and love. The latter are important factors in a child's healthy development. Such children are at the mercy of criminals, police, drug addicts and smugglers. Such factors are also a reflection of how the street children phenomenon leads to other social problems, which can then fuel societal disruption, and thus interrupt its order and stability.

The literature on the street children phenomenon most often focuses on the economic condition

of the families of street children as the main reason driving the children away from home and into the street. However, there are insufficient studies unpacking the functioning and dynamics of various family structures of street children, particularly in the North West province. The study conducted in the province, in Mahikeng area by Idemudia et al. (2013: 161) focused primarily on the social experiences and psychological condition of street children in that area. Their study also involved children participants directly from the street rather than those from the centres and did not involve the parents of the children. Correspondingly, the study conducted by Van Jaarsveld et al. (2011: 5-8), focused on the developmental status of street children in the Potchefstroom area in Thakaneng shelter in North West. They recommended that further research should be done on street children around all the major cities in the country to attain a comprehensive picture of this sub-group of the population.

Mthombeni (2013) also conducted a comparative study of parents' and children's perspectives in Gauteng province about the factors in the family system causing children to live on the streets. He suggests that his findings could be explored and applied to a larger population. By contrast, this research seeks to specifically and primarily understand in an in-depth manner, and unpack the extraordinary dynamics in the family structure and its impact on the street children phenomenon, as it has not been sufficiently researched by researchers who conducted research on the phenomenon.

Furthermore, based on the researcher's initial observations, the growing number of street children in North West province is becoming a problem. Street children in the province are mainly found at traffic junctions, at restaurants of different shopping malls and in towns of different areas in the province. Such an observation raised the researchers concern and curiosity as to what leads such children to leave their families and end up on the street. The title of the study has been developed with the purpose of understanding the reasons as to why such children have left their families and take to the street. In light of this, the researcher's interest is mainly to understand the dynamics in the family structures of street children by exploring the overall functioning of such families from which street children emerge, as a holistic approach in terms of the following: the nature and type of the family structure, the family-home environment, the parent-child relationship, parenting style, child discipline, guidance, economic conditions, as well as other relevant aspects that emerged in the study.

There are numerous studies on street children in South Africa and in other parts of the world.

However, many such studies focus more on the economic conditions of street children's families. The researcher realized that poverty may be an important factor, but it is not the only factor that drives children to leave their families and go to the street. Studies on street children should not ignore the fact that the family structure and its various dynamics can also play a role as a factor in the perpetuation of the growing population of street children. The phenomenon of street children is not only due to financial instability in families but also involves other intervening variables. Authorities and institutions would therefore need to pay more attention to such factors, so as to enable children to live in a stable family environment where they could get a greater sense of belonging and security.

According to Mthombeni (2013), Centres and Programmes for street children could assist with the street children's needs. However, the problem cannot be solved if attention is not given to the situation at home. Hence this study seeks to explore those aspects that are crucial to understand the family background of street children who are the beneficiaries of the two mentioned drop-in centres, and in particular their family structure and its dynamics.

1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this study is to explore the impact of the family structure and its influence on the street children phenomenon, by understanding the overall functioning of such families from which street children emerge as a holistic approach to the following: the nature and type of the family structure, the family home environment, the parent-child relationship, parenting style, child discipline, guidance, economic conditions and other relevant aspects.

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To ascertain the effect or influence of family structure and its dynamics on street children who are the beneficiaries of the two centres, by understanding various aspects of their families holistically.
- To identify which family structure/s lead children to resort to a street life.
- To explore children's attitudes towards their family environment and various reasons in the family that might have led them to the street.

- To corroborate parents' perspectives and their children's views about the reasons for children to resort to living on the streets.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the various aspects in the family structure that contribute to the effect or influence of family structure and its dynamics on street children who are the beneficiaries of the two centres?
- Which family structure/s lead children to resort to a street life?
- What are the children's attitudes towards their family environment, and the various reasons in the family that might have made them to turn to a life on the street?
- What are the similarities and differences between parents' perspectives and their children's views about the reasons for children to be on the street?

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the street children phenomenon in South Africa as derived from the dynamics of the family system and its practices in the North West province. The results and recommendations of this research may contribute to the literature or existing knowledge on the sociology of children and family, the contexts of street children's lives, and the literature on children in general, and especially to universities / institutions that offer studies on the subject.

By exploring current studies of street children in the literature, this study seeks to unearth the background lives of street children receiving services from the centres, by looking at their various family structures and the impact of the latter on such children who migrate from their families to the streets. This means that the study will not include children who are directly on the street (as is the case with most previous studies conducted on the phenomenon) but those in the centres to get a different sense of the phenomenon. Contrary to other studies on the phenomenon, this research focused primarily on the dynamics in the family structure that contribute to the street children phenomenon, rather than simply presenting poverty as the most relevant underlying factor igniting the street children phenomenon.

The centres also make follow-ups with street children's families in order to begin the process of

family reunification. Home visits by the caretakers help them to understand what is happening at the homes of the children. Before children can be reunited or reintegrated into their families, it is important to ensure first that it is appropriate to do so. Therefore, the results of this study might benefit, among others, the Department of Social Development and the drop-in centres or shelters that provide services to street children, as these organisations or institutions might use the findings of this study as a guide for family reintegration or reunification programmes.

The findings of this research could also contribute to government's policies in providing interventions to resolve the problem of street children and to enhance the functioning of families. Mooney, Knox and Schacht (2007) find that, it is currently likely for children to have experienced the effects of divorce or parental separation, to have a lone parent or to grow up in a step-family. They further argue that the effect such experiences have on children is a key issue for policymakers. The high increase in the number of street children justifies the need for more studies to be conducted on the phenomenon through different lenses. Furthermore, in the area of theory, the study seeks to contribute towards the structure and dynamics of families and how this affects the phenomenon of street children. Overall, the findings of this study might assist in identifying a particular type(s) of family structure(s) that is/are likely to 'push' children towards opting for street life and to examine and understand the reasons why such children tend to take such decisions.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review identifies and organizes the concepts in terms of relevance to the study. A literature review scans the existing literature in a subject field and one aim is to summarize the state of the knowledge in that field. Literature reviews are thus, important in the following senses: to lend towards the identification of a research topic, question or hypothesis; to identify the areas in which the research will make a contribution, and thus also allows the researcher to contextualise the research within that literature. In this way, the researcher is able to build an understanding of theoretical concepts and terminology, which will prove invaluable in facilitating the building of a bibliography or list of sources that have been consulted, engaged with and contested, and to, suggest research methods that might be useful for the study as well as to analyse and interpret the results obtained in the study (Rowley & Slack, 2004).

Therefore, with the use of various books, journal articles and academic information from various databases, this study unpacked, in an in-depth manner, the extraordinary dynamics in the family

structure and its impact on the street children phenomenon.

1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Four theories have been employed in this study. These theories are Structural Functionalist theory which has been used as an umbrella theory for Feminist theory (Gender reform feminisms) and Symbolic Interactionist theory, Attachment theory has been used independently. These theories will be discussed in the theoretical framework chapter. Together with the theories, this study also uses some other theoretical concepts in the findings and analysis chapter to strengthen the argument of the discussion.

1.9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology that is employed in this study follows clear steps to connect the key methodological stages of the study: these are the research design used for the study, the presentation of the data and the analysis of the data in order to produce the study findings.

To explore the impact of family structure and its dynamics on street children phenomenon, a qualitative research method has been used, which is recognized for its ability to add a new dimension to interventional studies that cannot be obtained through measurement of variables alone (Pathak et al., 2013). Silverman (2006) notes that the most important reason for doing qualitative research rather than using the quantitative approach, relates to the nature of the research problem, which in this case relates to the structure of the family of street children. The study used non-probability purposive sampling, since it uses qualitative analysis, and needs to select particular children at the chosen centres and their parents that would be guided by the centre managers, for appropriate interviews.

Data was collected from street children receiving services from the two drop in centres in the North West Province which are Kgakala drop- in centre from Leeudoringstad and Letsema Drop in Centre from Ventersdorp. These centres have been chosen, because of a range of services that they provide to street children and considering that there are few centres in North West province that offer such services particularly to that population group. Fifteen (15) children from the ages of fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) years were sampled. The parents or guardians of each of the fifteen

(15) children were also interviewed. A total of thirty (30) (children and parents) participants were interviewed in the study. With their consent, the participants' interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Notes of any significant aspects were also kept when conducting interviews, that were later brought into the analysis.

1.10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to a group of street children from Kgakala drop in centre in Leeudoringstad and Letsema drop in centre in Ventersdorp in the North West province of South Africa. It was important to target those children in such centres under the controlled environment of such centres. There was careful treatment of the findings of this study, in order to avoid overgeneralization of the results. Therefore, while this study is not conducting a probability sample that leads to generalizations, the possibility of patterns of family structures that may be gleaned from this research may be useful for both the study and for policy interventions

The focus is on the two drop in centres and did not cover all the operational street children centres in the country. Hence, the study's findings may only reflect some broad picture of street children in the province, and specifically within the two communities rather than reflect a national trend. This is to recognize that the province has varying socio-economic and geographic settings. The study cannot also be generalized empirically for all the street children in the province or country, but theoretical and conceptual generalization may be possible. While the centres also provide services for children who are below the age of fifteen, this study is limited to focusing only on street children between the ages of fifteen (15)- eighteen (18) in such centres. This is because street children of such age groups could be somewhat mature to speak for themselves on the subject.

1.11. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS USED

The main concepts or terms of this study are explained as follows:

1.11.1. Family

A family refers to individuals who are related to a specific degree, through blood, adoption or socially approved sexual union” (Makiwane & Chimere-Dan 2010).

1.11.2. Family structure

Before defining a family structure, the concept of a ‘**structure**’ needs to be defined. A structure is the actual arrangement or composition of the family unit, (Vangelisti, 2004).

A family structure is therefore defined in terms of diverse family forms identified as child-headed families, blended families (such as stepfamilies), extended families (or multiple generational families), single-parent families, married or cohabiting parent families and the like (Voydanoff, 2001: 1609-1637).

1.11.3. Street children

It is important to firstly understand the concept of a “**child**” in general, before explaining the “street children” phenomenon. According to the United Nations, any boy or girl under the age of eighteen (18) years is considered as a “child” (UNICEF, 2000).

According to the Children’s Act no 38 of 2005, a street child means a child who (a) because of abuse, neglect, poverty, community upheaval or any other reason, has left his or her home, family or community and lives, begs or works on the streets; or (b) because of inadequate care, begs or works on the streets but returns home at night (Department of Social development, n.d).

1.11.4. Drop-in centre

A drop-in centre is a facility, which provides basic services to meet the emotional, physical, and social development needs of vulnerable children. Basic services are food, homework support, laundry and personal hygiene (Department of Social Development, 2012).

1.12. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

This study has been organized in the following manner:

Chapter one provides the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, the aim of the study, research objectives and research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the definitions of relevant concepts.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review on studies and/or what other scholars have written about the institution of family and street children phenomenon, out of which a conceptual framework is sought for this study.

Chapter three relates the theoretical framework that informs the study.

Chapter four focuses on the research methodology followed by this study.

Chapter five is the presentation and analysis of participants' demographic characteristics.

Chapter six is the presentation and analysis of the emerging themes.

Finally, chapter seven discusses the findings, and gives some conclusions and recommendations that emerge from the study.

1.13. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter provided a discussion on the introduction and background of the study. Problem statement was discussed. The aim of the study, research objectives and research questions were outlined. Significance of the study was explained. Limitations of the study and the definitions of relevant concepts were also outlined. The below chapter discusses the literature review for this study

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to review the literature on family structure and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon. The following aspects as subheadings are discussed in detail: the concept of family, street children and drop-in centre, the social construction of the concepts of 'childhood' and 'street children', the effects of Apartheid, Urbanization and Migrant Labor, HIV-AIDS and Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the street children phenomenon, South African children and family policies, the street children phenomenon and family structures in South Africa, the theoretical working model of family structures and demography of South African children.

2.2. FAMILY, STREET CHILDREN AND DROP IN CENTRE CONCEPTS

2.2.1. Family

The two terms '**Family**' and '**Household**' are sometimes used interchangeably, though they do not denote the same thing. **Household** is a useful term in quantitative research, as it easily lends itself to quantitative analysis. Household refers to individuals who share a physical space and jointly provide themselves with food and other essentials of living. The individuals may pool their incomes and share some budget and may be related or unrelated or a combination of both. On the other hand, a **Family** refers to individuals who are related to a specific degree, through blood, adoption or socially approved sexual union (Makiwane & Chimere-Dan 2010). As a qualitative study, this research uses the concept of the family instead of household.

The term family does not lend itself to an easy definition as it is subject to the norms and customs of different societies across the world. Ferrante (2016) defined a family as a social institution that ties individuals together through blood, marriage, law or social norms. Family members are normally expected to care for, and support, one another. On the other hand, Friedman and Neuman Allen (2011) defined a family as a living, ongoing entity consisting of sub-systems that are organized as a whole, which is constantly subjected to demands for change. Families are also regarded as sub-systems of larger extended family systems and societies (Felker et al., 2002:

125–142). The phrase 'It takes a village to raise a child' is common in South Africa, and implies the communal nature of raising a child. South Africa is especially rich in family diversity, and such diversity is evident in that it is one of the few countries in the world where both same-sex marriages and polygamy (as part of customary marriages) are legally recognised (Rabe, 2017).

2.2.2. Street children

While Abro (2012) asserts that the term '**Street children**' is a notion mainly used around the world to refer to the phenomenon (street children), different countries use different terms to denote the concept of street children. For example, there are such terms that are used such as 'out of place', 'runaway', 'homeless children' and the like.

Street children have been categorized in two ways: as 'street children' or as 'children of the street'. The first refers to individuals working on the street throughout the day, to then return to their households in the evening. The second term refers to the individuals residing full time in the street and are not in communication with their parents (Montane, 2006; Raffaelli and Koller, 2005; West, 2003). As Ayuku et al. (2004: 24-30) assert, it is nevertheless significant that the former street children, residing in shelters and those spending time at garbage dumps, and those that take on some kind of work on the streets, including begging, are still referred to as street children. Street children in sheltered homes are given a chance to connect with caregivers in such sheltered homes, and this attachment is exchanged in lieu of the lost bonds that they experienced with their families.

According to Silva (2003), the cause of the existence of street children is categorized into three main aspects: **immediate**, **underlying** and **root** causes. **Immediate causes** cover aspects of the child's life that are connected with both personal and family dimensions. These include economic status, family relations, family environment, parenting skills, and values espoused at home and the child themselves. The category of **underlying causes** factors is seen to indicate the following: ineffective access to basic services, employment problems, inadequate housing facilities, poor law enforcement and such factors in the community that influences the life and the development of a child. In terms of the third category of **root causes**, it includes the following: economic, political and ideological superstructure, poverty and underdevelopment (Martinez, 2010).

Moreover, Ferguson's (2007: 103-112) categories of the causes for the existence of street children phenomenon cite three aspects: **individual**, **familial** and **structural** categories. Ferguson (2007:

103-112) found school difficulties and dropouts, unplanned pregnancies, gang involvement, and alcohol and substance abuse as **individual-based causes** that either push or pull children to live in the streets. While parental conflict, abuse, strictness, neglect and hostile home environments fall under the **familial causes** that lead to the street children phenomenon; and the general situation of poverty as falling under the **structural causes** (Martinez, 2010). Often, conditions of poverty are compounded by difficult family situations. These include irregular family living arrangements, parental marital problems, family relationships, separation, instability, physical or sexual abuse, violence and child neglect (Ruiz, 2003; Taylor, Lydon, Bougie & Joharmsen, 2004).

2.2.3. Drop-in centre

A Drop-in centre is an alternative, community-based response that encourages local people to actively participate in local caring initiatives. This transform and strengthens the community-based model of care, thus enhancing children's access to basic services within their communities. Most importantly, it offers communities a sense of ownership of projects, responsibility and self-reliance, and gives them an opportunity to decide how they want to support those members who are vulnerable. Mahlase (2008) defines a drop-in centre as a community-based initiative practiced. He refers to a drop in centre particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, that incorporates early childhood development and home-based care. These centres, he adds, provide physical nourishment, while taking care of the educational and pastoral needs of orphaned and vulnerable children.

In addition, drop-in centres play a critical role in attending to the material, pastoral and psychological needs of children. For example, in the absence of parents and other caregivers, drop-in centres are better positioned, through multi-sectoral collaboration, to provide for physiological needs (in the form of food, clothing, medical care and school supplies), and to ensure that children get age-appropriate guidance and assistance (viz. capacity building, pastoral and psychological support) to develop positive self-concepts. This becomes possible because a number of professional, semi-professional and lay people are employed by such drop-in sites, and there are many volunteers from the community who come forward to assist or to learn skills (Mahlase, 2008: 193-201). Mahlase (2008) further writes that some of the services provided for children at these centres include but are not limited to the following: referrals, the provision of material assistance, development and implementation of programmes in early childhood and youth development, the supervision of home circumstances, monitoring of homework and school attendance, and the creation of balanced plans to care for children.

The biggest advantage of drop-in centres, according to Mahlase (2008), is that they develop the capacity of local people to look after vulnerable children in environments that are friendly, and which promote self-reliance. This is supported by Guest (2001) who contends that in contexts where there are orphaned children, the best alternative is to keep them within their communities and also keep siblings together, which is what drop-in centres attempt to do. However, in communities where attitudes towards those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS are negative, the quality of support provided is likely to be compromised, as people may be reluctant to be associated with such a service centre, for fear of social reproach.

The literature on drop-in centres is generally sparse, let alone their influence on street children. Enhancing drop-in centres to make them more beneficial to street children is to understand how they work (Nath, 2016). One of the most prevalent interventions for street children around the world is drop-in centres (Coren et al., 2013). Drop-in centres primarily provide non-formal education, free lunches, recreational activities, preventative health services and basic medical treatment provision for street children for a few hours during the week. Coren et al. (2013) are of the view that there is a need for research that analyses the benefit of drop-in centres and shelter services, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Considering that drop-in centres are one of the most popular interventions for street children and that little is known about such centres, it is critical to investigate how drop-in centre programmes influence or do not influence street children's health and the drug use status of street children (Nath, 2016). Some drop-in centres may merely serve free lunches to street children, while others serve as a drop-in night shelter service. However, they all provide crucial services that street children would likely not receive elsewhere. Therefore, drop-in centres provide these additional services for street children, in order to support them while they are living on the streets (Nath, 2016).

Nath (2016) went on to emphasize that comprehensive, rigorous studies on the impact of drop-in centres, informed by street children, are particularly essential. It is therefore very important to evaluate the impact of such drop-in centres on street children and family reunification. This research partly serves to further deepen the knowledge of the effects of these drop-in centres services in South Africa although its sample is a small one based in the North-West Province.

2.3. CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD CONCEPT IN THE APARTHEID CONTEXT, THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPTS OF 'CHILDHOOD' AND 'STREET CHILDREN'

2.3.1. Apartheid and the construction of the childhood concept (UNICEF, 2009)

South Africa is still recovering from the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Almost three decades into the democratic dispensation, the struggle, in all its dimensions is far from over. The country has made great progress in dismantling over 40 years of apartheid institutions and policies. However, the apartheid legacy in which racist beliefs were enshrined in the law, denying and violating the majority of the population of their basic human rights continues to influence many people's daily lives and opportunities (UNICEF, 2009).

The effects of apartheid were (and continue to be) particularly severe on black children who had little protection from the state while their families and communities were destroyed by political violence. They were denied access to a decent life, nutrition, housing, health services, education and other basic and essential services. In addition, children were themselves important political actors, used in various capacities by both state and non-state forces. Many black children left their homes to join the armed liberation struggle for political freedom and social justice. In its report, the 1998 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) concluded that many black children during apartheid in South Africa had lost their capacity to be children. They had been forced to become adults before their time. The extent of the psychological impact of apartheid on children is incalculable and will never be truly known.

The social impact on the other hand is well documented and still evident today. The establishment of Bantustans, pass laws, the Group Areas Act (Act No 41, 1950), and the migrant labour system, among other laws and policies, intensified state controls for the black population and facilitated the implementation of the separate development programmes for the various territorially segregated population groups, with white people as a priority. Black people were forcibly moved to places without adequate food, shelter and provisions such as clean water, sanitation, health services and recreational facilities. For many black people, these laws destroyed communities and social networks. They meant more or less permanent separation of families, with devastating effects on children. For example, children, no matter how young, were not allowed to live with their mothers if those mothers were hostel residents or live-in domestics. At the age of 16 years, they had to go to the Bantustans whether or not they had family to live with (UNICEF, 2009).

Many black children and women remained in rural areas dependent on income from the men who worked in urban areas and lived in foul single-sex hostels unfit for human habitation and without adequate services. The separation of families, especially of men from their children has continued to characterise the post-apartheid family structures. This has further been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has led to a rise in the number of children who have lost one or both parents and in child-headed households. Thus, while children born post-1994 have equal political rights, apartheid policies continue to influence their social and economic conditions (UNICEF, 2009). Below is the social construction of the childhood concept

2.3.2. The social construction of the childhood concept

The children of today will be the adults of tomorrow. If we are to work effectively with and for children, then it is vital to understand the social processes and institutions that impact on childhood and the many different aspects which make up the context of children's lives (Clark, 2010). When children were regarded as primarily the concern of their mothers and their teachers, they were studied as 'units' within the family and the school system (Clark, 2010). Childhood studies offered alternative conceptualisations, which have influenced childhood research in numerous countries around the world (Tisdall & Punch, 2012: 249-264).

Until the new social studies of childhood placed them firmly in a central position in their own right, children were mainly understood sociologically as units located within the social institution of the family (Clark, 2010). Children learn to adhere to certain social values in the society mainly through the family unit; the lifelong process of learning begins shortly after birth. Since new-borns can hear, see, smell, taste and feel heat, cold and pain, they are constantly orienting themselves to the surrounding world (Pannilage, 2015). Such a view also dominated psychology which emphasised concepts such as 'bonding' and 'maternal deprivation' as well as the social policy which focused on the family unit. All of these were based on an underlying assumption that the interests of the child and the interests of the family were one and the same thing. Despite the two decades of debates that saw challenges to this traditionally sociological view, the concept of the family is still the prime way in which society understands childhood politically, economically and through everyday life (Clark, 2010).

The family is a basic social group, generally connected by kinship or marriage, which aims to provide its members with mutual social, emotional and economic security. The structure of the

family varies widely although some sort of communal living arrangement exists in all societies. The predominant family model in the global west is the nuclear family and, for the majority of children, some variation on this is likely to form the prime microsystem for socialisation. However, it must be remembered that not all children will live in such family units and some may not live within families at all. Clark (2010) draws attention to the way we use the term 'family' to mean 'children' in a conversation – consider such phrases as 'Do you have a family?' and 'They are going to start a family'. Clark (2010) calls this process the 'familiarisation' of the child and argues that the child as an individual is often obscured by a focus on the family unit. Changes in society have brought about corresponding changes in the family.

According to Norozi and Moen (2016: 75), childhood had undergone the process of social construction. Different approaches such as the social constructionist approach have been used to study children and childhood. Social constructionism seeks to understand how children and childhood knowledge is constructed, by whom, why and most substantially what purpose it would serve. Social constructionism offers alternative ways to find out about children and childhood. Social constructionism of childhood studies is grounded in varying conceptions among different cultures, societies and at different time periods in history. It also emphasizes the diversity of situations and circumstances in which childhood is experienced. Social construction is a theoretical perspective that explores the ways in which 'reality' is negotiated in everyday life through people's interactions and through sets of discourses (Norozi & Moen, 2016: 75). The discussion below is about the social construction of the street children phenomenon.

2.3.2.1. The notion of childhood or children in the Global South and North

Without a question, critical childhood studies have been dominated by Foucault, Derrida, and more recently Deleuze and Guattari, who are all European white men. It is for that reason as indicated by Mignolo (2000) that the critical global north theorists speak from specific localities within power configurations and could not apprehend the complexity of colonial impact from their body-knowledge. As such, although points of connection to global north thinkers can be found, there is a challenge to envision how these works can intimately coalesce with the lived experiences of women and children of color, colonialism, and the violence experienced by global south peoples (Pérez et al., 2017). Although there have been important challenges to the discourse of normalized, deficit child, Pérez and Saavedra (2017) argue that much of this work has remained grounded in global north positionings, which separate theory from the lived realities of children of color.

Furthermore, Twum-Danso Imoh (2016) writes that images of childhoods and children's lives in sub Saharan Africa are closely associated with marginalised childhoods or children with extreme or difficult circumstances. In particular, there is an abundance of literature on: street children (Bordanaro, 2011); child workers (Spittler and Bourdillon, 2012); the impact of HIV/AIDS on children (Ansell and van Blerk, 2004); and children's involvement in conflict (Shepler, 2014). This reflects what has been stated by Ensor (2012:1) that the limited corpus of reliable research on Africa's youngest citizens has tended to adopt a negative outlook (Twum-Danso Imoh, 2016).

These narratives foregrounding the experiences of the marginalised and those in difficult circumstances have contributed to the creation of a false dichotomy between Northern childhoods and the multitude of childhoods that are located in the diverse contexts that exist in the South. For example, while work has been recognised as a key element of the childhoods that some children in the North occupy, few studies seek to explore this (Twum-Danso Imoh, 2016).

Another scientific knowledge on children is analysed from the point of view of a decolonial political economy of knowledge production which asserts the structurally epistemic imbalance between North and South and the latter's position of subalternity. This is shown to selectively affect what topics of investigation are picked up, privileging certain circuits for the circulation of research results, whereas turning others invisible (De Castro, 2020).

De Castro (2020), further states that the local is inevitably couched as the difference ('the colonial difference' in terms of decolonial thought, Mignolo, 2002) between the universalized notion of childhood (towards which all childhoods should aim at) and its diversity to be invariably found in the Southern world depicted as other, traditional, non-modern and embodied. Thus, globality positions Southern childhoods as different begging the question, inspired by a decolonial shift (Mignolo, 2011), whether such a difference can be problematized by questioning the self-referential status of definitions of otherness, tradition and so forth frequently made by Northern scholarship (De Castro, 2020).

2.3.3. The social construction of the street children phenomenon

According to De Moura (2002: 353-367), policymakers and scientists have increasingly been concerned with the social phenomenon of street children since the early 1980s. A considerable number of publications are devoted to the description of such individuals and their street life, and the suggestion of possible interventions. Although the social problems in different countries and

their cultural background and social policies differ substantially, international agencies and scientists tend to focus on similar issues to characterize and explain the genesis of street children. One possible explanation for this similarity would be that they are reporting on a worldwide social phenomenon regardless of people's geographical location and historical, social and cultural context. In contrast, it might be argued that this agreement does not represent evidence of reality but is rather an indication of consensus (De Moura, 2002: 353-367).

For this study, the phenomenon of street children is reported from the South African Apartheid context. This means that the phenomenon of street children in South Africa is quite unique and different from other countries. One of its distinctive features is its relationship with apartheid. It is therefore important that studies of street children phenomenon in South Africa take into account the phenomenon and its relationship to apartheid. This is to consider the unpleasant apartheid history of South Africa which contributed to the phenomenon as a result of disrupting the institution of family and as a result of poverty due to the past apartheid inequalities. De Moura (2002: 353-367) thus states that the family situation of street children is suggested to have its origins in the macroeconomic problems of countries where street children live.

According to De Moura (2002), it is argued that the discourses on street children naturalize social deprivation and stigmatize poor families and children. Street life is thus presented as the outcome of an organic and linear chain of adverse factors including migration, economic hardship, family dysfunction and child abuse. Street children and their families are portrayed as displaying socially unacceptable attributes which place them outside mainstream society. It is also argued that the social construction of street children prompts interventions which sustain the status quo of social inequalities.

2.3.4. Contemporary street children phenomenon

This study acknowledges that street children is not a recent phenomenon but an old one that has been influenced mainly by apartheid with various processes that affected family structures. Even in the contemporary South African societies, after over two decades of being a democratic country, the damaged caused by apartheid in restructuring South African families is still clear. Such apartheid structural changes influenced the contemporary street children phenomenon. Families are still going through dissolution or are restructured due to issues that are still existing today from apartheid regime. For example, families are still going through a breakdown or restructuring due

to divorce as a result of migration/ urbanization amongst black people. Poverty is still rife amongst black people; hence parents find themselves migrating to areas or cities with better economic conditions to secure employment to feed their families. That comes with its disadvantages as some relationships or marriages for spouses do not last as a result of long distance, which then result in divorce and dissolve the family structure. Children then ultimately get affected by such family structural changes caused by such issues. Therefore, poverty (amongst people in black families) as the apartheid structured inequality is still the root of all the negative outcomes in such families which affect children from such families and ultimately send them to the street.

Furthermore, the deaths during HIV and AIDS pandemic that was discovered in the 1980s is still contributing to the family dissolution and restructuring recently. In addition, the novel Coronavirus has also added to such devastation and exacerbated the situation, which has left many children orphans or without one parent as a result of succumbing to such a pandemic. According to Hillis et al., (2021), globally, the COVID-19 pandemic had, by the end of April 2021, left over 1.5 million children experiencing the death of a parent or a caregiver who lived in their homes and helped care for them. UNICEF (2020) further indicated that the harmful effects of this pandemic were not distributed equally. Such effects were most damaging for children already in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations such as street children. In their study on the “*Effect of COVID-19 response in Uganda on street children*”, Kawala et al. (2020) predicted that more children could get on the streets after lockdowns as poverty and orphanage levels increased, following the intentional recessions in the economy and deaths of parents from the virus.

Attanasio et al. (2020) assert that the COVID-19 crisis did not affect all families equally, but may have caused particular harm to children of low-income such as street children as compared to children of higher income. It means the effects of the pandemic cast a long shadow over their lives. It is therefore evident that the past apartheid inequalities are still visible even with COVID-19 pandemic in the post-1994 South Africa.

2.4. SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILY POLICIES

Numerous civil society organisations, as well as the National Children’s Rights Committee (NCRC) and UNICEF, supported South Africa’s post-apartheid government to institutionalise children’s rights as a fundamental pillar of the new democracy. Towards this end, in 1995 the government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) (1989). Drawing on this international

standard, children's rights were enshrined in Section 28 of the SA Constitution (1996). Further to cover the particular vulnerabilities of African children, the government also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the ACRWC) in 2000. Collectively these instruments seek to ensure that children have a range of integrated political, civil, cultural and socio-economic rights, (September, 2008).

In addition to the general human rights to equality, basic education and the right to dignity, children have additional socio-economic rights, including the right to family and parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from their family setting; to basic nutrition, shelter, health care, social services and to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse and degradation. By ratifying the international children's rights instruments and through its national constitutional provisions for children's rights, the SA government accepted an obligation to put in place mechanisms to realise these rights. However, the nation made these laudable commitments within the context of the huge resource and capacity challenges required for their implementation. The apartheid regime of South Africa, with its racially discriminatory policies and structural inequalities, left a legacy of a government bankrupt and in disarray, and a country with millions of children and their families in abject poverty. Over two decades on, the inequalities remain stark, (September, 2008). September (2008) further states that in response to these historic inequalities and the expanded need for services, as well as the fact that the types of interventions used before, did not match the needs of the targeted populations, the new government has also instituted a number of policy shifts.

South Africa is one of the few developing countries that formulated a national policy focusing on families. A family policy, broadly defined, refers to everything a government does to promote the well-being of families, such as social grants, family services, or social housing. The country's policy – known as the White Paper on Families – has three priorities. They are promoting healthy family life, strengthening the family and preserving the family. The intention of the policy is to promote and support families, many of whom are currently facing huge financial and social pressures (University of Cape Town, 2018). To achieve the aims and objectives of the White Paper on Families, South Africa is governed by a number of global, regional and national conventions, goals, and other instruments that the country has adopted, ratified or developed. Any changes to legislation and to policies which affect families have implications for the Revised White Paper on Families. Such changes and their impacts on families should always be monitored and considered (Department of Social Development, 2021).

In sum, families that are faced with structural changes and breakdowns may experience a variety of challenges. Government should therefore give more attention and support to parents and children that experience these challenges in such families. Government policies that are implemented and developed should also benefit such families, and such policies should call for better functioning of such family structures. South Africa's Constitutional court had introduced, on 18th September 2019, a new policy of 'no child spanking' (Mogoeng, 2018). This came as a result of the case of a father who assaulted his 13-year-old son in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province. Many South Africans reacted differently towards that ruling. One argument was that 'parents have the right to decide on what is best for their children and to raise them in a way that pleases them'. Another view asserts children's rights as fundamental.

The literature on parenting styles and roles indicate that parents find it very difficult to discipline their children, and that they face challenges in adopting good parenting styles and roles (Molahlehi, 2014). The no-spanking policy, without recourse to an alternative form of dealing with children, may adversely affect the functioning of families. It may even make it more difficult for parents to raise their children in a way that they see fit. Policies such as these and other government policies will continue to impact the families generally, and also on the care of children specifically. Much still needs to be done to enhance the functioning of different family structures. Bronstein et al (1993: 268-276) uphold that greater attention is needed for the challenges and difficulties that are faced by non-traditional families. Moreover, to avoid the greater proliferation of street children, the implementation of appropriate family preservation services is necessary: this can stabilize troubled families in a short period of time. Family preservation aims to strengthen family bonds and keep families together. Shelters or Drop-in centres need only to be used as a final option (Magagula, 2009).

2.4.1. The role of government towards street children (international, national and provincial policy, interventions and programme landscape)

There is a legal obligation on the state, imposed through the cluster of child specific rights afforded children in section 28 of the constitution, the Children's Act and other international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These laws demand that all vulnerable children in South Africa, including the growing number of children on the streets, gain access to services that will ensure their development even within a harsh environment (Lefeh, 2008).

Different arms of the government undertake programmes and render services to street children. The Brazilian government is playing a significant role in trying to address the street child problem (Anirudhra, 1998 as cited in Lefeh, 2008). Although the Brazilian and South African scenarios are similar in many instances, the attitudes of Brazilian street child workers are more direct. While in Brazil there is recognition of this fact and efforts are made to address the problem at these levels, in South Africa the assistance programmes are 'fundamental' and restricted to the micro-level (child) only. In South Africa there is an absence of meso-level (family programmes which are supposed to identify and assist high-risk families). The availability of such programmes are essential because they would help preserve the family structure so that children would be less likely to gravitate towards the street (Anirudhra, 1998 as cited in Lefeh, 2008).

Furthermore, Kawala et al. (2020) stated that during COVID-19, street children in Cameroon reported to have received some form of government support. CSC (2020) also indicated that street children in Congo have received support from the government to secure all drop-in centres with food and handwashing installations for children. In Uganda, child-focused civil society organisations connected to the Consortium for Street Children Network have successfully cooperated with city authorities to identify and quarantine some street children to protect them from COVID-19 and facilitate their rehabilitation in their communities. The Government of Uganda has also provided relief food to registered children's homes across the country during the lockdown (CSC. 2020). However, the South African government did not have a clear, targeted plan in response for specifically street children during COVID-19.

Other arms of the government that undertake programmes and render services to street children locally include; the Gauteng Department of Social Development, the Johannesburg City Council and the South African Police Services (SAPS). These different institutions of government work in partnership with NGOs in implementing the Children's Act. Despite the intention to redress the situation of street children in the country especially in Johannesburg, government has not sufficiently provided the space for mutual collaboration and the resources needed to undertake the task of implementing the policies (Lefeh, 2008). In North West province specifically, there are not enough interventions by government that caters for street children specifically. The social development department still lacks collaboration with NGOs or centres as per the two specific centres selected for this study. The centres still lack support from government to address the street children problem. Lefeh, (2008) writes that in recent years, research has been carried out in the area of advocacy and policy formulation for vulnerable children, yet little has been done in programme implementation by government institutions as a response to the plight of vulnerable

children such as street children.

Lefeh (2008) suggests a need for different stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner in addressing the plight of street children in South Africa as a whole. Provinces need to be brought to a position where they are able to budget for the care of children. Such budgeting cannot be considered as being the sole responsibility of the Department of Social Development. A National Policy Framework should also be implemented, so that the State Departments could set aside a portion of their budget to effectively combat the street children phenomenon (Anon. 2004).

2.5. STREET CHILDREN PHENOMENON AND FAMILY STRUCTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Family structures in South Africa have been affected by the society that has suffered the consequences of previous political history as mentioned. Currently, the South African family is in most instances multi-generational, co-existing with other emergent family types, which includes single-parent families, polygamous couple relationships, same-sex couples, skipped generation, child-headed households, and reconstituted families. Those changes have been influenced by various factors such as labour migration, modernisation, the HIV-AIDS pandemic, and post-colonial and post-apartheid legal reforms (Makiwane, Nduna, & Khalema, 2016).

Roopnarine and Gielen (2005: 3-13) indicate that during the twentieth century, numerous societies went through crucial structural changes in the arrangements and organization of families due to several events that took place in the past, which include the following: an increase in single-parent families in post-industrialized societies; a decrease in marriage rates; and a rise in the percentage of nuclear families due to an extreme reduction of fertility rates. Depending on the culture, family size and household composition have been affected by governmental policies such as urbanization and migrant labor in search for better economic conditions, an increase in educational and economic opportunities for women, changing gender roles, attitudes toward childbearing and child-rearing, aging, marriage postponement, decline in arranged marriages and the rise in divorce rates (Arnett, 2002; Booth, 2002; Friedman, 2000).

According to Le Roux (2001) and Malindi (2009) research indicates that 'streetism' as a subject is driven by factors such as dysfunctional families. Dysfunctional families tend not to recognize their children. They are abusive to their children and do not give their children a sense of belonging and

acceptance. Brooks (2006: 69-76) espouses that a family is the strongest and most immediate caregiving environment with the most impact on the growth of resilience in children, including for those categorized as street children. Amoateng *et al.* (2014: 487-498) argue that the family is a multidimensional construct, with multiple influences on adolescents' problematic behaviour in various ways. Vanassche *et al.* (2014: 128-143) further argue that children are likely to be challenged with difficulties and insecurities and that a stable family environment is frequently observed as a key component for positive transition throughout this period.

Family issues can be seen to be one of the reasons why children turn to the street. The street children phenomenon is ascribed to the abusive, broken and neglected home environments that these children originate from, and is generally exacerbated by the lifestyle that they lead on the street (Panter-Brick, 2002: 147-171).

In their study, Abdelgalil, Gurgel, Theobald and Cuevas (2004: 817-820) found that street children participants frequently pointed to family issues. Many street children are from broken families with major problems, and where they suffer physical and mental abuse. Their familial system is characterized by high levels of conflict, abuse (sexual, physical or emotional), financial insecurity, parental substance abuse, parental divorce or separation and lack of communication. To Ahmed *et al.* (2004: 386-408) when children feel that they are in an environment where they feel they do not belong and are not accepted, it can compromise their resilience and render them psychosocially vulnerable. This also drives them to accept street life, where they adopt a new social identity.

According to Mokomane and Makoe (2017), the shelter's social worker interviewed in their study indicated that the dysfunctional family is the major push factor of the contemporary street children phenomenon in South Africa. Children in such dysfunctional families are abused by their parents, especially when the parents abuse alcohol. In child-headed households, oftentimes after the parents of the children have passed on, the extended families volunteer to take care of the orphan. This is usually not because they care about the child but at times, they simply want to look after them as a way of using them to receive government foster care grants. In such families, children are discriminated against and given difficult chores or even taken out of school (Mokomane & Makoe, 2017: 378-387).

According to Duyan (2005: 445-459) when children lack supportive relationships or supportive environment, their helplessness and hopelessness scores increase. Haj-Yahia (2001: 885-907), writes that there are significant relationships between parental or familial variables and children's

levels of hopelessness. If a child grows up in a family where there is a lack of supportive relations, they could become physically and emotionally ill, and they may also go through serious trauma and anger episodes. Street children whose families are not supportive are likely to go through psycho-social developmental problems that usually culminate in hopelessness (Duyan, 2005: 445-459).

2.5.1. Relationships in the family

Relationships in the family, particularly those among parents and children have for quite some time been described as vital in various international studies (Anderssen et al., 2006; Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006; Loucaides and Chedzoy, 2005; Ommundsen et al., 2006; Raudsepp and Viira, 2000; Timperio et al., 2006; Trost et al., 2003; Yang et al., 1996). According to Bronstein *et al.* (1993: 268-276) parenting and family relationships are the main factors affecting children's development and general outcomes.

In parent-child relationships, parent-child communication is particularly vital to engender pro-social behaviors in adolescent children (Amoateng et al., 2014: 487-498). In their longitudinal study, Neale and Flowerdew (2007: 25) demonstrate that great quality parent-child relationships and flexible arrangements can lead to improving much of the negative impact on children's well-being. Bastaits *et al.* (2012: 1643-1656); Swiss and Le Bourdais (2009: 623-652) encourage positive relationships between parents and children as they can better children's outcomes. Pantin et al (2004: 545-558) argue that street life is not only influenced by a child's current social context as manifested in poor family cohesion and parental monitoring but also possibly by previous low levels of family support and high parent-child conflict.

2.5.2. Parenting styles

Parenting styles are persistent approaches, strategies, ways and standards that parents use in raising their children. This includes the way parents respond to the psychological and material needs of children, and what is demanded by parents from their children. According to Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387), many children leave their homes because of poor parenting skills. They indicate that social workers for shelters visit the homes of the street children for the following reasons: to strengthen the parenting skills adopted by parents, to rebuild parent-child

relationships; to identify the significance of maintaining and developing rules and structures at home, and to enhance parent's awareness of children's rights in relation to discipline and living in safe homes that are free from abuse and neglect. Family visits are thus said to be of crucial significance in this matter.

Härkönen et al. (2017: 163) propose that the style of parenting and the quality of the relationship between a parent and adolescent can affect the adolescent's social development. The children's feelings, autonomy, accomplishment and identity are all brought about by the parenting style adopted by the adolescent's parent. The way children are brought up is vital to their total development. The manner in which parents respond to their children's needs and how children relate to them has an incredible impact on the development of children's personalities and their interaction with society (Härkönen et al., 2017: 163). Parents are viewed as important individuals who can help curb children moving to the streets, and parents with negative parenting styles seems to lead to risks of streetism (Molahlehi, 2014). Researchers believe that the kind of family a child comes from and the parenting style of the child's parents is likely to influence the child's social behavior (Steinberg, 2011; Olds & Papilia, 2011; Baltus, 2012).

Amato (2005) and Dunn et al. (2005: 223-234) demonstrate that ways of parenting and the parent-child relationship play an important role in understanding children's well-being in relation to family adjustment. The excellence of parenting is a standout amongst the best indicators of children's well-being in various family structures. In his study, Molahlehi (2014) found that parents with negative parenting styles result in driving children to the risk of accepting the street life.

Research cites three main parenting styles that have been given wider attention throughout decades and identified in the social science literature: **parental connection**, **parental behavioral control** and **parental psychological control** (Amoateng et al., 2014; Steinberg et al., 1992; Barber 1996; Gray and Steinberg 1999). There are differences in the **parental connection** among the sub-groups, with parental connection more prevalent in the nuclear family because of its nature and its predominance in white families rather than African families (Amoateng *et al*, 2006: 7-15).

Parental behavioral control alludes to how far parents monitor their children's actions or behaviour (Amoateng et al., 2006: 7-15; Barber, 1996: 3296-3319). Parental knowledge of the children's whereabouts has often been considered to be related to a decrease in the troublesome behaviour of a child (Dishion & Patterson, 1997). Empirical evidence demonstrates that the knowledge of children's whereabouts by parents results in a negative relationship with the anti-

social behaviour of a child in a range of settings, South Africa included (Amoateng et al., 2006; Barber 1992: 69-79). On the other hand, Idemudia et al. (2013: 161) indicate that some street children in Mahikeng, North West Province, leave home as a result of disobeying their parents. Children do not want their parents to control them, and they hate being told to stop doing whatever they want to do or going wherever they want to go. Many of them run away from their homes because they want to be free from parental control. Kanyane (2016: 92-106) also indicates that some children cannot stand the harsh discipline of their parents. He adds that children mostly run away from their family to the street because of ill-discipline by parents and these children leave comfortable homes to live in the street because they do not want to be under parental guidance.

Barber and Harmon (2002) cite **parental psychological control** of the child showing how parental behavior tries to shape and influence a child's mental growth. This is done through guilt induction, invalidating emotions, constraining verbal expression and excessive personal criticism. These behaviors are found to reliably anticipate children internalized and externalized troublesome actions in western societies, and as developing evidence for similar negative effects on children in other societies, including South Africa.

2.5.3. Family structures

2.5.3.1. Nuclear, Intact or two biological parents' family

Children from two-parents families are likely to be socially advantaged with shared parental monitoring (Thomas & Sawhill, 2005; Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Olaniyi & Narain, 2008; Waldfogel et al., 2010). The nuclear family (which is made up of parents with their biological or adoptive children only) is considered the most common type of a family structure (Department of Social Development, 2012). Holborn and Eddy (2011) revealed that between 1996 and 2001, there was a decrease in the proportion of households that were made up of nuclear families, from 46% to 40%, while the proportion of households made up of extended families increased from 32% to 36% over the same period. According to McGoldrick and Carter (2011: 317-335), when couples come together to form a new family, there are huge adjustments and changes that need to take place such as the couple's adjustments to their living arrangements and when they decide to have children. They will have to make space for the children and adjust their lifestyle in order to accommodate the children (McGoldrick et al., 2011: 317-335).

A husband and wife's decision to become parents create the most important transition in the family's life, which also results in changing the relatively simple roles of the couples (Carr, 2012; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004; Walsh, 2012). Therefore, new parents are faced with the huge task of incorporating their new-found relationship with their child into their previously existing relationship with each other (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). Hutton (2014) states that within a family structure without children, there are various solutions to immediate problems. Before the arrival of children, the couple subsystem tends to be more loosely organized, and this means that there is more flexibility in the roles of partners, their roles are also often interchangeable (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004).

As soon as a child is born, the lives of parents transform drastically, taking on the responsibilities of parenting roles. The parents make adjustments (such as finances) in the family to accommodate the child. When the child is still young, the role of parenting for parents might not be as challenging compared to when the child is growing into his/her teenage years. When children reach adolescence, the family is faced with new organizational challenges relating to children's autonomy and independence. Adjusting to rules and negotiations of role are essential activities during this stage of adolescence (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). Adolescents start to depend less on their parents and move towards their peer cultural group for guidance and support. They also start gaining distance from rules set by their parents, and it may manifest in the form of changes in attitude, changes in dress code, the use of drugs, curfew violations, gang behaviour, and unusual body piercings and tattoos (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004).

2.5.3.2. Child headed household

A child-headed household is a home that is made up of orphans living on their own as a result of losing both parents due to HIV/AIDS or due to other such medical factors (Schenk et al., 2008; Stefan, 2006). Children below the age of 18 years are looking after themselves in this household and there is no adult caregiver. The household is headed by the eldest or most responsible child who assumes parental responsibility. The South African National Household Survey of 2008 indicates that the number of children in South Africa living in a Child-headed household was 0, 5% in 2008: this is estimated to be ninety-eight thousand (98.000) children (Meintjes, 2010: 40 – 49).

According to the Department of Health, South Africa (2004), many children lose their parents because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which consequently leaves them without care and support from adults. Oftentimes, orphans in child-headed families are usually stigmatized by society, exploited, and denied affection and protection. This leads them to be more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infections and other conditions which may worsen the situation (Nkwe, 2008). Orphaned and child-headed families are more vulnerable to various forms of abuse. This is especially so with sexual abuse, especially with girls, who then may end up facing teenage pregnancy, STIs and HIV/AIDS, and rejection from the communities and family members. They may also experience hardships such as a lack of food, clothing, medical care, schooling and the love and guidance of parents. All these adds to their already existing challenges (Nkwe, 2008).

Due to the novel Coronavirus, many people lost their lives, and this might have had an impact on these households – when HIV-AIDS kills one or both parents, it can exacerbate their conditions as COVID-19 may also have deadly impacts on the parents of such families. Besides orphanhood, there are other assumed reasons for the formation of child-headed households, including abandonment, parental labour migration, etc (Bower, 2005; Philips, 2011; Meintjes et al., 2010: 40 – 49).

In child-headed households, the oldest child who takes the lead role takes on all everyday responsibilities for the functioning of the household; these include making decisions and providing care and leadership of the younger siblings (Kelly, 2005; Sloth-Nielsen, 2004; Walker, 2002). Power negotiation in that household is both complex and dynamic. Foster et al. (1997: 155–168) and MacLellan (2005) report that even though there are older boys in the house, girls may take greater responsibilities in the household, and this is because they make significant contributions in the households (Francis-Chizororo, 2010: 711–727). The locus of power in such households may also change in relation to other considerations, such as the presence or absence of an adult in some of them (Mavise, 2011). For this study, no street children are from child-headed households. In a case where a child is an orphan, they are taken care of by an extended family member (aunt) or stepparent (as it is the case with the study's findings). However, Mokomane and Makoa (2017: 378-387) are of the view that extended families who volunteer to take care of the orphan is usually not because they care about the child but at times they simply want to look after them as a way of using them to receive government foster care-grants.

2.5.3.3. Grandparents household

Grandparents household also referred to as the 'skip-generation household' is a family type where grandparents raise their grandchildren (without the grandchildren's parents). In the past few years there has been an increase in the number of children who spend their lives with grandparents (Elder & Conger, 2000). The figure cited is that over 7 million children live in the households headed by their grandparent or great-grandparent (Hall, Richter, Mokomane & Lake, 2018).

According to Ainsworth and Dayton (2000) orphaned children are more likely to live in grandparent-headed households than in other households. Grandparents also raise children born out of wedlock because their mothers are busy studying or working (Pardey, 2006). Pillay (2010) indicates that grandparents are being forced to take on full responsibility for financial and physical care of their grandchildren. The migrant labour system and influx control laws resulted in a situation where younger children remained in the rural areas with their grandparents, and grandparents had to take care of the children and to provide for all the children's needs. Increased divorce rates, unemployment, substance abuse and dependency and the HIV-AIDS pandemic have also contributed for grandparents to be caretakers of abandoned and orphaned children (Pillay, 2010).

Grandparents often contribute positively in the lives of their grandchildren by taking on different roles such as caregiver, playmate, advisor and friend (Elder & Conger, 2000). Research shows that a grandparent-grandchild relationship is associated with positive child outcomes. For instance, greater grandparents' involvement is associated with less emotional problems and more positive outcomes for children (Attar-Schwartz et al., 2009).

Yet there is also the impact on the elderly, Hall et al. (2018) state that one of the common concerns about grandparent care is that the latter may be old and frail, and not physically strong enough to provide adequate care. In addition, the generation gap between grandchildren and grandparents is greater than that between children and parents, which poses further challenges for grandparents in respect of adequate parenting skills (Mokone, 2006: 187-200). Still, there is a trend which suggested that grandparent headed households were least likely to leave the children unsupervised (Pillay, 2010). However, it is also true that other studies (Khaniha et al. (2014) found that almost half of the children on the street are living with their grandparents. Ncube (2016) reveals that while families frequently tend to depend on their grandparents' grants and pensions, many families actually encourage their children to 'work' on the street in order to add-on the family income (Maphatane, 1994: 22-30).

Mokone (2006: 187-200) believes that grandparents could be a valuable resource in addressing the issue of child-headed households prevalent as a result of HIV-AIDS, but strongly recommends that more research needs to be done in this area and that adequate programmes should be developed to support grandparents in this role of being surrogate parents. This is especially the case in view of the challenges that the grandparents face in view of the ageing process and the demands of being ageing caregivers.

2.5.3.4. Single parent family

A single parent is someone living without a partner and is responsible for taking care of his/her dependent child/children on a daily basis. There are various types of single-parent households: single-mother and single-father households, as well as single-parent households that include other family members (such as an aunt or uncle-headed household) (Abdelgalil et al., 2004: 817-820). The single-parent family has been one of the fastest-growing type in many parts of the globe. Single-parent family emerged as a result of divorce, death, the choice of an unmarried mother to keep her child, separation and out-of-wedlock births (Berndth, 2007: 1005-1027).

According to the Department of Social Development (2012) many single-parent families in South Africa are headed by mothers. This pattern has implications for family poverty given that female-headed households (FHHs) have been indicated to be generally disadvantaged in terms of access to important socio-economic resources such as land, livestock, credit, education, health care and extension services (Connell, 2003; UNECA, 2009). In essence, the inequalities that afflict women in society are magnified among female-headed households, where dependency and vulnerability combined with sexist societal attitudes ensure that these households are typically poorer than their male counterparts (Ellis & Adams, 2009). Abdelgalil et al. (2004: 817-820) add that an increase in the number of female-headed households reflects the traditional gender role of the mother maintaining the responsibility for the child or children after separation of the couple.

An increase in single-parent households must be understood in the context of broader socio-economic developments. Based on the assumption of male economic activity outside the home and female responsibility for children and housework within the home, the male breadwinner ideally depended on full male employment and stable families (Lewis, 2006: 103-114). These two tenets were jeopardised as women gained increasing autonomy and as 'the stable, typical, blue-collar, low-skilled and male jobs of the Fordist societies were replaced by more insecure, flexible, high-skilled and differentiated jobs, accessed by a growing proportion of married mothers

(European Migration Network, 2007). Labour market changes meant that fewer families were able to depend on a sole income, giving rise to the dual-earner model or the one-and-a-half earner model (Bradshaw and Hatland, 2006).

Growing up in a single-parent family is often linked to a number of adolescent behavioural problems (Hoskins, 2014: 506-531). Children in such households may suffer from guilt and loneliness, or feelings of anger amongst other social problems. For many children, the lack of one of the parents seems to have a profound negative effect on them, such as intense emotions due to their parents' abrupt departure or death. McLanahan (1999) suggests that a child who suddenly moves from having two parents to one parent will almost certainly feel the missing parent's absence intensely, not because single parenting is a problem, but especially because the transition may have been abrupt or had been lacking in explanation from one or both the parents.

According to Hoskins (2014: 506-531) children in single-parent families are most likely to engage in high-risk behaviours since there may be only one parent to provide supervision. Single-parent families tend to have lower monitoring levels of their children when compared to two-biological-parent families (Fisher, Leve, O'Leary & Leve, 2003: 45-52). Low levels of parental monitoring in single-parent families may result in diminishing the well-being of its children (Basson, 2013; Waldfogel, et al., 2010: 675–678). Bhukuth and Ballet (2015: 134) is therefore of the view that single-parent families are more likely to produce street children, particularly if these families are also poor. Webber (2000) also explains that with boys known to have good appetites, but in times of drought, suffering and unemployment, it is especially difficult for single parents to provide for the basic needs of their children. Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) add that the majority of street children are males aged six (6)- fifteen (15) years who for the most part are illiterate, of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds and migrate to the urban centers and most emerge out of single-parent and chose the street life largely due to socio-economic factors.

According to Cummings (2017), most street children live with single parents, while children in intact family homes stay with both parents, and are thus in a position to enjoy the warmth, care and security within a stable and cohesive family. "Following their parents' divorce, children may opt for the street because they can no longer cope with their family situation" (Lewis, 2004:46). Children need a father to identify with, however, female single parents often do not realize how important it is for their sons to have such a father figure (Kilbourne, 2004).

Ganong and Coleman (2012) found that children tend to like living in single-parent families with their mothers. They have her undivided attention. When she begins dating or she remarries, her

attention is divided between her children and new partner. Children may, therefore, resent the new boyfriend or stepfather, who may have no clue about why he is a target for his stepchildren's ire (Ganong & Coleman, 2012). Sorre (2009) also observed many boys of the single parents joining street life because when their mothers decide to marry, the new husband/father does not want to take the child in, as the boys may demand land as heirs in a patriarchal society.

Inclusively, the poor outcomes in respect of children from single-parent homes could generally be attributed to socio-economic conditions, as single-mothers may not have access to the same level of financial resources as compared to males or as compared to two earner households (Donohue, et al., 2004).

Though the literature doesn't explore them extensively, single parent families headed by fathers also exist as it is the case in this study with children from such families headed by fathers. According to Sepek and Jevtic (2019) many researches have proved that fathers are equally good or even better parents than mothers, but society is still oriented to mothers as primary caregivers. Sepek and Jevtic (2019) further said media and research are devoted almost exclusively to mothers and their problems, and data about single fatherhood is hard to find. They indicate that fathers are perceived to be less caring than mothers, with poorer parenting skills and poorer family relationships. More of this will be explored in the feminist theory in the theoretical framework chapter.

2.5.3.5. Blended families, remarried families or stepfamilies

Remarriages usually occurs swiftly after divorce, as 30% of people get married immediately after one year (Clarke & Wilson, 1994: 305-310). Research on remarriage is mainly concerned with issues of step-parenting and blending of two families (Adler-Baeder & Higginbotham, 2004; Dupuis, 2007; Faber, 2004; Stokes & Wampler, 2002; Stokes & Wampler, 2002: 91-108). There is a complex set of dynamics in the remarried family system, which create great challenge for children and the step-parents or couple. In the step-family there is a competition between the biological parent-child dyad and the new marital dyad, with the biological dyad often winning out (Dupuis, 2007: 91-104; Pappernow, 1987: 630-639).

Step-families are sometimes referred to as remarriages and also called incomplete institutions (Hutton, 2014). Pappernow (2013) defined a stepfamily with a sociological definition, this being when two adults come together through marriage, cohabitation, or civil partnership, and when only

one or two couples have their very own children in their past relationships. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (2003), different definitions are used to define various stepfamily types. 'Simple step-families' alludes to families in which just one of the adults has children from the past relationship. 'Complex stepfamilies' denotes to families in which the two adults have children from the previous relationships. 'Step-father families' are simple step-families with a mother, her children, and her partner. 'Step-mother families' are simple stepfamilies with a father, his children, and his partner. In complex stepfamilies, children have step-siblings. Some re-partnered couples also alluded to as step-couples, carry on to have a "mutual" child of their own (ABS, 2003).

Dunn et al. (1998: 519-524) indicated that stepfamilies are emerging and growing at a fast rate in the contemporary society, because of the growing number of divorces, separation and unmarried parenthood. According to Carr (2012), Sayre et al. (2010: 403-415), Visher and Visher (2003: 523–538), adapting to remarriage or stepfamily life is complicated, while stepfamilies faced with various difficulties that affect mainly young people. Mooney et al. (2009) indicated that children currently have a higher likelihood of facing parental separation, having a lone parent, and being part of a stepfamily than was once the case. McGee (2012) has noted that much is unknown about the effect on children, when they become part of stepfamily or move between two or more than one family (this will be explored in the attachment theory employed by this study). He further observed that the cumulative impacts of such transitions and interruptions must be scrutinised and clear attention must be given to the needs of children experiencing childhood in stepfamilies. It is vital to understand the challenges that stepfamilies encounter (McGee, 2012). Bronstein et al (1993: 268-276) also uphold that greater attention is needed for the challenges and difficulties that are faced by non-traditional families.

- **Relationships in the stepfamily**

Despite the fact that there is significant research on parent–child relationships after divorce, less is known about stepparent–stepchild relationship after divorce (Bumpass et al., 1995: 425-436). In his research, McGee (2012) found that the relationship amongst stepparent and stepchild have been considered to be a solid determining factor towards living in a stepfamily for the children. According to AdlerBaeder and Higgenbotham (2004: 448-458); and Bernstein (2000) the success of remarriage is relying on effective step relationships. The quality of relationship amongst those two parties have appeared to eventually build or destroy a stepfamily. In general, specialists have

discovered that stepparents who invest more in their stepchildren's lives develop a closer relationship with them than stepparents who do not. Hetherington and Kelly (2002); Weaver and Coleman (2005) discovered that the way stepchildren behave can significantly have an effect on the reactions of stepparents, the quality of the relationship amongst them and the quality of their stepparent and remarriage experience.

As cited by Pryor and Rodgers (2001) scholars and stepfamily therapists have conclude that adapting to the stepparent role is not the same as a biological parent role. In non-divorced families, authoritative parenting characterized by strong warmth and support, and moderately strong however responsive discipline is related with positive children's adjustment. De'Aths' (1992) reveals that the subject of control and discipline creates huge friction in the stepparent and stepchildren relationship, and it is believed that if there are no blood relationships, parents cannot come up with demands. Good relationship with stepparents is earned gradually, stepchildren prefer respect and understanding without their stepparents meddling in their businesses (Cartwright, 2005; Ganong, et al., 2011, Moore and Cartwright, 2005; Schrod, 2006; Schmeckle, 2007).

Stepfamily therapists like Browning and Artlett (2012), and Papernow (2006: 34-42) have emphasized that step parents need to take time to become more acquainted with their step children before trying for a parenting role, particularly with regards to discipline. Kinniburgh-White et al. (2010: 890-907) has shown that some stepparents do end up being friends with their step children instead of taking on a disciplinary role. They keep up a supportive role. Other step parents focus fundamentally on the relationship with their partner and have less involvement with their stepchildren. Still, some disengage from children, which can happen after initial attempts to relate to the children are rejected (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

Dunn (2002: 154-161) states that children have more positive relationships with biological parents, as compared to step parents, and they normally have a biological parent of the same gender as the stepparent comes to their lives. Cartwright and Moore (2012); Stoll et al. (2006: 177-189) expressed that the introduction of a stepparent is not constantly accepted, as it can possibly undermine the biological parent and child's relationship. As indicated by Pryor and Rodgers (2001), a conservative viewpoint on family transition has come with a suggestion that stepfamilies are bad for children. Amato (2005: 75-96) indicated that changing to a stepfamily could be troublesome to children's development.

- **Advantages of stepfamily**

Few authors criticize the unfairness in relation to the discussions of negative aspects of stepfamily life. They state that, though it is vital to admit and look at the problematic areas in the stepfamily, it is also crucial to recognize the positive aspects about stepfamilies (McGee, 2012). Differentiating between children living in different types of two-parent families gives a more complete understanding of the biological, family environment, family instability, and the parental selection mechanisms through which family structure influences a child's outcomes. Family structure has different effects on various aspects of children's lives (Halpern-Meekin & Tach, 2008: 435-451). Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994: 359-381) indicate that stepfamilies are assumed to be worse off than first-marriage families. According to Furstenberg (1987), when it comes to stepfamily life it would be a misrepresentation to assume that it is an interminable struggle. In their study, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994: 359-381) found that most stepparents reported to be happy with their roles and their new families. Moreover, well-functioning stepfamilies can serve to decrease the risks of poor child outcomes associated with divorce (Adler-Baeder and Higginbotham, 2004; Hetherington, 2005; Pryor, 2005). Shafer and Pace (2015: 115-125) have shown that parent and stepparent support have the potential to lower stress on children in stepfamily experiences.

According to McGee (2012) one of the advantages of stepfamily experience is to gain extra siblings. Braithwaite et al. (2001: 221-247) found that good adolescent relationship with half-siblings were associated with adolescent developing good behaviours generally. Furthermore, Visher and Visher (2003: 523–538) recommend that the nature of step-sibling relationship is seen as a strong predictor of stepfamily experience. Step-siblings usually bring a feeling of friendship and a feeling of experience to a child's world (McGee, 2012). To Newman (1999: 5-9) numerous step-siblings adapt positively, and ties and close relationships can grow, particularly if they are of the same age, gender and life experience.

- **The influence of Age and gender on growing up in a stepfamily**

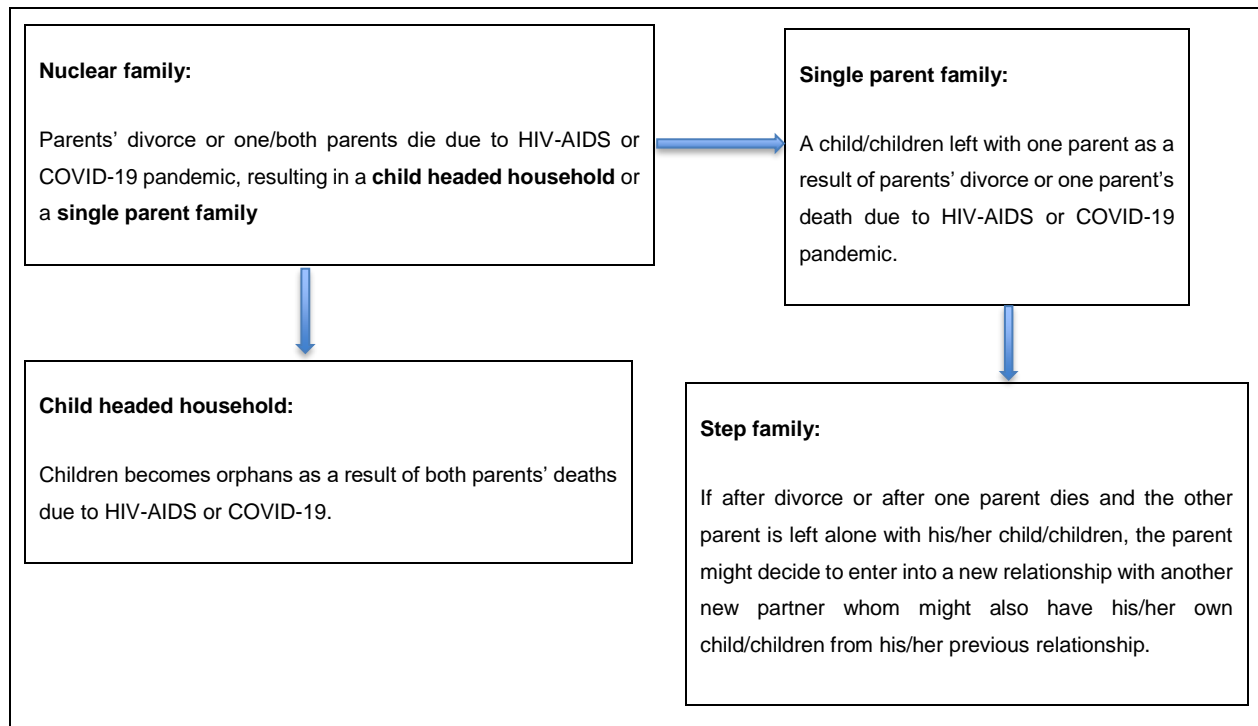
Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994: 359-381) states that there is conflicting evidence concerning whether children of various ages or genders adapt to the arrival of a stepparent. Few studies exist about the particular practices that construct stepfamily connections. Social practices of gender essentially affect relationships in stepfamily (Schmeeckle, 2007: 174-189). According to Bray (1988) and Hetherington (1987), research undertaken mostly with younger children, shows that

girls have a tougher time adapting to the arrival of a stepfather than boys adapting to a stepmother. Bray (1988) and Hetherington (1987) reasoned that few researchers have speculated that girls tend to have close bonds to their divorced mothers and that these bonds are disturbed when a stepfather comes. Brand et al. (1988), Bray (1988) indicate that some studies discovered that girls adapt negatively when their mothers, and stepfathers reported greater cohesion and bonding in their marriage. On the other hand, girls adapted better when there was less cohesion in the marriage.

According to Stearman (2000) some children leave their homes due to ill behaviour of their parents and the treatment towards them. Some of such children feel that they cannot face such circumstances and so they flee from home. Such treatment can include sexual abuse, sometimes leading to rape. In the study conducted by Idimudia et al., (2013) in Mahikeng, about 15% of the street children' participants were staying with their mothers and stepfathers. Their study revealed that some children participants reported occasional incidences of parental abuse from both biological parents and stepparents, leading to the children eventually running away from home. Amato (2000: 1269-1287) has noted that young people and older children frequently have more trouble adapting and accepting the stepparent generally, and that stepparent-stepchild relationships are more conflicted when the stepchild is an adolescent.

2.5.4. Theoretical working model of family structures

Below is the theoretical working model of family structures developed in this study.



The above model is explained as follows: If a child is from a nuclear family structure with two parents and then the parents get divorced, or one parent dies or both parents die due to any pandemic, the following family structures emerge as a result: In a case where both parents die due to any pandemic, then a child or children becomes orphans, a child-headed household emerge as a result of that. In a case where parents get divorced or only one parent dies due to any pandemic (or illness), then the child is left with the other one parent, a single-parent family then emerges as a result. Furthermore, if after divorce or after one parent dies and the other parent is left alone with his/her child or children, he/she might decide to enter into a new relationship with another new partner who might also have a child/children of his own from his/her previous relationship, a stepfamily structure emerges a result. Although the child-headed household is part of this model and part of the types of family structures discussed, no street child in this study is from a child-headed household.

It is thus important to note that, the family structures presented are not a representation of all the family structures that exist in South African societies or globally. The diverse family structures

discussed in this study are for the purpose of giving an overview of different family structures that exist in the society. As per the findings of this study to be presented and discussed later, street children participated in this study come from only four types of family structures which are: nuclear families, single parent families, step families and extended families.

2.6. DEMOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN

This section provides an understanding of the demography of South Africa's children cited from (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220).

Table 1: Distribution of households, adults and children in South Africa, by province, 2018

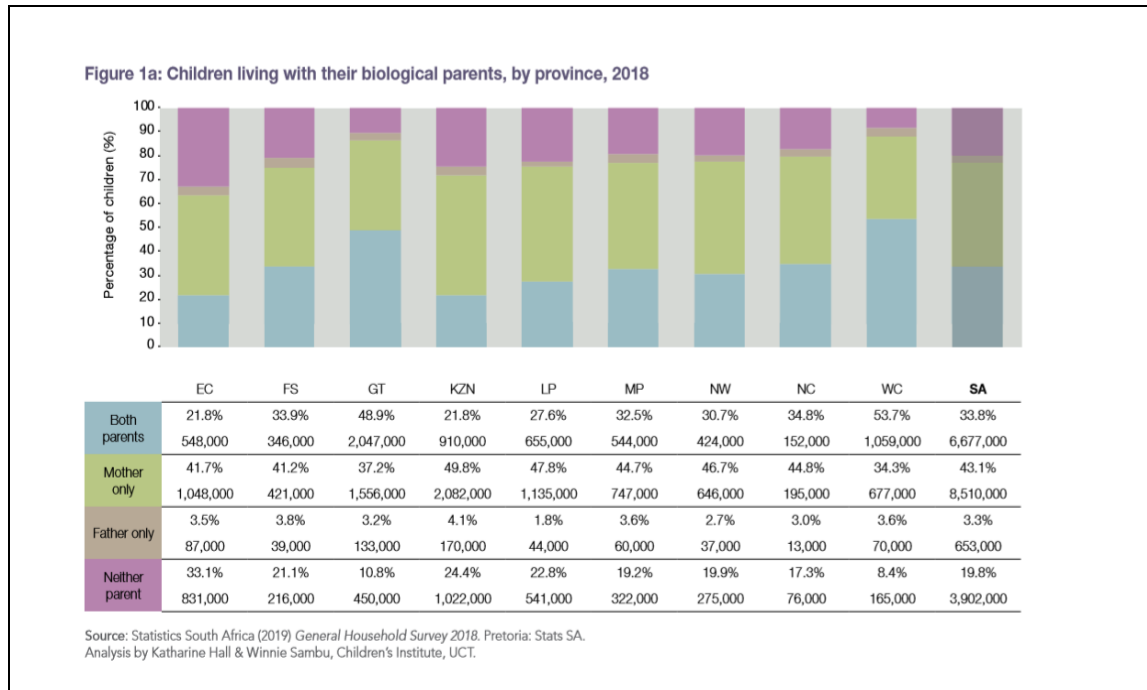
Province	Households		Adults		Children		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	% change 2002 – 2018
Eastern Cape	1,685,149	10	3,994,247	11	2,514,000	13	-14%
Free State	901,319	5	1,869,794	5	1,021,000	5	2%
Gauteng	4,883,861	29	10,475,112	28	4,186,000	21	42%
KwaZulu-Natal	2,904,523	17	7,031,487	19	4,184,000	21	1%
Limpopo	1,578,772	9	3,479,374	9	2,374,000	12	-2%
Mpumalanga	1,288,862	8	2,850,795	8	1,673,000	8	10%
North West	1,209,525	7	2,542,741	7	1,382,000	7	19%
Northern Cape	341,651	2	793,830	2	436,000	2	10%
Western Cape	1,877,193	11	4,679,036	12	1,971,000	10	22%
South Africa	16,670,854	100	37,716,416	100	19,741,000	100	9%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2019) General Household Survey 2018. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Based on the above table, South Africa's total population was expected to be 57.7 million people in mid-2018, with 19.7 million children under the age of eighteen (18). As a result, children made up 34% of the entire population. Children's distribution among provinces differs significantly from that of adults, with a higher proportion of children residing in provinces with huge rural populations. KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo together accommodate about half of all South African children. Gauteng is the country's economic hub, but it is the country's smallest province in terms of the physical size, but has surpassed KwaZulu-Natal as the province with the biggest population of children: 21% of all children in South Africa reside in Gauteng. Gauteng also has the highest

proportion of adults' population (28%), as well as the highest proportion of households. Gauteng's child population has increased by 42% since 2002, making it the province with the fastest rising population since the latter year. There have been significant changes in the numbers of children in various provinces since 2002. The number of children in Eastern Cape has declined significantly (by 14%), whereas the number of children in the Western Cape has increased by 22%. Since 2002, the child population in the North West has increased by 19%. A rise in the child population is partly due to the population migration (for example, when children are part of migrant homes or move to join existing urban households) and partly the consequences of natural population growth (new births within the province) (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220).

Figure 1: Children living with their biological parents, by province, 2018



The above figure shows the number of children living with their biological parents, by province in 2018. Most children in South Africa do not live with their biological parents on a regular basis. This has long been the case for South African children. International studies have demonstrated that South Africa is the worst in terms of parents' absence from their children's everyday lives. Many variables contribute to parental absence, including historical population control, labor migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities, low marriage and cohabitation rates, and

traditional child care arrangements. Relatives frequently have a significant role in child rearing. Most children experience a sequence of different caregivers, grow up without fathers or live in different households with their biological siblings (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220).

Children in the poorest 20% of households are the least likely to live with both parents: only 15% do so, as compared to 74% of children in the wealthiest 20% of households. Only around a third of African children (29%) live with both biological parents, but the vast majority of Indian and White children (85% and 78%, respectively) live with both biological parents. Almost a quarter of African children live with neither of their parents, and another 46% live with their mothers but not their fathers. These numbers are striking because they imply that biological fathers play a minor role in the lives of a huge proportion of children. Younger children are more likely than older children to have co-resident mothers, but older children are more likely to live with neither parent. While just 12% of children aged 0 to 5 years (875,000) live with neither parent, this number rises to 27% (1.6 million) of children aged 12 to 17 (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220).

Figure 2: Children living in South Africa, by orphanhood status, 2018

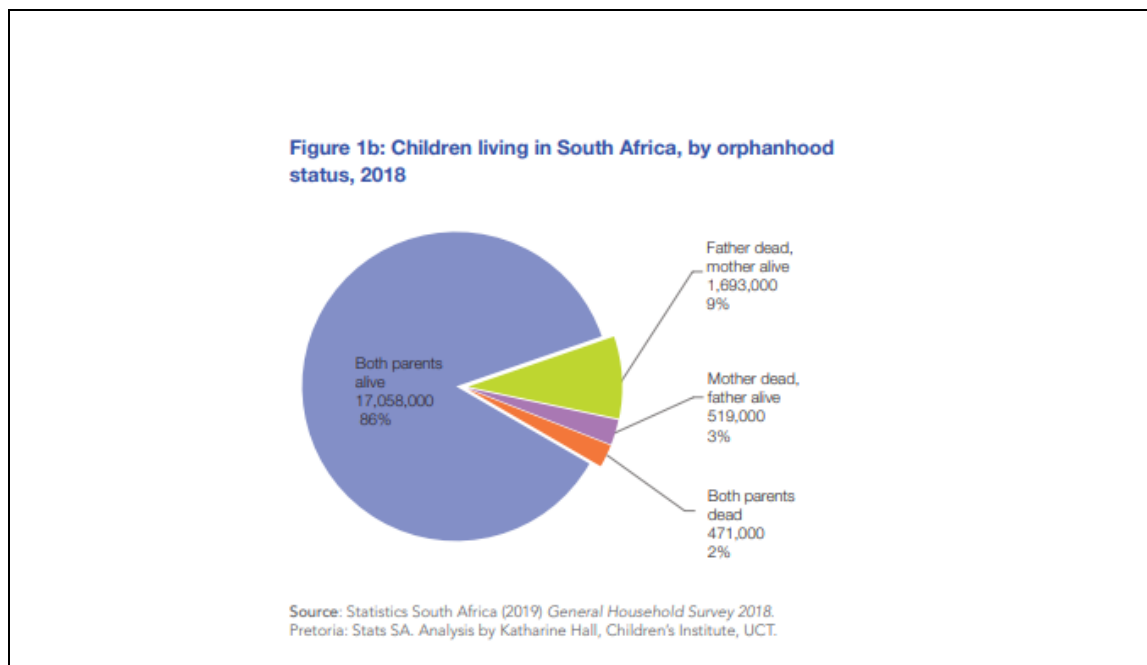
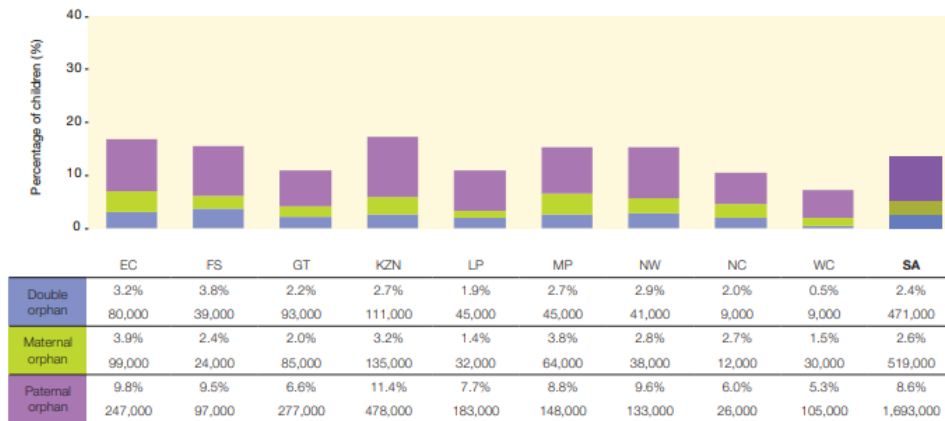


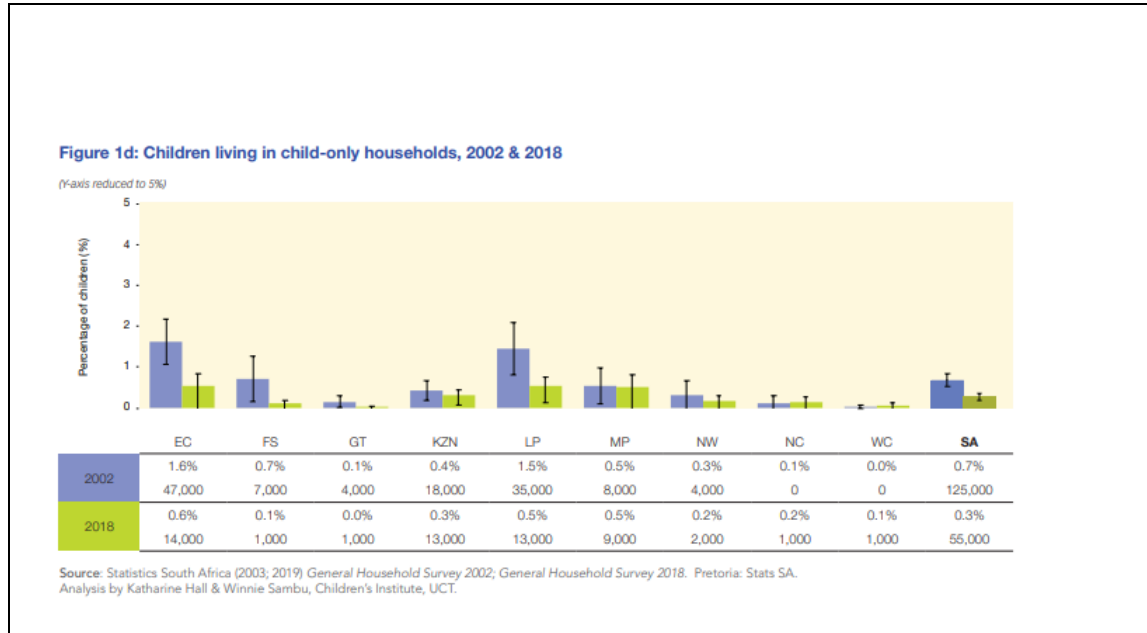
Figure 1c: Number and percentage of orphans, by province, 2018



Source: Statistics South Africa (2019) General Household Survey 2018. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

The above figure shows orphan children, by province. An orphan is defined as a child below the age of eighteen (18), whose mother, father, or both biological parents died (including those whose living status is unknown but not those whose living status is unclear) (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220). Orphan status is not always a good measure of how well children are cared for. The overall number of orphans must be broken down since the loss of one parent may have different consequences for children from those following the death of both parents. Maternally orphaned children, in particular, appear to have worse outcomes than paternally orphaned children: for example, in terms of education (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220). In the year 2018, 471,000 children lost both parents. Orphaning rates are especially high in provinces that contain the former homelands, as these areas bear a large burden of orphaned children's care. In terms of orphan numbers, KwaZulu-Natal (24%), Gauteng (24%), and the Eastern Cape (17%) are the three provinces with the most double orphans. 60% of all double orphans live in these three provinces.

Figure 3: Children living in child-only households, 2002 & 2018



A child-only household is one in which all of the members in the household are under the age of eighteen (18). "Child-headed household" is another term for this type of a household. In 2018, there were around 55,000 children living in 33,000 child-only households across South Africa. This equates to 0.3% of the total number of children. While children living in child-only households are uncommon in comparison to other types of households, the proportion of children in this extreme position is concerning. However, it is worth noting that the share hasn't increased in 2018. In fact, the number has decreased. As a result of HIV, predictions of a rapid increase in the number of child-headed households have been made. According to the national household surveys, an examination of the circumstances of children in child-headed families in South Africa indicated that the majority of children in child headed households are not orphans, and 84% of those children's mothers are alive. These data show that factors other than HIV-AIDS related mortality may influence the development of these families. For example, teenage boys looking after a house in a rural area while their parents go to work may be a viable option for the family. While living in a household without an adult is not ideal for any child, it is suggested that all children living in child-only households should be fifteen years or older. From the age of fifteen, children can legally work, and from the age of sixteen, they can get an identity document and apply for grants on behalf of younger children. Only 4% of children under the age of six live in child-headed families (Hall & Sambu, 2019: 216-220).

2.7. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter focused on the literature review, with the following aspects covered: the concept of family, street children and drop-in centre, the construction of childhood concept in the apartheid context, the social construction of the concepts of 'childhood' and 'street children', contemporary street children as a phenomenon, the role of government towards the street children phenomenon, South African children and family policies, street children phenomenon and family structures in South Africa, as well as various types of family structures. The study then developed a theoretical working model of family structures. The demography of south African children was explored. The below chapters focus on the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. INTRODUCTION

A theoretical framework identifies the assumptions on which theoretical explanations are based. This chapter reviews the major theoretical frameworks of relevance to the subject under investigation. Four theories have been employed in this study, these are **Structural functionalist theory** which has been used as an umbrella theory for **Feminist theory (Gender reform feminisms)** and **Symbolic Interactionist theory**, and **Attachment theory** has been employed independently. This study also used some relevant theoretical concepts in order to strengthen the argument and discussion of the study, of which will be explored in the presentation and analysis chapters (Chapter five and six).

3.2. DISCUSSION OF THE THEORIES

Structural functionalist theory assists in interpreting the macro-social factors in the society (such as poverty and apartheid processes) that affect and disrupt the family structure which influences the street children phenomenon. As a link to Structural functionalist theory, **Feminist theory**, particularly Gender reform feminisms attempts to explain how the effects of societal structures shapes the inequalities of gender in the society. **Symbolic Interactionist theory** has also been used as a branch of Structural functionalist theory which is considered a micro-level theory that focuses on the interaction within and outside the family structure, in terms of how children's interaction with their peers outside the families and interaction with their parents within their families influence their behavior of going to the street. Lastly, the **Attachment theory** has been used independently by this study, which best explains the step-family structure as a whole and its influence on the street children phenomenon.

3.2.1. Structural functionalist theory

Structural functionalist theory has been used as an umbrella theory for Feminist theory and Symbolic interactionism. The theory draws its inspiration mainly from the ideas of Emile Durkheim who sought to explain social cohesion and stability through the concept of solidarity. This theory

assists to interpret the macro factors in the society that affect the institution of family which ultimately results in the street children phenomenon. The theory assists in analyzing how particular historical or current societal forces can lead to a disruption of a family institution, and which can have an impact on children and ultimately lead them to live on the street. This is supported by Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba (2016: 309-321), that the family as an institution in charge of socialization, has been exposed to historical processes that resulted in affecting its structure, roles and its functioning. On the other hand, Amoateng and Heaton (2012) assert that since the democratic elections in 1994, the applied socio-economic policies (such as the migrant labour system) of the government had also impacted the family in terms of its structural changes.

In regard to the impact of history, the physical separation of family members for sustained periods dates back, in some forms, to pre-colonial times. Family members were separated by the upheavals of the Mfecane wars of 1815 – 1840 and the waves of migration that followed. Pre-apartheid labour migration to (and within) South Africa also contributed to family fragmentation. The extended separation of labour migrants from their family homes was common in the region as far back as the late nineteenth century when gold was first discovered. Children's living arrangements were often restructured, and informal kinship care was common (Hall and Richter, 2018). The result of this was wholly unpleasant for children especially, as they struggled to adjust and adapt to such restructured living arrangements. Quite a few households became intolerable to children, and this led such children to turn to the street.

This study also applies structural functionalist theory to explain how the street children phenomenon relates to dysfunctionality by affecting and disrupting the societal order and stability in the society. Based on the metaphor of an organism in which many parts (social institutions) function together to sustain the whole, Durkheim argued that modern complex societies are held together by organic solidarity. Many functionalists argue that social institutions are relational and functionally integrated to form a stable system, and that a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions (Abro, 2012). Abro (2012) further states that the phenomenon of street children emerged due to instability and failure of the family as an institution, which also affected the education system as many street children are not schooling.

A family is a pivotal social institution, particularly in the role that it plays for children. It is responsible for reproducing, nurturing and socializing children. According to Mooney et al. (2009) the concepts of functional and dysfunctional are used by functionalists to define the effects of social elements on the society. Elements of society are functional if they contribute to social stability and dysfunctional if they disrupt social stability. Abro (2012) states that the family plays

an important role in socialisation for individuals, however in dysfunctional families the opposite is the case.

Merton (1976) identified two types of functions: manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are the intended, anticipated and commonly recognized consequences, which are overt. While latent functions relate to unintended and unanticipated consequences, which are covert. Merton states that parts can have dysfunctions that can have disruptive consequences for the social order or for some segments of society. Dysfunctions are also either manifest or latent. Manifest dysfunctions are a part's anticipated disruptions to social order. Latent dysfunction is unanticipated or unintended disruptions to the social order (Merton, 1976).

Merton (1976) has been cited as the proponent and the originator of the manifest and latent functions. His notion of manifest and latent dysfunctions is adopted to explain the street children phenomenon. In terms of the manifest dysfunction, the street children phenomenon can be dysfunctional in the society in several ways: street children would be deprived of the family's primary role of socialization; or they may not attend school and thus deprive themselves of education. For the purposes of this thesis, the interest is in the children going to the street due to the various factors in their family structures that may be driving them there. The anticipation and intention of such children may be that street life allows an escape from the dysfunctional home, and may result in bringing some kind of a solution to the problems they face at home. It may presuppose that they may receive money from the people in the public, and being free from their parent's treatment and discipline as stated by Idemudia et al. (2013). However, the much-unanticipated disruptive consequences of the action of going to the street by children can lead to many forms of dysfunctional forms of social being: for example, getting raped, especially for female street children, and this can also result in HIV-AIDS and unwanted pregnancy (WHO, 2000). According to Van Greunen (2001), prostitution is one source of the income, especially for female street children, and which under such circumstances exposes them to the risk of HIV infection, which can lead to the further spread of the virus.

Another unintended disruptive consequence of the street children phenomenon can be the substance abuse and an increase in crime (Coren et al. 2013, WHO, 2000 and Ferguson (2007: 103-112). Such unanticipated consequences can cause the disruption in other parts of the society and create social disorder and instability. For example, street children under the influence of substance could behave in inappropriate ways, such as becoming involved in criminal activities. Street children who do not receive services from centres are those that especially fall prey to such latent dysfunctions, and are at the mercy of criminals and even the police. This is a clear indication

that the street children phenomenon leads to other macro-social problems and that fuels societal disruption, and interrupts its order and stability.

Furthermore, Durkheim used the metaphor of an organism in which many parts (social institutions) function together to sustain the whole, that when one system is disrupted it causes disruption for the entire functioning of the body (Allen and Henderson, 2016). To illustrate this, functionalist theorists compares the society to a biological organism such as the human body. The skeletal framework, muscles, organs such as the heart and lungs, as well as the central nervous system and circulatory system, make up the human body. All of these components function together in a balanced equilibrium. Each 'functions' in its own way to keep the entire body running well, and none can be separated from the other body parts that it affects and which, in turn, help it function (Ferrante, 2016). As mentioned, South African families have gone through major historical disruptions with the massive changes that took place in the past, during apartheid (Hall & Richter, 2018), of which some of those disruptions still continue in the current era. Such disruptive changes affecting South African family structures include urbanization and migrant labor, modernization, industrialization, the spread of the HIV-AIDS pandemic and the divorce rate (Ashoka, 2004; Hall & Richter, 2018; Budlender and Lund, 2011: 925-946). Due to such changes, some families broke down or even dissolved.

As discussed earlier, currently, South Africa and most parts of the world are affected by the novel Coronavirus, which disrupted and dissolved the various family structures that exist in the society. The virus outbreak has taken the lives of many people in the country and globally. With a high increase in the mortality rate, the virus has caused social strains in families in different societies. It has already seriously impacted on South African families, with many lives lost due to the pandemic (Lebow, 2020). This has ultimately created further disruption and change in many families due to losing their loved ones. During the first wave of the virus, it seemed to attack a high number of adults, as they were more vulnerable compared to other population groups in the society. It is thus likely that many youth or children have been left orphaned or without one parent. As a result, new types of family structures may have yet again emerged and formed due to that new pandemic.

Furthermore, the death of one parent in the nuclear family structure could result in or form a single parent family or a step family structure. Which means a child goes through the transition of being raised by both parents in a nuclear family to being raised by one parent in a single parent family.

Moreover, the death of both parents from a nuclear family due to a pandemic such as HIV-AIDS or COVID-19 could result in a child to be an orphan and grow up in a child headed household. Additionally, the death of a breadwinner in the family due to such pandemics could also result in the financial strain for the family. Based on this explanation, it is clear that children become the main victims when family structures are disrupted or dissolve and when they transition from one family structure to the next. This is supported by UNICEF (2020) with the data that indicates that children are affected by COVID-19 in different families that they find themselves in. Therefore, different types of family structures emerge as a result of different societal ills and strains. It can therefore be speculated that some families were formed because they lost their family members due to HIV-AIDS and the novel Coronavirus as outlined above, while others emerged from divorce due to urbanization or migrant labor, as argued by Hall and Richter, (2018).

It is usually very difficult for children to adapt and adjust to such drastic structural changes in the family, including new life styles in the new family structure, and to cross the transition from intact to a broken or dissolved family. Children may react in different ways when transitioning from one family structure to the next. Failure to adapt to such family changes may result in them going to the street. This is in line with what has been discussed in the attachment theory by Bowlby and Ainsworth (2013: 759-775), in how it might be a challenge for children to adjust to the new family formation such as a step family. It seems that when families go through disruptions and structural changes, children are those that get most affected.

Poverty is another aspect that produces societal strains that can disrupt the institution of the family. Poverty has been indicated as one of the important factors leading to the street children phenomenon. Children have been seen to leave home and go to the street because of their family's financial instability. Children from single parent family structures have been seen as those that are likely to go to the street because of lack of parental financial support and provision, especially the female-headed single parent families. Women in such families are seen to be economically challenged and disadvantaged (Ferrante, 2016). More of this will be discussed when the feminist theory is outlined in the section to follow. The structural functionalist theory therefore explains how macro social factors mentioned herein, affect the institution of the family, and as a result perpetuates the street children phenomenon.

The structural functionalist theory has been employed and the metaphor of an organism has been adopted because the theory and its metaphor of an organism is still being used by comparable

recent studies about families and children particularly. For example, in their book “Family Theories: Foundations and applications”, Allen and Henderson (2016) also referred to the metaphor of comparing the society to a living organism. They write that the functionalist theory is used by researchers to help explain processes both within families as well as how families operate in and contribute to the society at large. Allen and Henderson (2016) are also of the view that functionalism as one of the founding theories in social science, is based on the analogy that society is like a living organism, and when one part of it stops working, other parts are affected. They add that functionalism helps in understanding how healthy levels of social integration are important to the normal functioning in society. The theory considers how individuals within families need to maintain healthy levels of social integration, promoting and reinforcing societal norms for citizens-in-training. This theory highlights the interplay between social norms, family functions, and how family members contribute to the equilibrium (or not) of the entire family (Allen & Henderson, 2016).

Ingleby (2017) who supports this view writes that Functionalist sociologists are interested in the type of social circumstances that lead to the social creation of the concept of childhood. He states that, in the context of United Kingdom, that UK society modernised childhood as a social concept became increasingly important. The identity of childhood became defined by particular social conventions. He gave an example that children were not expected to work and were expected to go to school. Functionalists are interested in how societies preserve this sense of identity. Just as a body has its main organs, so the societies have their key social institutions. These social institutions are regarded by functionalists as being responsible for preserving and developing this shared understanding of childhood (Ingleby, 2017).

Based on the evidence of the above cited sources on the use of functionalism, this study saw the theory and its use of the metaphor of the living organism as still being relevant and important to explain the phenomenon of street children and the institution of family. It is important to point out that, “by referring to the system as being made up of interrelated parts that works together, and the breaking of one part affecting the entire systems”, does not mean that a certain part of a system is more important than the other or some kind of an authoritarian system. This means that all the parts in the system are important, meaning, all institutions in the society are important in their own unique way of functioning in order to bring solidarity and stability in the society.

3.2.1.1. Critique of Structural functionalist theory

Structural functionalist theory can be credited for illustrating how a social institution can work at two different levels - both fulfilling the needs of each individual and meeting the needs of the whole society at the same time. However, all the needs of all the individuals are not met by every societal social institution. The institutions in the society are not necessarily performing all their functions to meet the individuals' needs. For example, the function of the family is to socialize children and providing care and emotional support to them, but it's not always the case that such functions are performed effectively by the family. Not all children are socialised successfully, such as street children. The theory therefore ignores the failure of such institution of family to perform its functions and it is too optimistic by implying that the family life is always good and happy. Cheal (2002) shares the same sentiments that the family functional relationships can easily slip into damaging relationships, looking at the parenting styles adopted by some parents in terms of disciplining their children, considering child mistreatment and abuse in some families.

The above reflection is supported by the literature on street children that some children go to the street because of poor parenting styles or lack of parental care and support, manifested by such ills as abuse, alcohol use by parents and lack of financial care (Mokomane & Makoe, 2017; Nkwe, 2008). It is also worth noting that not only parents should be blamed due to their parenting styles, but children's behaviours are also problematic as they misbehave as a result of external influence such as peer pressure (through their interactions as assert by the symbolic interactionists). Also, the functionalists state that a family should be defined in terms of its social functions it performs primarily to its members, and its contributions to order and stability in the larger society. However, it is not always the case that the social order is maintained, as children could break the rules, in this case, street children phenomenon could contribute to the disruption of such order and stability of the family institution and the society. The functionalist is therefore too ambitious of the functions performed by the family institution without considering other factors that could hinder such performance.

Also, even though it may be possible for the functionalist theory to demonstrate that various institutions perform certain functions that are necessary to the society, it does not necessarily acknowledge that the macro societal factors could affect such institutions to perform their functions. For instance, as discussed, poverty as a macro social factor and apartheid social processes affected the family institution and as a result disrupted it performing its functions which affected its children.

Furthermore, Anthony (2014) is of the view that with the functionalist theory, it is not clear whether the functions of the family could be performed by other social institutions, the theory doesn't examine the alternatives to the family. This is to consider that some children (like orphaned children) might not have a family to socialise them and provide them with care and support. If there are no other alternatives in the society to replace the orphaned children's lost families (deceased parents) to take on such functions, it therefore means that such children are excluded from the functions performed by the family of being socialised, taken care of and supported like other children. Though there are shelters and centres in the society that accommodate or provide services to vulnerable children like street children, orphans or abandoned children, that does not mean that such shelters or centres could entirely replace the functions performed in the same way by the parents in the family. As a result, such children end up missing out on the warmth that they would have received if it were their parents.

In addition, according to Anthony (2014), the functionalist's description of the family is almost too good to be true; its nuclear family is a remarkably harmonious institution. Husband and wife have an integrated division of labour and have a good time. Despite that the nuclear family is not always perfect as portrayed by the functionalists, but the theory also gives an impression that it simply refers to the nuclear family as an ideal family to socialise children as compared to other family structures. It overlooks other family structures that exist in the society that could also be exceptional in performing their functions to its children.

Lastly, the feminist theory (as discussed below) is critical of the structural functionalist theory. That the functionalist theory provides a very harmonious view of society and the family, ignoring the societal gender inequality. Feminists argue that the family serves the needs of men and oppresses women.

3.2.2. Feminist theory (Gender reform feminisms)

Gender reform feminisms has been used as a branch theory for structural functionalist theory. Gender reform feminisms argue that the sources of gender inequality are structural and not the outcome of personal attributes, individual choices, or unequal interpersonal relationships. The structural sources are women's relegation to low-paid work and a devaluation of the work women do, overwhelming responsibilities for child care and housework, and unequal access to education, health care, and political power. These inequalities are built onto national and international social

structures, and so have to be redressed structurally. An overall strategy for political action to reform the unequal gendered; social structure is gender balance. The goal of gender balance is to attain equality or parity in numbers of women and men throughout the society, in their domestic responsibilities, and in their access to work and business opportunities, positions of authority, political power, education, and health care. Affirmative action in workplaces and universities and mandated quotas to increase the number of women in government are common gender-balancing policies (Lorber, 2001).

Feminists contend that social life, work, family, the economy, politics, education, and religion cannot be fully examined without gender as a major analytic category. The definition of feminism is never static, never unitary, and always subject to the theorists' specific understandings (Crothers, 2010). This study specifically adopted Gender reform feminisms. Gender reform feminisms were the theorists and activists that predominated in the 1970s. They locate gender inequality in the structure of the gendered social order. Politically, their goal is to achieve a gender balance, so that women and men are positioned in equal numbers throughout the society, and have equal power, prestige, and economic resources. A reformed gendered social order would thus eradicate gender inequality.

The feminist theory has been used to explain the single-parent family structure and its influence on the phenomenon of street children, due to a high percentage of single-parent families in this study mainly headed by mothers. The theory explores the meaning of gender specifically in interpersonal life, and in society more generally (Vangelisti, 2004). It has contributed new ways of conceptualizing the family with a focus on sociological analyses of the experiences of women in the family by making gender a central concept to analyse the family as a social institution. Apartheid entrenched gender inequalities by relying on women to sustain family homesteads and care for dependents. The care of children remains highly gendered and generally undervalued by society, both when it is provided for free, within families, and as a professional service. Domestic workers, including those providing child care are paid below the national minimum wage. Educators in the Early childhood Development (ECD) sector are paid very low wages, also child and youth care workers who provide welfare and protection services (Hall & Richter, 2018).

Poverty as a societal strain can be understood from a feminist macro-level perspective, by understanding how it affects single-parent families and street children. Children who are from female-headed single-parent families may be likely to go to the street because of poverty. Ferrante (2016) referred to the feminisation of poverty as an increasing proportion of poor people being women. The majority of South African single-parent families are female-headed. Such families

rely on social grants, remittances or donations from relatives. This reveals the lack of equality that still exists in relation to the female sex, and thus the marginalization of women (Ferrante, 2016). It has been reported that in many poor households, one or more parents are absent or deceased, and this is generally fathers in most cases. The majority of households have women as the main and often only earner for the family. The family breakdown seems to be a strong factor in children spending more time on the street or in leaving home entirely (Sorre & Oino, 2013: 148-155)

South African single-parent families are made up of a mother and her child or children. Often times, the literature portrays single parent families especially those headed by females as not capable of raising children with positive child development outcomes due to financial challenges. This is due to the societal stereotypes associated with the patriarchal system. Lewis (2006: 103-114) is of the view that an increase in single-parent households must be understood in the context of broader socio-economic developments. Furthermore, Pillay and Schoubben-Hesk (2001: 727-33) state that a high number of street children come from female-headed, single-parent families, and they live below the poverty line. Due to not having access to economic resources equally to men. Women are seen as incapable of raising children due to economic challenges they face and due to being marginalized in the society. Children from such female headed single parent families could fall victim to finding themselves under such economic circumstances faced by their single mothers and thus resort to a life on the streets.

Having said that, it is assumed that females in single parent families are still seen to be classified with an inability to financially care and provide for their children. It therefore means that children from such female single parent families become the victims of the unfair societal systems that are gender discriminatory in nature. This is espoused by Lorber (2001), that Gender reform feminisms have made visible the pervasiveness of discriminatory practices, both formal and informal, in the work world and especially in the distribution of economic resources and family responsibilities. It is thus expected that children who are living in families with their unemployed single mothers are likely to go to the street (Sorre and Oino, 2013: 148-155), and consider the street as a way of making ends meet, simply so that they can survive.

Furthermore, Lorber (2001), indicates that the 1970s brought dissatisfaction with conventional ideas about women and men, their bodies, sexualities, psyches, and behaviour. The beliefs prevalent at that time about women and men tended to stress differences between them and to denigrate women in comparison with men, who were seen as stronger, smarter, and generally more capable than women-except when it came to taking care of children. Such beliefs viewed men as compared to women who are not capable of taking care of children. However, the theory

should not ignore the fact that there are men who are also capable of taking care of their children as single-fathers, as proven by the findings of this study with some children from single-parent families headed by men.

With the above points made, Gender reform feminists are of the view that women should be valued as much as men and to be free to live their lives according to their human potential. People should be able to work, parent, produce culture and science, govern, and otherwise engage in social life as they choose, whether they are women or men. Gender mainstreaming helps to achieve the goal of equal participation of women and men in all walks of life and equal recognition and reward for the work they do.

In sum, Gender reform feminists want to purge the gendered social order for practices discriminating against women. These feminists accept the existing gender structure (two classes of people) and work towards erasing the inequalities between the two classes, women and men, by policies to advance women in the workplace and positions of power, in education and other important venues, and by minimizing the differences between them. Their goal is to reform the social order so that although it is still gendered, it is more equal (Lorber, 2001).

3.2.2.1. Critique of Gender reform feminisms

Gender reform feminisms bring comparisons of the bodies of both genders in terms of their sexes as a contribution for them being unequal in the society. Gender reform feminism is criticized for ignoring the soft nature of women and their femininity when it praises them for their good skill in child nurturing, (acknowledging that they carry the burden of childbearing). This is because some writers are of the view that mothers or females in single-parent families are not capable of emphasizing strict parenting styles towards their children due to their soft-spot nature of rearing and disciplining children. Fathers, on the other hand, are considered to be strict in parenting their children. For example, authors like Kilbourne (2004), are of the view that children need a father to identify with, but, female single parents often do not realize how important it is for their sons to have such a father figure. Consequently, it is assumed that children from single-parent families headed by mothers are likely to go astray because parents do not enforce strict parenting styles on them (such as harsh discipline). This study is thus of the view that women are not only economically challenged when it comes to raising their children, but they face two challenges of facing financial struggle to take care of their children and a challenge in their parenting styles of

child discipline due to their femininity nature of being soft. However, it is important to point out that there are some children who are from female single-parent families with positive growth outcomes. Not all single-parent families especially headed by mothers produce children with negative outcomes (McGee, 2012), due to mothers' soft nature. This study found that though some literature or the society portrays men as those capable to instill strict parenting on their children because of their masculinity, the findings of this study contradict such claims. Some street children participating in this study are from male single-parent families and still went to the street despite living with their single fathers.

Moreover, just like many studies focusing more on single mothers' families than single-fathers as being economically challenged, and hence the term feminization of poverty by Ferrante (2016), which simply means that most women are poor, the Gender reform feminisms also give the same impression of believing that only single mothers are economically challenged to raise their children, while there are some single fathers who are also facing the same financial challenge as per the findings of this study. This study indeed acknowledges that the majority of single parents' families are headed by women and they are financially challenged to raise their children. However, if Gender reform feminism advocates for the equality of both genders in the society from the family and child rearing point of view, it should speak for both genders; both men and women in single-parent families. Failure to do that, the idea of creating gender balance in the society would not be a success if only too much attention is given to one gender. It is understandable that women are the main focus as the gender that was previously marginalized. Nevertheless, there is no need to advocate for one gender (women) and ignoring the other (men) or while the other gender suffers. In addition, Bisong and Ekanem (2014: 33-38) reveal that the patriarchal structuring of the society limits not only the woman; it is rather more damaging to male folks. Patriarchy demands too much from the males. Bisong and Ekanem (2014: 33-38) further critique the feminists for not having a sound basis for their argument for equality. According to Nienaber and Moraka (2016: 139-163), Feminism also generally condemn and upsets women who are in heterosexual relationships and who are from the working class as well as from ethnic minority groups

As a fair and objective suggestion, this study proposes that parenting by parents to their children should not be judged or measured by the gender of parents based on their physical appearance or sex classification or even their economic status. This is to consider that there are single women who are from single parent families who are working and able to take care of their children. Feminism carries with it, certain assumptions about gender inequality that may no longer be true in today's society. It is now more common in the contemporary society for working mothers to hire

a nanny or a helper or take their children to a day care centre. So, it is less feasible for them to stay home and nurture children. Thus, it does not mean that, women's parenting should be undermined due to their femininity. Women should also be regarded as being capable to raise well socialized children. It can therefore be concluded that women and men's capabilities in all aspects of life (family, politics, workplace, etc.) should not simply be measured based on the nature of their femininity and masculinity.

3.2.3. Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism has also been linked with Structural functionalism. The term Symbolic interactionism was coined by a sociologist Herbet Blumer who also outlined its essential principles. Symbolic interactionist theory focuses on social interaction: everyday encounters in which people communicate, interpret and respond to one another's words and actions to find meaning. When individuals are involved in interaction and the way they take account of what the other is doing or is about to do and then direct their own conduct accordingly, this process depends on (1) Self-awareness, (2) shared symbols, and (3) negotiated order (Blumer, 1969).

Self-awareness takes place when a person is able to observe and evaluate the self from another's point of view. People are self-aware when they imagine how others are viewing, evaluating and interpreting their words and actions. Through this imaginative process, people become objects to themselves; they come to recognise that others see them (Blumer, 1969).

Shared symbols are any kind of object to which people assign a name, meaning or value (Blumer, 1969). Objects can be classified as physical (e.g. cars, facial expression or colour), social (a friend, parent, celebrity) or abstract (freedom, empathy). For example, the colour green has come to symbolise go or proceed in driving. Objects can take on different meanings on audience and context. People learn meanings that their culture attaches to objects from observing others. By observing, people learn such things as that a wave of the hand that means goodbye or that one should not text messages during a church service (Blumer, 1969).

A negotiated order emerges when people enter into interaction with others, and what we take for granted is a system of expected behaviours and shared meanings that is already in place to guide the interaction. Although expectations are in place, symbolic interactionists emphasise that established meanings and ways of behaving can be reinforced and affirmed during interaction, but that they can also be ignored, challenged or changed. In most interactions, room for

negotiation exists; that is, the parties involved have the option of negotiating other expectations and meanings. The negotiated order, then, is the sum of existing expectations and newly negotiated ones (Blumer, 1969).

Blumer coined the term “symbolic interactionism” and outlined its basic premises (Mead et al., 2015):

- (a) Humans develop their attitudes towards things according to the meanings that things propose to them.
- (b) These meanings are inferred from the “interaction of one of them from its addressees”.
- (c) These meanings change within an interpretive process (Carter & Fuller, 2015: 1-17)

Symbolic interactionist theory is used in this study to look at the factors outside and within the family structure that perpetuate the phenomenon of street children. The theory looks at how individuals interact with each other on everyday basis. Other than dynamics in the family structure that can contribute to the street children phenomenon, this theory assists in explaining how face to face interactions and interpersonal activities of children with their peers outside their family environment could influence them going to the street. Research shows that one of the reasons why children leave their home and go to the street is because of peers/friends’ influence (Mokomane & Makoae, 2017: 378-387). Through such interactions with friends, children could assign certain meanings of going to the street. When street children encounter their peers, their peers can tell them about the street life, such as receiving money or food from people on the street when they beg. Children could symbolise that as a good thing for going to the street. When children observe their peers and get influenced by them, it can lead to the imitation of their peers by repeating such actions, and joining them in street life too.

According to Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387), pull factors such as money, peer pressure and food, are also linked to the increasing number of street children in South Africa. Furthermore, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2004) stated that adolescents start to depend less on their parents and move towards their peer culture group for guidance and support. Children could assign going to the street to mean being free from their parent’s maltreatment (e.g. typical mistreatment by step-parents), free from their parent’s discipline, free from parent’s strict rules so that they can be free to behave in their inappropriate behaviour. Consequently, children could start gaining

distance from rules set by their parents, which may manifest in the form of such things as changes in attitude, the use of drugs, curfew violations, and gang behavior (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004).

Amongst some of the functions of the family outlined by functionalist theory are: socializing the young, providing care and emotional support, and conferring social status (Allen & Henderson, 2016; Ferrante, 2016). Parents are expected to provide care and emotional support to their children. According to Saelens and Kerr (2008) children depend entirely on their families for care, nurturance and guidance during the course of their childhood. However, the literature on street children states that some children go to the street because of poor parenting styles or lack of parental care and support, manifested by such ills as abuse, alcohol use by parents and lack of financial care (Mokomane & Makoe, 2017 and Nkwe, 2008). Consequently, children could symbolise going to the street as a solution to be free from some of such issues they face at home with their parents. Mokomane and Makoe (2017: 378-387) write that pull factors such as freedom from family or parental control are linked to the increasing number of street children in South Africa. Therefore, failure by parents to fulfil and perform expected functions, may result in children going to the street.

Parents are the first agents of socialization for children, so it is expected that parents should perform functions such as giving children an earliest exposure to rules of life. Parents are also expected to emphasise certain parenting styles towards their children such as setting rules in the family, like shared roles and child discipline. As stated, to children, going to the street could mean freedom from their parents and from different issues in the families. In their study, Idemudia et al. (2013) indicate that, due to enforced rules, child discipline and treatment, some children leave their homes because of parent's treatment and they wanted to be free from their parent's discipline, and free from being told what to do. With expectations in place in the family, parents also expect their children to abide by the family rules they put in place and children to respond positively when disciplining them. Therefore, such expectations in the family are reciprocal and constitute a two-way process between parents and their children.

Thus, this study underlines that parents and children are responsible for maintaining some form of order in the family so that the family structure could function well by adopting certain relational tasks in their family home. It is not only the task of parents to nurture and socialize their children, but it is also about how children respond and react to how they are being socialized. Consequently, all members (parents and children) in the family as an institution play a role in maintaining a well-functioning family.

3.2.3.1. Critique of Symbolic interactionism

The good about Symbolic interactionism is that it focuses on the individuals' acts and what goes on between people rather than categorising them into groups of society. It allows individuals to compare the way they act with different people and it helps in understanding the social construction of the world.

Despite such mentioned advantages of the theory, its drawbacks are that it is not applicable to large-scale social structures (Aksan, et al., 2009). The theory's focus is narrow and centered on small sets of people and the micro-interactions. It therefore overlooks macro-social structures as a result of focusing on micro-level interactions. So as to not put much blame on the big structures of the society, however it is the macro societal factors that influence individuals' interactions. For example, children interact with their peers and end up influencing each other to go to the street, is as a result of poverty and the apartheid processes as macro social factors that influenced such a phenomenon of street children. So, it is a drawback for Symbolic interactionism to perceive any social reality beyond the one that humans create with their interpretations and denies explaining society on a more general level (Aksan, et al., 2009: 902-904). The theory therefore overestimates the power of individuals to create their own realities, ignoring the extent to which humans inhabit a world not of their own making (Goffman, 1974).

Moreover, what is problematic about the theory is that the symbols may be interpreted incorrectly or differently among different groups of people. In this case, street children could misinterpret an act of going to the street as a financial gain, while in actual fact the phenomenon disturbs the order and stability of the society and create societal dysfunctions.

Symbolic interactionism thus contradicts structural functionalist theory, in a sense that structural-functionalist is conservative, and children are known to break the rules: one cannot assert an order for them. It also means that the contest is between the social change that children bring with them and the preserved social order of functionalist theory. In this case, children could break the societal social order and bring the social change of the street children phenomenon caused by their interaction with their peers.

3.2.4. Attachment theory: stepfamily adjustment

Attachment theory is used independently in this study. The theory is the combined work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Bowlby, & Ainsworth, 2013: 759-775). It provides a thorough approach to the development, maintenance and dissolution of attachment relationships. It also gives a unique perspective on the dynamics of developing stepfamilies where past ties are destroyed (biological parents), existing bonds sustained (biological parents and children), and new ties created (remarried partners) (Bowlby, & Ainsworth, 2013: 759-775).

The congruity and quality of these attachment ties show significance in shaping the processing of social experience, emotional regulation and behavior in family relationships, which all have an important bearing on how family members may react to losses common to stepfamily experiences (Bowlby, & Ainsworth, 2013: 759-775). There are numerous difficulties faced in the development of a stepfamily and can be understood as a reaction to attachment insecurity. Both parents and children react to attachment insecurity in an unsurprising way, including anxious and/or avoidant behaviors, which are informed by a persistent fear of or unforeseen loss of an attachment figure. According to Papernow (2018: 25-51), children frequently enter into stepfamilies with a background of loss, such children struggle with losses, loyalties bind, and change. The resulting pressure on children to accept the stepparent as parent can leave them especially alone with the loss of their nonresidential parent and with their loyalty binds, as well as carrying the extra burden of stigma (Papernow, 2018: 25-51).

According to Lewis et al. (2000), a parent's divorce may end up in the decrease of a parent's physical and emotional availability, and this loss occurs in the context of children's perceived loss of the parent's original marriage. These loss experiences turn out to be more complex for families where post-divorce parents engage in heightened conflicts. The unfolding adjustment to change and loss in the family affect children's outcomes associated with behaviours and needs. For teenagers, the experience of attachment insecurity frequently leads to an increased distance from their parents (Maio et al., 2000: 58).

The step-family is one of the most challenging family structures in terms of its dynamics, as one of the rapidly growing family structures. Stepfamily formation comes with many transformations, both for children and parents (such as family transition adjustment and for the development of new life and new relationships). These come with strain and challenges, especially for children as they are the most affected when they go through such family transitions. Papernow (2018: 25-51) writes that, for adults, finding a new partner is a gift. However, for children of all ages, watching Mom or

Dad turn away to a new love can create yet another cascade of losses, on top of the losses of separation or divorce or death.

The literature thus relates that some street children indicate they left home due to the mistreatment by their step-parents. This is evident to what has been stated by Ward and Seager (2010: 85-100) that various children described their family environment as intolerable due to circumstances of domestic violence, abuse and poor family relationships in their home. These include girl-child sexual abuse, normally by stepfathers or by the mother's boyfriend. Boys described unpleasant relationships with their stepparents. In most cases, they described these situations as being fueled by alcohol (Ward & Seager, 2010).

Often times, the introduction of a step-parent is not always welcomed by children, as it can potentially threaten the biological parent and the child's relationship with the latter (Stoll et al., 2006: 177-189). According to attachment theory, both parents and children respond to attachment insecurity in predictable ways including anxious and/or avoidant behaviours, which are informed by a persistent fear of or anticipated loss of an attached figure. Baxter et al., (2004: 447-467) and Cartwright (2008) found that some children reported experiencing a loss of attention or loyalty from their parents as they focused on the new couple relationship. Children see this as disloyal and interpret this to mean that the parent cares more about their new partner than them. According to Papernow (2018: 25-51), adults and children experience stepfamily differently. What is an exciting new life for adults very often creates loss and an overwhelming change for children.

The step-family structure could emerge as a result of the single-parent family structure, which could have come about as a result of the death of one parent or occur as a result of divorce. When a child grows up in a single parent family or raised by a single parent, there is some sort of a relationship or a bond that is formed between the child and their single-parent. Due to attachment insecurities, when the parent decides to enter into a relationship with a new partner, their new partner could appear as a threat to the relationship that a single-parent have with their child or children. Papernow (2018: 25-51) reports that stepfamilies do often create loyalty binds for children. This means that the entrance of a stepparent often creates a loyalty bind for children of all ages: If a child cares about his or her stepmom, it might appear as if the child is disloyal to their biological mother (Papernow, 2013).

Furthermore, in the process of the parent wanting to form a strengthened relationship with their new partner (remarried), the relationship with their child/children that existed before the new partner arrived, could be threatened. As Baxter et al. (2004) and Cartwright (2008) argue, children

could therefore question the loyalty of their parent. Children may feel that their parent is no longer emotionally available for them and that they no longer give them the same attention they gave them before the stepparent arrived to 'interfere' with their relationship with their biological parent. As a result of this, it becomes a challenge for both the single parent and their child/children to adjust to the stepfamily structure, this could therefore affect a child's/children's outcome associated with behaviors and needs (Lewis et al., 2000), and most likely send them to the street.

By many standards, attachment theory is a strong candidate for being considered an outstanding theory in the contemporary society. Even today, Bowlby's views still continue to have a powerful influence on ideas about childcare (Clark, 2010). Attachment theory is considered to still be suitable for carrying out this research. Over the last 20 years, attachment theory has played a major role in the field of, assessment, interventions and psychotherapy, serving as the foundation for a diverse range of perspectives and practices (Salcuni, 2015). It has been generating creative and impactful research for almost half a century and has been consistent to date. Thus, Attachment theory is still exceptional in explaining the dynamics within the family structure and the phenomenon of street children in this study; in this case, the theory explains transition from single-parent family structure to step-family structure particularly well. This was a way of looking at how the formation of a stepfamily could interfere with the attachment relationships of a child and a single-parent from the single-parent family. Salcuni (2015) writes that attachment theory and its practices still stand out for their relevant consequences and effects in explaining different phenomena in different disciplines. Overall, applications of attachment theory have been significant and varied. It is also one of the most widely accepted theories of child development, and it received a lot of attention from researchers all around the world in the past years. Due to its popularity, many people still consider it to be extremely important and useful in understanding people and their behaviour in many contexts (Beckwith, 2018).

3.2.4.1. Critique of Attachment theory

Attachment theory portrays the transition of a child to stepfamily as a bad experience, without taking into consideration that children could also experience such transition positively. The theory gives a sense that, just like other authors that portrays stepfamilies to be dysfunctional, it also does the same as it makes it obvious that the reaction of parents and especially children, is negative towards the formation of a stepfamily. When parents enter into a relationship or a marriage with a new partner, it does not necessarily mean that there will be loss of an attachment

figure. The theory ignores the fact that not all stepfamilies could create negative outcomes for children, but the formation of such a family structure could also come with positive outcomes for the child. This is the case with some street children in this study from stepfamilies who portrayed their stepfamily positively as per the responses.

A stepfamily can therefore contribute to a child's life positively in various ways such as gaining another new parent (step-parent), considering that children frequently enter into stepfamilies with a background of loss, as espoused by Papernow (2018: 25-51). This, therefore, contradicts the view by Lewis et al. (2000) that the unfolding adjustment to change and loss in the family affect children's outcomes associated with behaviours and needs. Also, it does not necessarily mean that the positive relationship between the child and the step-parents equates to children being disloyal to their biological parents as stated by Papernow (2018: 25-51). So, when children develop a good relationship with their step-parents, it is likely for them to experience the stepfamily home environment positively, which will decrease the chances of them going to the street.

Lee (2003) also pointed out that the other limitation to attachment theory is that the mother is viewed as the primary attachment figure of the child, when in fact, a child may have different types of attachment such as a father or sibling. It means the attachment theory affirms the basis made by the feminist theory that women as compared to men are always placed within the institution of family with the role of child nurturing. The attachment theory, therefore, lacks validity, as it does not measure a general attachment style, but instead an attachment style specific to the mother (McLeod, 2008).

2.3. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter discussed the four theories that have been employed for this study, these are structural functionalist theory which has been used as an umbrella theory for Feminist theory (Gender reform feminisms) and Symbolic Interactionist theory, and attachment theory that has been employed independently. These theories were discussed to understand and analyse the phenomenon in place. The subsequent chapter discusses the research methodology for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology followed in this thesis, it entails the whole process of the research endeavor. The chapter outlines the research design, the site of the study, the description of the study areas, the sampling techniques used, the actual sampling procedure, how data was collected and analyzed as well as the ethical considerations of the research.

4.2. STUDY SITE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREAS

The North West Province in South Africa has been selected as the location of the study, considering that few investigations have been done to understand the family structural background of street children around the province. Leeudoringstad and Ventersdorp are two different peri-urban municipalities in the North West province of South Africa. Leeudoringstad is situated under Maquassi Hills municipality while Ventersdorp falls under the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda region. One centre has been selected from each of the two areas, which are: Kgakala drop-in centre from Leeudoringstad and Letsema drop-in centre from Ventersdorp. This means that street children from two centres were interviewed. The province and the areas were chosen as the study site due to the rise of street children in the areas and in the province. Such an escalation of street children in the areas gave rise to the establishment of such centres. These drop-in centres were also chosen because of how they are unique in terms of their aim which is mainly centred around street children as compared to other centres with different vulnerable children as their main focus. Street children are the main target of these centres. Therefore, the location choice in the province relates to the centres being placed there. Below is the description of the study areas.

4.2.1. Ventersdorp

Ventersdorp is a farming town located in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda region of the North West Province in South Africa. It was founded in 1866 as a Dutch Reformed parish on a farm named Roodepoort. The town is named after the owner of the farm, Johannes Venter. Ventersdorp has conveniently located about 100km from the economic hub of Gauteng and is situated in the lush

Vaal River Valley. This town has a total population of approximately 4 000 residents and the majority of them speak Afrikaans. The nearby township, Tshing, has a population of about 15 000 and a diamond mine nearby (Anon, n.d). Its history relates, as do most of such rural towns, to a white colonial town site with the township being occupied by blacks as historically prescribed by apartheid. Such differentiation is changing in the new dispensation in the town, but the African township continues as a historical legacy with almost all of its residents being Africans.

- **JB Marks Local Municipality**

This municipality has been named after John Beaver Marks. John Beaver Marks popularly known as JB Marks was a towering giant of the trade union and liberation movements in South Africa. The JB Marks Local Municipality is situated within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District in the North West Province. It is the largest municipality in the district. It was established by the amalgamation of the Ventersdorp and Tlokwe City Council Local Municipalities in August 2016. The N12 route that connects Johannesburg and Cape Town via the city of Kimberley runs through the municipality. The main railway route from Gauteng to the Northern and Western Cape also runs through one of the municipality's main cities, Potchefstroom.

4.2.2. Leeudoringstad

Leeudoringstad is a small town situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda region of the North West Province of South Africa. It was founded in 1920 on a farm named Rietkuil. The name of the town is derived from a certain type of thorn bush named the Leeudoring (Afrikaans for 'lion thorn'). The area was once full of wildlife and plants, but the practice of hunting led to the disappearance of many of the area's fauna and flora. These animals and plants still live on the name of this town. Leeudoringstad has a total population of about 2 000 inhabitants and the majority of them speak Afrikaans. This town is the proud host of the headquarters of Suidwes Landbou which is one of the largest agricultural companies in the country (Anon, n.d).

- **Maquassi Hills Local Municipality**

The Maquassi Hills Local Municipality is a Category B municipality situated within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District in the North West Province. It is bordered by Tswaing in the north, the Free State Province in the south, the City of Matlosana and the Free State in the east, and Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District in the west. It is one of the three municipalities that make up the district, accounting for a third of its geographical area (Anon, n.d).

4.2.3. Outline of the centres

4.2.3.1. Kgakala drop-in centre

Kgakala drop-in centre has been in operation since 1996. The centre is based at Leeudoringstad, North West, South Africa. The centre does laundry and cooking for vulnerable children (street, abandoned and orphaned children), assists them with their homework, bathes them and counsels them. It is a centre for Orphans, Vulnerable and children living and working on the streets. Fifty (50) children are the beneficiaries of this project at the moment when data was collected, although not all of them can be regarded as children living on the street. Volunteers from the community (such as the centre's caretakers) assist at the centre, for no financial gain. These volunteers prepare meals, wash dishes and the like. The drop-in-centre is managed by such volunteers from the community, who have the interest of the children at heart

- **Aims of the centre**

The centre aims to:

- Provide services to children living and working on the streets, child-headed households as well as orphaned and vulnerable children.
- Provide family reunification and family preservation services.
- Provide food for children.
- Provide life skills programmes for children.

- Update their database of children living and working on the street, child-headed households, and orphaned and vulnerable children.

- **Objectives**

- To make a centre available and accessible to all the communities in the Kgakala area (Leeudoringstad, Kgakala and surrounding rural and farming communities as well as Tswelalang)
- To provide meals to children on a daily basis.
- To coordinate and integrate services with the relevant stakeholders such as social development.
- To provide community awareness in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders.
- To provide counseling to children living and wandering in the streets.
- To assist with personal hygiene.
- To assist with laundry services.
- To do outreach programmes.

4.2.3.2. Letsema drop-in centre

Letsema street children drop-in centre is a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) based in Ventersdorp. The organization was established in 2006 with eight volunteers. Presently it consists of ten members and there is a need for a permanent structure. The escalation of children working and living on the street in the area gave rise to the establishment of the project. The range of socio-economic challenges associated with the targeted children were observed. The challenges included the following: orphans, children that are left unsupervised, abused, neglected, exploited and in some cases, uncontrollable children.

Due to the above-mentioned challenges, children spend most of their time on the streets, begging for money, selling items to earn a living and experimenting with various substances. Some of these street children are orphans and vulnerable because of the HIV-AIDS pandemic, or due to divorce, abuse and emotional distress. The Letsema Project thus saw it necessary to initiate a special programme that directly deals with children living and working on the street, particularly for both

boys and girls under the age of 18.

The organization aims to operate as a drop-in centre where deprived and homeless children at risk receive support services during the day with the following objectives:

- **Objectives of the centre**
 - Provision of cooked meals
 - Assisting with schoolwork
 - Guidance, counselling, and psycho-social support
 - Social skills and life skills
 - Educational programme
 - Recreation and personal hygiene
 - Community services:
 - i. Street outreach
 - ii. Community outreach
 - iii. Home-visits
 - Primary health care in collaboration with the health care sector
 - Promotion of family preservation and reunification
 - Reporting and referrals of children to social workers or social service professionals

With this brief outline of the centres, the section below sums up the roles and responsibilities of the centre managers:

4.2.3.3. Roles and responsibilities of the centre managers

- To supervise and guide all the caregivers.
- To visit each family every week and verify if care workers are doing their job adequately.
- To compile and submit monthly reports to the Department of Social Development (DoSD).
- To ensure that the services provided benefit children living and working on the street and the other vulnerable children.

- To keep confidentiality on the circumstances around families and children who receive the services where necessary.
- To ensure that the centre is managed effectively and efficiently.
- To identify the training needs of the staff and arrange for relevant training.

The above outline of the centres gives some indication of the diverse range of activities of the centres, the support and beneficence functions, as well their link to government. The following section turns to the step followed for the sampling process for this study.

4.3. PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM

Philosophy as an academic discipline has witnessed paradigm shifts such as positivism, interpretivism, post positivism, pragmatism, post modernism and critical realism (Turyahikayo, 2021). This study adopted the Interpretivism paradigm as explained below.

4.3.1. Interpretivism

Interpretivism refers to the approaches which emphasise the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in both social and cultural life (Elster, 2007; Walsham, 1995 as cited in Chowdhury, 2014). The term interpretive research is often used synonymously with qualitative research, but the two concepts are different. Interpretive research is a research paradigm, or set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed (Kuhn, 1970 as cited in Nickerson, 2022). Interpretivism denotes that the methods of research which adopt the position that people's knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors, and so it distinctively rules out the methods of natural science (Eliaeson, 2002; McIntosh, 1997 as cited in Chowdhury, 2014). Nickerson (2022) adds that because interpretivists see social reality as embedded within and impossible to abstract from their social settings, they attempt to make "sense" of reality rather than testing hypotheses. This is in contrast to post positivists, who generally consider their reflections and personal stories of researchers to be unacceptable as research because they are neither scientific and objective (Smith, 1993 as cited in Nickerson, C., 2022). Interpretivists look for meanings and motives behind people's actions like: behaviour and interactions with others in the society and culture (Whitley,

1984 as cited in Chowdhury, 2014).

4.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a framework that includes the methods and procedures to collect, analyse, and interpret data (Bouchrika, 2020).

Creswell et al. (2007) write that there are common types of qualitative research which included narrative research, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology and participatory action research. Case study has been considered for this study as explained below.

4.4.1. Case study design

According to Zainal (2007), case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships.

Zainal (2007) further indicates that Yin (1984) notes three categories of case study, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies. Exploratory case study has been selected for this thesis. According to Zainal (2007) exploratory case studies set to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher. Hasa (2021) adds that exploratory research is a type of research that attempts to explore and investigate a problem that is not clearly defined.

This study selected the two centres in the small areas of the North west province with 15 children and their parents interviewed as subjects of the study with an interest to clearly investigate and explore the street children phenomenon by exploring various dynamics and factors within the family structures influencing the phenomenon. This study was conducted by taking another angle to understand in-depth the underlying problem of street children phenomenon as influenced by such various family structures and dynamics.

4.5. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative research paradigm is used for this study. Silverman (2006) notes that the most important reason for doing qualitative research rather than using the quantitative approach, is that it relates to the nature of the research problem.

The qualitative method is of specific significance to the study of social relations (Flick, 2002). A qualitative method is apt for the current study since it is a methodology governed by an idea of connectedness: the aim of this study is to produce an understanding of the topic directly related to other parts of social life. A qualitative approach is therefore holistic. The research strategies employed generally create words, meanings, procedures and developments, instead of simply gathering numbers and percentages, as it is done in the quantitative data gathering (Patton & Cochran, 2002).

The qualitative research method has been selected for this study because the researcher is primarily concerned with exploring the dynamics within family structures that send children to the street. A slight quantitative element has also been incorporated mainly in analyzing the demographic characteristics of the participants in percentages using pie charts. The qualitative method helps in understanding street children's experiences and their parents' views in a humanistic manner. Rather than relying on a set of finite questions to elicit categorized, forced-choice responses with little room for open-ended replies to questions as quantitative research does, for this study, the researcher relies on the participants to offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their experiences. This humanistic, interpretive approach is also called 'thick descriptive' because of the richness it offers of the view of social life, and the detail that it provides about the discussion (Jackson et al., 2007: 21-28).

Jackson et al. (2007: 21-28) further add that, by design, the qualitative researcher gathers much more information about a phenomenon. While they do cite a major drawback, that the results are not generalizable to a wider population because very few participants participate in such studies, qualitative studies offer so much depth of detail. As this study covers a small sample, it means the researcher does not want to generalize but would like to get detailed information on each case of the research sample.

4.6. ENTRY AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

4.6.1. Gaining entry

The researcher wrote letters to the drop-in centre managers to request entry to conduct research at the centres with the street children and their parents. The letters were e-mailed to the centre managers, accompanied by the proof of the researcher's PhD registration. The researcher also called the centre managers as a follow-up to the emails to explain the intention of the study and to also clarify anything in the letters that they needed clarity on. After the centre managers perused the letters, the researcher called them again after some time to remind them, and only after few weeks, they eventually agreed to the request with a letter indicating that they were granting the researcher entry to conduct the study at the centres (see the appendices 3 and 4).

4.6.2. The choice of children from the centres

The researcher opted to include only street children in the centres, and did not interview children directly from the street due to the safety concerns of the researcher, considering that she is a woman. Children situated in the streets are sometimes under the influence of drugs, and involved in glue sniffing and they might be problematic or unruly. By contrast, children from the centres may have a greater sense of responsibility and may be more cooperative. The other reason why the researcher decided to include children in the centres is because there are reunification programmes rendered by such centres in respect of street children with their family households. Therefore, the researcher thought it would be easy to study such children in the centres so as to have access to their families via the centres, by liaising with the centre managers and then to talk to the children's parents to gain the perspectives of the parents too.

Interviewing children in the centres that are under the control of the centre caretakers and managers enabled the researcher to follow the right procedure by asking permission from the centre managers as gate keepers, to interview the children, and also be directed to the families or homes of the children to also interview their parents. By definition, gatekeepers are essential mediators for accessing study settings and participants within the social research. They may be persons within organizations who have the power to grant or withhold access to people or situations during research into organisations (Andoh-Arthur, 2020).

4.6.3. Selection process

Centre managers granted the researcher entry to the centres. The selection of the participants was made based on the children who are receiving services from the centres, between the ages of fifteen (15)- eighteen (18). The selection of the child automatically meant that the parent of that child was also part of the sample. The researcher explained to the centre managers the children who were eligible to participate in the study by outlining the sample criteria to the centre managers. The researcher explained to the centre managers that one of the criteria of the eligible street child to participate in the study were those between the ages of fifteen (15) to eighteen (18). Then the centre managers assisted in selecting children who met that criteria, to participate in the study. The researcher also asked assistance from centre managers or caretakers to locate the children's parents. It was important for the researcher to contact the families of children to also hear what the parents feel, and to get a sense of their perspective about their children who spend time on the street.

4.6.4. Pre-interview process

The researcher went to the centres a day before the scheduled interviews to ask the centre managers more about the children, such as the language they speak and other important traits for children that the researcher wanted to know about, that were of importance to the study. This was done so that the researcher could be aware of what to expect.

Before the actual day of the participants to sign the consent forms, the researcher went to the centres to inform the centre managers that the following day she will come for participants to sign the consent forms. The researcher explained to the centre managers that the parents of the children should be the ones to first sign the consent forms to participate in the study and then to also sign the parental permission forms giving assent that their children can also participate in the study.

Children were informed by the centre managers a day before that the researcher was going to come to the centre for the signatures. The centre managers then wrote letters to the parents of the children to inform the parents that the researcher and the caretakers would come to their homes the following day to request them to sign the consent forms. Letters are used by centre

managers to communicate with the parents of the children: for example, to invite them for meetings or for discussions with them about their children. The following day the centre managers assigned the caretakers to accompany the researcher to the families of the children. Upon arrival at the families of the children, the caretakers were the ones to first approach the parents of the children and briefly explain in detail what was in the letters about the reasons for the researcher's visit. It was up to the parents to agree or disagree after the caretakers explained to them the purpose of the visit by the researcher. After they communicated their agreement to the caretakers, the researcher then proceeded and explained to them the purpose of the study and also explained in detail the information in the consent form and further explain that their children would also take part in the study. Fortunately, all the parents agreed to participate in the study and give consent for their children to also participate. However, consent to participate in the study was not given at the same time as some parents were not available at their homes the first day of visit. The researcher had to set time and day aside to go back again with the caretakers to the homes of the parents who were not available on the initial day.

Interviews with children and parents took place for three days for each of the centres, after ensuring to give the centre managers a number of reminders that the interviews were going to take place so that they would be adequately prepared. Therefore, the researcher and her assistant were in the field for a week of data collection. Before the interviews, the researcher briefed her assistant and took him through what is expected of him during the data collection. The function of the assistant was to assist with notetaking.

During the interviews, the researcher requested the centre managers that she be allowed to conduct interviews with the children in a separate room in the centres, where children would come into the room one at a time to be interviewed individually for reasons of privacy. The researcher also requested the centre managers that she be allowed to conduct interviews (which were consensual) with each of the selected parents of the children in their homes and ask for caretakers to accompany her to the homes of the parents as stated earlier. The reason for requesting caretakers to accompany the researcher was so that the parents could see the familiar faces of the caretakers at their homes. The researcher saw this as breaking the ice with the parents and that it would have a calming effect, which would not have been present if the researcher had gone alone with her assistant only. In the case where it was not going to be possible to interview parents at their homes, the researcher made arrangements with the centre managers, that the centres be used for these interviews. Fortunately, all the parents of the children agreed to be interviewed at their homes. Parental participation gave crucial information on the family dynamics that are at

play in terms of the reasons for the child to leave their homes.

4.7. SAMPLING

Purposive sampling is an intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014).

This study used a non-probability purposive sampling due to the sample size of this study. Data was collected from street children who are the beneficiaries of the two drop-in centres in Leeudoringstad and Ventersdorp in the North West province. The researcher initially interviewed nine (9) children with their parents, which made it a total of eighteen (18) participants. However, the researcher then later realized that the sample size was too small. As a supplement to the already interviewed eighteen (18) participants, the researcher then went back to the field to interview more parents and children to add to the sample size and get more data, which eventually increased the total sample from eighteen (18) to thirty (30) children and parent's participants. This means that fifteen (15) children from the ages of fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) years were sampled from each of the two selected drop-in centres with the assistance from the centre managers. The parent/s or guardian/s of each of the fifteen (15) children were also interviewed to also hear their views as to why their children go to the street, unlike only understanding children's perspective. Thus, a total of thirty (30) (children and parents) participants were interviewed in this study.

The researcher decided to interview children between the ages of fifteen (15)- eighteen (18), in light of the fact that such children are of a capable age, and the interviews lie within their intellectual, social and emotional development. It is expected that those children would be able to speak for themselves, answer questions and express themselves on their own as they are in the stage of transitioning to youth. That is why the researcher opted to use the interview method for children of this age group, in order for them to be able to speak for themselves to understand their views on the topic from their perspective in a verbal and interactive form.

The study intended to interview children from more than one racial group. However, all the children that participated in this study were from the black population. The study also intended to have a balance of both male and female street children participants, however, only three female street children took part in the study and the rest of the other street children interviewed were males.

4.7.1. Counselling for the participants

The researcher took into consideration that interviews with children and parents could evoke some personal embarrassment or even emotional stress about their circumstances. Therefore, the researcher asked for the intervention and assistance of the centre managers, caretakers and/or social workers to be on standby during the interviews to assist in such situations. This was also to consider that such individuals, especially the social workers are professionals and well-trained to communicate with and be able to relate to the children and parents about their situation. The children were interviewed at their respective centres where the social worker was available.

Counselling is one of the services that is provided by the centres to the children by social workers. Therefore, in situations where the interview questions were to evoke some emotional trauma during or after the interviews with the participants, one social worker in each centre was available to assist with providing counselling for the participants. The researcher explained to the centre managers and social workers the possible harm that the questions could evoke. The social workers were requested to also provide a brief pre-counselling session to the participants as a way of preparing them mentally for the interviews, so that the participants could be calm and relaxed, to avoid nervousness and emotional trauma. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, the researcher ensured to tread carefully when conducting the interviews, and ensured the maximum safety of the participants being interviewed. Fortunately, no participant experienced emotional distress during the interviews.

4.8. DATA COLLECTION

4.8.1. In-depth interview

Face-to-face semi-structured open-ended interview questions were used for child and parent participants. The instrument was the same for all the centres. Scribano and Zacarias (2007) indicate that a semi-structured interview is based on a flexible topic guide that provides a loose structure of open-ended questions to explore experiences and attitudes. Generally, semi- or unstructured, open-ended interviewing is preferred to allow for more flexibility and responsiveness to emerging themes for both the interviewer and participants (Jackson et al., 2007: 21-28). This face-to-face method of data collection is useful since it enables participants to express themselves freely about their experiences. This also allows the researcher to study their attitudes through their

body language. The method has the advantage of great flexibility, as the researcher is able to explore new lines of inquiry and produce richer data. It also assists the researcher to develop a rapport with the informants. Marshall (2016) adds that face-to-face interviews enable the researcher a chance to interpret the body language and facial expressions of the participants during the interview. The reason for using semi-structured interview questions as applied to all the participants, was to allow the researcher, during the interviews, to be able to ask for more elaborative responses, particularly for those that required clarity and when the responses are inadequate. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to express themselves freely, and it also assisted the researcher to acquire more detailed information from the participants about the street child phenomenon.

For obvious reasons, street children have various personal motives and issues as to why they left their homes and went to the street, and the researcher believes that some of the reasons might be confidential or sensitive for both children and parents. Additionally, as for McAlpine et al. (2010: 26-32), the experience of living on the street is individual and contextual. This is why the study did not use focus group interviews, but an in-depth interview method where each one of the children and parents were interviewed individually. Lopez and Whitehead (2013: 123-40) argue that focus group interviews might fail to uncover deep issues as much as it is the case with individual interviews. The former are not as intimate or private as in-depth interviews, and they do not usually reveal sensitive or potentially embarrassing information. Interview guides were provided for open-ended questions to be asked during interviews. During the interviews, the researcher was able to probe for more elaborative responses, especially where some of the participants' answers needed clarity or where participants gave incomplete or insufficient responses. Moreover, where there seemed to be some form of latent information that was emerging, the researcher probed further in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the family situation and its immediate environment.

4.8.2. Interviews language and transcription

In developing the interview schedule, the research questions were derived from the research objectives of this study, thus to ensure that everything in the study would be fundamentally aligned.

The prepared semi-structured interview had questions, which were read out to the participants, with follow-up questions asked during the interviews. The interview questions were in English, however, during the interviews, the interviewer allowed the participants to express themselves in

their own language and ensured to conduct the interviews with the participants in the language they were most familiar with. The language that the participants were familiar with was Setswana. This is because the study is conducted in the North-West Province, which is mainly dominated by Setswana-speaking people. Therefore, the researcher used Setswana for the interviews considering that she is also a native speaker of the language herself and quite fluent in it. The participants' responses in Setswana were then translated and transcribed into English by the researcher from the recordings and notes taken during the interviews.

The researcher's assistant noted the responses of the participants in a notebook, and there was also an audio recording of such interviews (for which permission was sought from each participant). The role of the research assistant was to take notes during the interviews, as the researcher wanted to pay attention and focus on interacting with the participants. The assistant also assisted with administration during data collection, such as sorting out necessary documents.

4.9. DATA ANALYSIS

This study used thematic analysis for analyzing the data. Braun and Clarke (2012) explain the thematic analysis as a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. Through focusing on meaning across a dataset, thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. This method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about, and of making sense of those commonalities.

Data is thus presented and analysed in the form of themes and sub themes in chapter five and six of this study. The presentation and analysis of findings were done based on various sections and themes informed by the participants' responses such as their demographic characteristics. Quotes were chosen to back up the analysis and discussion.

The researcher listened to the participants' responses recorded during the interviews and read the notes taken and transcribed them in English. The transcripts that were carefully read were then coded manually. The researcher then familiarized herself with the data, then grouped or categorized the codes into themes in accordance to the objectives of the study, particularly as regards family dynamics. Themes were reviewed and revised. Main themes were then identified, as well as relevant sub-themes under each main theme. Themes and sub-themes were then

outlined to be presented for analysis. Writing of the final narration were done in accordance or as relates to or with guidance from the literature review and the theoretical framework of this study.

4.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.10.1. Ethics clearance

For the purpose of the study's ethical integrity, the researcher submitted her proposal to the NWU ethics committee. After the proposal was approved and ethical clearance granted by the NWU ethics committee, the researcher wrote a letter requesting permission from the centre managers, to conduct the study with the street children in the centres and to be directed to the relevant families of the children to interview their parents.

4.10.2. Informed consent

Informed consent, in the context of research, is described as a 'voluntary choice based on sufficient information and adequate understanding of both the proposed research and the implications of participating in it'. It is often cited as the 'cornerstone of research ethics', and the act of obtaining informed consent is seen as fundamental in satisfying ethical research principles of respect, beneficence and justice (Xu, 2020).

Some of the parents and children were not literate enough or lacked formal education. Though the informed consent forms were in the English language, the researcher thus considered that it would be difficult for some to understand the consent forms. Therefore, the researcher took care to explain the consent forms to the participants in the language they are most familiar with. The consent forms were also described and explained to the participants in detail so that they could understand them.

Before data collection, the researcher, having completed the MacQuarrie online ethics training module, first went to the field so that the participants could sign the consent forms for ethics application. The parents first provided permission by signing the informed consent forms, then the children provided assent by also signing these forms. The signing of the forms was voluntary, and only once the form was signed, a child or parent was considered a participant. Failing to sign a

consent form meant the parent or child was not included in the study.

4.10.3. Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Coffelt (2017), confidentiality and anonymity are ethical practices designed to protect the privacy of human subjects while collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. Confidentiality refers to separating or modifying any personal, identifying information provided by participants from the data.

The researcher made sure not to force the participants to talk about or answer any question such as their life circumstances if they were uncomfortable with any of such questions. It was also ensured to the participants that the information and details that they provided would be kept confidential, and ensured and guaranteed that no harm was going to be caused to them in the process of the research.

For anonymity, the researcher initially assigned the following pseudonyms to the children and parents: “child 1 - parent to child 1” this was for the purpose of organizing the data. Only these pseudonyms were used in the research process to maintain confidentiality for participants. This involves not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual.

With the participants' consent that their responses were recorded, they were assured that whatever information they provided in the recording would be confidential and kept safely in a locked computer. It was made clear to them that the information they provided in the recording was entirely for the purpose of this research and not for any other purposes.

Since the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act 4 of 2013 is in force in South Africa, it was crucial to ensure that all the personal information and identities of participants is kept confidential in the thesis. The researcher also made sure of the safe-keeping of the information provided by the participants and that data storage on the researcher's computer was locked with a password that only the researcher has access to, so as to protect all personal and sensitive information. The researcher ensured that the data collected was safe and secure and that the participants were also protected by making sure that the information they provided was protected and secured and not leaked for any purpose other than this research. The continuing validity and scientific merit of the research study was ensured by the researcher.

The researcher also complied with the ethical rules as there was a confidentiality agreement between the researcher and the assistant. It meant that both the researcher and the assistant signed a declaration of confidentiality of information they have been exposed to so that maximum confidentiality for participants could be adhered to. During the ethics application by the researcher, a Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the assistant was also requested, which the researcher attached with the documents that accompanied the ethics application. Once the assistant finished assisting with the administration of the data, he was not involved in any way with the data.

4.10.4. Safety and COVID-19 compliance

As data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, both the researcher and her assistant ensured that they followed the right COVID-19 precautions and safety measures when approaching the centres and the families of the children: these included putting on a mask and sanitizing, and keeping a safe distance, to ensure the safety of everyone.

4.10.5. Researcher' s position

The researcher tended to be more cognizant of her personal rather than impersonal role in the research. This recognition of subjectivity also leads to enhanced safeguards for trustworthiness such as member-checking. By doing this, the researcher notes that her study of others' experiences borders the investigator's experience as well, and this has implications for social scientific interpretation of the data collected.

4.10.6. Trustworthiness and Credibility

Korstjens and Moser (2018) write that there are different definitions and criteria of trustworthiness, however, the best-known criteria are those defined by Lincoln and Guba. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to parallel the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability (Nowell et al., 2017).

Credibility as one criteria of trustworthiness is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Credibility establishes whether the research findings represent plausible

information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, the research methodology and the data analysis methods that have been disclosed in this study have been followed by the researcher extensively and accurately. The data of this study has been analysed carefully and accurately in precise, consistent and exhaustive manner. One way of ensuring that the findings are accurately interpreted and analysed was to carefully listen to the information provided by the participants via the recording that was taken during the interviews through the participants' consent. Such findings were carefully interpreted and thematically analysed to ensure reliability of the outcomes of the study. The research methodology and especially the data analysis followed by this study has been disclosed and explained in-depth for the purpose of ensuring that the process followed is credible.

4.10.7. Verbatim translation

The researcher listened to the recording and transcribed the data word for word or verbatim in an original source language including pauses, emotional expressions, and annotations in the same language. Each transcript was then translated into English and the researcher ensured that the translation better reflected the intended meaning.

Transcripts were checked several times against the translated interpretations during analysis and synthesis to add more credibility to the findings of this study's findings as recommended by (Lyons and Coyle, 2007 as cited in Regmi, 2010)

4.11. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has discussed the methodological approach for this thesis. The following aspects of the methodology have been outlined in detail: research design, the site of the study, the description of the study areas, research design, qualitative method, sampling procedure, method of data collection and analysis as well as the ethical considerations of the research. The below chapter presents and analyse the demographic characteristics of the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

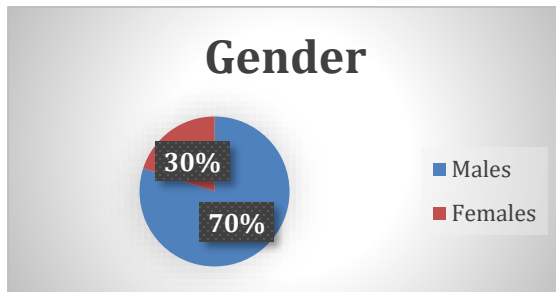
This chapter intends to present and analyse the demographic characteristics of this study. The data analysed in this chapter is informed by the theoretical framework and the literature review of this thesis. Street children's views of being on the street were corroborated by their parents' perspectives. To further confirm such views, the researcher also spoke to the centre managers to listen to their views about the street children that they admit to their centres. This chapter also examines whether the main aim of this study was accomplished which is to explore the impact of the family structure and its influence on the street children phenomenon. The responses provided by the participants about the impact of family structure and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon are discussed.

5.2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The following relates to the demographic characteristics of the participants interviewed, street children receiving services from Kgakala and Letsema drop-in centres from Leeudoringstad and Ventersdorp together with their parents. These demographic characteristics include gender, age group, racial group, level of education, level of income and family structures. These demographic characteristics are presented in a quantified manner, the presentation of these demographic traits is essential for this study because such demographic characteristics play a role or have an influence on the street children phenomenon.

5.2.1. Gender of street children and parents

Figure 4. Gender of street children



Gender provides a lens through which we can begin to more clearly understand street children's lives (Van Blerk, 2006: 47-74). Gender (and a number of other variables such as age) has rarely been considered for understanding street children's experiences, yet deserves attention given its importance in social organisation. Van Blerk (2006: 47-74) believes that when researchers refer to 'street children' without gender differences, important distinctions between boys and girls get blurred.

Figure 4 indicates that seventy percent (70%) of the total sample of street children were males, while thirty percent (30%) of the total sample were females. These results reflect that the number of male street children was higher than that of female street children. This is in line with the literature that South African street children are normally males, between 10 and 17 years of age (Idemudia et al., 2013; Ward 2007; Ward & Seager 2010). Ibrahim (2020) also found that the majority of street children in South Africa are boys. This study intended to have a balance of both male and female street children participants, however, it was difficult to reach female street children participants. Only three female street children took part in the study and the rest of the other street children interviewed were males. It seems like street children appears to be a gendered phenomenon in that most street children are male. This may be so due to the fact that South Africa has inherited a patriarchal family system, which assumes that males are breadwinners, outgoing, being made to explore the world among other notions of manhood.

- **Patriarchal system and Durkheim on morality**

A low number of female street children in this study relates to the standards hold by the patriarchal

society and the notion of manhood to mean that females remain locked to being responsible female members of households whilst males have the freedom to step out of the family situations. Such circumstances bring in the relevance of feminist theory, which will be explored hereunder. Besides the patriarchal control that rules over females, it could also mean that girls make their own individual moral choices that they would not want to wander the street. According to Saha (2001: 21-31), Durkheim regarded morality as that set of duties and obligations which influenced the behaviour of individuals. However, it is not 'determined' behaviour, because Durkheim argued that while moral behaviour is in some respects 'coerced', it is nonetheless behaviours based on the 'desirability' of the object of that behaviour" (Saha, 2001: 21-31). The behaviour of boys to go to the street could relate to them seeking economic opportunities for themselves, especially those that are from working-class families, considering that most street children in this study are from poor families. Therefore, the identity sought may be economic. The notion of patriarchy comes back into play as a macro issue, to mean that as the families of those male street children are struggling financially, it could mean that automatically it is the responsibilities of these boys to go to the street to seek an economic identity to provide for their families as a result. This is justified by the responses of the children, as some male street children stated that they went to the street to extend their labour (though less productive or informal) in some way, in exchange for money to provide for their families. Such findings will be explored further hereunder.

5.2.1.1. The relationship between gender of street children and the stepfamily structure

- **Conflict between parents and children**

There is a connection between the gender of street children and their reasons to be out on the street in relation to the family structures that they come from, such as a stepfamily structure in this case. Examples of such a connection would be: a female street child who is from a stepfamily and not getting along with her step-dad, and a male street child who is from a stepfamily and not getting along with his step-mom. Street children from stepfamilies mainly described unpleasant relationships with their step-parents. Children indicated that they do not get along with their step-parents and that their step-parents mistreat them as presented below.

A fifteen-year-old female street child from a stepfamily stated:

The reason why I am on the street is because I don't like living with my step-dad. He is not

treating me well but he is treating his biological daughter well.

Likewise, A 16-year-old male street child from a stepfamily explained that:

The reason why I am on the street is because I feel like my step-mom does not love me, because when I am home, she makes me work more than my step-sister (the step-mother's biological daughter), my half-brother is still young. I am always the one washing the dishes and cleaning but my step-sister is not doing anything.

Another sixteen-year-old male street child from a stepfamily stated that:

I am on the street because my stepmother is mistreating me. When my dad goes to work, she would beat me, she does have her own child, but she is treating her child well. We are not really getting along with my stepmother.

Similarly, an eighteen-year-old male street child from a stepfamily said:

I am on the street because things are not fine at home between me and my family. I am not happy at all, I really miss my late dad, I wish he was alive because if he was still alive, my stepfather would not have come to our lives. My mother and step-father only love my half-sister, but they do not love me, they do not treat us the same. I do not feel loved because my biological dad is no more. Sometimes they would only buy clothes for my half-sister and don't buy me.

The above response provided by the child also corroborate what the mother (49 years) said:

The reason why my son goes to the street is because he doesn't like his step-father. When his biological father was alive he was not acting and behaving this way. He was a child who listens when me and his late dad talk to him. He was never on the street and he was schooling. Thing changed after his father passed on. I did not even move on with his step-father immediately after his dad passed on, I waited for some time. His biological dad passed on in 2015, in 2017 that is when I met his step-father and then we moved in together in 2019. So, this child is just acting weird and misbehaving. He is going to the street because he is saying he doesn't like his step-dad and insisting that his step-dad should move out of the house. He is disrespecting his step-dad, when his step-dad reprimands him, he would say he is not his biological father and so he doesn't listen to him. His step-dad is really trying to be nice to him, but my son doesn't want things to be fine between him and his step-dad. Me and his step-dad have a daughter together,

everything that we do for our daughter, we also do for my step-son, we treat them the same.

The above quotes reflect various notions that can be explored in the context of the family structure that could be enumerated and described as follows:

- i) Lack of love and care within such family forms and children not feeling at home and in charge of their destiny.
- ii) Being encapsulated by a dysfunctional stepfamily system that creates unequal chores between members, being unequally treated with unequal material things given to children in the family.
- iii) Children are faced with the violence of step-parents, that creates a push to the street

- **Attachment in the family in relation to gender**

Based on the preceding findings, it seems like step-children are double neglected if they have parents biased against them. These findings are well explained by the Attachment theory adopted in this study. According to Stephens (2009), studies began to focus on the effect of the child's attachment to both the father and the mother. To Jelić and Kamenov (2015: 155-172), it is important to pay attention to age and gender differences in the effects of parental divorce and malfunctioning parental relationship on children's attachment to family members and to romantic partners. Few researchers have speculated that girls tend to have close bonds to their divorced moms and that these bonds are disturbed when a step-father comes (Bray, 1988; Hetherington, 1987). According Brand *et al.* (1988), studies discovered that girls adapt negatively when their moms and stepfathers reported greater cohesion and bonding in their marriage. On the other hand, they adapt better when there is less cohesion in the marriage. Though the literature mainly portrays girls as finding it difficult to adapt to stepfamily structure, however, as per the above presented responses, the findings of this study do show that this is not unique to girls: boys also find it difficult to adapt to the step-family structure: such as, a sixteen-year-old male street child from a step-family who indicated that he is not getting along with his step-mom and that's why he went to the street. Another sixteen-year-old male street child from a step-family said the reason he is on the street is that he feels like his step-mom does not love him.

These findings correlate with Jelić and Kamenov (2015: 155-172) assertion that there are certain

gender disparities in parental divorce reaction. Specifically, boys, seem to have an especially hard time dealing with divorce, making them behave in a certain way (Jelić & Kamenov, 2015: 155-172). Nevertheless, Bray (1988) and Hetherington (1987) assert that research undertaken mostly with younger children have discovered that girls had a more tough time adapting to the arrival of a step-father than boys adapting to a step-mother. Despite the fact that all the reviewed researchers discovered that there are gender differences in the way children react to their parents' divorce, scholars frequently emphasize that the stress experienced by both sexes is equal, even if it manifests itself in different ways (Jelić & Kamenov, 2015: 155-172).

5.2.1.2. The relationship between gender of street children and the single parent family structure

The connection between the gender of street children and their reasons to be on the street in relation to the single-parent family structure that they come from exists from an economic point of view. Single-parent mothers may find it difficult to run a household while financially challenged especially when their children are boys. This is supported by Webber (2000) who explains that boys are known to have good appetites, yet, in times of drought, suffering and unemployment, it is especially difficult for a single parent to provide for the basic needs of their children. Sorre (2009) goes deeper when he observed that many boys of single parents turn to a life on the street when their mothers decide to marry, and the new husband or father doesn't want to take them in, as the boys may demand land as heirs in patriarchal societies. Furthermore, Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) gave a general overview of the street children phenomenon and explained that a majority of street children are males aged between 6 and 15 years, who are mostly illiterate, of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds and have migrated to the urban centres. Most come from single-parent, large families and chose street life mainly due to socio-economic factors.

5.2.1.3. The relationship between gender of street children, parents' parenting styles and societal gender norms

There is also a connection between the gender of the children and the parenting styles of parents, which could be a contributing factor for a high number of boys landing up on the street, as compared to girls. This is supported by Renk et al. (2005: 139-149) that parents react differently

to their children, based on the children's gender. The other reason for a high number of boys from single-parent families to be on the street could be because of the 'opposite-sex parent-child relationship': this is to do with the challenges faced by single parents raising their children of the opposite sex. Street children who are from single-parent families form a high number or percentage in this study (40%). Parents who are of the opposite gender to their children, particularly mothers parenting their sons, could find this a challenge, especially in terms of adopting a more strict and harsh discipline for boys. As stated in the gender reform feminism theory, single mothers could find it difficult to emphasize strict parenting towards their boy children, without the help of an absent father. Kilbourne (2004) adds that children need a father to identify with, however, female single parents often do not realize how important it is for their sons to have such a father figure. Consequently, it is likely for boys from female single-parent families to go to the street if they do not listen to their single mothers when they discipline them.

Cultural norms of gender that exist in the society also influence the parenting styles. Aptekar and Ciano-Federoff (2007) revealed that in Kenya, male street children outnumber the females, because most boys are taught by their mothers to substitute the family income by being independent at a young age, while the girls stay and tend the home. For example, an eighteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family (female headed) indicated:

I am on the street because I want to try and get money so that I can help at home. I sell two litre empty bottles.

Another 18-year-old male street child from a single parent family uttered:

So, I am on the street to help people with their groceries or luggage to take to their cars or taxis so that I can get money in return to take care of my mother and my sister.

The above quotes also reflect the symbolic identity that children have to fulfil that which is not fulfilled due to lack of the father figure in the family, as a result of death for example. This means that the missing symbol of the father's authority may lead a child to want to fill that gap with his own symbolic power as a 'man-child' and provide for the family as it is the case with the above street children. The identity sought may not only be symbolic but economic as reflected in the discussion below.

- **Marx on work and money as a productive affirmation**

Based on the above responses, as asserted earlier, the children's (especially boys) behaviour of going to the street could mean, in their benefit conditions they seek an economic identity, seeing that the male street children from the above responses are from working-class single-parent families with poor economic conditions. Therefore, the identity sought appears to be economic, to venture outside of their family's financial challenging situation and go 'hustle' on the street by extending their 'informal labour', in exchange for money. Both children from the above responses are males, and this notion emphasised what has been indicated earlier that the street children phenomenon seems to be a gendered phenomenon with many boys (70%) in this study being on the street as compared to girls (30%).

Furthermore, "in his published text Notes on James Mill's Elements of Political Economy, Marx differentiates between four different forms of 'affirmation', he wrote about the affirmation of the human needs of others, which relates to the affirmation of the other or others, specifically to the affirmation of their human needs" (Christ, 2015: 558). Under human production conditions, individuals no longer produce (objectify) so as to satisfy their own needs by selling their labour or the products of their labour on the market. Through the production of goods, which satisfy the assumed or articulated needs of an individual or group of individuals, the needs of those other than the producer are affirmed. The incentive for the production of goods is no longer self-interest and the 'having', but directly satisfying the human needs of others (Christ, 2015). In this case, when street children are on the street to assist people in exchange for money, they do not only do so for the purpose of satisfying their own needs but also the needs of their family members, as per the above children who indicated that with the money that they get from the street, they do take care of their family members. In their responses, children do not just state that they use the money for their own individual needs, but they also consider the needs of their family members. One can therefore argue that in a sense, these street children are battling against their own alienation, economically and in the Marxist sense, but also of their own families' economic alienation as they become estranged from their own means of reproduction. This may be an important point of analysis as there are no many studies on such street children in terms of their productive status and how they attempt to deal with being hemmed into a corner. This is due to the structural conditions of the economy that is slanted to function simply to reproduce itself as a capitalist economy with little consideration in terms of the human and humanitarian crises that sits at the doorstep of one of most developed countries in Africa, despite all the social responsibility rhetoric of both the government and private sector on the matter.

Van Blerk (2006: 47-74) states that the street is often seen as a male space, the street is also viewed as doubly wrong for girls because they challenge existing norms and values that the domestic sphere is the correct place for them, thus experiencing the street differently from boys. Gender stereotyping affected this greatly as girls were required to engage in housework activities that kept them closer to home. According to Aptekar and Ciano-Federoff (2007), the presence of girls on the street is interpreted as a breakdown in the family structure, whilst the presence of boys on the street is ascribed to generating income for the family. Females are more controlled by their families, because of their relevance at home. Also, they are more likely to be abused on the streets than boys (Ibrahim, 2020). Hills et al. (2016) also add that most of South Africa's street children are black and male, with the gender disparity attributed to the widespread practice of girl children being tasked with home responsibilities such as household chores.

Moreover, Renk et al. (2005: 139-149) write that conflicts between children and their parents over different issues may vary, based on children's gender and age. For example, parents keep a closer eye on their daughters' whereabouts than they do on their sons. Judging from their behaviour, boys appear to have more internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems than girls (Renk et., 2005: 139-149). Additionally, Veale and Doná (2003) state that the majority of street children are actually boys. They further state that it is considered inappropriate for girls to walk alone on the streets in Sudan, where almost all street children are boys.

Van Blerk (2006: 47-74) warns in this regard, that it is important not to draw attention to the significance of age and gender for street children's lives only to universalise the experiences of young children or girls, but to recognise that there are differences within and between countries. For example, in Nigeria, the street is seen as a place for girls to meet a future husband, whereas in other countries like South Africa, girls on the streets are often separated out because of their sexuality and sometimes viewed as prostitutes. This discussion illustrates that children's everyday geographies are varied based on a range of variables, of which age and gender are particularly influential (Van Blerk, 2006: 47-74).

Van Blerk (2006: 47-74) further demonstrates the importance of considering variables such as gender and age in the analysis of street children's socio-spatial experiences. He then concludes by arguing for policies to be sensitive to the diversity that characterises street children's lives and calls for a more nuanced approach where policies are designed to accommodate street children's age and gender differences, and their individual needs, interests and abilities. The nature of this process varies both within and between cultures, as the expectations regarding how children (of different ages and gender) should behave differs. The preceding discussion therefore indicates

that the street children phenomenon may have an underlying gendered basis, both for street children and their parents.

Figure 5. Gender of parents interviewed

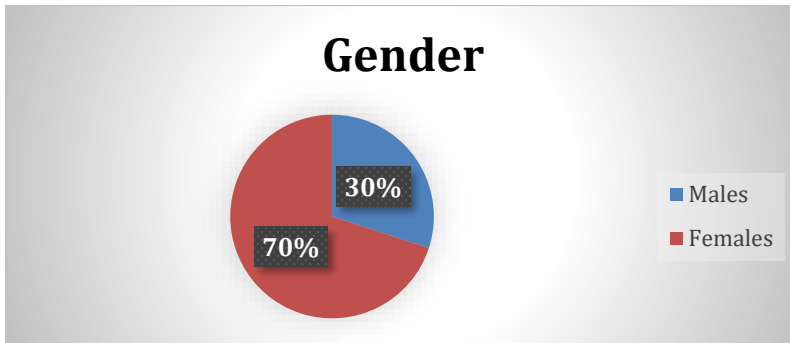


Figure 5 indicates that thirty percent (30%) of the total sample of parents are male parents, while seventy percent (70%) are female parents. There are thus two gendered realities of the sample for this study; of street children being predominantly boys and parents being predominantly women. A further gender reality is that single parent families are predominantly female headed.

5.2.1.4. The economic relationship between street children phenomenon and gender of parents in single parent family structure

There is a connection between the gender of the parents and the reasons for their children to be on the street in relation to their family structure formation, especially those street children from single parent family structures.

- **Gender inequality (Feminism and patriarchy)**

The majority of street children's parents in this study are females, some of them being single mothers from single parent families. This is supported by Ferrante (2016) who points out that the majority of South African single parent families are female headed, and they live below the poverty line. From an economic point of view, it has been presented in the literature that in single-parent families there is lack of parental financial support and provision for children, especially in the female-headed single parent families. The findings of this study have revealed that women in

single-parent families are seen to be economically challenged and disadvantaged. For example, a forty-one (41) year old unemployed single parent female who is a mother to an eighteen-year-old male street child said:

*I am a single mother taking care of three children. I think the reason why they go to the street is because I don't have an income, there is no man in the house, (repeating twice), I don't have a man in the house (*gagona monna montlung).*

Another 45-year-old unemployed female single parent who is a mother to an 18-year-old male street child explained:

The reason why my son goes to the street is because we are struggling financially. Since my husband passed on, I can no longer able to take care of my children. My husband was the only one working and taking care of us. But now life is not the same without him.

Donohue, et al (2004) admitted that the poor outcomes in respect of children from single-parent homes could generally be attributed to socio-economic conditions, as single-mothers may not have access to the same level of financial resources as compared to male earning or two earner households. It is clear that gender inequality and conflict is still rife in the democratic society as asserted by Marxist views. "Marxist feminists blame the capitalistic mode of production as one of the main causes for male domination and women's oppression in society" (Hossain et al. 2016:13). In the same vein, Vogel (1983) argues that a gender wise division of labour is needed because a capitalistic society survives on 'production' and 'reproduction'. Men meet the demand for 'production' and 'create surplus' by working outside of the family system. So, men deal with their lives in a public space. On the other hand, women traditionally work within the homes and are involved in the biological reproduction process. Thus, they spend most of their lives in the private domain. Again, it is the men's jobs that secure the economic sustenance of the family. This places men in a dominating and powerful position. Though this male domination prevailed in the past, with the advent of the capitalistic mode of production, the dichotomy between 'public' and 'private' spheres became institutionalised and male domination became almost unavoidable. In light of the discussions of Vogel (1983), it can be concluded that the capitalistic ideology has largely contributed to gender inequality which still prevails in today's society (Hossain et al. 2016).

Therefore, despite the fact that structural functionalists view the society as a system that functions harmoniously, macro-structures that have not changed in a patriarchal society such as democratic South Africa, are also the real contributors to gender inequality and the 'restructured' families. An

increase in single-parent households must therefore be understood in the context of the broader socio-economic developments. Also, Ellis and Adams (2009) revealed that the inequalities that afflict women in society are magnified among female-headed households, where dependency and vulnerability combined with sexist societal attitudes ensure that these households are typically poorer than their male counterparts. Abdelgalil, et al., (2004: 817-820) also add that an increase in the number of female-headed households reflects the traditional gender role of the mother maintaining the responsibility for a child or children, after separation of the couple. Most of such women may not have the requisite skills or education to partake in the core economy. So, they are left to fend for themselves, this also relates to the societal macro structures that are failing women.

As discussed in the feminist theory, the gender reform feminisms mainly present females in single-parent families as mainly being challenged financially. However some single-parent families are headed by males as per the findings of this study and they are also financially challenged. A 41-year-old male who is a father to a 16 year-old male street child stated:

I wish I was financially stable, maybe my son would not go to the street. It's just the two of us, me and my son. His mom passed on in 2020, we were living together with his mom, so I am a single father now. Life was better when the mother of my children was alive, but after she passed on, then things fell apart. I am no longer managing to run a household as single father alone.

The gender reform feminisms advocate for equality of both genders in the society; however, the theory and the literature can be criticized for dwelling much on the economic challenges faced especially by women in single-parent families, without also exploring men facing such identical economic challenges too in such family structures. Men also struggle financially to run the family and take care of their children in such family structures. This should not be ignored as some males in this study are from single-parent families and are also struggling financially, to run the family and take care of their children. Men are also challenged and sometimes more so, as they are also the victims of a patriarchal society in that they are not socialized to both be economically contributing to the household and to bring up children and make a home for their children.

5.2.1.5. Gender of parents in single parent family structure, their parenting styles and the nurturing of children

There is a relationship between the single-parents' parenting styles and their gender. Females in single-parent families might find it difficult to discipline their children as compared to fathers who are considered to be strict in parenting their children. As a result, children from single-parent families headed by mothers might easily go to the street as a consequence of the mothers being too soft and failing to adopt and emphasize strict parenting styles when it comes to rearing and disciplining children. The concept of fatherlessness is clear here in various forms; symbolically as loss due to the father's death amongst others, economically and support wise with struggling single parents. This will be explored further in detail in the next chapter.

5.2.2. Age of the participants

Figure 6. Age of street children

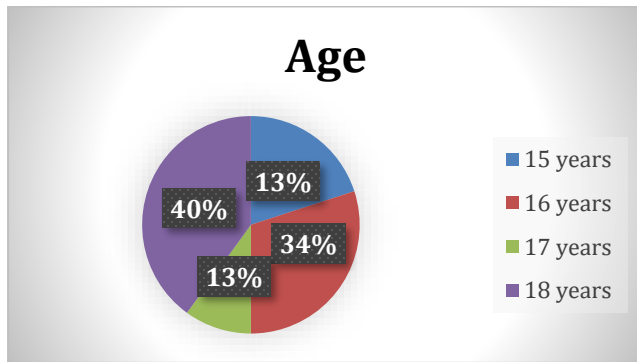


Figure 6 shows the age group of the street children who participated in the study. Thirteen percent (13%) of street children participants are fifteen years old. Thirty-four percent (34%) are sixteen years old. Thirteen percent (13%) are seventeen years old, while forty percent (40%) are eighteen years old.

The researcher decided to interview children between the ages of fifteen to eighteen (15-18), so as to consider the age definition of what constitutes a child. According to the United Nations sources, "any boy or girl under the age of 18 years is considered as a "child" (UNICEF, 2000). On the other hand, Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) gave a general overview of the characteristics of street children and they see that the majority of street children are between the ages of 6-15 years, amongst other characteristics. However, this study is limited to focusing only on street children

between the ages of 15-18 in the mentioned two centres. This is to also consider that these two centres (Kgakala and Letsema centres) provide services to only children below 18 years and not above.

There is also an economic relationship between the age of street children and the phenomenon itself. Children's Socio-Economic Status (such as unemployment) in relation to their age could somehow play a role in them being on the street. This is evident in the youth unemployment rate that was released on 30 November 2021 in South Africa. Such statistics revealed that, measuring job-seekers between 15 and 24 years old, unemployment hit a new record high of 66.5% (Anon, 2021). This study only focuses on street children between the ages of 15 to 18 years, yet, children of that age group (15 to 18) have been included in the category of the unemployed youth of this country. Such a problem cannot be overlooked, since children of such age go to the street perhaps to make ends meet.

Figure 7. Age of the parents

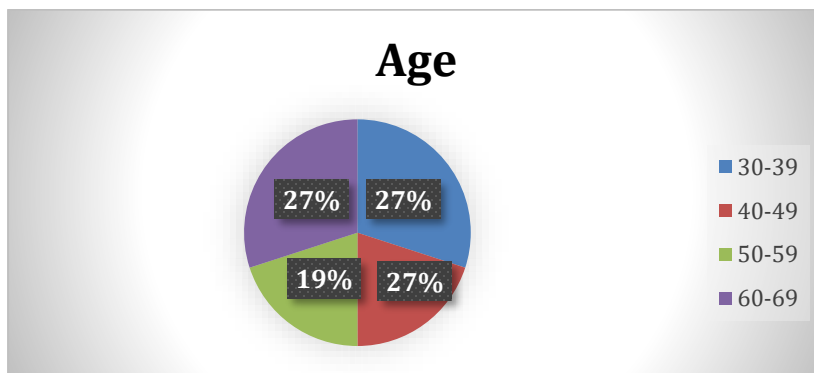


Figure 7 shows that twenty seven percent (27%) of the parents are between the ages of 30-39. Twenty seven percent (27%) are between the ages of 40-49. Nineteen percent (19%) are between the ages of 50-59 and twenty seven percent (27%) are between the ages of 60-69.

5.2.2.1. The influence of parenting and generation gap on street children phenomenon

There is some kind of a connection between the age group of the parents and the reasons for their children to be on the street. The findings of this study show that the age of the parents in the family structures does have an impact on the street children phenomenon.

- **Age vs parenting**

Some parents in this study are older and in their pension years, which makes disciplining and controlling children a challenge. The researcher interviewed a sixty-two (62) year old female pensioner from a nuclear family who is a mother to a seventeen-year (17) old female street child. During that interview, an older sister to the child who was around to assist answering questions stated that her younger sister (the interviewed street child) does not listen to her parents because they are old:

My parents are old. So, sometimes I would talk to my younger sister as her sister to ask her to stop going to the street, considering that our parents are old. Then I would think she would listen to me, but she doesn't listen. She just listens for now, and then repeats what she is doing again.

Similarly, A 65 -year-old female who is a mother to a 17-year-old male street child from a nuclear family said:

I don't know why my son is going to the street, I don't know if he is disrespecting us because we are old or what, he really doesn't listen to us, he only listens when his older siblings are home, that's when he doesn't go to the street. When they talk to him he listens to them, but as soon as they leave, he turns back to his behaviour.

The above quote reflects that sibling's guidance and support seems to be vital for children as they need such family heroes to step in especially in this case when the parents are old.

Another sixty (60) year old male pensioner from a single-parent family, who is a father to a fifteen-year-old male street child, also stated his concern about his child: that he is influenced by his friends and does not listen to him when being reprimanded.

This clearly shows that due to family structure consisting of an old parent, children at times become uncontrollable. Old parents find it difficult to discipline their children when they reprimand their children and try to stop them from going to the street. Children for their part, don't listen as the parents stated in their interviews.

It is worth noting that some older parents in this study are from a nuclear family or a single-parent family structure and taking care of their own children. Those parents are not grandparents to their children, the children are their own. Thus, such family structures are not in a formation of grandparents' family structure (a family with grandchildren and no parents present in the

intervening generation). Meaning, the parents in such family structures are old and are facing the same challenges that grandparents face. Hall et al., (2018) uttered that one of the common concerns about grandparent's care is that grandparents may be old and frail, and not physically strong enough to provide adequate care. In addition, the generation gap between grandchildren and grandparents is greater than that between children and parents which poses further challenges for grandparents in respect of adequate parenting skills (Mokone, 2006: 187-200). One historical point worth noting is that South Africa has a history of grandparents taking the role of parents possibly due to the migrant labour policy during apartheid. There was also a trend which suggested that grandparent-headed households were least likely to leave the children unsupervised (Pillay, 2010). It is evident that the literature pays much attention to the challenges that grandparents are facing in grandparent families, and not acknowledging the same challenges that elderly parents in different family structures (besides grandparent families) face, as it is the case with the presented findings.

Lastly, because of the remarkable improvements in life expectancy over the last century, the population of elderly people has been growing in the modern world. The rise in the elderly population has numerous implications in almost every aspect of the society (Mahir & Lebbe, 2020). However, there are insufficient studies looking at the parent-child age gap (especially old parents) effects on the child's outcomes.

5.2.3. Participants' racial category

Figure 8. Street children and parents' racial category

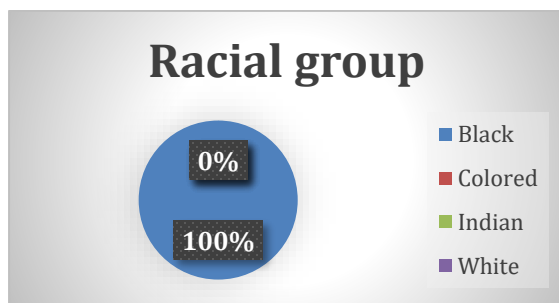


Figure 8 shows that hundred percent (100%) of the street children and their parents in this study are from the black population group. No participant were from the white, coloured or Indian population (as per the apartheid classifications). This is also because of the geographic area of the province where the participants find themselves in. North-West Province is one of the

provinces that is economically challenged in South Africa and dominated by a predominantly black population.

- **Street children and black racial category**

The above presented findings confirm the statistics that have been revealed in the literature about what has been found by other scholars with regards to the racial categories of children that are found in the streets. According to Le Roux (2001: 94-114), a high number of children who are in the South African streets are from the black population, and this is because of the circumstances that resulted from the urbanization process that took place in South Africa. Compared to other population groups (White, Indian and Coloureds as per the apartheid classifications), black children became more vulnerable to poverty and to poor parent-child relationships. Malindi and Theron (2010: 318-326) also found that there are far fewer white children on South African streets, and this is historical as they were previously favoured by the apartheid system. Though the literature justifies the dominance of black children on the street from an economic point of view due to the past apartheid system, this study seeks to go deeper than simply using the explanation of poverty as the main relevant justification for street children from such racial group to be on the street but to also examine their family structures dynamics as contributing factor. Moreover, this study shows that there is some kind of a relationship between poverty and the type of a family structure where children are coming from. This will be unpacked further later hereunder.

5.2.4. Level of education for the participants

Figure 9. Level of education for street children

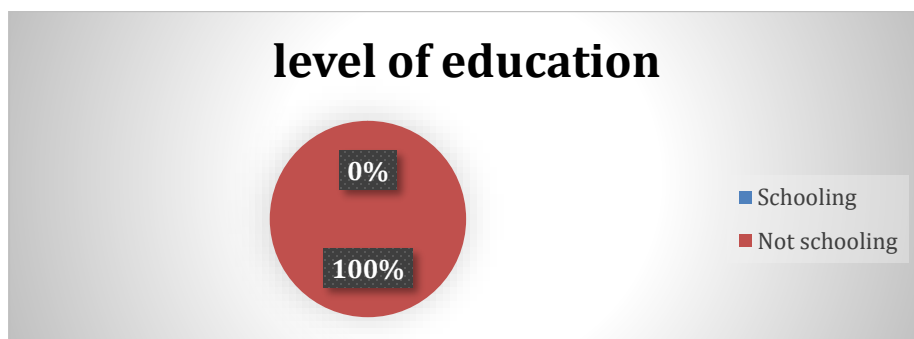


Figure 9 indicates that all (100%) street children are not schooling.

- **Low level of education amongst street children**

The most powerful weapon that can be utilized to change the world is education. These remarkable words by Nelson Mandela serve as a benchmark by which South Africa can assess whether children's rights, particularly the right to education, are being progressively being realized (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020).

Children in this study were asked if they are schooling. They provided reasons as to why they do not go to school: such as lack of school pocket money and uniform, mistreatment by teachers and due to accusations of wrong doings at school. Their responses are as follows:

An eighteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family indicated:

I am not schooling, I haven't been schooling in a long time, since I left school when I was in grade two.

A seventeen-year-old female street child from a nuclear family said:

I am schooling and in grade seven. I come to the street after school at two o'clock and go home at 5 o'clock. I do school homework immediately in class at school before I leave.

(The above response contradicts what the parent said, that the child is not schooling)

A fifteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family headed by an aunt stated:

I am not attending school; I have never been to school in my life.

A fifteen-year-old female street child from a step family stated:

I don't attend school, I left school last year (2020).

A sixteen-year-old male street child from a step parent family said:

I am not schooling, I left school when I was in grade three. I would love to go back to school.

A fifteen-year-old male street child from a single parent (male headed) stated:

I am not schooling, since I left school when I was in grade five. I left school because the teachers accused me of smoking.

An eighteen-year-old male street child from a step-family indicated the following:

I don't go to school, since I left it when I was in grade six.

A sixteen-year-old male street child from a single parent said:

I don't go to school because I didn't have a uniform and pocket money, my mom couldn't afford it.

An eighteen-year-old male from step family mentions:

I stopped going to school because they did not give me school pocket money, but my step-sister gets everything she wants.

A sixteen-year-old female street child from a step family stated:

I don't go to school, I left school in 2020. Since COVID-19, I didn't go back to school. I stopped going to school because my step mom was not paying the school trips for me but she was paying for my half-sister.

The above responses indicate that most children dropped out of school when they were in primary school. One street child stated that he had not attended school at all. These findings correlate with what has been found by Ferguson (2007: 103-112) that school difficulties and dropouts, as individual-based causes, either push or pull children to live in the streets.

The information provided by one street child who indicated that she does attend school does go against the information provided by the parents of the child. The parents stated that she is not schooling: this is the case with a 17-year-old female street child who is a child to a 62-year-old female pensioner from a nuclear family. The researcher decided to go with the information provided by the parent in this case, that the child is not schooling. This is because parents provided detailed information about the child and described their family structure situation fully. This enabled the researcher to gauge that the information provided by the child that she is schooling is not true. This reveals that some information provided by some street children does not match the information provided by parents. The researcher will discuss this issue further in-depth, in the next chapter, and as to how such discrepancies in the findings were dealt with.

Therefore, the structure of family is segmented amongst others, by children's lack of schooling. While the sample of this study is small, lack of schooling may be a reflective pattern in the society and also a national structural issue. Such a structural condition of no education for such children becomes a problem within the family as a result of structural default of families unable to pass on

the education baton to their children, considering that children of the parents themselves also did not go far in education as far as reaching the tertiary level. However, lack of access to schooling is not what is normally considered the structure of a family but rather of the society due to the failure of the educational system. Thus, in the modern society, education is crucial for children even as a right, hence a further reflection on that as per the discussion below.

5.2.4.1. Street children's basic education right

The South African Constitution reigns supreme, and the 'best interest of the child' is a cornerstone of this law, as stated in Section 28. (2). The right to education is one such right. However, it seems like South Africa is still struggling to achieve this goal (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020). This is evident in the findings of this study, where a hundred percent (100%) of street children are not schooling.

Uke (2018: 103) mentions that street children are the same as other children, with the right to obtain a decent education to get knowledge and to play around. But, street children are used to working rather than studying. Uthayakumar (2019) writes that the universal right to education has a solid basis in international law and is a key component of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, centred on leaving no one behind. The goal to get all children, adolescents and youth into education by 2030 has translated into a rising global enrolment rate reaching 82% in 2017. The figure went as high as 91% for primary school aged children. Despite such commendable progress, street children are at risk of being left behind. The numerous societal, practical and health barriers street children face means they are among the millions of the world's hardest-to-reach children who are unable to attend mainstream schools, and if they do attend school, they face high drop-out rates from formal education programmes (Uthayakumar, 2019).

The connection of children's socio-economic status (such as education) and the street children phenomenon is therefore clear. Children who are out of school are likely to go to the street. According to Ranjan (2021), the first place where a child is socialized is at school. Children are exposed to new concepts as well as exposed to peers their own age in schools. Empathy, friendship, teamwork and helping others are all valuable skills in a child's life. While the home gives a restricted outlet, a child's energy can be channelled into more sociable avenues at school. The provision of activities such as sports, crafts, and other such activities in school allows a child to channel their endless energy into something beneficial. Children can acquire valuable activities

through education. It is one very important source that can ignite their worlds. As a result, children's whole development is influenced by the education they get (Ranjan, 2021).

When children are not schooling, they are unable to focus their energy and attention on studies or education. They don't get the opportunity to learn and experience other activities offered at school, such as sports that might keep them busy and shift their focus and attention. Such children might also not have the opportunity to interact with and engage in age appropriate developmental activities that would assist with their socialization process. Consequently, not having such opportunities and not experiencing the school environment, could ultimately turn them to the street as they have more time doing nothing. This is evident to what has been reported by Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) that apart from other negative characteristics, the majority of street children are illiterate.

Since all the street children in this study are not schooling, the question then arises: to what extent can South Africa be proud of having achieved this noble goal of providing primary education, after more than two decades of democracy? (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020). Despite the rising enrolment, which could be misinterpreted as equal access to high-quality education for all learners, school dropout rates have reached a national crisis in South Africa, as they remain extremely high (Lewin & Wang, 2011). Secondary school dropout rates are very high. Most school dropouts in South Africa occurs in grades 10 and 11, resulting in 50% of learners in any one cohort dropping out before reaching grade 12. The situation is even more worrying when National Senior Certificate graduation rates (school leaving) are considered, (Hartnack, 2017).

In addition, Ward and Seager (2010: 85-100) take it that playing truant from school, or dropping out of school, is often an early sign that a child is likely to take to the streets. They further argue that many street children in their study reported school failure, extreme punishment at school, or an inability to attend because their parents were unable to pay fees or buy uniforms, as it is the case with street children of this study. Street children are highly likely to have experienced failure in school settings, and to have one or more learning disability. Their educational needs must be assessed, and they should be placed in the appropriate setting. Shelter managers from their study observed that, the longer a child has been on the street, the harder it is to intervene and the less likely it is that family reunification and educational interventions will succeed (Ward & Seager, 2010: 85-100).

Furthermore, the government has created a number of social grants and a socio-economic foundation in response to the high poverty levels. However, these have not improved poverty

levels. For example, a General Household Survey done in 2015 revealed that more than 70% of South Africa's 14 million learners walked to school daily. This exposed the learners to fatigue, absenteeism, late coming and finally dropping out of school (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020). According to Clark (2019), despite the fact that education in various countries is free, there are numerous hidden costs of education like uniforms and textbooks, which means that many children in poor families cannot get education. So, for the many street children who are driven to the streets due to poverty, it means going to school would take time away from income generating activities on the street (Clark, 2019).

In the earlier discussion on the structural functionalist theory, the manifest dysfunction of the street children phenomenon was outlined, showing that the phenomenon can be dysfunctional in the society in a number of ways. One way that the street children phenomenon could cause a manifest dysfunction is that street children may not attend school and thus deprive themselves of education. Clark (2019) expands on such manifest dysfunction of street children and the lack of education. Clark found that street children face unique barriers to access education that many other children don't have. Street children are often unable to enrol in formal education due to poverty as has been mentioned earlier. Clark (2019) further explains that excluding street children from efforts to improve educational access will only serve to perpetuate their poverty and the countless human rights violations that they endure on a daily basis on the streets. Giving them access to education can provide them with not only safe spaces and protection while they are on the streets, but also opportunities to leave the streets and live a happy and healthy adult lives. Action needs to be taken to make sure that street children no longer remain invisible and can benefit from efforts towards inclusive and quality education for all (Clark, 2019). Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020) add that as part of the South African constitutional and human rights culture, children's rights to education should be recognized and supported. The current state of the education system necessitates a re-examination of how the government of the Republic of South Africa has approached the education sector, which falls short of providing millions of children with their full right to education, particularly equal access to schooling (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020).

Additionally, Durkheim's preoccupation in his analysis of education was with its place in the wider society as an instrument which contributed to social integration and social order (Saha, 2001: 21-31). In short, he was interested in the extent to which education inculcates in the young the normative values and attitudes in society. Durkheim referred to this process as moral education. He constructed a theory of educational practice which included what he considered the three basic

elements of morality: discipline, attachment to social group and autonomy. Durkheim believed that discipline was essential to ensure consistency and regularity of conduct, as well as a sense of authority which would serve to evoke both the desired responses and restraints in human behaviour (Saha, 2001: 21-31)

Moreover, Merton argues that the “entrenchment of the success theme in American culture is transmitted through socialization in the family and in the school system, where individual ambition and the American dream make up the core values of the American cultural structure” (Deflem & Triplett, 2018: 144). However, this is not the case with the South African families and school system, with street children from broken families and who lack schooling. The question of street children who are not schooling and the general increased dropout rate of children from schools in the country may point to the failure of the schools or education system to keep them in schools. There seem to be no real and effective interventions from government departments (Education, Social Welfare, Social Development) to salvage this situation, or even the skilling agencies (Sector Education and Training Authorities: SETA’s). They are not playing a role in this state of affairs and not stepping into the foray to play their role. It’s almost as if there is a structural collapse across various institution of South African government.

Figure 10. Level of education for parents

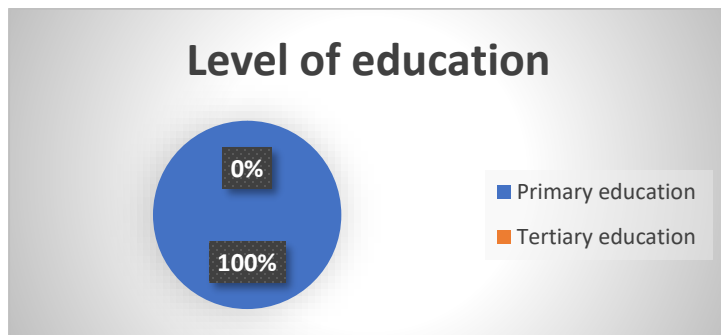


Figure 10 shows the level of education for the parents. It indicates that all the parents of the children, viz, 100% of the sample are only educated up to the primary education.

- **Low level of education amongst parents**

None of the parents of the children have tertiary education. Parents indicated that they do not have formal tertiary education due to not having the means to study further in the past because of

their circumstances of poverty not allowing them to study in the context of the past apartheid system. These figures suggest that one underlying problem may also be a lack of formal education and information in the midst of scarcity of resources. The literature indicates that the Socio-Economic Status (SES) such as the level of education for the parents may influence both parenting and child outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005).

A number of proximal factors influence parents' ability to provide socialization experiences. Such proximal factors include their own personality traits, their attitudes about proper child rearing practices, and their parental behaviours towards their children. These factors are influenced by more distal Socio-Economic qualities, such as the parents' own education, occupation, and income. Researchers have begun to study various ways that parental education can influence parenting and child outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005).

The level of education for parents of the children in this study is low, as all of them only have primary education. None of the parents (100%) have a formal tertiary education, due to not having had the financial means to study further in the past because of poverty and other legacies of apartheid. Such conditions have not changed much for a majority in the new political dispensation. This is to also consider the fact that most of the parents of street children in this study are under-educated black females. This is what Davis-Kean (2005) also argues, in asserting that educational influence varies by race and gender. There is therefore a correlation between the level of education of the parents and the street children phenomenon. The level of education for parents plays a role in determining the parenting styles adopted by parents in various family structures and it has an influence on the child's development. This is also supported by Kiadarbandsari et al. (2016) who put forward the view that in comparison to authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, highly educated parents have a more authoritative parenting style. This is because such parents perceived self-efficacy is expected to impact their parenting (Kiadarbandsari et al., 2016).

According to Davis-Kean (2021: 186-192), the Socio-Economic Status (SES)—indexed via parent educational attainment amongst others, is a powerful predictor of children's developmental outcomes. This kind of a relationship is also evident in what both Connell (2003) and UNECA (2009) assert: that female-headed households (FHHs) have been indicated to be generally disadvantaged in terms of access to important socio-economic resources including education. This further reveals the concerns of the gender reform feminists about the visibility of the pervasiveness of discriminatory practices especially in the distribution of economic resources (Lorber, 2001).

Silva (2003) adds that some children come from rural areas or their parents migrated to the cities to look for employment opportunities, and lack of education rendered them ill-equipped to struggle for survival in the urban jungle and have thus been confined to a life of abject poverty. It therefore means that, there is a relationship between participants' (parents of street children) level of education and their income level. For instance, an unemployed 45-year-old single parent female who is a mother to an 18-year-old male street child said:

*I have been looking for a job, but I am struggling to find one, because I didn't even go far with school. (*Akena di pampiri; meaning "I don't have papers") If maybe I had papers (certificate or qualification) to lend me a job, I don't think I would be struggling like this to find a job so that I can take care of my children.*

Lack of education thus influences the financial standing of the family (Hills et al., 2016). This will be further discussed in detail later in the next chapter.

5.2.5. Family structures of the participants

Figure 11. Street children and their family structures

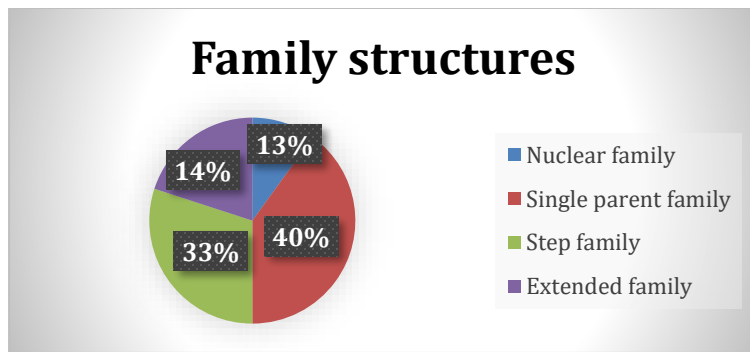


Figure 11 shows that street children come from a variety of family structures. Forty percent (40%) come from single parent family, thirty three percent (33%) come from stepfamily, fourteen percent (14%) come from an extended family and thirteen percent (13%) of the street children come from a nuclear family structure. Such diversity of the presented family structures differs from the western norm of nuclear centred families. Most western societies continue to view the nuclear family as the prevalent family structure. This is justified by Clark (2010) that the predominant family model in the West is the nuclear family. However, it must be remembered that not all children will live in such family units, and some may not live within families at all.

5.2.5.1. Members in the family structures

The researcher was interested in how the family structures of street children are formed, and the reasons for the formation of such family structures. To understand this, children were asked who they are living with at home. The responses below reflect their statements:

An eighteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family said:

I only live with my mother and siblings, my father passed on.

A seventeen-year-old female street child from a nuclear family stated:

I live with my mother and father and my siblings.

A fifteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family headed by an aunt responded as follow:

I live with my aunt and siblings, my mother and father passed on.

A fifteen-year-old female street child from a stepfamily stated:

I live with my mother, my step-farther and my siblings.

A sixteen-year-old male street child from a step-family also said:

I live with my dad, my step-mom and my siblings. My biological mom passed on when I was young.

A sixteen-year-old male street child from a single parent (male headed) uttered:

I live with my dad, only the two of us. My mom passed on.

An eighteen-year-old male street child from extended single parent family (female headed) consisting of a grandmother indicated that:

I live with my grandmother, my mother and my siblings.

A sixteen-year-old male street child from a nuclear family consisting of a grandmother also stated that:

I live with my mother, my father, my grandmother and my siblings.

A fifteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family (male headed) stated:

I live with my dad only, my mom passed on

An eighteen-year-old male street child from a stepfamily indicated:

I live with my step-mom and my siblings. My biological mom and biological dad passed on.

An eighteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family said:

I live with my mom and my younger sister, my dad passed on last year (2020) because of COVID-19.

A sixteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family uttered:

I stay with my mom and my half-sister. Me and my sister are not of the same father. She knows her dad, but I don't know mine, I never met him since I was born.

An eighteen-year-old male street child from stepfamily uttered:

I stay with my mom, my step dad and my younger half-sister. My dad passed on when I was 13 years.

A sixteen-year-old female street child from a stepfamily stated:

I live with my dad and my step-mom and my half-sister and half-brother. My mom passed on when I was 10 years old.

A seventeen-year-old male street child from a nuclear family said:

I stay with my mom and dad. I am the last born in my family, older siblings are married and working.

In sum, the above family structures of the children are formed in the following ways: some children live with one parent, their mother or father only because one parent died or the parents separated (single parent family). Some live with both the mother and father (nuclear family). Some live with both the mother and the father and the grandmother (nuclear family consisting of a grandmother), the grandmother to the street child in this case is the mother to the father of the street child. The father brought home his partner together with the children as they do not have a house of their

own yet, and this resulted in overcrowding in the house. Some street children live with the mother, the grandmother and the siblings (extended single parent family consisting of a grandmother). Some live with the step-mother and step-father only because one biological parent has passed on. Others live with an aunt who has adopted a parental role to the child because the parents of the children are irresponsible or because both the parents have passed on.

In cases where the family structures appeared to have been disrupted, participants provided reasons like death for such a disruption. The researcher could not go deeper in asking some participants the cause of the death of the parents as it is a sensitive subject, and they may not have felt free to share it with her. This is because the researcher sought by all means to avoid making the participants feel uncomfortable. However, some participants shared with the researcher the cause of the death of the parents. They stated that parents died due to different illnesses or sickness. Likewise, Olaleye and Oladeji (2010) write that dominant group of lone parents consisted of those who had lost a spouse through death, usually through premature death. In all but the rarest of cases, one partner will die before the other: meaning that widowhood is a common experience which many people, term sickness to sudden and unexpected death (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). In a case where the participants stated that a parent died because they were sick, the researcher thought that it was not fair to further probe or ask for further details about the kind of illness that killed the deceased. For that reason, the researcher avoided to appear as insensitive towards the participants, persuading them to talk about that if they were not comfortable to share such with her.

5.2.5.2. Discussion of the family structures

There are about four types of family structures for street children identified in this study, and these are: single parent family, nuclear family, stepfamily and extended family. Street children in this study from single-parent family structures forms a higher percentage of forty percent (40%) of the total sample of the study. Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) also indicate that out of the 324 street children participated in a study, 273 (84%) were from a single-parent family background. As it is one of the objectives of this study to identify which family structure/s lead/s children to resort to a street life, the findings of this study show that children from single-parent family structures are more likely to go to the street due to various dynamics in such a family structure: these include financial challenges faced by parents in such single parent families, especially females or mothers as presented by the literature and as discussed in the feminist theory. Also, without only reasoning

from an economic point of view, the other reason for the majority of street children who come from single-parent family structures could be because these children might not have a privilege of getting support and the warmth of both parents, as it is the case with children from the nuclear family structure. Cummings (2017) found that most street children live with single-parents, while children in intact family homes stay with both parents and are thus in a position to enjoy the warmth, care and security within a stable and cohesive family. Also, the low level of parental monitoring in single-parent families may result in diminishing the well-being of such children (Waldfoegel et al, 2010; Basson, 2013).

Furthermore, stepfamily structure follows after single parent family with a thirty three percent (33%) of the total sample of street children in this study that are from such stepfamily structure. Single-parent and stepfamily structures are faced with various unique dynamics and challenges. Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) reported that divorce is a growing phenomenon in East Africa, especially in Nairobi and those who end up suffering are the children who eventually find an alternative livelihood on the streets. Street children generally come from homes headed by single mothers. Most single parent families and stepfamilies could be formed as a result of divorce or death of one biological parent due to HIV-AIDS or COVID-19 virus. To elucidate, if a child had two parents and they divorce or one parent dies, the child will be left with one parent and as a result, single parent family is formed. Furthermore, consider the situation where, if after divorce or one parent dies and then the other parent is left alone with his/her child/children, he/she might decide to enter into a new relationship with another new partner whom might also have a child/children of his/her own from his/her previous relationship, and then consequently form a stepfamily structure. Stepfamilies are faced with different challenges as outlined in the literature and by Attachment theory, which will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter.

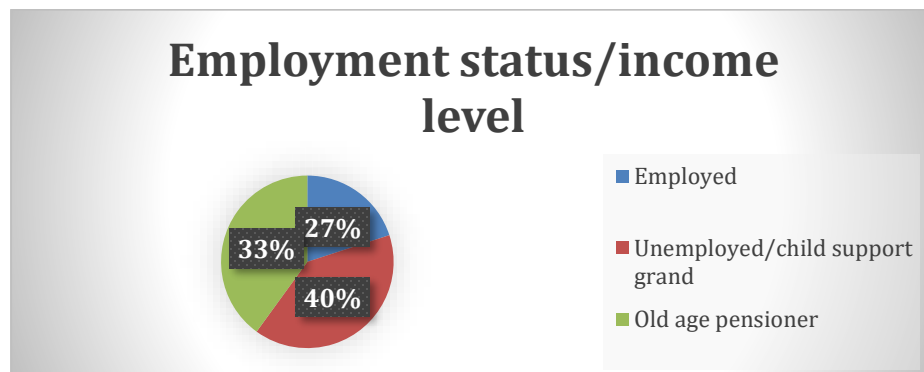
Fewer street children are from extended families (14%) and nuclear families (13%). The literature portrays a nuclear family structure as an ideal family structure for the positive child upbringing or child development. However, despite few street children who are from such family structure, this study has revealed some dysfunctions or challenges (to be discussed in detail in the next chapter) in the nuclear family structures which had led children to the street.

The findings of this study also reveal that within a certain family structure, another family structure can exist or occur. For example, one child lives with his step-mother and the siblings only. Both his biological mother and dad passed on, making the child an orphan. So, this stepfamily structure could also be considered as a single parent family structure. This is because the step-mother to the child is taking on both a role of a step-mother to the child, and she is also a single-parent in

the family. Also, one street child lives with both his biological mother and father, grandmother and siblings. This particular family appears to be both a nuclear family structure and an extended family structure as it consists of a grandmother too. All of this points to one of the gaps in the literature that has been identified by this study: that the literature rarely zooms into such kind of unusual occurrences within family structures. This brings the recognition that certain family structures exist within other family structures and have varied functioning. Studies of families should explore such unusual occurrences of mixed or hybrid family structures.

5.2.6. Parents' employment status or family income level

Figure 12. Parents' employment status or family income level



One of the most common causes of street children is extreme poverty (Hills et al., 2016). Figure 12 indicates parents' employment status or the level of family income for street children families, measured through the parents who are employed, unemployed or who receive South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) child support grants and/or an old age pension grant. Twenty seven percent (27%) of the parents are employed, forty percent (40%) are unemployed and getting the child support grant (meaning that's their income) and thirty three percent (33%) are pensioners.

The forty percent of the unemployed parents rely on the government social grant money as their income. Though some stated that they are unemployed, but they indicated that that they are in non-permanent/contract/temporary/ informal jobs, which they referred to as "piece jobs". For instance, a forty-one (41)-year-old male who is a single father to a sixteen-year-old male street child said:

The reason why my son goes to the street is because we don't have an income. I don't

have a job. I only get 'piece-jobs' (contract jobs) here and there.

As mentioned earlier, the formation of a family structure and the gender of parents has an influence on the economic conditions of the family, which ultimately influences the street children phenomenon. Ballet's (2015) is of the view that single-parent families are more likely to produce street children, particularly if these families are also poor.

According to Bradley and Corwyn (2002: 371-399), the Socio-Economic Status (SES) remains a topic of great interest to those who study children's development. This interest derives from a belief that high SES families afford their children an array of services, goods, parental actions and social connections that potentially rebound to the benefit of children. This is cultural capital, and this is a concern in that many low SES children lack access to those resources and experiences, putting them at risk for developmental problems (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002: 371-399).

As mentioned earlier in the structural functionalist theory, poverty is also one of the societal strains that can disrupt the institution of the family. It is also the case in this study amongst other factors and dynamics in the family, that influence the street children phenomenon, with poverty being one of the factors of that phenomenon. However, a number of studies have presented poverty as the predominant and relevant reason for children to turn to the street. Studies like Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) found that the majority of street children choose street life because of socio-economic factors. There are insufficient studies unpacking in an in-depth manner, the different dynamics within various family structures of street children, particularly in the North-West Province that influence the phenomenon. This study intended to reveal that poverty is not the only factor that drives children to leave their families and go to the street. There are other intervening variables and dynamics in the family besides poverty, that have been identified to contribute to the street children phenomenon.

- **Marx's capitalism, Division of Labour and alienation**

"Money in capitalism, as presented by Marx, is a commodity" that makes even people objects of capitalists (Germer, 2004:21). Moreover "...in The Division of Labour in Society, Durkheim analyses the pathological forms of the division of labour and the division of anomic labour" (Serpa & Ferreira, 2018: 689). The intensification of the division of labour should increase solidarity and interdependence among the members of a society. However, the division of labour may have the opposite consequences, such as isolation or alienation (Serpa & Ferreira, 2018). In the same vein,

Christ (2015) emphasizes that since labour (under the capitalist modes of production and the laws of exchange and private ownership) becomes a mere means of self-preservation, Marx argues that humans become alienated from their own species and reduced to an animal-like existence. Marx mentioned the alienation from humanity as a species-being, and alienation from other individuals. "Just as human interrelationship becomes a means rather than an end in itself, so are individuals alienated from one another" (Christ, 2015: 555). "The individual is not only a productive, self and nature-objectifying being, they are also always social being and therefore reliant on social institutions for their realization" (Quante, 2013: 79). Work and pleasure, says Marx, are always simultaneously social, and not individual. Every form of human expression, is a form of social expression, so in essential aspects the individual is socially designed (Christ, 2015).

In the case of street children under study, they are on the street for the purpose of getting money in exchange for their 'informal labour', and they may be attempting to overcome their sense of alienation of not being reproductive in a capitalist system. Two aspects are evident: one positive and the other negative: In the positive sense, street children do have a sense of identity and belonging within their social groups that they create with their peers on the street, while they are engaged in exchanging their 'informal labour' for money. In essence, they create their own non-biological families outside their real families in the street and when they are at the centres, where they can find that sense of identity and belonging that they (some of them) do not get at home. However, in a negative sense, street children extending their 'informal labour' by helping people on the street may reflect some form of humanism on their part, yet it also reflects a lack of solidarity in the society. Some of the street children are already from broken dysfunctional families, and instead, the extension of their 'informal labour' in the street means they are isolated from their families. These children are alienated from the experience of being well socialized within the institution of family and education for their realization as compared to those that are not on the street. They become alienated and miss out on the important stage in their life of normal childhood growth experience.

5.3. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented and analysed participants' demographic characteristics. These demographic characteristics include gender, age group, racial group, level of education, level of income and family structures. It was crucial to present and analyse these demographic traits in relation to the role they play or the influence they have on the street children phenomenon as

discussed. The subsequent chapter is on the presentation and analysis of the emerging themes and subthemes of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF EMERGING THEMES AND SUBTHEMES

This chapter discusses themes that emerged from the participants' responses (quotations). The chapter discusses the holistic description of street children's family structures and reasons for them to be on the street, family reunification programmes and street children phenomenon solutions, comparing and contrasting children's and parents' responses, data from the centre managers, reflection on COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on street children.

6.1. HOLISTIC DESCRIPTION OF STREET CHILDREN'S FAMILY STRUCTURES AND REASONS FOR THEM TO BE ON THE STREET

Parents and children were asked to describe their family structures. The researcher's intention was to understand the functioning of their family structures holistically, including the following aspects amongst others: family home environment, the relationship between parents and children, parenting styles adopted by parents, child discipline and guidance by parents and the economic conditions in the families. What emerged is that the way the participants described their family structures gave some insights into the reasons for the phenomenon of street children to occur.

Street children provided various reasons as to why they left their homes and turned to the street. Some children stated that their family home environment is fine, as their parents are treating them well. Others described their home environment as boring since their parents are not at home most of the time. Some children from stepfamilies stated that they are really uncomfortable at home as their step-parents mistreat them, and that they have a bad relationship with their step-parents. Parents also provided detailed information and reasons as to why they think their children turned to the street. Amongst other reasons that drives children to the street, some parents described their families as being poor: they stated that they are struggling financially. Some parents said that their children are uncontrollable and influenced by friends.

What follows below are the sub-themes of the above theme about the family structure description and reasons for children to go to the street. These subthemes are **financial struggle or economic conditions**, and **parenting styles** (that includes **boredom, peer pressure, child's treatment and child discipline**).

6.1.1. Financial struggle/economic conditions

Parenting styles vary according to their socio-economic status (SES) as already mentioned. Parents from various socio-economic categories raise their children in various ways, partly as a result of the different circumstances in which they live, and partly because they themselves are different types of people who engage with the world in various ways. Educational, occupational, and financial factors all play a role in SES-related differences in parents' conditions and characteristics, with educational factors having the most impact (Hoff et al., 2002: 231-252). According to Olaleye and Oladeji (2010), single-parent family affects both the parent and child since the responsibilities that are supposed to be shared by both parents falls solely on a single parent. This makes life more demanding and challenging and, if not well managed, it can lead to maladjustment, crisis or even disaster in life.

Some children and parents in this study stated that they are struggling financially at home, to the extent that there is lack of food, which is one of the reasons why children turned to the street. One finding of this study is that there is a relation between poverty and the type of a family structure and the gender of parents, meaning that there is a connection between the formation of a family structure and the economic conditions of that family as presented and discussed below.

6.1.1.1 Poverty vs female single-parent families

There is a relationship between poverty and the single-parent family structures particularly headed by females in relation to the street children phenomenon. A fifty-one (51)-year-old woman who is an aunt to a fifteen (15)-year-old male street child said the reason why the child turned to the street is because, there is no income and sometimes there is no food at home. The aunt said the mother of the child is an irresponsible mother and even though they have been looking for her everywhere they cannot locate her. As a result, the aunt stepped in herself as a surrogate mother and took on the responsibility for the child:

The child decided to stay with me as his aunt. He grew up here.

This family can be equated to a single parent family or a somewhat extended family structure as the aunt stays with her nephew (the interviewed street child) and her own children.

Also, an unemployed forty-five (45)-year-old female single parent who is a mother to an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child explained that they struggle financially and that's why her son goes to the street:

I stay with my son and daughter. My husband passed on last year due to COVID-19. The reason why my son goes to the street is because we are struggling financially. Since my husband passed on, I can no longer be able to take care of my children. My husband was the only one working and taking care of us. But now life is not the same without him. We are struggling, I have two children, my daughter and my son who goes to the street. I do get social grant money for both of them, but it is not enough to sustain us for a month at home. When my husband was alive it was better because with his salary it was helping and adding to the social grant money. I cannot buy enough food and electricity.

The mother's response corresponds with the child response. An eighteen (18)-year-old male street child from a single parent said:

*The reason why I am on the street is because we are poor at home (*rea sokola). We stay in a shack. My mom is a single mother, when my dad was alive, life was better, he would buy us clothes and give us money. But now because he is no more, things are difficult, my mom is struggling with the two of us. On the street I can make 100 Rands a day, which is something because it can help with buying electricity at home and buy maize meal so that we can sleep with full stomach, because if I don't make money, sometimes we sleep with a hungry stomach. I also go to the street on weekends. My mom earns the child support grant money, but it is not enough. My relationship with my mother is fine, I do respect her.*

As mentioned, COVID-19 seems to have created a dent in some families as with the above family that lost a father who was a breadwinner due to the pandemic. The pandemic also exacerbated and added to the restructuring of a nuclear type of a family structure into a single-parent family. The mother lost her husband and is now left with parenting her children alone and seems to be financially challenged.

Another sixteen (16)-year-old male street child from a single parent family said:

At home we are struggling financially, my mom is earning the social grant for my sister, my sister's dad also sends the child maintenance money every month. So, the money is not enough to buy enough food, sometimes we run out of food in the middle of the month, I don't earn the social grants.

The above response of the child contradicts the response provided by the mother. A thirty (39)-year-old unemployed female who is a mother to a sixteen (16)-year-old male child from a single-parent family explained:

I really don't know why my son is going to the street, because we don't struggle that much at home. I do try to take care of him and his sister. I do try by all means to give him everything that he wants. There is always food in the house. I do get his sister's child support grant money which sustain us in the house. I try by all means to ensure that I take care of them. His younger sister doesn't go to the street and has her own father who provides child maintenance supports to her monthly. So, with that money that I get from his sister's dad, I also do for him with it. I am not isolating him, he is the one that goes to the street because he is really stubborn and doesn't listen to me. I am a responsible mother, I don't drink alcohol and I ensure that I use money wisely. With his sister's child support grant money and maintenance, I take care of both of them, but my son is just not seeing that I am trying. I don't know why they stopped his child support grant money, I did follow up with SASSA and they said they will fix the issue.

Furthermore, a forty-one (41)-year old unemployed single-parent female who is a mother to an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child said that she lives with three children, and all of them have turned to the street. The parent stated that she is taking care of all three children:

I live with three children. They are all under my care.

The mother further stated that she doesn't have an income and that there is no man in the house:

I think the reason why they go to the street is because I don't have an income. I am a single mother to all three of them. There is no man in the house, (repeating twice), I don't have a man in the house, and the children also doesn't earn the child support grant money.

Though the parent spoke for all her three children who go to the street, only one child was interviewed in this study who met the study's participant selection criteria. The reasons provided by the interviewed street child also corresponded with the reasons provided by the mother as to why he is going to the street because of poverty:

The reason why I left home is because we are suffering financially at home. I am from an underprivileged family. We are...short of food. My mom is not working. We don't have income at home. My mom borrows money for us to survive.

Moreover, an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child who is a step-son to a thirty-eight (38)-year-old female explained that the reason for ending up on the street is because he is trying to get money for electricity:

I am not earning social grant money, I am trying to get money so that we can buy electricity.

The above family appears to be both a step-family and a single-parent family structure, as the parent stated that they were together with the father of her step-son (viz., a street child who was interviewed) and that the father had passed on. The biological mother to her step-son also died. So, the mother is now left with her step-son and takes care of him together with her other biological children as a single mother. Reasons provided by the child do not necessarily correspond with the reasons provided by the step-mom. The step or single mother in this family stated that they are really not struggling that much or to that extent for her children to go to the street as the social grant money she gets for the children can sustain them in the house. When she was asked what is it that she thinks takes her children to the street, she said:

I struggle with my children but they really don't listen to me. The other one smokes glue. I don't know why they are disrespecting me. I always reprimand them. I really don't know why they leave home and go to the street because they do get food at home. There is nothing that they don't have as I make sure that they have food. There is toiletry, everything that they need, I make sure I give them. So, I really don't understand why they go to the street.

The above case clearly shows that poverty is not the only reason for the child to turn to the street, although it may be an important factor. The step or single mother cited other reasons beyond poverty. Though this particular type of a family structure will also form part of the discussion about parenting styles, the child didn't mention any negative aspects about the step-mother's treatment towards him, as it is the case with other children who are from other step-families. The step mother also mentioned that she is treating all her children (including the step son) the same:

The way I treat my children is the same way I treat my step-son to make sure that they get the same care. I am trying by all means to take care of him. This is his home.

The relationship between the child and his step mom in the above stepfamily seems to be a positive one. This is line with what has been reported by Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994: 359-381) that most step-parents reported to be happy with their roles and their new families. From the above stepfamily, it is clear that not all stepfamilies are toxic and some stepfamilies can benefit the child.

The child in this case gained a mother in the form of his stepmom after both his biological parents passed on. Few authors criticize the unfairness of discussions on the negative aspects of stepfamily life. McGee (2012) wrote that though it is vital to admit and look at the problematic areas of stepfamilies, it is also crucial to recognize its positive aspects. As per this finding, not all stepfamilies are negative for the child.

As stated in Attachment theory, when children develop a good relationship with their stepparents, it is likely that they will experience the stepfamily home environment positively, which will decrease the chances of them going to the street. Furthermore, McGee (2012) found that the relationship between stepparent and stepchildren has been considered to be a solid determining factor towards children living in the stepfamily. The quality of the relationship amongst those two parties appears to eventually build or destroy the stepfamily. In general, specialists have discovered that stepparents who invest more in their stepchildren's lives develop closer relationships with them as opposed to stepparents who do not support their step-children.

The above findings reveal a relation between the gender of parents and the financial struggle or economic conditions in single parent families headed by females. This means that children who are from single-parent families headed by females are more likely to go to the street due to financial challenges in the family. These findings are in line with what has been presented in the literature and the theoretical framework of this study. As asserted by gender reform feminists, poverty as a societal strain induces the researcher to analyze the situation from a macro-perspective, and to use a macro level analysis in order to understand how the problem of poverty affects single-parent families and street children. Such a reflection is backed by the thinking that the more the number of children a single woman must support, the higher the likelihood of those children to end up on the street (Mabbs-Zeno, 1986). In the same vein, Pillay and Schoubben-Hesk (2001: 727–33) point out that a high number of street children come from female-headed single-parent families, and these families live below the poverty line.

The researcher therefore realized that there is also a correlation between the economic conditions of street children's families and their parent's demographics, as per this study's findings. Parents' demographics such as their gender, race, type of the family structure and the level of education all influence the economic status of the family. It is very important to understand that parents' level of education is the main determining factor of the financial standing in the society. It is also clear that there is a relation of race and parents' level of education in this study: parents of street children lack formal tertiary education, due to historical circumstances such as the apartheid system that blocked them from going to school considering that they are from the black population group. As

a result, without education, parents cannot secure formal well-paying jobs. This can put a financial strain on parents in terms of care for children, which could then ultimately send children to the street.

The relation between the economic conditions and the type of the family structures of street children is clear in single parent families headed by females. Some single mothers who lack education and are unemployed due to various circumstances (such as the broad patriarchal system of society) may experience financial strain in the family and struggle to take care of their children. Consequently, children from such single parent families may be affected and likely to end up on the street. Here, the notion of fatherlessness comes into play as discussed below.

- **The notion of fatherlessness**

Stephens (2009) found that the ways in which parents interact with their children differ significantly by gender. Women spend more time with their children than fathers, this is to also consider that fatherlessness is common in South Africa. Father's absence is a tendency and worldwide phenomenon in many communities (Freeks, 2019, 685-700). Such a phenomenon has been a serious social issue in South Africa, which has become more tenacious in post-colonial South Africa because of economic reasons, untold fatherhood, refused fatherhood, fatherhood accountability, divorce, and dissolution of households, (Freeks, 2022). Freeks (2017) adds that the increasing number of absent fathers on the horizon had become not only a dilemma but a serious debate in the country, especially on subjects such as socio-economic, morals, maturation of children, children development, relationships and replacement of fathers. This social issue influenced and affected both family and society dysfunctions and created a vicious cycle of poverty in many South African homes, (Freeks, 2022). The fatherlessness phenomenon also generates problems such as broken families and aggressive behaviour among children, (Freeks 2017).

Women are less likely to work full-time, be perceived as more overprotective and loving, spend the most quality time with their children, and also talk to their children more frequently. Based on the high percentage (70%) of female parents that participated in this study. It can therefore be noted that there is a relationship between a high number of female parents who participated in this study and the street children phenomenon. It is important to state that the opposite gender of parents and children and their relationships, also play a role in the child's life.

The study conducted by Stephens (2009), revealed that many people were not raised by their fathers. They did not spend much time with their fathers, preferring instead to spend time with their mothers. Clark (2010) also identifies fathers as too busy to bond with their children. To Stephens (2009), many people believe, that caring for children is primarily the responsibility of the mother and not the father, traditionally speaking. Single-parent family structures form the highest percentage of 40%, when compared to other family structures in this study. Most of those single-parent families are headed by females or mothers. According to Stephens (2009), single mothers are far more prevalent than single fathers. Hawkins (2015) admits that the fatherlessness phenomenon is a desperate cry which it is negative because most household families are run by single mothers.

Stephens (2009) expresses that it is more likely to hear of a stay-at-home mom than a stay-at-home dad. When the parents of a child divorce, the mother is more likely to get custody of the child than the father (Stephens, 2009). While the courts are sympathetic to the best interests of the child by giving them over to the mothers, it seems to ignore the fact that single mothers may struggle to raise children alone (with all the other burdens of finances and child discipline). Even if they have both parents in their lives, children will be more likely to feel closer to their mothers since they spend so much more time with them as they grow up (Stephens, 2009).

The preceding discussion reflects why Gender reform feminists are against women being portrayed to be mainly responsible for the reproductive work within the family for nurturing the children. It is therefore important to point out that women are not only economically challenged when it comes to raising their children as stated by the gender reform feminists and Marxist feminists, but women face two challenges of facing 'financial struggles' to take care of their children and a challenge in "their parenting styles" of child discipline due their femininity nature of being soft as discussed in the theoretical framework chapter.

6.1.2. Parenting styles

Various parenting styles affect children differently (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). The findings herein reveal that the parenting styles adopted by parents is influenced by the age of parents and the type of their family structure which has an influence on the street children phenomenon. In this regard, the following topics have been extrapolated from the data, and discussed here below:

'boredom and peer pressure', 'child's treatment and child discipline' that emerged from this sub-theme of parenting styles.

6.1.2.1. Boredom and Peer pressure

Other than poverty being one reason driving children to the street, some street children indicated that they really do not have any particular reason for them to have left their families and turn to the street. Instead, they indicated boredom as one of the reasons to go to the street. Parents found another reason and stated that their children go to the street because of peer pressure or being influenced by their friends. Such reasoning is also influenced by the type of family structure of street children, as discussed below:

➤ Parenting styles vs 'boredom and peer pressure' in single parent family structures as the influence of street children phenomenon

A fifty-five 55-year-old female is a mother to an eighteen-year-old male street child from a single parent family. The mother stated that they do not understand why her son goes to the street. She indicated that he is always on the street because, she assumes that, sometimes he becomes bored and maybe wants to be with friends:

We don't understand why he goes to the street. He is always on the street because sometimes I guess he becomes bored at home. He likes spending time with friends. Is not that we are financially struggling, is just that a child is a child, he is just being naughty. He is also not schooling. We told him that when he listens to friends, they will lead him astray.

Similarly, a fifteen-year-old male street child who lives with his fifty-one (51)-year-old aunt stated that he likes spending time more on the street than at home because on the street he is with his friends:

I like spending time more on the street than at home, because on the street I am with my friends and at the centre they give us food.

Moreover, a thirty-nine (39)-year-old unemployed female who is a mother to a sixteen (16)-year-old male child from a single-parent family said:

My son is influenced by his friends because they go to the street too. I always talk to him and ask him to stop going to the street but he doesn't listen to me, he rather listens to his friends. I don't know if he is disrespecting me because I am his only parent or is it because I am a woman. Sometimes I would think that if maybe his father was around, he would listen to him. Since me and his father were not together way back. He doesn't know his father, he never met him. So sometimes he throws tantrums saying he wants his father. He says I am denying him of his father's love. So, I don't know if that's the reason he is behaving this way, is it because he never met his father. I really don't know where is his father, we haven't spoken in years since the child was born. Sometimes I would think maybe I should look for his father and if maybe we find him, he will be better and change his behaviour of going to the street.

A sixteen-year-old male street child whose father is forty-one (41) years old stated that he doesn't have any particular reason going to the street. He further said he does not like being home during the day because his dad is never around and is just left alone at home because his mom passed on, and he is also not schooling. He said if his mom was around it was going to be better. He would spend time at home:

The reason why I'm not home full time is because my dad never spends the whole day at home, so I get bored.

The preceding findings show that boredom and peer pressure have been reported by the participants as among the reasons for the street children phenomenon. The reasoning of boredom and peer pressure could be influenced by the parenting styles adopted by parents, and the type of a family structure that the street children are exposed to. In single-parent families, sometimes it might be a challenge for a single parent (male or female) to raise a child alone without the help of another absent parent due to divorce or death. The literature cites that children from single-parent families are worse off compared to children from families with both biological parents and intact families. For example, Hoskins (2014: 506-531) observed that children in single parent families are most likely to engage in high-risk behaviors since there may be only one parent to provide supervision. In the same vein, Fisher et al., (2003: 45-52), state that single-parent families monitor their children less when compared to two-biological-parent families. Low level of parental monitoring in single-parent families may result in diminishing the well-being of its children (Waldfogel et al. 2010; Basson, 2013: 675–678).

It is also assumed that mothers or females in single-parent families are too soft to be capable of

employing strict parenting styles to rear and discipline children as many children grow up without their fathers (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). Yet, Kilbourne (2004) asserts that children need a father to identify with, but female single-parents often do not realize how important it is for their sons to have such a father figure. Further assumption is that children who are from single-parent families headed by mothers are likely to go astray because parents do not enforce strict parenting styles on them: this includes the lack of harsh discipline. However, the literature should not just emphasize that single mothers in single-parent families are mainly the ones facing a challenge of enforcing strict parenting styles towards their children. Single fathers too could also face challenges in disciplining their children: one street child in this study, presented under this sub theme, comes from a single-parent family headed by a male (a sixteen-year-old male street child whose father is forty-one (41) years old). It seems the father struggles with rearing the child alone since the mother of the child passed on and the child's behaviors of going to the street is also influenced by his peers.

In this family, a child indicated that the father is always not around at the house, so he gets bored and as a result he goes to the street. This clearly shows that there is lack of parental discipline, and the father does not spend time with his child. The child gets ignored and ends up going to the street. The child also indicated that if his mom was alive, he would not be on the street. This is echoed by McLanahan (1999) that a child who suddenly moves from having two parents to one parent will almost certainly feel the missing parent's absence intensely. This thus contradicts the literature, that it's simply a matter of fathers being stricter in parenting their children as compared to mothers in single parent families. While the child in this case stays with his single father but is still not well disciplined.

It is therefore clear in this case that, the child feels the absence of his mother since his mother's passing, and it reveals how the presence of the mother is essentially important in the child's life. Stephens (2009) reports that there is a perception that mothers are more involved in their children's lives, whereas fathers are far less involved, mostly serving as playmates for their children. Also, because women are more likely than men to display affection, it may be more difficult for fathers to demonstrate affection to their sons. According to Vangelisti (2004), feminist theory explores the meaning of gender specifically in interpersonal life, and in society more generally. The patriarchal system that shapes society sees women frequently as more nurturing, and many people believe that women are better at caring for children than men (Stephens, 2009). Both men and women have specific characteristics that make men more successful in the workplace, and women being better at child-care and rearing. Stephens (2009) revealed that

women are more empathetic than men, and men are more assertive than women. As a result, society frequently assumes that all women should care for children while all men should concentrate on work and leave childrearing to the mother. Because mothers are meant to be more focused on their children, it is also considered that they should have a closer bond with their children than fathers.

Also, if a child doesn't feel the warmth from the parents, he/she may go astray. In this instance, it is evident that the warmth and the love that comes from both parents is important, as it is the case with a street child who feel the missing parent's absence. Perhaps if the mother was alive in that particular family structure, she would assist the father with parenting. Consequently, with the father as a single parent, parenting becomes challenging to him. Hence Cummings (2017) admits that children in intact-family homes benefit from both parents, and are thus in a position to enjoy the warmth, care and security within a stable and cohesive family as compared to children in single-parent family. Nevertheless, children from intact families could also have negative outcomes, as per the findings of this study regarding some children from nuclear family structures. Also, there are some children who are from single parent families with positive growth outcomes, since not all single parent families produce children with negative child development or outcomes.

It is important to understand the challenges that single parents face. Single parent families headed by either a mother or a father face various challenges that affect the child. However, as alluded, the literature seems to dwell much on the challenges that female single-parents face, ignoring the challenges faced by male single-parents. As stated in the discussion on Gender reform feminisms, Pillay and Schoubben-Hesk (2001: 727–33) reveal that a high number of street children come from female-headed single-parent families, and they live below the poverty line. Much is not said about the challenges faced by fathers in single-parent families. This is why more attention should also be given to the challenges faced by single-parent families headed by fathers. The literature can also be criticized for relying mainly on exploring the challenges faced by single parent families specifically headed by females from an economic point of view and not from a general sociological point of view. This is, because such challenges go beyond economic challenges only. There are other challenges beyond that, that single-parents in such families' face, and that need to be explored. Hence the adoption of a more general point of view is preferable. The overall challenges faced by single-parent families should therefore also be studied and explored and not solely from an economic point of view although the latter is important. This is especially so in regard to the female headed single-parent families, as the literature in relation to gender reform feminisms rely more on such single female parents. Less attention is given to the households headed by fathers,

and more attention is given to the households headed by mothers. Attention should also be given to the male-headed household, so that children from such families can also have positive development and outcomes.

➤ **Old parents' parenting styles vs 'boredom and peer pressure' as the influence of street children phenomenon:**

There are other global demographic dynamics that are important to keep in mind. The population of elderly people is increasing at a far higher rate in developing countries. Over two-thirds of the world's aging population now lives in developing countries (Mahir & Lebbe, 2020).

A sixty-two (62) years old female pensioner who is a mother to a seventeen-year-old female street child stated that everything is fine at home, but her daughter goes to the street because of friends' influence:

There is food and everything at home. We don't know why she goes to the street. She is influenced by her friends.

While the child claimed to attend school, the parent stated that the child doesn't attend school. In this particular family structure, as the researcher interviewed the parent at home, the researcher learned that the parents in question (in a nuclear family structure) are old (they are pensioners). They indicated that they do try talking with the child to dissuade her from going to the street, but she doesn't listen. It is clear that the child has unbridled freedom and is taking advantage as the parents are old. She is free to do what she wants, such as going to the street, even if there is no particular reason that takes her to the street. During an interview, this girl's older sister (who moved out of the house and has her own family) was present when their mother (62-years old pensioner) was being interviewed. The sister confirmed that her younger sister (street child) does not listen to their parents, possibly because they are old. The sister said that when she is visiting at home, she does reprimand the child to stop going to the street. The sister tries to persuade her to stop doing so, but she would listen only for that particular moment and when she (the sister) is around, that's when she would not go to the street. But as soon as the older sister leaves, the child repeats the behaviour, and returns right back to the street:

My parents are old. So sometimes I would talk to her as her sister considering that our parents are old, and I would think she would listen to me, but she doesn't listen. She just listens now

(for the moment) and then repeat what she is doing.

A sixty-five (65)-year-old female pensioner who is a mother to a seventeen (17)-year-old male street child from a nuclear family also mentioned:

I really don't know what to do with this child. It could be that he gets fascinated by some of his friends that he sees on the street and also join them. He doesn't listen to me and his father, he is disrespectful.

A child also provided his view; this is what a seventeen (17)-year-old male street child from a nuclear family:

I am not on the street every day, I just go when I'm bored or when I am with my friends to help people with their grocery and get money. With the money I get from the street, I add it to the money that they give me at home and then buy myself shoes or clothes, at home they don't want to buy me nice clothes. They do buy me clothes but not those that I like. They say I want expensive clothes with brands. So that's why I come to the street to make extra money to buy myself clothes and shoes. I save that money and then buy myself clothes and shoes, me and my friends we save it.

As the researcher interviewed the mother at their home, the researcher observed that the family does not seem to be poor. The family lives in a proper house and doesn't seem to face financial struggle. This is evident that not all nuclear family structures are ideal as portrayed by the literature and the functionalists.

Another fifteen (15)-year-old male street child who is a son to a sixty (60) year old male from a single-parent family said that he left home for no particular reason, but purely because he was bored. His single father who is a sixty-year (60) old pensioner stated his concern that the child is being badly influenced by his friends and not listening to him:

*The reason why he goes to the street is because his friends can just come here at home in the morning and wake him up and take him to the street. I really don't understand why he goes to the street, because there is food at home, lots of it. He left school and made himself a "street kid", and I really don't like seeing him on the street. I'm always reprimanding him. I also don't know if he is smoking *nyaope (drugs/glue) or what. So, I don't understand why he goes to the street. Everything is fine at home. I even spoke to the social workers that they should assist me with this child. My concern is that he doesn't*

want to go to the school, but he goes to the street.

This is a single-parent family but the parent is also old, which might be the reason why the child is getting enough freedom to go to the street as the father stated that the child does not listen to him.

- **Generational gap and symbolic interaction**

The preceding findings reveal that the generational gap, as a structural family form, could be another underlying basis of the street child phenomenon. The parents are old and it could be challenging for them to raise their children and enforce strict parenting styles to their children. It seems that street children from such family structures of elderly parents are uncontrollable, and as such, elderly parents find it hard to discipline them even when they reprimand them to stop going to the street. Children do not listen to their parents and are influenced by their friends, as the parents stated. This could be because of the elderly nature of the parents. According to Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387), pull factors include amongst others, peer pressure, freedom from family or parental control and discipline that are also linked to the increasing number of street children in South Africa. Freedom from family or parental control can also play a role when children get influenced by their friends and stop listening to their parents. This can be related to one of the tenets of Symbolic interactionist theory. The theory focuses on social interaction: everyday encounters in which people communicate, interpret and respond to one another's words and actions to find meaning. When individuals are involved in relevant social interactions, they take account of what the other is doing or is about to do, and then go ahead to direct their own conduct accordingly (Blumer, 1969). The face-to-face interaction and interpersonal activities of street children with their peers or friends outside their family environment could influence their decision to go to the street. Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387) further report that pull factors such as money, peer pressure and food, are also linked to the increasing number of street children in South Africa. In addition, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2004) state that adolescents start to depend less on their parents and move towards their peer cultural group for guidance and support. They also start gaining some distance from rules set by their parents, and it may manifest in the form of changes in amongst others, attitude, the use of drugs, curfew violations or gang behavior.

Symbolic interactionism also relates with negotiated order, when people enter into interaction with others, they take for granted that a system of expected behaviours and shared meanings is

already in place to guide the interaction. This can be explained in the following way: with expectations in place in the family, parents are then also expecting their children to abide by the family rules they put in place, and children to respond positively when disciplined rather than being influenced by their friends, in this particular instance. Hence, such expectations in the family are a two-way process between parents and their children. Thus, parents and children are responsible for maintaining order in the family so that the family structure could function well by adopting certain relational tasks in their family home. It is not only the task of parents to nurture and socialize their children, but it is also about how children respond and react to how they are being socialized. Consequently, all members (parents and children) in the family as an institution play a role in maintaining a well-functioning family.

To further reflect on the concept of 'negotiated order' from the symbolic interactionist perspective, when street children extend their informal labour in exchange for money on the street, they seem to negotiate on a daily basis, when they construct their own ostensibly non-productive labour. Yet this labour is somehow productive but at a micro-level, when they are able to 'earn' some money whether it be in the parking lot to assist shoppers with bags or finding other odd jobs. These children negotiate their own conditions of their 'informal labour' and its conditions of existence in awaiting piece jobs that may or may not come, failure of which they also change towns to migrate and continue in another location. These are indications of a negotiated order that they engage in.

Belsky et al. (2012: 1570) write that most prospective studies of the inter-generational transmission of parenting have focused on whether parental age might moderate and attenuate the intergenerational transmission of parenting. As alluded, the literature simply outlines the challenges faced by grandparents in grandparent families. However, there is little that is said about the challenges that elderly parents in nuclear, single parent families or even any other family structures face, beside grandparents in grandparent families. Thus, this study reveals that some of the challenges faced by grandparents in grandparent families are similar challenges faced by older parents either in single parent or nuclear family structures, as it is the case with the said families of old parents. Hall et al., (2018) admit that one of the common concerns about grandparents' care is that grandparents may be old and frail, and not physically strong enough to provide adequate care. In addition, the generation gap between grandchildren and grandparents is greater than that between children and parents. This poses further challenges for grandparents in respect of adequate parenting skills (Mokone, 2006: 187-200).

There is also another view which suggested that grandparent headed households were least likely to leave the children unsupervised (Pillay, 2010). On the other hand, Belsky et al. (2012: 1570)

argue that older parents provide more growth-facilitating care than do younger ones. They add that one reason older parents can provide more sensitive and supportive care is because they are psychologically more mature. This could enable them to distance themselves from and gain a perspective on their own rearing experiences, making them less susceptible to them. These findings revealed in the literature about grandparent-headed households matches what has also been found in this research about elderly parents in the single parent family and the nuclear family structures as discussed in this sub theme. This study therefore strongly recommends that more research is required to address the challenges faced by elderly parents in other family structures (rather than just in grandparent families). Also, adequate programmes should be developed to support such parents, especially in view of the challenges that those parents face as a result of their age and the demands of being ageing parents. More of such will be explored in the recommendation section in the chapter (7) to follow.

6.1.2.2. Child's treatment and child discipline

The treatment and the discipline of a child is influenced by the type of a family structure which is then contributory for the child to make their way to the street.

➤ Parenting styles in a stepfamily vs child discipline and child treatment, as the influence of street children phenomenon

A sixteen (16)-year-old male street child from a stepfamily stated that his step-mother mistreats him, and that is why he left home for the street:

*I left home because my step-mom is mistreating me (*wa nsotla). When my dad goes to work, she would mistreat me. She would beat me, she does have her own child (half-sibling), but she is treating her child well. We are not really getting along with my step-mom. When I sleep at home, she would beat me and threatens that she will put poison in my food...(silence with head looking down). She doesn't give me anything, she would be saying she does not have money.*

During the interview, the researcher could sense the sadness in the tone of the child's voice and demeanour. The step-mom herself who is a 39-year-old female was interviewed, and it is also not surprising that she gave a different story as compared to what the child had said. She stated that

she does not understand why her step-son left home, as he gets everything at home:

He would just come home and just sit outside the house unless I am the one to call him inside to come bath, that's when he would come. After bathing, he asks for money, I give him and then he would leave again. Then I would see him again maybe after a month or so. So, I really don't understand the reason why he went to the street, as everything is just fine at home, he gets everything.

The way the step-mother from the above family narrated the story revealed that the child was not free at home and that he was not comfortable, as he stays outside the house when he is home. It also seems like the step mother seems to take it as almost natural and normal that the child is not around at home for a long period of time. Also, the fact that the child went on to say when he sleeps at home the step-mom would beat him and threaten him, and threatens that she would put poison in his food and that she doesn't give him anything, is a serious concern and it means the mother cannot be trusted and it's a serious issue that has had little intervention. Ward and Seager (2010: 85-100) found that boys described unpleasant relationships with their step-parents. The interview with the stepmother was done at their family home, the researcher observed the family environment and the situation at home. The home environment was fine and clean with a proper house. It didn't seem like the family struggles financially, but it is clear that there is a serious problem between the stepmother and her stepson. It also seems like there was no honesty from the step-mom's side about how is she contributing to the child's behaviour of going to the street. The biological father of the child was not available for an interview at the time so that his view could also be considered.

The parent is saying the child gets everything, which could mean material things. However, the child could be looking for other things that are not necessarily material, especially in this case where poverty is not really the problem. Thus, the issue of meaning is central to symbolic interactionism. According to Saha (2001: 21-31), Durkheim argued that moral behaviour required an attachment (or belonging) to a social group. To the above child, being on the street could mean behaving morally because that is where he finds his identity and where he finds a sense of belonging within a social group of his peers, and so too, at the centres and under the care of centre managers in a different form. If it is true, the child mentions a very disturbing aspect, that the step mother threatens to put poison in his food, and reflects that the situation at home is highly unethical and not liveable for him due to his step mom's mistreatment of him. So, it could mean that on the street, the child finds a sense of peace and belonging as he ventured outside the trappings of his unpleasant home environment and being at the behest of his mother who mistreats

him.

Another fifteen-year-old female street child from a step-family stated that her step-father mistreats her, which is why she went to the street:

The reason why I am on the street and left home is that I don't like living with my step dad. He is not treating me well, but he is treating his other biological daughter well.

The step-father himself who is an employed forty-one (41)-year-old was also interviewed for his views. In contrary, he stated that he doesn't understand why his step-daughter goes to the street as she gets everything at home and that she is being treated well. The child stated that the stepfather is not treating her well but he is treating his biological daughter well. However, the stepdad said they sat down with the child and asked her why she goes to the street. They believe that when the child is with her group of friends, she is uncontrollable. The stepfather further said that they do not understand what is it that is taking the child to the street because there is everything in the house, as he is working, and the child gets everything at home. However, it is worth noting again, that everything for the adult is not everything for the child, this means that meaning construction for children and parents are different; one relates to the adult world of discipline and the other relates to the child's view of 'everything' to mean playing and interaction with friends or peers outside of the family house.

Furthermore, it is not surprising that the information provided by the stepfather in the above family is different from the information provided by the child. The child stated that the step father is mistreating her, and the step father said the opposite. Unfortunately, the biological mother of the child was not around to be interviewed. The researcher therefore observed and assessed the home environment of the family where she comes from when the stepdad was interviewed, as he was interviewed at his home. The researcher's assessment was that things seemed fine at home, and it did not seem like the family was struggling financially. Hence, in the researcher's opinion, there was nothing specific and poverty-related that was visible that would take the child to the street. However, it seemed like the child did have a problem with her stepdad, being viewed as a negative relationship.

These findings from these stepfamilies correspond with what has been asserted by Amato (2005: 75-96) indicating that changing to a stepfamily could be troublesome to children's development. Ganong and Coleman (2012) also found that children tend to like living in single-parent families with their mothers. They have her undivided attention. When she begins dating or she remarries,

her attention is divided between her children and potential or a new partner. Children may, therefore, resent the new boyfriend or stepfather, who may have no clue about why he is a target for his stepchildren's ire. Cartwright and Moore (2012) and Stoll et al., (2006: 177-189) further express the view that the introduction of a stepparent is not constantly accepted, as it can possibly undermine the relation of the biological parent and child. Thus, Pryor and Rodgers (2001) state that a conservative viewpoint on family transition suggests that stepfamilies have negative impacts on children.

- **Sense of belonging and identity**

From the preceding discussion of the stepfamilies, the behaviour of children to go to the street could also reflect another sociological tendency: that of seeking a sense of belonging (as Durkheim stated) after having been exposed to a negative identity at home. These children's families do not seem to be poor, as the children and the parents did not mention anything with regards to or struggling financially. Therefore, the two children from these stepfamilies could be on the street to find a sense of belonging outside of their families, but within their social groups in the street and at the centres. It is thus clear that the identity that these children seek is not necessarily about economic and material things, but an identity sought that is social, to venture outside of the trappings that the parents cited as the children having everything in the way of satisfying the children's physical needs, since children still complained that they do not get everything they want from the parents. By the looks of what the researcher understood, the parents may be enforcing their views on the children on the meaning of 'getting everything,' which to the children could have another meaning, and as a result do away with that common shared meaning or agreement of what it means to have everything, according to both the parent and the child.

To expand further on the above thinking, Saha (2001: 21-31) emphasised that Durkheim did not believe that moral behaviour could be coerced or forced behaviour. In other words, the individuals must freely choose to behave in a manner which reflects obligation and responsibility towards society as a whole. To act morally is to act in terms of the collective interest. Because there is certain autonomy of the actor in moral behaviour, Durkheim believed that every society had not only generate its own set of moral norms and rules of behaviour, but it had to instil into individuals the motivation to act morally (Saha, 2001: 21-31).

Another eighteen (18)-year-old male from stepfamily explains:

When my dad was alive, I was staying with him and my mother, life was fine. After my dad passed, I stayed with my mom only, and things were fine. My mom loved me and she never used to be rude to me. Then since my step father came to live with us in our house, things changed, even my mother changed, she no longer loves me. Her and my step-dad have a daughter who is my half-sister. My half-sister is the only one who is loved and treated better.

My relationship with my mom and step-dad is not fine because my mom always listens to my step-dad and not me. My step-dad once beat me, my mom was not around, but I did tell her that my step-dad had beaten me. When she asks my step-dad why he had beaten me, my step-dad just said I was misbehaving and disrespecting him. After that, my mom just said that I should no longer disrespect my step-dad and that I should respect him just like I was respecting my biological dad and accept him as my father.

The above quote reflects the functioning triad/dyad relationship of the biological family which transforms into a dysfunctional dyad/triad relationship. The child had a better relationship with his biological mother and father (when the biological father was alive), after the father passed, the family and the relationship between the child and the mother was functional until the step father came into the picture.

One sixteen (16)-year-old street child from a step-family stated:

I am on the street to ask for money, my step-mom does not do anything for me. When it comes to me she always says she doesn't have money. I no longer even talk to her when I want something, I just ask my father. I stopped going to school because my step mom was not paying for me the school trips but she was paying for my half-sister. I never went to any school trip, every time when I tell her that there is a trip, she would say she don't have money and that I will go on the next trip, but when the next trip comes, she would not pay for me again.

My father sometimes gives me money, but sometimes he would tell me to talk to my step mom. My step mom is the one that buys us clothes, so sometimes she would just buy clothes for her children, but not buy for me. Last year December she bought my half siblings both Christmas and new year clothes, but for me she only bought for me Christmas clothes, she said she was going to buy new year clothes for me, but she didn't end up buying them, I had to repeat the Christmas clothes again in new year.

The stepmother for the above child shared her side of the story. A fifty (50)-year-old woman who is a stepmom to a sixteen (16)-year-old street child said:

Every time we ask my step-daughter why she is on the street she would say it's because I don't treat her well. I don't know how I don't treat her well, because I take her as my biological daughter because she is my husband's daughter. I love her father, so I love her too. My children are young, my son is five and his sister is fourteen (14), so my step-daughter likes comparing herself to them saying I don't treat her like them, I am really trying. Her father gives me his bank card because I am the woman of the house, every month when he gets his salary, I am the one taking care of everything in the house, I buy grocery and everything. I do make sure that I buy clothes for all of them sometimes, like winter clothes and Christmas clothes. My step-daughter would say I only buy enough clothes for my children and not buy her.

It seems it is through the father that the mother loves her step daughter rather than loving her directly. This is not a direct triad of one on one usual relations which is what the child most probably wants (rather than a triad via the father's love by the stepmother). One can call this a dyad within a triad relationship.

Therefore, the challenges faced by the stepfamilies in the above findings are in line with what has been outlined in the literature on stepfamilies and by Attachment theory as discussed here below.

- **Attachment theory and stepfamily**

Attachment theory provides a deep approach to the development, maintenance and dissolution of attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1979: 637-638). According to Hazan and Shaver (1992) the theory gives a unique perspective on the dynamics of developing stepfamilies where past ties are destroyed (biological parents), existing bonds sustained (biological parents and children), and new ties created (remarried partners). The unfolding adjustment to change and loss in the family affects children's outcomes associated with behaviors and needs (Lewis et al., 2000: 1031-1060). For teenagers, the experience of attachment insecurity frequently leads to an increasing distance from their parents (Maio et al., 2000: 58). Oftentimes, the introduction of a stepparent is not always welcomed by children, as it can potentially threaten the biological parent and the child's relationship with the latter (Stoll et al. 2006: 177-189). Baxter et al., (2004) and Cartwright (2008) found that some children reported experiencing a loss of attention or loyalty from their parents as

they focused on the new couple relationship.

Furthermore, there is a complex set of dynamics in the remarried family system, which create great challenges for children and the stepparent or couple (Dupuis, 2007; Pappernow, 1987). The discussed families appear to be complex stepfamilies: "Complex stepfamilies" denotes families in which both adults have children from previous relationships (ABS, 2003). Hetherington and Kelly (2002: 66-92); Weaver and Coleman (2005) discovered that the way stepchildren behave can significantly have an effect on the reactions of stepparents, the quality of the relationship between them and their step-parents and the quality of the experience of remarriage. As cited by Pryor and Rodgers (2001), scholars and stepfamily therapists have come to the conclusion that adapting to the step-parent role is not the same as a biological parent role. In a non-divorced family, authoritative parenting characterized by strong warmth and support, and moderately strong but responsive discipline is connected to positive child's adjustment. According to De'Aths' (1992), the subject of control and discipline created a huge conflict around the stepparent and stepchildren relationship. If there is no blood relationships, parents could not come up with demands. Stepfamily therapists like Browning and Artlett (2012); Papernow (2006: 34-42) have emphasized that stepparents need to take time to become more acquainted with their step-children before attempting a parenting role, particularly with regard to discipline. Shafer and Pace, (2015: 115-125) have shown that parent and stepparent support have the potential to lower stress on children in stepfamily experiences.

A family structure of a 38-year-old female who is a stepmother to an eighteen-year-old male street child, has been discussed earlier under the sub theme of financial struggle. The child in this family cited poverty as the main reason for him to have left home and roam the streets. However, the single/stepmother did not really state that poverty was the reason for her step-son to turn to the street: she stated that she made sure that she took care of her children and ensured that they are not starving:

*They don't listen to me. I always talk to them to quit street life. I am a single parent, taking care of my children alone (*ke tlhokomela bana baka kele one).*

The parent mentioned that her two children roam the streets. She stated that she speaks to her two children to stop the street roaming and to stop smoking glue, but they do not listen to her. The one child could not be interviewed as she did not meet the criteria of the sample for this study in terms of age. Therefore, only one child was interviewed who reached the sample criteria of this study and who is also a beneficiary of the drop-in-centre. As indicated earlier, this type of a family

structure seems to appear as both the single parent family and at the same time as a stepfamily. The child lives with his step-mom, his biological dad passed on and he is now left with his step-mom. Contrary to the other step-families discussed, and what the literature presents and with regard to Attachment theory about the challenges faced by step-families, in this particular step-family, there seems to be a healthier relationship between the step-mother and her step-son. When the child was interviewed, he did not say anything negative about the stepmother, of being mistreated, for example. Likewise, the step-mother also did not give any negative account of her step-son disrespecting her or any such:

The way I treat my children is the same way I treat my step-son to make sure that they get the same care. I am trying by all means to take care of him too.

Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994: 359-381) argue that stepfamilies are assumed to be worse off than first-marriage families. However, the above step family clearly shows that not all stepfamilies have a negative impact on children. This is asserted by Furstenberg (1987) that stepfamily life is not always an interminable struggle. McGee (2012) adds that one of the advantages of stepfamily experience is to gain extra siblings. Evidently, in the presented stepfamily, a child gained a family for himself as his both biological parents passed on, he gained a mother and siblings.

The stepfamily seems to be a common practice in South Africa and has not been fully analysed in the literature. Stepfamily structure should therefore be fully explored as a structural feature of families, both in terms of its negative and positive connotations.

- **Durkheim and anomie of the division of labour**

Based on the preceding responses and discussion, most street children from the above-mentioned step-families (with the exception of one family mentioned) feel alienated in their home environment due to the mistreatment that they get from their step-parents. So, it could mean these children begin to leave their homes and go to the street when exposed to the negative effects in their stepfamilies. This reflects the complexity of the street children phenomenon. In essence, some such children flee from their stepparent's mistreatment and avoid being under-supervised and without a support base that verges on anomie ('normlessness' as a deregulative notion) and reconstruct their own lives within that street space as much as they are able to.

To expand on this preceding discussion, Serpa and Ferreira (2018) declare that, when the division of labour is anomic, it means that individuals do not abide by the rules imposed by society. But it also means that societies are organised in such a way that they do not have the power to impose rules on individuals so as to ensure social harmony. Serpa and Ferreira (2018) further avow that anomie of the division of labour is divided into two components that Durkheim calls egoism and anomie. An egoistic individual is one who draws his/her rules of conduct and life, not from an external moral authority, but from him/herself. The egoistic individual gives priority to values that are limited to an individual disposition, whereas the non-egoistic individual abides by values that go beyond his/her own personality. The egoistic, feeling less supported by the community, has more difficulty in finding a meaning for his/her existence. Anomie would characterize social situations where the individual's desires can manifest freely without being bound by rules (Serpa and Ferreira, 2018).

Street children could break the societal social order of the traditional family structure, and bring their social change with their choices of going to the street and ways to survive when they are on the street. They do not abide by the societal rules, and such rules cannot be imposed on them if they do not want to abide by them. As Durkheim stated, moral behaviour cannot be coerced. Therefore, street children in this case could be considered as egoistic individuals, their conduct and choice of being on the street is an individual choice and goal. They do not behave or draw their conduct from their families or societal rules, but from themselves.

➤ **Parenting styles in the nuclear family vs “child’s treatment and discipline” as the influence of street children phenomenon:**

A sixteen (16)-year-old male street child to a thirty-eight (38)-year-old female from a nuclear family consisting of a grandmother stated the following:

I go to the street because my brother taught me. I saw him going to the street, then I joined him.

The brother could not be interviewed as he did not meet the sample criteria because of age. The child was not sharing in detail his reasons to turn to the street, he only stated that as his only reason. The mother of the child was interviewed and she cited amongst others the same reason mentioned by the interviewed street child that he is imitating his brother's behaviour of going to the street. The interview with the mother was very long as she provided detailed information

describing the situation at home that influenced her children to go to the street. A thirty-eight (38)-year-old female described the situation at home and the everyday life in detail. Included in the detailed information was this comment:

The reason why they go to the street is because in this house there is a problem, both the father of my children and their grandmother are alcoholics. I am the only one who is not drinking or smoking. Like now the father went to work, when he knocks off, he will go drink alcohol. When he comes back home, he does not check what we need in the house.

She also indicated that the father of her children abuses her physically. She gave an outline of the entire situation at home, and she also stated that she does not get along well with her mother-in-law who is a grandmother to her children. The house they are staying in together with her husband and her children belongs to the mother-in-law, and therefore there is some kind of mistreatment towards her from her mother-in-law.

The interviewed mother went on to state that both the grandmother and the father of her children are irresponsible and do not assist her to discipline and control the children, instead, they lead them astray. She stated that they also smoke in-front of the children and can even stoop so low as to ask the children to light up a cigarette for them. She indicated that when she talks to her husband and her mother-in-law insisting that they should stop their behaviour and assist her in disciplining the children, they do not listen to her. She further specified that the father of her children is working but is not taking care of the children. He just uses his money for alcohol. The mother also stated that all these things affect the children. The children also watch the father abusing her, and that is why they go to the street. He also cannot control the children:

I did sit down with my children and asked them why they are going to the street. What they said to me was that, they go to the street because they are looking at their father's lifestyle. That he is working but he does not buy food and when he comes back from drinking and arrive home, he would beat us.

Several issues arise from the context of the above family. It seems like alcohol is one of the main issues. The family is a mixture of biological parents to the children and their grandmother. The mother is facing a challenge of being the only responsible parent without the help of the father and the grandmother to the children as they are irresponsible and seem to be alcoholically inclined. The mother stated that the father to her children is working and the grandmother is also a vender. However, they do not do anything with their money to assist at home and to assist with the children,

besides using the money on alcohol. The mother stated that the total number of her children is eight, including the toddlers. All in all, there are eleven members in a Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) household. There is thus also an issue of overcrowding in the four-room house. The researcher observed the household and its environment. There seems to be no order in the house: the father and grandmother are drinking unabashedly, and the children receive no care from their father which could be the reason for them going to the street.

Fathers are traditionally respected, however, in dysfunctionality, fathers can become abusive and the structure of authority collapsed as it is the case with this family with alcoholic parents. The mother in this case carry the family burdens of the most responsible parent without the help of the irresponsible and alcoholic father and grandmother to socialise the children into the world in their formative years. Symbolically, the street represents freedom for the child in this family, that he escapes drunken abuse at home.

As the family is a hybrid form of a nuclear and extended family structure, in which the children stay with their mother, father and grandmother. The mother therefore provided detailed reasons as she painted a whole picture of the functioning of the family. It is evident that there is poor parenting from the side of the father and the grandmother of the children, as the mother said they cannot discipline the children well enough (if at all), and they act under the influence of alcohol. These findings are backed by Ward and Seager (2010: 85-100) that various children described their family environment as intolerable due to circumstances such as domestic violence and abuse. In most cases, they described these situations as being fueled by alcohol (Ward & Seager, 2010: 85-100). In the same vein, Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387) found that the dysfunctional family is the major push factor in the contemporary street children phenomenon in South Africa. Children in such dysfunctional families are abused by their parents, especially when the parents abuse alcohol.

Furthermore, a seventeen (17)-year-old male street child from a nuclear family stated:

I don't have the reason to be on the street. Things are fine at home, the reason I am on the street is just that I am bored at home, my siblings are not home, I am the only child and don't have anyone to play with. I am also on the street to ask money from people.

The mother to the above child provided her perspective; a sixty-five (65)-year-old female said:

I live with my son and my husband. My son is my last born. His sisters and brothers are married. I really don't know why my son is going to the street because everything is fine at

home. Me and his father are getting the old age pension grant and his siblings also send us money every month to supplement the old age pension money that we get and to pay for the house helper. He gets everything at home, there is always food. He also doesn't do anything because there is a helper.

Sometimes even when I send him somewhere he doesn't want to go, or when I ask him to assist at home with home chores when the helper is not around, he would not want to do so. He left school last year (2020). He says we do not want to buy him clothes and shoes, this child wants expensive clothes and shoes with brands which we don't have money for, but sometimes his siblings buy him such brands, I think he got spoiled.

The findings of this study with regard to the presented nuclear families (especially the latter or the above nuclear family) do not reflect what the literature presents about the nuclear family structure. The nuclear family structure is portrayed as an ideal family structure for the development of a child compared to other family structures, such as single-parent families. This is evident in what Cummings (2017) states, children in intact family homes who stay with both parents are in a position to enjoy the warmth, care and security within a stable and cohesive family. This is however not necessarily the case as per this study's findings, especially judging from the latter presented nuclear family structure. It is clear that the family is not facing any financial problems that could be blamed for the child's behaviour of going to the street. The parents are earning old age pension grants, they also have children that are sending them money monthly to supplement such old age pension, they can also afford a helper in the house. It could be that the child is misbehaving because the parents are not able to control him due to their old age as discussed in the previous sub-theme on 'old age parents and their challenge of disciplining the children'.

In a nutshell, based on the above findings of this section, parents are fully aware that their children are on the street. Some parents are not happy that their children are on the street for they do assert that they have asked their children to stay home, but children do not want to listen. The reasons found for children to turn to the street include poverty, bad parenting styles such as child mistreatment and child discipline, boredom and peer pressure. Some parents mentioned that they asked for help from the centre managers or social workers to assist them with their children as their children do not want to listen to them. It is also clear that there are children that are totally free from parents' discipline as such children are uncontrollable. That seems to be the reason they turn to the street even when parents sit them down and talk to them to stay home.

The phenomenon of street children seems to also be perpetuated by children not being allowed to grow up in an environment with various entertainment facilities. The lack of recreational facilities (such as parks, football clubs, etc) in the townships (Ventersdorp and Leeudoringstad) could hinder children to take part in various activities that can allow them to be themselves and could leave them not to resort to street life

In some families, more than one child turns to the street, for example, two children in some families are on the street. However, even if more than one child goes to the street in the family, the researcher only interviewed those street children who met the sample criteria for this study. Still, the parents included all their children in their responses they gave when they were interviewed. If there is no intervention on such families with multiple children on the street and this kind of a pattern develops, South African families would develop in producing more street children.

6.2. FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROGRAMMES AND STREET CHILDREN PHENOMENON SOLUTIONS

This theme is divided into the analysis of parents' and children's responses, to understand both their perspectives in terms of what is it that they wish could be done or be different to stop the phenomenon.

6.2.1. Street children's views on family reunification

Children were asked if they will ever stay home permanently and reunite with their parents. If this was accepted, children were asked how would they wish things were different at home that would stop them from being on the street. Some street children (especially from stepfamilies) stated that they do not have a wish to stay home permanently and reunite with their parents. However, most children in this study, especially from single-parent families, did state that they would like to go home permanently and be reunited with their parents. They indicated that they wish things were fine at home, so as to stop them to go to the street. Below are the responses of street children from single-parent families:

- **Single parent family**

A fifteen (15)-year-old male street child from a single-parent family headed by an aunt said:

I would love to be home and be reintegrated with my family. I do wish things were fine at home. I wish it was clean and there was food at home.

Likewise, a sixteen (16) -year-old male street child from a single-parent (male headed) stated:

I wish things were just fine at home, if my dad was working and if my mom was alive maybe it was going to be better.

Another eighteen (18)-year-old male street child from a single-parent uttered:

I have never stayed home full time. My mother does know that I am on the street, she is just ok with it because sometimes I come with money and then we would buy bread. I really wish things were fine at home. I wish there was food and that we were staying in a proper house. I wasn't going to come to the street. I was going to attend school. I also wish my dad was alive. When he was alive the situation was better, we were not going to bed hungry. He made sure that there was always food in the house.

One more sixteen (16)-year-old male street child from a single-parent family stated:

My relationship with mom is just fine, is just that she doesn't want me to know my father, but the social workers once came and asked her to look for my dad. She asked me to stop going to the street, but I told her I will only stop if I find my dad. I really want to know my dad, maybe he will take care of me.

I once went back home in 2020 due to COVID-19, it affected me because I couldn't be on the street to ask money from the people, so I was home full time. After lock-down restrictions were eased, I then came back to the street again. The social worker went home and spoke to my mom and asked her to look for my dad but, she has not looked for him. I wish I knew my dad, at least he would take care of me and give me money. I also wish there were enough food at home and my mom could buy me clothes. I also wish I can go back to school.

- **Nuclear family**

The below response is of a child from a nuclear family who stated that he would love to be home full time, but only if he will be allowed to leave his home town and go live in Johannesburg with his sister. This is what a seventeen (17)-year-old male street child from a nuclear family had to say:

I will go back home soon, but I just wish I can leave home and go stay in Joburg with my sister and attend school there, because at home I am bored.

- **Step-family**

The findings of this study further revealed that children from step-family structures specifically don't want to go back to their homes permanently to reunite with their families, mainly due to the treatment they get from their step-parents.

A fifteen-year-old female street child from a stepfamily said:

I just wish I can go stay somewhere and not stay with my parents. I can stay with my mother but not my step dad.

This child has a good relationship with her biological mother but has a problem with her stepdad. Such a situation is reflected in the literature, as Dunn (2002: 154-161) finds that children have more positive relationships with their biological parents, as compared to stepparents. Children normally have a biological parent of a similar gender as the stepparent comes to their lives.

Another sixteen (16)-year-old male street child who is a step-son to a thirty-nine (39)-year-old female, also said he did not want to go back home even if he would be reunited with his parents. This child does not stay full time at home but stays at some house with his friends. The step-mom said he is not staying in a one place, and that they can only see him once a month or so when he comes home. The child said he once went back home and reunited with his parents, but still things were not fine between him and his stepmom:

I do not want to go back home even if I would be reunited with my parents. I once went back home, but things were still not fine. When I am home, my step-mom acts as if she is treating me well and talks well with me when my dad is around, but when my dad is not around she mistreats me. My dad does know and is aware that my step-mom mistreats

me. He spoke to her that she should stop mistreating me but still she doesn't change. My dad even no longer talks to her anymore. I wish things were different, and I wish my step mom was treating me well.

Also, an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child from the stepfamily uttered:

At home they know that I am on the street, they always say I should stop going to the street and go back home, but I can't go back home full time as long as my step dad is still there. I only go home to sleep and then every morning I wake up and leave. My step dad should leave our house so that I can be with my mom and my sister only. Or I wish they were treating me well, just like they treat my younger half-sister and give me everything. I only stayed home full time in 2020 during COVID-19 hard lockdown because I couldn't be on the street, but at times I was going to my friend's home.

Lastly, a sixteen (16)-year-old male street child from a stepfamily said:

My step-mom really doesn't love me. I really miss my biological mom, I really wish she was still alive. She was doing everything for me when I ask her, I was not suffering, she loved me, I miss her. I wish my step-mom could also treat me the same way she is treating her children. I wish my dad could also give me money and not always refer me to my step mom every time I ask for something.

It seems like street children from above stepfamilies do not wish to be home full time with their families and reunited with their parents, because of the ill-treatment meted out to them from their stepparents. From this, it seems stepfamilies may perhaps be one of the heart problems of family dysfunctionalities. Apart from its positive aspects to the child as mentioned earlier about one family, stepfamily as a structure is not recognized in the literature as being part of the structural fault of children having a wholesome childhood.

As discussed in the section below, the parents of the children indicated that they want their children to be home permanently without going to the street, but some children were of the opposite opinion on the matter of staying home permanently as per the preceding discussion.

6.2.2. Parents' views on family reunification

Parents were asked if they do wish their children could come back home permanently and be reunited with them. They were also asked what is it that they think could be the solution to stop their children's behaviour of being on the street.

Based on the findings, parents are aware that their children are on the street, and some are not happy with that. They do want their children to stay home permanently.

- **Single parent family**

Some parents indicated that their children left home because of poverty, but also stated that they wish that the situation was fine at home, including to be able to afford food and such necessities. Parents in single parent families indicated that they wish their partners or spouses were still alive, perhaps things would be better to assist them with parenting and helping them financially to run the household. A forty-one (41)-year-old male who is a father to a sixteen-year-old male street child stated:

Life was better when the mother of my children was alive, but things fell apart after she passed on. I am no longer managing with the children as a single father. My son also gets influenced by friends to go to the street, and I can't beat him because when you beat a child in today's government it's a problem according to the South African law, so I don't want to be arrested.

The above view from the father is also corroborated by the child's view:

I wish things were just fine, if my dad was working and if my mom was alive: maybe it was going to be better.

The above response from the father indicates the peer influence that the child is exposed to. The parent also expressed a challenge in parenting his child the way he wants, as he states that he cannot beat his child as a way of reprimanding him because he is afraid of the government's policies such as the 'no child spanking' rule. Previously, the South African government put in place a rule that parents cannot beat their children and stated children's rights as fundamental. However, it did not at the same time put in place substitutes in terms of how parents should deal with problem children or advise them in how to discipline their children in another way. This could therefore

create a challenge for parents (like the parent who raised his concern) in raising their children within a violent patriarchal society, with little guidance on what to replace punishment with, particularly for parents who are not exposed to educational opportunities to deal with such issues, or how to deal with discipline issues as these go to the heart of the problem of a functional family structure.

Furthermore, a forty-one (41) year old unemployed female single-parent who is a mother to an eighteen-year-old male street child said:

I think the reason why they go to the street is because I don't have an income. I am a single mother to three children, and not all my children earn child support grant.

It is surprising that the mother in this family is not receiving the SASSA child support grant. This reveals the failure of the systems that the present democratic government always boasts about.

Another unemployed forty-five (45)-year-old single-parent female who is a mother to an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child explained:

Me and my son have a good relationship, is just that I don't like it that he is on the street. But then again, I don't have a choice because sometimes he comes with some money that would assist at home. Since he went to the street mid last year (2020). In the beginning I was not fine with the fact that he goes to the street, but then as time went, I accepted because I could see that he would bring something home. But I really don't want him to continue being on the street forever, it's not right.

I was offered a job to be a domestic worker in Johannesburg, but I cannot even go work far because my children will be left alone without care. It will seem like I am an irresponsible mother if I do that. So, I really do not know what to do in this situation. If maybe I can get a job of a domestic worker around here, it's going to be better because I would not be far from home and I will be able to knock off at home every day to be with my children.

I really wish the situation was fine at home. I do miss my husband because he had a contract job, the money he was getting was able to sustain us at home. I wish my son could stop going to the street and attend school. I really want a bright future for my children. I wish they can attend school and go to University and get good jobs and be better people so that they can change our life at home. We sometimes get food from the centres.

Also, a thirty-nine (39)-year-old unemployed female who is a mother to a sixteen 16-year-old male child from a single-parent family explained:

I am not okay with the fact that my son is on the street. I once asked him to stay home full time, and the social workers also once came and ask that I should look for his father and introduce him to the child. Maybe he will change his behaviour because they think maybe he feels neglected and feel like he is deprived of his father's love and so maybe that is why he is behaving this way. So, I am still looking for his father, hopefully I will find him. It is really my wish that he could stay home full time and go back to school. The social workers also said they will follow up with SASSA to assist us so that my son could get the child support grant money. I once received the money and then they stopped it.

- **Nuclear family**

Some parents indicated that they do not necessarily want their children to come back home. But they do want their children to be out of the street and be taken somewhere but not back home, as they feel that children do not listen to them. They stated that if perhaps children can be taken somewhere (like a children's home), then that would be a better option. Other parents stated that they really would love their children to stop going to the street. They sought help from social workers to assist them with their children, as they thought that could be the solution because their children do not want to listen to them. For example, a thirty-eight (38)-year-old female who is a mother to a sixteen (16)-year-old male street child stated:

I once did ask for help from social workers about these two children of mine who are on the street. Since they said they will come to me and assist. I even wanted to sign an agreement so that they can take the children to children's home so that they can go stay there. I thought it would be better If they go there and leave the street.

From the above quote, the mother sounded like she gave up as she was considering taking children to the children's home. She might have felt like the legal and social services system is failing her.

Parents to a seventeen-year-old female street child also do not wish for the daughter to come back home and stay with them. They feel that there is no use for the child to come home as she would be uncontrollable. Instead they wish that the child could go somewhere out of the area,

where she will be away from her friends who are a bad influence. The sister to the child who was around to answer the interview questions thus states:

We wish she can go somewhere out of the area, because around here she is being influenced by her bad friends.

*We are really not fine with the fact that she is on the street. She left school when she was in grade 5. She is very talented and was involved in various school activities. She and her friends do not attend school; they are just always around town. Apparently, they are prostitutes (*gate ba ithekisa).*

This is the first family that makes claims of the child being a 'prostitute'. However, it seems like the sister is not sure of such claims of the child being a 'prostitute'. Van Blerk (2006: 47-74) admits that for survival, street girls use the dual representation of women as either mothers or prostitutes simultaneously. The child from this family said the school pocket money that she gets from the parents is not enough and that is why she goes to the street. It could be that going to the street is a form of a business to her to get money that would add to her school carry. This is not to ignore the fact that the child said she goes to school while parents indicated that she is not schooling. The child might therefore use the money she gets from the street not for school pocket money but for something else, including being a child prostitute.

Another sixty-five (65)-year-old female who is a mother to a sixteen (17)-year-old male street child from a nuclear family explained:

The social workers from the centres once came and stated that the child feels withdrawn. The process of family reunification is still underway and hopefully this child will come back home and behave. His other sister once proposed to take him and go stay with him in Johannesburg, maybe he will be better. The social workers also spoke to him to go back to school. He agreed that he will go back to school next year. I hope they will accept him because his sister is looking for a school for him

- **Stepfamily**

Some street children from stepfamilies stated that they would not like to stay home full-time and quit street life, however, their parents and stepparents have a different wish of them quitting street life and stay home permanently. This is what they had to say:

A forty-nine (49)-year old female who is a biological mother to an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child from a stepfamily said:

We once thought that my son could go stay with his grandmother, but I really want to stay with my son and raise him myself, but the problem is that he does not want to make peace that I am together with his step-dad. Is like he wants me to choose between letting him or his step-dad go, he really puts me in a very difficult situation. Even when we ask him to stop going to the street and stay home, he would say he will only stop until his step-dad leaves us, as he says his step-dad makes him uncomfortable in the house. It's really difficult for me because I do not see anything wrong with his step-dad being here. He loves me, he is a great dad and he is taking care of us. If only he can accept his step-dad.

A fifty (50)-year-old woman who is a step-mom to a sixteen (16)-year-old street child uttered:

The social workers from the centres came last year to talk to us. They advised that my step-daughter should go back to school, because she also said I don't pay school trips for her. Since the social workers came and spoke to her, I think she is getting better. I just wish one day she can stop going to the street completely because I really don't like it. It appears bad to us as her parents especially me as her step-mom, people maybe think I am the reason she is going to the street. It's really a bad reputation.

In sum, from the above discussion, it seems like most parents do wish their children could stay full time at home, and stop going to the street. Some parents do ask their children to stop going to the street but children do not listen to the parents. This is because some children do not heed their parents depending on the nature of the family structure as outlined: that is, with single parents, with old parents or with step-parents. Parents might find it difficult to adopt certain parenting styles for children and discipline them because of the various challenges that they might face and the nature of the family structure that they find themselves in, as children do misbehave and can be uncontrollable.

6.3. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING CHILDREN'S AND PARENTS' DATA

Based on the presented data of both street children and their parents, the researcher realised that the information provided by some street children and their parents did not correspond. Thus, the researcher provided equal interpretations for both parent's and children's views so as to keep a

balanced picture. The following section therefore compares and contrasts the information provided by some street children and their parents:

6.3.1. Contrast and comparison of the nuclear family

A sixty-two (62) year old female pensioner and her seventeen-year-old daughter are in a nuclear family consisting of a biological mother, father and siblings. The information provided by the child does not correspond with that provided by the parents. The child said she is schooling, but the parents said she left school. The reasons she provided as to why she left home and went to the street do not match the reasons provided by her parents. The child said she turned to the streets because her parents cannot afford to give her school pocket money:

I am on the street because we came to ask for money for school carry (pocket money), because the money they give me at home is not enough.

However, the parents said she is not schooling and is uncontrollable.

She left school when she was in grade five. Her and her friends don't attend school. They are just always around town.

As mentioned earlier, for the above response from this family, parents provided detailed information about the child and described their family structure situation fully. Thus, this enabled the researcher to gauge that the information provided by the child that she is schooling is not true, based on the detailed responses provided by the mother and the sister for the interviewed street child.

From another nuclear family, a seventeen (17)-year-old male street child stated that he is on the street because he is bored at home:

My siblings are not home, I am the only child and do not have anyone to play with, so when I am on the street, I spend time with my friends. I am also on the street to ask money from people. But I am not on the street every day, I just go when I'm bored or when I am with my friends to help people and get money.

The sixty-five (65)-year-old mother to the child said the same thing that he doesn't understand why the child goes to the street because everything is fine at home:

Me and his father are getting the old age pension grant and his other siblings also send us money every month. I don't know why he is going to the street. Maybe he is disrespecting us because we are old. He really doesn't listen to us, he only listens when his brothers and sisters are home that's when he doesn't go to the street. I really don't know what to do with this child. It could be that he gets fascinated by some of his friends that he sees on the street.

A thirty-eight (38)-year-old female and her 16-year-old son from another nuclear family did correspond in terms of their responses in some respects. The information provided by the child corresponds with that of the mother, although the child did not really go into details to provide the information about the situation at home. The mother was very forthcoming and provided very detailed information. The interview with her was quite long and gave a clearer picture of the situation at home which contributed to her children leaving home for the street. The mother did say that two of her children including the one interviewed, ended up on the streets. However, one of these children did not meet the sample criteria in terms of age to be interviewed.

6.3.2. Contrast and comparison in single parent family

A forty-one (41) year old unemployed female and her eighteen (18) year old son form part of a single-parent family: This parent takes care of three children, and all three of the children have turned to the street. Only one child who met the sample criteria was interviewed. The other two did not meet the criteria due to age. The parent is a biological mother to the 18-year-old child that was interviewed in this study and an aunt to the other two street children who were not part of the study. However, the parent's responses were a generalisation of all three children as they stay with her and she's taking care of them. The information provided by the child and the mother corresponded, as they both declared their state of financial struggle in the family as the reason for the children to voluntarily surrender themselves to the street. Below is one touching parental response:

I think the reason why they go to the street is because I don't have an income. I am a single mother to all three children, there is no man in the house, (repeating twice), I don't have a man in the house, and the children also don't earn the child support grant money. They also don't attend school, they refused to go to school. So, they go to the street because we are suffering at home.

Also, from a single-parent family, an eighteen (18)-year-old male street child stated that the reason why he is on the street is that they are poor at home:

I am on the street to help people with their stuff (groceries or luggage) so that I can get money in return to take care of my mother and my sister

The child's response does correspond with his mother's response; an unemployed 45-year-old single-parent female said the reason why her son goes to the street is because they are struggling financially:

Since my husband passed on, I can no longer be able to take care of my children. My husband was the only one working and taking care of us. But now life is not the same without him. We are struggling. So, I don't have a choice that my son is on the street, because sometimes he comes home with some money that would assist us in the house.

The above vulnerable family, due to its embattled conditions, begins to reach for street money as a means of income to survive since they do not have an income as the mother stated. What seems to be happening is that street life is a small business where children extend their informal labour in return of money as a reward. There may be more forms of businesses that are operating there due to the many vulnerabilities existing out there together with other forces that seek to exploit vulnerable communities.

Another sixteen (16)-year-old male street child from a single parent stated that he is on the street because they are struggling financially at home and that his mom also does not want him to know his father. This child's response slightly corresponds with his mother's response. His 39-year-old mother did mention that the child does not know his father, however, the mother stated that they are not really struggling financially:

I don't understand why my son is going to the street, because we do not struggle that much at home. I do try by all means to give him everything that he wants, there is always food in the house. Since me and his father were not together way back, he does not know his father, he never met him. So sometimes he throws tantrums saying he wants his father. So, I do not know if that is the reason he is behaving this way, is it because he never met his father.

The above quote reflects that the notion of fatherlessness as indicated earlier has theoretical and practical implications on children's outcome or development. Absent fathers are symbolically

strong in their effects to the child, with multiple problems arising from such absenteeism, including lack of male authority and power in the house to discipline the child. Whereas, in the case of an absent mother, the absence of care or nurture and love is more present, and may result in existential loneliness.

Furthermore, a forty-one (41)-year-old father and his sixteen (16)-year-old son from a single-parent family gave responses that were pretty much in basic agreement: They live in an informal settlement, with a small one room place that has no furniture. Both the father and child stated that they are struggling financially at home and that poverty is the reason that made the child leave home. Further, they both stated that they really wished the mother was still alive and expressed the hope that things were going to get better. The father also stated that he is not managing as a single parent and that he wished the mother was alive to assist. Gender reform feminisms' view is reflected here, particularly as it relates to the caring and loving role of the mother in a historically traditional society. What can be deduced from this family is that it seems like the father-child families are particularly vulnerable as they miss out on the mother's presence, touch and care. In this case there is also poverty factor as they live in an informal settlement.

From another single-parent family, a sixty (60)-year-old father and his fifteen-year-old son differed on some reasons that took the child to the street: The child simply indicated that he left home because he is bored at home while his dad said it is peer pressure with the child being influenced by friends. Both the father and the child may seem right in their unique way. Being bored may be true for the child, due to boredom, it could be easy for him to be influenced by his friends to go to the street as the father sees it that way.

The responses of a fifty-one (51) year old female who is an aunt to a fifteen (15) year old male street child, and the child himself contradict each other: The child stated that his mom and dad passed on, while the aunt indicated that his mom is still alive but the mother cannot be located even though social workers assisted them to look for her. She presently took on the responsible role of taking care of the child.

6.3.3. Contrast and comparison in a stepfamily

An eighteen (18) year old son from the stepfamily said he is on the street because his mom and stepdad only love his half-sister (their daughter):

They don't love me, they don't treat us the same. I don't feel loved because my dad is no more. Sometimes they would buy my half-sister clothes and not buy me.

The 49-year-old biological mother to the above child was the one who was interviewed; she said the child is going to the street because he is saying he doesn't like his step-dad and that his step-dad should move out of the house:

He is disrespecting his step-dad when he reprimands him, when his step-dad talks to him, he would say, he is not his biological father and so he doesn't listen to him. His step-dad is really trying to be nice to him, but my son just doesn't want things to be okay between him and his step-dad.

Another sixteen (16)-year-old female street child from the stepfamily also said the reason why she is on the street is because she feels like her step-mom doesn't love her and does not pay her school trips:

When I'm home she makes me to work more than my half-sister, I am always the one washing dishes and cleaning but my half-sister doesn't do anything. I stopped going to school because my step mom was not paying for my school trips but she was paying for my half-sister. I never went to any school trip, every time when I tell her that there is a trip, she would say she don't have money.

The fifty (50)-year-old female is a step-mother to the above child. The responses of the step-daughter and the step-mother are not corroborating. The step-mother said every time they ask her step-daughter why she is on the street, she would say it's because her step mother does not treat her well:

I don't know how I do not treat her well, because I take her as my biological daughter because she is my husbands' daughter. I love her father, which means I love her too. My children are young, my son is 5 and his sister is 14 years, so my step-daughter likes comparing herself with them saying I don't treat her like them. I am really trying to be good to her.

As mentioned earlier, a pattern of dyad, triad relation is appearing here with the mother loving the step child because of the love she has for the father of the child. Which is not a direct triad but rather a triad via the father's love by the stepmother.

The information provided by a forty-one (41) years old employed male and that provided by his fifteen-year-old step-daughter from a step family also disagree: The child indicated that she left home because her step-father was mistreating her. However, the step-father himself was interviewed, he painted an entirely different picture, stating that he does not understand why his step daughter left home and went to the street as everything was fine at home. The biological mother of the child was not around to be interviewed to share her views.

Another pair from a stepfamily that also provided different accounts, are a thirty-nine (39)-year-old female and her sixteen (16)-year-old step-son: the step-mother's account contradicts the information provided by the child. The child stated that the step-mother is abusing him and they have a toxic relationship. However, the step-mother stated that everything is just fine at home and that she doesn't understand what is the problem with her step son. The biological father of the child was not around. The researcher conducted the interview with the step-mother at their home, during the interviews, the researcher ensured to ascertain the nature of the family environment. The impression was positive: the house was fine, structurally okay and kept clean, and it seems like they are not facing financial hardship.

In a nutshell, some children provided reasons for going to the street such as poverty, boredom, and parents' mistreatment. Others said they don't have a reason to be on the street. Parents also provided explanations of why their children ended up on the street. However, as presented above, it's clear that some of the reasons provided by the children do not correspond with the reasons provided by their parents.

It was difficult for some children to provide sufficient details on their responses, as they provided brief answers. This is in contrast to parents who provided detailed information and answers. However, the researcher tried by all means to allow the children to be free to provide information and share their experiences. Before the researcher could conduct the interviews with the children, the caretakers also ensured children that they should not be afraid to share their experiences and should be able to answer the questions freely without fear. It seems like the children were a bit nervous in participating in the interviews, but their care takers assisted in making them feel at ease. The researcher also encouraged them to speak freely and ensured them that their information would be confidential

6.4. DATA FROM THE CENTRE MANAGERS

6.4.1. Presentation and analysis of centre managers' responses

To support and supplement the data from the street children and their parents, the researcher also spoke to the centre managers of each of the two centres, Kgakala Drop-in Centre and Letsema Drop-in-Centre.

6.4.1.1. Reasons for street children's home visits and steps on admitting them to the centres' services

The centre managers indicated that children end up in the street, due to (amongst other reasons) peer pressure or the influence of friends as discussed earlier in the street children and parents' responses. The centre managers indicated that when they do home visits before admitting the street children to the centres' services, they realize that sometimes there is really no need for them to admit some street children to such services. They find that at times there is really no problem at home for some children to go to the street, as children are simply influenced by friends. With such cases, they indicated that they do not admit the child to the centre:

The other reason why we do home visits for street children is to understand if it's really necessary for us to provide the services to the child, because for some children, it's not always that there is a problem at home, but sometimes it's because of peer pressure as they join their friends on the street. So, with such cases, we don't just admit the children to the centre if we can see that everything is fine at home and if we observed that there is no serious problems and valid reasons that really takes the child to the street.

If centre managers visit the family of the child and find out that a child goes to the street just because of peer pressure and therefore see no need to admit them in the centre, it does not resolve the problem. If everything is fine at home and perhaps children go to the street because of friend's influence, there may be a need for some form of intervention at the level of family counseling or some such, and the problem of the child not listening needs some or other intervention, even if it is not from the center itself. Parents have indicated, as described earlier, that their children are uncontrollable and therefore parents in such families should be assisted in socializing their children anew.

6.4.1.2. Termination of services and family reunification programmes provided by the centres

Centre managers said that at some point they do terminate the services they provide to street children after reuniting them with their families. However, they indicated that some children still go back to the street even after the reunification process has been done:

After we terminate them, there are those that stop street life, but there are some that do still go back to the street even after they are reunited with their parents. Due to such cases, as case are different, those that go back to the street after we terminate them, we consider them as uncontrollable children.

This corresponds with what the parents said about their children being uncontrollable and not listening to them, and that even if they would be reunited with them they would still continue with being on the street. It is not clear what the problem is in this case, whether the reunification programmes are not working or families and their various dynamics are the issues that make it difficult for such programmes to be a success, or children or parents are the hindrance themselves. Thus, further interventions and research are needed on this aspect of the phenomenon.

The centre managers further indicated that they don't only provide services to street children around the area, but sometimes they have cases of other street children that find themselves in the centre from other places. For example, one centre manager stated that they once admitted a street child who was from Mpumalanga. This reflects the temporary local migration of children to other cities.

6.4.1.3. Street children's home situations and reasons for them to go to the street

The centre managers outlined various family structures where children are coming from and stated that some of those families are dysfunctional. This is also what came out of the data, especially responses provided by parents, who gave detailed information about their families. Some parents described the dysfunctions in their families as mentioned, which drive children to the street.

As mentioned, the findings of this study show that children are from family structures formed in

nuclear families, single parent families, stepfamilies and grandparents related or extended families, among a host of other kinds of family dynamics (multiple kids on the street in one family, alcoholic parents, jobless/low income families, violent infested families etc.). The centre managers also mentioned that they do deal with children from these kinds of families. Though the centre managers also mentioned that they do deal with some children who are from child-headed households, but no street child in this study is from child-headed household. Street children in this study are taken care of by their extended family member such as an aunt in this case.

As the centre managers revealed the types of family structures that the children are coming from, they described the situation in the families of those children and how such situations as influenced by the type of a family structure in fact do contribute as the reasons for children to go to the street. The centre managers outlined the dysfunctions in those families where the children are coming from such as amongst others, irresponsible parents spending money on alcohol and not taking care of children, step-parents' mistreatment towards their step-children, poor parenting styles adopted by parents: uncontrollable children and peer pressure on children.

A centre manager said:

I can see that some street children are really neglected by their parents. Some of these families are nuclear families consisting of both parents but the parents are irresponsible. You would find that in some families, they give an elder child in the house the responsibility of being a parent to their younger siblings and take care of their siblings, while the parents are away to look for a job somewhere. Other children are from stepfamilies and you will find that they go to the street due to clashes in the family with their step-parents. Other children are from single parent families where parents are alcoholics...you will find that they misuse the child's support grant money on alcohol. Like every cent they would get of the child support grant they would go misuse it with alcohol.

So, we basically deal with children from such kinds of dysfunctional families. Sometimes you would find that some children are from normal families where you would find that both the parents are working formal jobs but the child would still go to the street. In such cases, you will find that the child is withdrawn and perhaps sometimes not getting that kind of an environment where they feel like they are children and should be treated so. Children in such families are not allowed to be themselves and play and behave like a child. When they are amongst other children they become vulnerable. Though our main focus is on street children, but we do accommodate children of other different cases.

The above response reveals that financially stable families may also be producing street children, and it may be that the children are left to their 'own devices'. The findings of this study also revealed out that some street children are from financially stable nuclear family structures. This contradicts what the literature states about financial instability being the main factor of street children phenomenon. However, it is not always the case as per these findings, where the centre managers also state that even children who are from nuclear families with both parents working, do end up going to the street.

The centre managers also revealed that parents themselves from poor families are the ones that send their children to the street to ask money from people to bring home:

If for example there is financial struggle at home, some parents tell their children to go to the street to ask for money from people so that when they come back home with that money they can give it to their parents, or whatever that they come with from the street, whether its money or food, so sometimes parents are the cause of the problem.

This triggered the researcher to think that some parents themselves are also the cause of the problem of the street children phenomenon. It is then evident that parents who are really sending their children to the street have adopted poor and illegal parenting styles towards their children. This calls for social workers and centres managers to assist parents in such families with for example, the speeding up of SASSA grant money administration on their behalf so that at least such families could be assisted with child support grant money, so that parents could stop sending their children to the street. Children and parents in such families should also be monitored, counselled and empowered. The parenting styles of parents in such families should also be strengthened, because poor parenting styles by parents have a major effect on children.

In sum, the centre managers outlined different family structures that children are coming from such as nuclear families, single parent families, stepfamilies, grandparents' families or extended families and child-headed households. Apart from the latter that was not found in this study, these correspond with the family structures of the participants as per the findings of this study. The centre managers mentioned that some children are from child-headed households, whereby sometimes older children become parents to their younger siblings: it means some of the centres' children's beneficiaries are from child-headed households. However, amongst the street children interviewed in this study, no street child was from a child-headed household.

The practice of child-headed households occurs in principle with extended family members (such as an aunt) or stepparents being the caregivers, sometimes for limited periods of time. In some cases, this appears as a way of making it a 'business' or to generate income in the home, in a case where the orphaned children receive the government child support grant. This is backed by Mokomane and Makoae (2017: 378-387), they write that in child-headed households, oftentimes after the parents of children pass on, the extended families volunteer to take care of the orphan. This is not because they care about the child but at times, as they simply want to look after them as a way of using them to receive government foster care-grants (Mokomane & Makoae, 2017: 378-387).

Therefore, the centre managers stated that there are dysfunctions in families where the street children are coming from, which corresponds with what the participants stated, as some of these dysfunctions include: irresponsible parents spending money on alcohol and not taking care of children, parents mistreatment, peer pressure, uncontrollable children, poor parenting styles adopted by parents such as parents who are sending children to the street to ask for money or food to bring it home, and the like. At times, as one cannot blame the parents all the time, it is also a matter of the structure and dynamics of the families caught in the vortex of conditions that they find themselves in, that affects the families and the children. Street children thus emerge from a complex set of conditions that one cannot say that its mono-causal even in terms of the structure of such families, since even these are a complex set of conditions.

6.5. REFLECTION ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON STREET CHILDREN

6.5.1. Economic impact

As already mentioned, there is an economic relationship between the age of street children and the phenomenon itself. Children's Socio-Economic Status (such as unemployment) in relation to their age somehow play a role for them to be on the street. This is evident in the youth unemployment rate that was released on 30th November 2021 in South Africa. Such statistics revealed that, measuring jobseekers between 15 and 24 years old, unemployment hit a new record high of 66.5% (Anon, 2021). For some children, being on the street and begging for money is a job, and some use this money to provide for their families. For example, in their study,

Manomano et al. (2021: 193-208) find that some of the street children make around R1600 per day from begging in Cape Town. Some parents also stated that they do understand why their children go to the street because the money that they get from the street is helping at home because they are poor. It thus seems to appear that the life on the street is a form of a business as already indicated earlier. COVID-19 has thus greatly affected street children by depriving them of their income. With lockdowns in place, street children and to some extent, their families were at the risk of dying from hunger because neither they nor the people they beg from could legally be found in the streets during lockdowns.

Some parents stated that they are not receiving the child support grants for their children, such parents seem to have lost faith on the social workers as they feel like the social services systems are failing them. This also deflects criticism of always blaming apartheid, as the problem is also the current state of affairs (though this does not cancel the historical legacy of apartheid having an impact on families). Work has also become scarce as some parents do not have qualifications or sufficient skills to market themselves as some could not study as far as tertiary level due apartheid system. COVID-19 has therefore exacerbated the situation of such parents in such families and their children as they also lost their family members (whom some were breadwinners) due to COVID-19.

6.5.2. Street children's housing conditions

Based on the author's observation, some street children in this study are from poor backgrounds with uncomfortable living conditions. There are more than five family members in shacks and RDP houses in families of some street children. One woman interviewed lives with her eight children, the father and grandmother of her children, in an RDP house. This means eleven (11) family members in such a small living space. It means due to such living conditions; street children and their families could not isolate or keep social distance in such small crowded housing spaces. Consequently, self-isolation was not possible in the case of one family member falling ill.

This shows that lack of infrastructure or housing conditions of some families, that directly impact on the functioning of the family and its structure, such as no privacy in the house that can lead to conflict in a home. Space structure is as important to the family structure as a context within which all other forms of sociological family structures need to exist. This is to say; sociological structures are also dependent on physical structures.

CSC (2020) reveals that while it is unquestionable that street children are entitled, under the right to adequate housing to enjoy safe, habitable and appropriate housing conditions, they are particularly vulnerable concerning this right and, thus, in most cases need of support from the government, especially during the pandemic's emergency.

6.5.3. Children's mistreatment in the family during COVID-19 lockdown

Lebow (2020) explains that COVID-19 affected the family institution both positively and negatively. In one sense, lockdowns strengthened some family bonding through spending much time together. On the negative side, as members could spend much time together, friction became unavoidable as some could not 'stand each other'. In Lebow's (2020) view, this increased the additional risks of violence and other forms of relational difficulty which could drive children into the streets.

According to Kawala et al. (2020), each child bears a unique story about why they decide to depend on the street. Some common reasons include mistreatment at home and the death of parents. In this study, street children, especially from stepfamily structures, stated that they left home and went to the street due to the mistreatment by step-parents. So, one would imagine how such children survived during the first COVID-19 hard lockdown, being locked under the same roof for a long time with their stepparents without the freedom to step away from their step parent's bad treatment. This means that the unpalatable conditions on the street during COVID-19 lockdown may have forced them to return full-time to the mistreatment by their step-parents from which they escaped. Therefore, this may have exposed them to repeated bouts of such mistreatment. COVID-19 exacerbated the condition of street children, one of the most vulnerable groups, and further restructured their existence in being marginal to society. The next section justified this view further when Drop in Centers were closed.

6.5.4. Closure of street children's Drop-in centres during the pandemic

According to the CSC (2020), street children need special support when it comes to the possibility to self-isolate and adhere to distancing measures to keep themselves and other people around them safe. The Consortium believes that cooperation in terms of resource allocation, partnerships and capacity building between governments and civil society organisations is crucial to ensure

access to adequate housing and shelter during and in the recovery from the pandemic. However, there was limited capacity for drop-in centres and shelters to provide services to street children during COVID-19. Other centres were closed entirely due to public health restrictions. Some centres were closed because they did not have the Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to keep staff safe and secure appropriate distancing among children in those drop-in centres.

At the beginning of 2021, while the researcher was conducting this study, she could not go to the centres to interview the street children. As gatekeepers, centre managers stated that they stopped providing services to their street children beneficiaries due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Thus, street children were not in the centres to be interviewed. Hence, the pandemic resulted in children living in the streets losing access to safe spaces to receive material and emotional support.

CSC (2020) indicates that there has been an increase in street children experiencing hunger and malnutrition, mainly due to the loss of income from informal and occasional work, but also due to the closure of schools, drop-in centres and residential institutions which previously provided free meals. The situation has been exacerbated by the unequal distribution of State emergency relief packages, which in many cases remain out of reach. While some organisations report that cooperation with local authorities has been crucial to secure safe spaces for street children during the pandemic, drop-in centres received no support from local and national governments to ensure the continuation of outreach activities with children and provide services like food and facilitate family reunification processes during the lockdown (CSC, 2020).

In late 2021, the centre managers eventually gave the researcher access to interview the street children and redirected her to the children's parents after she was refused entry in early 2021. When the researcher went to the field to collect data, she had hand sanitisers and packets of masks with her that street children could use and that they did not only use during the interviews but that could also last them for some months. The researcher also donated some money from her pocket (though not enough) to the centres so that the centre managers could buy food for street children in July 2021 for Mandela day. The researcher did all that because the centre managers had told her that they do not have the government support to run the centres to provide adequate services to the street children. It is evident that the centres did not receive the government's COVID-19 relief fund so that the centres could continue assisting the children.

Ndorom and Banyanga (2021) propose that street children shelters and drop-in centres should be provided with practical support and help during the pandemic to speak up for the street children,

who are being excluded from initiatives to reduce the spread of the virus. In effect, the closure of the centers did not only empty the street children of alternative homes but may have further pushed them into the street by their closures.

6.5.5. Family reunification programmes done by the centres

During COVID-19 pandemic, family reunification programmes was slowed down (CSC, 2020). One of the greatest challenges that social workers who work with drop-in centres for family reunification face during an emergency is ensuring that street children can safely reunite with their families. If there is no follow up when children reunite with their families, the problems that resulted in the child leaving home, such as domestic violence, may persist. Physical distancing measures have prevented social workers from pursuing their preliminary investigations, mediation work or follow-up activities of reunification programmes and some of their outreach activities. Consequently, this has compromised the success of the ongoing family reunifications (CSC, 2020).

6.5.6. The implications of street children's illiteracy during COVID-19

- ***Lack of access to COVID-19 information and protective wear***

Whilst people could easily access information from the mass media in the form of radios, televisions, phones, and the internet, street children could hardly receive such targeted information. They found themselves excluded from information sources (Kawala et al., 2020). Street children, therefore, remained uninformed, thus hampering national efforts to combat the spread of the virus (Kawala et al., 2020). Low literacy levels amongst street children impeded interpreting the minor health information they could access. Thus, they were primarily left misinformed about the virus. As a result, street children could quickly spread the virus in the family and community due to negligence, inadequate education, financial inability, lack of access to necessary medical facilities, and not following the required steps for treatment.

The above reflection indicates the importance of education for street children, considering that all street children in this study are not schooling. The COVID-19 exposed the level of literacy of street children, as they were not able to access the COVID-19 protective information due to their low literacy level. It also reflects how important it is for street children to also be included in access to quality education. This can put them in good stead to read basic texts, such as consuming important public information of concern, which in this case was the official information regarding

COVID-19 information. It is also clear that the Health department was ignoring the street children during such a period: there was no assurance that the health of such children was also being considered. This is the case even though street children of this study are part of an institution, viz., Drop-in Centers from which samples were taken for interviews.

6.5.7. Street children's self-esteem and resilience during COVID-19

Generally, street children choose the street even within the particular conditions that they are exposed to. This therefore reveals their level of resilience and their self-esteem. The Self-esteem theory indicates that self-esteem serves as a form of a protective factor when an individual is faced with challenging situations, as with COVID-19, (Maepa, 2021). As for resilience theory, it speaks of a person's capacity to overcome, successfully adapt to, or handle adversity (Masten, 2001: 493-506). Ali (2011) proclaims that there is perhaps no better place to observe children's resilience than on the street, suggesting that resilience theory is synchronous with street survival attributes. Furthermore, "resilience means the ability to bounce back suggesting that people with high resilience levels are likely to cope better under stressful life situations" (Maepa, 2021:2).

"Resilient children are likely to cope better with adverse life situations as resilience is a protecting factor for them" (Roy et al. 2011:2). Meaningfully, Karatas and Cakar (2011: 84-91) argued that when an individual's self-esteem improves, resilience also improves suggesting a link between resilience and self-esteem. Various factors, including family environment, are associated with the development of resilience among children (Maepa, 2021). Malindi and Theron (2010: 318-326) declare that street children are more resilient than other children. Maepa (2021) adds that street children have to find ways of coping with the harsh living conditions on the street. Their survival methods include risky behaviour such as taking drugs and being involved in petty crimes amongst others. Gang formation and taking part in illegal activities, allow for social acceptance in peer groups, which is another crucial survival strategy. Though it is really not the case with street children in this study that they are involved in some criminal activities, it might seem that children were not honest to reveal their other true survival strategies on the street when they were interviewed. Maepa (2021) argues that street children also engage in different forms of nonviolent criminal behaviour as a strategy to survive the street life. Majority of children in this study simply indicated that they are on the street to extend their labor or assist people and get money in return. However, some parents indicated that their children are involved in risky behaviours like smoking glue or taking drugs and even alleging prostitution (one parent stated that their child is prostituting).

Overall, survival of these children on the street is a 'display' of their coping strategies. The idea of coping strategies is generally understood to refer to behavioural and cognitive tactics to manage crises. Ali (2011) further avows that talking about resilience in the context of street children indicates that there is constant struggle and danger in their daily lives. Prior, amidst and post COVID-19, street children generally demonstrate a high level of self-esteem and resilience by engaging in peer mutual trust and friendships, taking part in street markets or informal business in the street, such as being parking lot attendants and helping people with their groceries when exchanging their informal 'labour' for money, or finding shelters or centres, thus enabling them to cope with street life. It is clear that street children exhibit socialised resilience tendencies given that they can function and survive on the peripheries of society. It further means that surviving through the threats of the pandemic required them to be resourceful and resilient. Street children could also be considered egoistic individuals as they draw their own rules of conduct and life, not from an external moral authority, but from themselves as stated by Durkehim (Serpa & Ferreira, 2018).

The egoistic and resilient personality of street children was evident during the COVID-19 situation which also revealed their level of self-esteem. COVID-19 is a national structure as it was declared by the enforcing agency, and there are specific incidents that reflect the violence of enforcing such a move (as when the army was brought in during the first hard lockdown). Though there were rules set by the government and the 'COVID-19 command council' as it was referred to, street children still stuck with what they wanted and stuck to their own conduct of being on the street and not abiding by the lockdown rules set by the government authority. It means these children stuck to their own individual goal of seeking to get money from people. Though, they were hopeful that they would still get money from the street from the people that they would normal beg from, but with lockdown in place, neither they nor the people they beg from could legally be found in the streets. They were subjected to discriminatory and cruel treatment by the community, emanating from fears of contracting the virus. Children did not care about their health and to contract the virus on the street during the lockdown, their main concern was their main need, which was to get money or food for themselves and some for their families to survive. This reflects the lowest level of needs, which are physiological needs in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid. Bozyiğit (2021: 56) declares that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory includes both human motives and human motivation theory. "It classifies basic human needs and associates these needs with general behaviour" (Bozyiğit, 2021:56). The needs of security and eating-drinking came into prominence more than others for street children. However, this created conflict between them and the law enforcement, when police were mistreating them in the street. The CSC (2020)

emphasised that, street children have frequently been unfairly criminalised for disobeying lockdowns curfews and other restrictions rather than receiving assistance and protection from governments. It therefore means that during that time, street children were not thinking about the command council rule of lockdown because they were concerned more about themselves and their priority need of getting food on the street.

The point of departure is that a societal structure that is meant to protect the public, turned on to the public with force in some instances, and also made it impossible for crucial institutions like schools and street children centres to operate, leading to them getting back to the street. Ndlovu and Tigere (2022: 25-45) announce that the size of street children population has been steadily increasing globally due to a lack of adequate social infrastructure and socio-economic programmes. While it was necessary for a central authority, even the naming of such a centre (a 'COMMAND' council) reflected its authoritarian nature but also its ambiguous character to save lives but to also repress people with their high-handed forms of keeping people off the streets (which is a double bind for street children as they live on them). Here, the order was not negotiated but defined by a central command structure of the COVID-19 council, and had its negative impact on street children as it did: one can also suggest that with the over spilling of a health order to be above all others, the social order was repressed as a sacrifice particularly for street children if they were not at home, as they were in the streets and with no other options for earning a keep.

6.6. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In the overall summary of the finding's presentation and analysis chapters, the findings revealed that all the various factors and dynamics within the family structures that have an influence on the street children phenomenon connect or relate with each other: There is an overall relation between the demographic characteristics of the participants and the street children phenomenon. This is a relation between the gender of the street children and their reasons to be on the street in relation to the family structure that they come from; a relation between the gender of the parents, the reasons for their children to be on the street in connection to their family structure formation; and a relation between the age group of the parents and the reasons for their children to be on the street.

The analysis of the above findings are aligned with the objectives of this study, which are: to identify which family structures lead children to resort to street life, to explore children's attitudes

towards their family environment and various reasons or dynamics in the family that might have led them to the street, and to corroborate parents' perspectives and their children's views about the reasons for children to go to the street. The above analysis is also aligned with the theories adopted by this study: Structural Functionalist theory, Symbolic Interactionist theory, Feminist theory and Attachment theory, in how they have been applied in understanding different family structures and their dynamics on street children phenomenon.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this study was to explore the impact of family structure and its influence on the street children phenomenon. This exploration was rooted in an understanding of the overall functioning of such families from which street children emerge. A holistic approach was adopted, one which factored in and connected all of the following in relation to street children: the nature and type of their family structure, their family home environment, the parent-child relationship, parenting style, child discipline, guidance, economic conditions within such families and other relevant considerations that emerged from the interviews. The intention was to understand the reasons within the family structures of street children that lead them to the street.

As per the findings, the researcher also identified some gaps in the literature that needs to be filled, and that future studies on street children phenomenon and families could focus on. As a result, this then enabled the researcher to come up with recommendations for future studies on street children and families. The researchers also came up with suggestions on how the different family structures that the street children come from, could be assisted. Finally, the study's conclusion is provided in this chapter.

7.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AND THE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study explored the impact of the family structure and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon in the North-West Province of South Africa.

The motivation to conduct this study was because of the growing number of street children in the province and the country as a whole. This research was also motivated by the fact that many studies on the street children phenomenon or the literature present poverty as the most relevant underlying factor that ignites the street children phenomenon, which may be so. However, there are also other family factors at play that are not fully explored by such studies, and some reveal contradictory forces too. This research intended to challenge such a general, dominant and popular view. Therefore, contrary to such studies that present poverty as the main relevant reason

for the street children phenomenon, this research took a different direction by doing a holistic in-depth exploration of the family structures of street children by looking at various factors and dynamics within such families and how such families function as an influence on street children phenomenon. Thus, the study's intention was not just to rely solely on poverty or the economic conditions of the families of these children, as it is the case with most of the studies on the street children phenomenon.

This study found that indeed rather than poverty being considered as the sole cause of the street children phenomenon, there are other intervening factors and dynamics in the family as a structure that do play a role in the mesh of events, conflicts and toxic circumstances that enveloped the phenomenon, but also some forms of irresponsibility on the part of some parents. This is evident from the responses provided by the participants' and the centre managers. The study developed the main themes and topics that emerged from the participants' responses. Amongst those main themes and topics, the researcher wanted to understand the description of the street children's family structures holistically and reasons for them to be on the street. The sub-themes and topics that emerged from this main theme are: financial struggle or economic conditions, parenting styles such as the treatment of the child, child discipline, boredom and peer pressure. Each of these sub themes and topics was discussed.

The researcher was also interested to find out if street children would ever be reunited with their parents, and to ever consider quitting street life and stay home permanently. It was found that children from stepfamily structures specifically do not want to go back home permanently and reunite with their families due to negative relationship with their step-parents, viz., mistreatment from their step parents. The researcher was also interested in finding out if parents have a desire for their children to stay home permanently and be reunited with them, and what are the possible suggestions or solutions in the families that would stop children from going to the street. Some parents indicated that they do not necessarily want their children to come back home, but they do want their children to be out of the street and be taken somewhere. They feel that the children do not listen to them and that if perhaps they can be taken somewhere, for instance to a children's home or shelter, then that would be a better option. Other parents stated that they really would love their children to stop going to the street. They asked for help from social workers to assist them with their children with the assumption that it could resolve the situation with their children since their children don't want to listen to them.

Based on the themes that emerged from participants responses, the findings revealed that there is a connection or a relationship between the overall factors and dynamics within a specific type

of a family structure which have an influence on street children phenomenon. This means that if for example, a child goes to the street because of poverty as a factor in the family, it is more likely that such a child would come from a single-parent family, especially headed by a female. As stated earlier herein, women from single-parent families face financial challenges which ultimately affect children from such families. If a child goes to the street because of mistreatment at home, it is likely that such a child could be from a step-family due to parenting challenges faced by step-parents in such families, as per the findings of this study.

This study discerns four types of family structures of street children, these are; single-parent family, nuclear family, stepfamily and extended family (with grandparents or aunt). Thirteen percent (13%) of the street children in this study come from a nuclear family structure. Forty percent (40%) come from a single-parent family. Thirty three percent (33%) come from a stepfamily, while fourteen percent (14%) come from an extended family.

As it is one of the objectives of this study to identify which family structure(s) lead(s) children to resort to a street life, the findings of this study reveal that children from single-parent family structures (40%) are more likely to go to the street due to various dynamics (such as one parent parenting and the economic status of the parent) within such families and challenges that such families face, as already discussed. This is followed by the thirty three percent (33%) of stepfamilies, this is also due to other various dynamics and challenges that such family structures face as outlined in the literature and by Attachment theory. As already discussed, a lesser number of street children are from extended families (14%) and nuclear families (13%).

As mentioned, there is a connection between family structures and their different intervening variables that are at play. This is also clear in relation to the gender of street children and parents, in relation to the family structures that they come from. This is evident in some of the street children that are from step-families, which forms 33% of the sample. For example, a sixteen-year-old male street child from a stepfamily is not getting along with his step-mother. Similarly, a fifteen-year-old female street child from a stepfamily is also not getting along with her step-father. There thus appears to be a negative relationship between opposite genders of children and step-parents. This is congruent to what has been found by Furstenberg (1994), that conflicting evidence on whether children of various genders amongst other characteristics adopt variously to the arrival of a stepparent. Schmeekle (2007: 174-189) also found that social practices of gender essentially affect relationships in the stepfamily.

Also, the relationship between the gender of the parents and the reasons for their children to be

on the street in relation to their family structure formation, is evident in the gender of parents in single-parent families which form part of 40% of the sample. Most of these single-parent families are female-headed. This is because in the view of the gender reform feminists, females in single-parent families face huge financial challenges, amongst other challenges. According to Ferrante (2016) the majority of South African single parent families are female-headed. Such families rely on social grants, remittances or donations from relatives. Therefore, it seems that because of female single parents being economically marginalized, this then ultimately affects the children in such families as single-parents face a huge challenge of taking care of their children on their own, which consequently drives the children to the street.

Also, the majority of street children's parents are females in this study: they form 70% of the sample, of which amongst those female parents, a majority are single mothers from single-parent families. These findings correlate with the 2021 unemployment rate statistics that were released by Statistics SA (2021), that equal opportunity and equal treatment in the labour market are at the core of decent work. Unfortunately, women in South Africa, and world-wide, still face additional challenges that hinder them from accessing employment. Once they are in employment, appointments to decision-making positions and jobs in certain sectors, or of certain characteristics, remain elusive. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey of the 2nd quarter of 2021, the South African labour market is more favourable to men than it is to women. Men are more likely to be in paid employment than women regardless of race, while women are more likely than men to be doing unpaid work. The proportion of men in employment is higher than that of women: more men than women are participating in the labour market as the labour force participation rate of men soars above that of women; and the unemployment rate among men is lower than that of women. The rate of unemployment among women was 36,8% in the 2nd quarter of 2021, as compared to 32,4% amongst men as per the official definition of unemployment (Stats SA, 2021).

Also, all the participants (street children and their parents) in this study are all from the black population group. The literature on the street children phenomenon also revealed that a high number of children who are in the South African streets are from that population group. This is in large part a result of the circumstances that resulted from the urbanization process that took place in South Africa. Due to that, compared to other population groups (White, Indian and Coloureds as per the apartheid classifications), black children became more vulnerable to poverty and to poor parent-child relationships (Le Roux, 2001: 94-114). It has also been revealed in recent unemployment statistics, that the unemployment rate among black African women was 41,0% during the period of the 2nd quarter of 2021, as compared to 8,2% among white women, 22,4%

among Indian or Asian women and 29,9% among coloured women. Amongst those unemployed African women, some are from single-parent families (Stats SA, 2021).

The relationship between the age group of the parents and the reasons for their children to be on the street came out clearer. The findings of this study show that the age of the parents in the family structures also have some kind of an impact on the street children phenomenon. This is because some parents in this study are old, and in their pension years (over 60 years), as a result, disciplining and controlling their children is a challenge. This is why their children go to the street, as they are usually uncontrollable and do not listen to their parents, as parents stated in their responses.

Furthermore, parents in this study do not have higher or tertiary education, which can also be seen to be one of the intervening variables within families that may drive children to the street. The literature revealed that the level of education of parents also plays a role in the parenting styles adopted by parents in various family structures, which ultimately has an influence on children to go to the street, viz., due to the poor parenting styles adopted by parents. This somehow congruent to what Attanasio et al (2020) stated that the COVID-19 crisis did not affect all families equally, but may have caused particular harm to children of low-income and less-educated parents, who tend to have lower academic and socio-emotional skills when compared to higher income or more educated parents. There is thus a relationship between parents' level of education and the economic conditions that such families face. This means that it is most likely to be a challenge for parents with less academic skills to possess better formal jobs, which then can make it difficult for them to take care of their children. This ultimately leads to their children ending up on the street as a result of financial challenges in such families.

All the above-identified variables within the family structures are inter-connected, and resultantly send children to the street. There is also another discernible pattern: street children from single-parent family structures form a higher percentage of forty percent (40%) of the total sample in this study, followed by thirty three percent (33%) of the total sample of street children, who are from stepfamily structures. It seems most likely that these two-family structures face unique challenges when compared to other family structures, viz., extended families (14%) and nuclear families (13%), with the smaller number of street children who emerge from such families. Most of the children in this study are from single-parent families and stepfamilies, due to different dynamics and challenges that such family structures face, as already discussed. Therefore, these families should be strengthened and empowered, with greater attention to be given to them by government. Such attention needs to be directed in terms of policies that are implemented to

benefit those families for the purpose of benefiting children in such families, as children become the main victims of challenges faced by such families.

Moreover, children provided various reasons why they left their families and went to the street, and parents provided their reasons as to why they think their children left home and went to the street. However, some of the reasons for going into the street provided by children and the reasons given by their parents do not corroborate with each other. For example, some street children indicated that they left home because there is no food at home, while their parents said something different: that they do not understand why their children left home as everything is fine at home and that food is provided there. Due such discrepancies and the lack of correspondence of information provided by some parents and their children, the researcher had to find ways to validate the data from the participants (street children and parents).

One of the ways that such validation was done is that the researcher made sure that after interviewing children and getting the information from them about their views, there was a follow up to interview the parents of the children at their homes. The researcher sought to assess the situation and the environment at home, to try and align it with the information provided by both the parents and the children. Therefore, interviewing parents at their homes was very important, as it enabled the researcher to assess the situation at such homes in order to assist in analyzing together with the responses that the researcher got from both the parents and the children if they do reflect the situation in their homes and the family environment.

Additionally, because the parents were the ones that were able to express themselves and provide detailed information, the researcher was also able to analyse such responses and read between their answers to analyse if the true and correct information they provided corresponded with responses provided by their children. The researcher further validated the information of parents and children by also talking to the centre managers. Centre managers got interviewed and they also provided a general overview information about the centres such as the services they provide to the street children, the kind of street children they admit in the centre, the type of family structures that street children come from and the common reasons that take children away from their families to the street. The centres caretakers stated that they normally do visit the families of the children every week, so that they could assess and have information about the families of those children and the information about what took children away from their homes to the street. Therefore, the researcher also linked and validated the data from children and parents with the data she got from the centre-managers.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter of this study, the researcher informed the centre managers of the emotional strains that the interviews could evoke from the street children and parents as participants. Therefore, one social worker for each centre was requested to be on standby to assist with counselling during interviews for such emotional trauma that could have taken place. The participants were also informed before the interviews, of the emotional strains that the interviews with them could evoke. Fortunately, no participant experienced any form of emotional breakdown that could have needed counselling during the interviews. Furthermore, when the researcher and her assistant visited the parents in their homes to interview them, they were accompanied by the centre's caretakers. When at the parents' homes, the caretakers took the addresses of the homes of the street children. This is because during the interviews, some parents raised some of their issues that triggered the researcher's attention. Some of the personal issues revealed by the parents about their families' situations were noted down by the researcher, and the researcher felt it was important for the centre managers to also know about such issues so that they can assist such families further. Thus, with the permission of the parents, the researcher informed the caretakers about such issues so that the centre managers could also follow up and intervene by resolving these issues in such families revealed or raised during the interviews, and from other issues as a collective. The researcher thought of it: that she could not just interview the participants and gather data and just leave after they revealed some of the triggering issues that needed urgent attention.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will amongst others, assist with contributing to government's policies, and act as a guide for family reunification programmes rendered by the street children centres in future, as a long-term goal. Since the researcher felt that the issues raised by the participants needed urgent intervention and short-term solutions, the researcher therefore came to the realization that the parents in such families needed urgent assistance with their children, as those issues could not just be left unresolved after the interviews. Some of those issues that some parents raised amongst others, was the concern by some parents that their children are sniffing glue and prostituting, and others stated that they are not receiving the child support grant money. The reason why the researcher noted such issues, and informed the caretakers to inform the centre managers, was that the researcher is not a professional to assist with those issues. Thus, the idea was that the centres could assign a social worker to assist in such regards. Some of the issues revealed by the participants are issues that the centre managers were not aware of. Therefore, interviewing the participants, especially the parents as they were able to express themselves in detail, was useful and necessary as it may also make it easier to assist with the family reunification programmes rendered by the centres. Thus, in undertaking such

reunification programmes, it should be ensured that the families of street children are studied carefully, with a specific focus on those issues revealed by the participants during the interviews.

7.3. Recommended solutions to street children phenomenon

It is the work of different role players in the society to ensure that there is a solution to the street children problem. These role players include parents, education department, law enforcement and members of the community, to combat the issue of street children. According to Shrivastava et al. (2015: 88), it is also important to ensure that powerful familial bonds are built, to maintain a nurturing environment, encourage enrolment of the children in schools, motivate people to adopt contraceptive measures, address issues of child placement clinics, and encourage further research to identify different community-based solutions to deal with the problems of street children. Molahlehi (2014) thinks that the street children problem can also be solved by strengthening the family and community resources in order to meet the difficult circumstances of such families as this study has investigated.

Some of the strategies that can be applied to prevent the problem of the street children phenomenon are discussed below:

7.3.1. Economic support

There should be programmes that respond to these children's needs, which include formal and informal education, life skills and vocational training. There should be micro-finance and other support to the parents, as this will assist in preventing the migration of children to the streets.

Street children from this study are from 4 types of family structures, namely: single-parent, step-family, nuclear family and extended family. Similarly, Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) shows that 84% of street children in their study were from family background that was problematic – families under single parenthood, step parenthood, grandparents, aunts and uncles, or simply with brothers and sisters. These groups represent a cohort of vulnerable families characterized by inadequate supply of food, clothing and shelter. They also have weak parental control over their children in the socialization processes, and hence a lack of role models, and also tend to reflect cultural and gender prejudices; with a general sense of economic impoverishment. These were

children that were socially, economically and psychologically abused, either being conscious of such abuse or not. Sorre and Oino (2013: 148-155) therefore recommend the need to instigate family therapy and socio-economic programmes targeting especially single-parent families and caregivers to encourage good parenting practices that would stem children from joining the streets.

Lack of schooling appears to be one of the underlying factors in the street children phenomenon. A child has the right to education yet this is not the case with street children in this study, as all of them are not schooling. Social development in partnership with the Department of Education should ensure to take the children out of the street and enrol them in schools. If the goal of taking them out of the street does not succeed completely with some children, for those that remain on the street, they should at least have access to education, as this is Constitutionally defined. Uthayakumar (2019) is of the view that it is time to act to ensure that street children no longer remain invisible, and are able to benefit from the efforts towards inclusive and quality education for all. Street children face unique barriers to accessing education that many other children do not have. Street children are often unable to enrol in formal education. Those who are able to enrol are often faced with marginalisation, stigmatisation and discrimination by their teachers and peers, which affects their well-being and performance in class (Uthayakumar, 2019).

To Uthayakumar (2019), the many unique barriers that street children face to access education highlights the importance of tailoring education initiatives to their specific needs. Acknowledging their realities is crucial for the development of education programmes that leave no street child behind. The need to develop alternative inclusive models for street children is clear. Governments must work collaboratively with NGOs, in order to jump start successful initiatives and to make such initiatives sustainable. Allowing street children to be left out of the national effort to improve access to education will only perpetuate the cycle of poverty and the countless human rights violations they face on the streets every day. Providing such children with access to education cannot only provide safe spaces and security whilst they are on the streets, but also opportunities to move away from the streets, and to go on to lead happy and healthy adult lives (Uthayakumar, 2019).

7.3.2. Focus on reintegration

Children live on the streets because of the social environment that is unstable in their families. They should therefore be reunited with their families after their families are fully assessed. Foster

families, adoption, and community homes can be identified and be used as options when the strategy of reuniting the children to their families fails (Molahlehi, 2014). Children should not be reintegrated immediately into the formal education system since they may require or even prefer informal education with a curriculum that is relevant to their life experiences. Such programmes aimed at the prevention of street children at the community level should prioritize the provision of basic services, such as job creation, education, advocacy, school improvement and a general but more intense strengthening of their social capital. Community members should also be made aware of street children through awareness campaigns in order to avoid stigmatizing children as they get assimilated into society.

7.3.3. Policymaking and advocacy

Policy formulation and decision-making processes should accommodate or cater for street children too. This is especially true in areas that directly touch their lives. The advocacy, which is based on street children's prevention, their families and the community, should directly address the sources of the problems that street children face. Firstly, integrated policymaking is required for effective solutions. Secondly, powerful NGO networks should be used to create public awareness of change (Molahlehi, 2014). Street children should therefore be viewed as individuals and policies should tailor to their needs and abilities (Van Blerk, 2006: 47-74). To add to this, parents may also need to be exposed to social programmes and social workers, in order to shift behaviour in dire cases, for them to be able to learn to adapt to step-families along with their step children and for a multiple pronged programme that involves multiple stakeholders and issues on their agenda's, in order to make progress on the numerous aspects of street children and their families. Street children drop in centres should be developed and funded by the government, such centres need support of various kinds that should be given from multiple sources, and there needs to be some form of legal code relating to street children to regulate change within their lives.

7.3.4. Networking and institutional operations

NGOs play an important role in street children's programmes by providing services that local and national governments cannot afford (Molahlehi, 2014). The contribution of NGOs is insufficient to significantly reduce the high number of children who have migrated to the streets. NGOs can combat the phenomenon of street children by collaborating with local governments and other

service providers. The affected families should be involved in the creation of strategies to both prevent and to avoid the spread of the problem of street children (Molahlehi, 2014).

7.3.5. Recommendations in relation to pandemics by Consortium for street children (CSC, 2020)

In strategies to mitigate the pandemic, different government departments failed to have a targeted action plan for street children. Amongst some government responses to COVID-19, there is no visible inclusion of street children in such responses. The consortium, therefore, suggested the following recommendations:

- Governments should always provide street children with accurate, accessible and adequate information and health education that is appropriate to the age, cultural context and educational/ literacy level of every child.
- Social workers should organise awareness-raising campaigns to provide street children with pandemic information.
- Equal access for street children to essential services should be promoted.
- Governments should identify and engage with organisations and centres that face challenges in providing services to street children, among other types of difficulties, so as to provide adequate support to meet their needs.
- There should be cooperation in terms of resource allocation, partnerships and capacity building between governments and civil society organisations to ensure access to adequate housing and shelter during and in the recovery from the pandemic.
- Governments should consider the essential role of civil societies in providing care for children deprived of a family environment and cooperate with civil society organisations to support street children who are deprived of a family environment to reunite with their family or voluntarily reintegrate with them.
- Governments should cooperate with local, national and international organisations to design and implement effective policies that facilitate the reintegration of street children within safe and healthy family environments.
- In situations of protracted crisis, conflicts and natural disasters, governments must adopt targeted responses to protect and realise the right to food and nutrition of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised groups, such as street children.

- Governments should take all appropriate steps to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the survival and development of street children

If the aforementioned methods, recommendations or strategies for preventing the street children phenomenon can be successfully applied, the problem of street children will then be effectively combated and prevented from escalating.

7.4. IDENTIFIED GAPS IN THE LITERATURE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the literature review and the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be drawn out from this research.

This study discovered that there is a relationship between the age group of the parents and the reasons for their children to be on the street. This is with reference to some parents in this study who are old (over 60 years) and in their pension years. These parents are the biological parents to their children and not grandparents. Based on such findings, the researcher realised that the literature pays much attention to the challenges that grandparents are facing in grandparent families and not paying much attention to challenges faced by older parents, that are not in grandparents' families but in other family structures. This is because, this study found that such older parents in such families also experience the same challenges that grandparents face in grandparent families. These challenges include discipline and control of children which could contribute to such children going to the street because they are uncontrollable and do not listen to their parents, as parents had indicated. There are still older parents who are still raising their biological children with a huge age gap between the parent and the child. However, the literature mainly focuses on age gaps between grandparents and their grandchildren. This is evident from what has been stated by Hall et al. (2018), that one of the common concerns about grandparent care is that grandparents may be old and frail, and not physically strong enough to provide adequate care.

In addition, the generation gap between grandchildren and grandparents is greater than that between children and parents which poses further challenges for grandparents in respect of adequate parenting skills (Mokone, 2006: 187-200). It is therefore apparent that the literature pays much attention to the challenges that grandparents are facing in grandparent families only. Yet it

is also important to focus on the challenges that old parents in different family structures face, and not just by looking at the challenges that old parents face from grandparent family structures' point of view. For that reason, more research needs to be conducted of studies outlining the challenges that older parents face generally, and not just challenges that grandparents face in grandparent families.

Furthermore, this study revealed that the broad literature and particular versions of the feminist theory dwells much on the challenges faced by single parent families headed by mothers', and rarely say much about the challenges faced by fathers in single-parent families. As a result, the children in male-headed households could suffer the consequences. It is imperative that attention should also be given to challenges faced by single-parent families headed by fathers. It is therefore recommended that future studies of families should also pay attention to the male-headed household so that children from such families can also have positive development and outcomes.

Feminist theory can also be criticized, even while it makes inroads into the area, for the fact that it relies more on explaining the challenges faced by single-parent families specifically headed by females, mainly from an economic point of view and not from a general sociological point of view. Such families' challenges also go beyond the broader economic challenges as a sole contributor to their children turning to the street. There are other challenges beyond that, which single parents in such families face and these need to be explored. It is therefore recommended that future studies should study the overall challenges faced by single-parent families, and not just from an economic point of view, and in particular, the female-headed single-parent families as they rely more on such single female parents. So, the focus should also be from a general point of view on other intervening variables that contribute to the challenges that such single-parent families face, which ultimately sends such children to the street, and also with the focus on male single-parent families.

The Centre-managers indicated that when they do home visits before admitting the street children to the centres, they sometimes realize that there is really no need for them to admit some street children at all. This is because they realize that there is really no problem at their home forcing such children to go to the street as some of these children are just being influenced by friends. In such cases, they indicated that they do not admit the child to the Centre. It is thus recommended that if the Centre managers find out that there is really no valid reason that takes a child from home to the street, and if a child is uncontrollable and influenced by friends, the Centre managers should not just leave such children in such families without assisting them and their parents. If the Centre managers see no need for them to admit a child in the Centre and provide services to

them, they should then at least assist by, say, referring such children and parents to social workers. In this way they may assist parents in such families especially if children are uncontrollable and are not disciplined. The Centre managers do a lot, but also need to provide some avenue of hope, rather than just saying that everything is fine at the homes of some such street children. The Centre managers need to suggest alternative forms of intervention if there are problems in families rather than gloss the surface to find that there are no problems at home, as nothing may be as it seems. Peer pressure as a case in point may also need some intervention at the suggestion of Center managers.

It is further recommended that when centre managers and social workers assess the families of the children before reunification, they should not only rely mainly on assessing the economic conditions of such families. There is really no use to reintegrate children with their families if such children would go back to the street again, and therefore consider them as uncontrollable children as stated by centre managers. This clearly shows that some of such re-integration and reunification programmes are not effective, and it means that there is a serious underlying problem in the family that needs to be studied and analyzed more comprehensively. It is therefore important that before starting with the family reunification and reintegration programmes, the functioning of the families of those children should be firstly assessed holistically before children could be reunited and reintegrated with their families and with their parents. Assessing such families should include amongst others, the nature and type of the family structures where children are coming from. This is so in the case especially where a child comes from a single parent family or a stepfamily, as those are the main family structures that seem to face challenges and where many children in this study emerged from.

The researcher is of the view that the centre managers and social workers should not use the same strategies of family reintegration for all the family structures of street children. Different methods of reuniting children with their families should be used, because different family structures face different challenges and function in their own unique ways. This is then to say that, the analysis of a nuclear family structure before reuniting the child to it, could not be the same with the analysis of a single-parent family or stepfamily structure. Hence, the form of analysis of families of the street children should therefore be dependent on their context and circumstances, and on the kind of family structure they emerge from.

As the limited sample of this study has shown, compared to nuclear families and extended families, street children from single parent families and step families face major identified challenges. The researcher is therefore of the view that the analysis of families of street children

from single-parent and step-families should be done more intensively, thoroughly and with more in-depth information. After assessing the overall functioning of such families fully and finding what dysfunctions in those families do contribute to leading children to the street, the Centre managers and social workers could then assist in strengthening such families in whichever way possible and then try to guide the parents the way forward leading to better their children's outcomes. In this way, children could be reintegrated into a conducive family home environment that would be unlikely to drive them back to the street ever again.

This study also suggested that the government's family and children policies in South Africa should promote and empower parents facing challenges in different family structures, for the purpose of producing better child outcome and development. The government's specific family policy directions should not be stuck in the old or outdated idealised family structures, but should be aligned to the different new family structures that are emerging and evolving in the contemporary South African society. It can also be recommended that the government should set a budget aside for funding the street children centres to provide services to street children.

All the above suggestions are highly recommended. Since a family is a crucial socialization institution within society and provides care and support for children and parents being the first agents of socialization in the society. The family as a societal institution therefore needs to be exhaustively analyzed. Thus, it should not be taken lightly that the formation of different family structures does have a huge unique impact on children. Children are the ones that become the victims when they experience family disruptions, and when they transition from one family structure to the next. Such transitions can affect them negatively, and can affect their development negatively or poorly. Children are the future generation, which is of great importance in that, future research should study the institution of family in a much more depth. This is because, we cannot say that we exhaust studying such an institution, as it is a continuous process that needs to be explored in an ongoing manner, as different forms of families emerge in the society.

7.5. CONCLUSION

This study fulfilled its brief which was to fill in the gap in the literature of street children phenomenon, that most often focused on the economic condition of the families of street children as the main reason driving children away from home to the street. The findings that emerged from this study are quite different, as they extend beyond, and are different from the focus on purely

financial issues and implications that have been raised by many studies on the street children phenomenon. Many intervening variables within different family structures that drive children to the street have been revealed by this study's findings. Studies on the street children phenomenon should not ignore the fact that different factors and dynamics in the family structures other than poverty also play a role of sending children to the street. Therefore, as intended, the findings of this study revealed that indeed poverty is an important factor, but is not the only main factor that drives children to the street. There are other intervening dynamics and variables, in a complex whole, within different family structures which also contribute as one salient factor to the emergence of the street children phenomenon.

Thesis output

Journal publications:

- 1. Name of the journal (peer review):** African Journal in Education & Transformation (AJET)
Volume 2, Edition 1 (May 2022) (ISSN 2788-6379)
Title of the paper: Street Children and Access to Education as a Basic Right (pages 48-58)
Author: Karabo Mohapanele
- 2. Name of the journal:** Social Sciences and Education Research Review (SSERR)
volume 9
Title of the paper: Exploring street children resilience during COVID-19 in South Africa: an exploratory literature review
Authors: Karabo Mohapanele and Tendai Makwara

Conference presentation:

Name of the Conference: 21st Annual Conference of the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM)

Title of the paper presented: Governments' responses to street children during COVID-19

Date: 26 to 30 September 2022

Venue: East London ICC, South Africa

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR STREET CHILDREN

- Age
- Gender
- Level of education
- Race
- Do you have a family?
- Tell me about your family structure and background (Who do you stay with at home, the family economic condition, etc)
- How is the family environment for you, tell me how life is at home?
- How is your relationship with your parent/s (communication, parental guidance and discipline and parenting style from your parent/s towards you)?
- Why you left your home and decide to be on the street?
- How do your parent/s feel about you being on the street?
- How long did you live on the street?
- Do you prefer to be in the Centre under the centre management or to be independently on the street and why?
- Have you ever gone back and then ended up back on the street again, if so why?
- How would you wish things were different at home that would stop you to be on the street?
- If there can be a solution to the reason/s that drives you to the street, would you agree to be reunited with your family and stay home permanently with your family and quit street life?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- Age, Gender
- Level of education
- Race
- Relationship to the child (mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandfather/mother)?
- Education
- Tell me about the family structure and background (how many family members, the family economic condition, etc).
- How is the family environment for your child at home?
- How is your relationship with your child (tell me about the kind of communication, parental guidance and discipline and parenting style towards your child)?
- Why do you think your child left home and went to the street?
- Did your child share with you his/her reasons why he/she went to the street, if so, what are those reasons?
- How do you feel about your child being on the street?
- How long did your child live on the street before they could go to the centre and receive services from there?
- Do you go to the centre when you are called for a meeting by centre managers?
- Have your child ever come back home and then ended up back on the street again, if so why do you think he/she went back?
- Have you asked your child to come back home, and what did he/she said?
- Do you wish that he/she could come back home for good?
- If so, what is it that you think perhaps can be done or you can do and change or sort out at home that will not drive the child away to the street again?
- If there can be a solution to the reason/s that you think drives your child to the street, would you agree to be reunited with your child so that they can stay home permanently and quit street life?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX 3: KGAKALA DROP IN CENTRE ENTRY ACCESS LETTER



Enquiry: 076 4141822, monewangpk@gmail.com

Dear Ms Karabo Mohapanele (22386424)

As per your request, this communiqué serves to inform you have been granted the permission to conduct research with the street children in Kgakala Drop in Centre in Leeudoringstad.

The title of your doctoral research is: The impact of family structure and its dynamics on the street children phenomenon in North West Province of South Africa.

All the best for your studies

Mr Kuape Monewang (Project Manager)

Date: 15/03/2021

APPENDIX 4: LETSEMA DROP IN CENTRE ENTRY ACCESS LETTER

528 Manaka street

Tshing Ventersdorp

2710

Email: letsemastr@gmail.com

Contact number: 0718478152

05 February 2021

Attention: Ms KG Mohapanele

Student no: 22386424

Subject: Approval to conduct research in Letsema drop in centre, Ventersdorp in respect of Ms KG Mohapanele – Student No: 22386424

This letter serves to inform you that Letsema drop in centre has granted you the permission to conduct research with the street children in the shelter for academic purposes.

The registered research title for your PhD research project is: **"The impact of family structure and its dynamics on street children phenomenon in the North West province of South Africa"**.

We wish you well for your studies.

Ms Polena Matlapeng

Shelter Project Manager



LETSEMA STREET KIDS

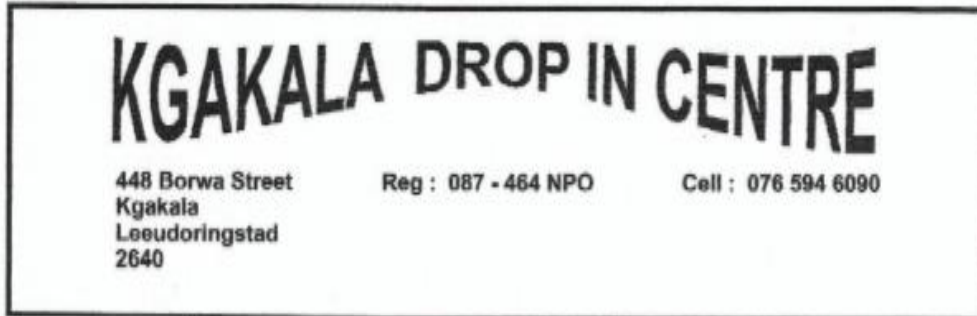
Cell: 078 340 8370

528 Manaka street

Tshing Location, Ventersdorp, 2710

N.P.O. No: 047-676

APPENDIX 5: KGAKALA CENTRE: STANDBY SOCIAL WORKER (DURING INTERVIEWS) CONFIRMATION LETTER



TO: MS KARABO MOHAPANELE

FROM: MR KUAPE MONEWANG

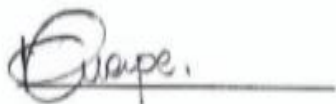
DATE: 28 MAY 2021

SUBJECT: CORNFIRMATION OF SOCIAL WORKER

Dear Ms Mohapanele

This is to confirm that Tshwaro Tshipo who is Kgakala Drop in Centre Social Worker will be on standby to assist with the counselling during interviews with the participants when they experience socio – emotional distress.

Mr Kuape Monewang (Project Manager)



Date: 28 MAY 2021

APPENDIX 6: LETSEMA CENTRE: STANDBY SOCIAL WORKER (DURING INTERVIEWS) CONFIRMATION LETTER

528 Manaka street

Tshing Ventersdorp

2710

Email: letsemastr@gmail.com

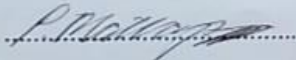
Contact number: 0718478152

31 May 2021

Dear Karabo

This letter serves as a proof that Ms Thato Nakedi is a centre's social auxiliary worker who will be available to support participants by providing post-interview consultations and counselling in a case where participants will require psychological assistance or a debriefing session after the interviews for your research project.

Ms Polena Matlapeng



APPENDIX 7: MACQUARIE ONLINE TRAINING MODULE CERTIFICATE



Certificate

April 30, 2021

This is to certify that Ms. Karabo Mohapanele has successfully completed the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Online Training Module for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Macquarie University