Narrative Identities: Voices of the unemployed youth in a low-income community in South Africa

by

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I would rather be ashes than dust!
I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze
than it should be stifled by dry rot.
I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow,
than a sleepy and permanent planet.
The function of man is to live, not to exist.
I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them.
I shall use my time.
Jack London

What a privilege it was to be afforded an opportunity to do this work. My participants, who shared themselves with me, and entrusted me with their narratives, humbled me. Thank you for your openness and I hope our work together makes you proud and becomes a meaningful contribution to the manner in which interventions for unemployed youth are designed and effected.

Thank you mommy for believing in me. I love you with all my heart.

I have no words to express my gratitude to my husband Abu Addae for the nourishing love and care; for being there with me and going the extra mile to create a conducive environment for me to excel. Thank you sunshine. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

Narrative identity refers to the stories we tell about who we are and how we have come to be who we are. This study explores the context, content, key constructs and discourses of the narrative identities of 10 unemployed young people of Kayamandi accessed through a participatory action research process. There is a dearth of studies on narrative identity in low income, urban contexts and especially with unemployed young people. This study aims to inform the understanding of narrative identity in an under-researched context vis-a-vis the contemporary research base.

Narratives are unique, individual and subjective thus a qualitative, interpretivist research approach was adopted. Narrative Inquiry and Participatory Action Research were the primary methodologies employed in the study whilst social constructionism served as the theoretical framework. Ten in-depth life story interviews were conducted with unemployed youth followed by a series of group discussions. The data were analysed using Template Analysis and Narrative Analysis. The initial, a priori themes emanating from the template analysis were categorised using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and these themes were then further analysed using narrative analysis into salient discourses.

Agency, communion and meaning-making were the narrative themes that defined the youth's narrative identities. The grand narratives that emerged were: how poverty fuels unemployment; what it means to be a responsible man/woman; the double edge of education; the importance of (social) support, and the connection between social support and pregnancy. Further analysis revealed the manifestation of ubuntu; freedom of expression; the differences in engagement with unemployment by young men and women; the enduring impact of racism, and the salience of

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capitalist principles. The dissertation concludes with a proposed intervention framework that appreciates the heterogeneity of unemployed youth and their experiences.

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OPSOMMING

Narratiewe identiteit verwys na die stories wat ons vertel van wie ons is en hoe ons gekom het waar ons is. Hierdie studie verken die konteks, inhoud, sleutelkonstrukte en diskoerse van die narratiewe identiteite van 10 werklose jongmense van Kayamandi waarby toegang verkry was deur 'n deelnemende aksie navorsingsproses. Daar is 'n gebrek aan studies oor narratiewe identiteit in lae inkomste, stedelike kontekste en werklose jong mense. Hierdie studie beoog om die begrip van narratiewe identiteit in 'n onder-nagevorsde konteks in verband met die kontemporêre navorsingsbasis in te lig.

Narratiewe is uniek, individueel en subjektief, dus 'n kwalitatiewe, interpretatiewe navorsings benadering is aangeneem. Narratiewe Ondersoek en Deelnemende Aksie Navorsing was die primêre metodologieë wat in die studie gebruik is, terwyl sosiale konstruksionalisme gedien het as die teoretiese raamwerk. Tien in-diepte lewensverhaal onderhoude was uitgevoer met werklose jeug, gevolg deur 'n reeks groepbesprekings. Die data is geanaliseer met behulp van Templaat Analise en Narratiewe Analise. Die aanvanklike temas wat uit die narratiewe analise voortspruit, is gekategoriseer met behulp van Bronfenbrenner se ekologiese sisteemteorie en hierdie temas was toe verder ontleed met behulp van die narratiewe analise.

Behulpsaamheid, eenheid en betekenismaking was die verhaal temas wat die jeug se narratiewe identiteite beskryf het. Die groot diskoerse wat na vore gekom het, was: hoe armoede werkloosheid aanspoor; wat dit beteken om 'n verantwoordelike man / vrou te wees; die dubbele kante van onderwys; die belangrikheid van (sosiale) ondersteuning, en die verband tussen sosiale ondersteuning en swangerskap. Verder het die diskoerse die manifestasie van ubuntu geopenbaar; vryheid van spraak; die verskille in die betrokkenheid by werkloosheid deur jong

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mans en vrouens; die volgehoue impak van rassisme, en die volharding van die kapitalistiese beginsels. Die proefskrif sluit af met 'n voorgestelde intervensie raamwerk wat die heterogeniteit van werklose jongmense en hul ervarings waardeer.

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USHWANKATHELO

Isazisi-mbaliso [narrative identity] sibhekiselele kumabali esiwabalisayo ngathi kwanendlela esithi sifikelele ngayo kobo bume singabo. Olu phononongo ludandalazisa imeko, umongo, izakhi ezingundoqo kwakunye neencoko zezasisi-mbaliso zabantu abatsha abali-10 abangasebenziyo eKayamandi ekuthe kwafikelelwa kuzo ngenkqubo yophando lwesenzo sokuthabath' inxaxheba [i-participatory action research process]. Kukho ukunqongophala okukhulu ngezifundo ezingesazisi-mbaliso kubantu abafumana imivuzo ephantsi, kwiimeko zasezidolophini kwaye ingakumbi kubantu abatsha abangasebenziyo. Esi sifundo sijonge ukwazisa ngokuqondwa kwesazisi-mbaliso kwimeko engaphandwanga isiseko sophando selo xesha.

Iimbaliso zezikhethekileyo, zingomntu ngamnye kwaye azikhethi-cala kungoko zizezohlobo [qualitative], kuye kwamkelwa indlela ye-interpretivist research. I-Narrative Inquiry ne-Participatory Action Research ibizezona methodi ziphambili ukusetyenziswa kolu phononongo ngelixa yona i-social constructionism isebenze njengesakhelo sengcingane [theoretical framework]. Udliwano-ndlebe lwabantu abali-10 nolunzulu ngobomi lwaqhutywa kulutsha olungasebenziyo lwalandeliswa ngoluhlu lweengxoxo zamaqela. Ingcombolo yahlahlelwa kusetyenziswa i-Template Analysis ne-Narrative Analysis. Imixholo yokuqala esukela kuhlolo lwembaliso yahlelwa kusetyenziswa ithiyori eyi-ecological systems kaBronfenbrenner yaza le mixholo yaphinda yahlelwa ngokungaphezulu kusetyenziswa i-Narrative Analysis.

I-Arhente, ikhomyuniyoni nokwenziwa kwentsingiselo beziyeyona mixholo yembaliso eyachaza izazisi-mbaliso zolutsha. Iingxoxo eziphambili ezavelayo zingokumalunga: indlela indlala ethi ikubasele ngayo ukungabikho kwemisebenzi; kuthetha ukuthini na yindoda/ibhinqa

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elinoxanduva; ubumbolo-mbini bemfundo; ubaluleko (ekuhlaleni) lwenkxaso, kwakunye nonxibelelwano phakathi kwenkxaso yasekuhlaleni kunye nokumitha. Ngaphezu koko, iingxoxo zavelisa ukubonakaliswa kobuntu; inkululeko yokuzivakalisa; umahluko ekuzixakekiseni nokungabikho kwemisebenzi kubantu abatsha abangamadoda nabangamabhinqa; ukunyamezela ifuthe lengcinezelo, kwakunye nobaluleko lwemigaqo-siseko yobukhapitali. Le dizeteyishini iphela ngesakhelo esindulula ungenelelo esibonisa ukungafani kolutsha olungasebenziyo kwakunye namava walo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION……ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……iii
ABSTRACT……v
OPSOMMING……vii
USHWANKATHELO……ix
APPENDICES……xvii
LIST OF TABLES……xviii
LIST OF FIGURES……xix
CHAPTER 1. Introduction……1
1.1 The Impact of Poverty……1
1.2 Aim of the Study……3
1.3 Rationale……4
1.4 Research Context……4
1.4.1 The Career Life Project……6
1.4.2 Entry……6
1.5 Key Constructs Defined……8
1.5.1 Narratives……8
1.5.2 Narrative identity……9
1.5.3 Ubuntu……9
1.5.4 Unemployment……10
1.6 Chapter Overview……10
1.7 Summary……10
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW……12
2.1 Unpacking Identity……12

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

2.1.1 Identity studies……13
2.1.2 Narrative and Narrative Identity……13
2.1.3 Erikson's psychosocial theory of development……17
2.1.4 Marcia's Identity status theory……25
2.1.5 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory of human development……27
2.1.6 Vocational/career identity……28
2.1.6.1 Narrative career counselling……31
2.1.7 Identity construction in the African context: Ubuntu and cultural variation in the self-concept……32
2.2 Identity as a Contested Social Construct……34
2.3 Identity in Context……36
2.4 Summary ……37
CHAPTER 3. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF UNEMPLOYMENT……39
3.1 Introduction……39
3.2 Key Theories in the Psychology of Unemployment……39
3.2.1 Latent deprivation theory……40
3.2.2 Vitamin theory……41
3.2.3 Agency restriction theory……42
3.2.4 Summary……43
3.3 Youth and Unemployment……44
3.3.1 Who are the youth?……44
3.3.2 Unemployment……44
3.3.3 A global look at youth unemployment……45
3.3.4 Unemployment in Europe……47

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

3.3.5 Unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa……..…….....…..48
3.3.6 Youth unemployment in South Africa…….…….....…..50
3.4 Psychological Impact and Scarring Effect of Youth Unemployment.....53
3.4.1 Coping…….....……...56
3.4.2 Resilience…….....……..57
3.5 Summary…….....……..61
CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY.....62
4.1 Philosophical Approach…….....62
4.1.1 Theoretical framework: social constructionism.....62
4.2 Methodological Design: Research Design and Methods…….....…….63
4.2.1 Narrative inquiry……..……...63
4.2.2 The role of stories in African traditions…….....…...66
4.3 Phases of the Study…….....….....…..67
4.3.1 Phase 1…….....….....68
4.3.2 Phase 2…….....….....68
4.3.3 Phase 3…….....……70
4.3.4 Phase 4…….....….....……70
4.3.5 Reference group process…….....71
4.4 Participatory Action Research and Action Research.…….....72
4.5 Recruitment Process and Data Collection…….....75
4.5.1 Life story interview.....77
4.6 Transcription.....78
4.7 Analysis and Interpretation of Findings.....78
4.7.1 Template Analysis.....79
4.7.1.1 Limitation of Template Analysis 80

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

4.7.2 Narrative Analysis……81
4.8 Rigour……82
4.8.1 Credibility ……83
4.8.2 Transferability……83
4.8.3 Dependability……84
4.8.4 Confirmability……84
4.9 Ethical Considerations……85
4.9.1 The decision to not pay participants……86
4.10 Reflexivity……87
4.11 Summary……91
CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS……93
5.1 Introduction……93
5.2 Biography of the Participants – Simulated CVs……94
5.2.1 *Akhona*……94
5.2.2 *Fezeka*……94
5.2.3 *Nhlakanipho*……95
5.2.4 *Kamva*……95
5.2.5 *Ntombi*……96
5.2.6 *Owami*……96
5.2.7 *Ongavumi*……97
5.2.8 *Samkelisiwe*……97
5.2.9 *Thando*……97
5.2.10 *Thatheka*……97
5.3 *A Priori* Themes ……98
5.3.1 Individual……101

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

5.3.2 Microsystem.....124
5.3.3 Mesosystem.....137
5.3.4 Exosystem.....140
5.3.5 Macrosystem.....144
5.4 Summary.....151
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION 154
6.1 Making Sense of the Youth Narratives.....154
6.2 Narrative Analysis.....156
6.2.1 Poverty fuels unemployment 156
6.2.2 The very real lack of resources and the overlooking of internal resources.....158
6.2.3 What it means to be a responsible man/woman.....158
6.2.4 The double edge of education.....159
6.2.5 The importance of social support.....161
6.2.6 The connection between social support and pregnancy.....162
6.2.7 Ubuntu manifests.....163
6.2.8 Freedom of expression.....164
6.2.9 Gender and engagement: aphi amajita? (translated, "where are the guys?").....166
6.2.10 The enduring impact of racism and the salience of capitalist principles.....167
6.3 Summary.....167
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION.....170
7.1 Introduction.....170
7.2 Recommendations.....173
7.3 Limitations.....177
7.4 Conclusion.....179
7.4.1 Implications.....181

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

REFERENCES…….....……183

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

Appendices

Appendix A Participant Consent Form in isiXhosa ….....…….....194
Appendix B Participant Consent Form in English.....198
Appendix C Life Story Interview in English.....200
Appendix D Biographical Information of Participants in English.....202
Appendix E Focus Group Script and Questionnaire in English.....203
Appendix F Life Story Interview in isiXhosa.....204
Appendix G Focus Group Script and Questionnaire in isiXhosa.....210
Appendix H Biographical Information of Participants in isiXhosa.....211
Appendix I Ethical Clearance Certificate.....212
Appendix J PAR Intervention Schedule.....213

Stellenbosch University https://scholar.sun.ac.za

List of Tables

Table 1. Super's career developmental tasks.....30
Table 2. Categories, themes and sub-themes.....100

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List of Figures

Figure 1. Phases of intervention……....67
Figure 2. Proposed unemployed youth development strategy graphic……176

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The post-apartheid South African context in low-income, urban communities is characterised by high levels of daily stressors on account of deprivation, poverty and violence (Mosavel, Ahmed, Ports, & Simon, 2013). These stressors are of grave concern and consequence to youth as they attempt to negotiate the developmental tasks of adolescence whilst unprotected sex, substance abuse and vagrancy increase rampantly (Mosavel et al., 2013). The unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2019 rose to 27.6% but the burden of unemployment seems to be shouldered by youth, with 55.2% of this cohort aged between 15 and 24 believed to be unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2019). While the normative developmental expectation for youth is that of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, consolidating a personal and social identity whilst considering work and other social roles, for many youth, identity formation may be under threat because of the interplay of adverse structural conditions that undermines this process.

1.1 The Impact of Poverty

Richmond (2007) notes that poverty is a multifarious concept but there are a few key tenets that capture the essence of what it means to be poor. Foremost amongst these is the deprivation of material resources, notably, the resources needed to survive. Human dignity, identity and agency are also key factors because there are people who, in the attempt to survive,

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may have to relinquish self-respect and are not able to meet even the bare minimum of social obligations in society. There is also a subjective component that speaks to the suffering felt by the poor due to deprivation. In light of these considerations, poverty can be construed in a narrow or broad sense. In the narrowest sense of the term, poverty means a lack of income. However, in a broader sense, "poverty can be seen as multidimensional, encompassing other issues such as housing, health, education, access to services and other avenues of accessing resources, ... 'social capital', and access to social power relations" (Richmond, 2007, p. 10).

Poverty often means that there is limited access to material and psychosocial home-learning resources for children (Dearing, 2008; Engle & Black, 2008). This means that poor youth may not be privy to a broad range of learning materials and opportunities that they may need and parents may not be as available to offer their time and support which may lead to diminished cognitive performance and achievement (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). The theories of developmental psychology associate poverty with social-emotional problems characterised by parental stress and parental mental health concerns on account of parental stress (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Dearing, 2008).

Parental mental illness is oft correlated with parental practices that are less warm and supportive, and more punitive (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Dearing, 2008). Such parenting practices can facilitate an escalation in social-emotional problems in youth (Dearing, 2008). Insufficient developmental stimulation and opportunities for learning at home, in schools and in the community can be a source of the significant differences in achievement and cognitive performance of poor youth compared to middle-class and wealthy youth (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). The combination of bedevelling crime, negative peer influences and punitive parenting

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practices in communities can also contribute to the social-emotional problems that poor youth present with (Dearing, 2008; Engle & Black, 2008).

In addition to considering the consequences of poverty, a review of the key determinants of this phenomenon is essential. An antecedent that contributes significantly to poverty is unemployment. Cassim and Oosthuizen (2014) aver that unemployed youth are rendered unemployable by a range of socio-economic factors. They tend to have lower levels of education, may have dropped out of school and may be without the requisite literacy, numeracy and communication skills required by the labour market (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Yu, 2013). Unemployed youth also tend to be without strong networks or social capital that would allow them to access work opportunities, and may not have the requisite financial resources to go where there is demand for labour (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Seekings, 2014). Unemployment will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3 along with its impact and sequelae. This account of poverty is foregrounded, as a study on (youth) unemployment would be incomplete without some engagement with poverty, given that many households in marginalised parts of South Africa – including those in Kayamandi, where this study was located – live in abject poverty.

1.2 Aim of the Study

This study sought to uncover the voices (narrative identities) of a sample of unemployed youth living in Kayamandi, so as to provide an understanding of who they are, reflect on the discourses that inform who they are, what their experiences have been, and what kind of influences (barriers, needs, resources and supports) play a role in their aspirations for a better life (narrative content). To this end, the study explores the content, key constructs and discourses of narrative identities of ten unemployed young people of Kayamandi accessed through a participatory action research process. This particular methodological approach was considered in

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order to stay as close as possible to the experiences of the youth. It was important that their voices were clear and not diluted by researcher interpretation and that the participants benefit from the process.

1.3 Rationale

Some scholars posit that research on the psychosocial effects of unemployment may be of little or no practical utility to the unemployed (Du Toit, 2003). However, research on unemployed youth has been shown to help create awareness and sensitivity to the plight of unemployed youth and, if thoughtfully constructed, may hold potentially empowering benefits for participants themselves (Du Toit, 2003). Studies on narrative identity have relied heavily on high-end education samples (Meeus, 2011). Consequently, there is a dearth of studies on narrative identity of participants from low-income, urban contexts.

This study, therefore, will contribute to understanding narrative identity in an under-researched context with participants of a different culture and hemisphere from the current research base. The study also foregrounds African conceptions of identity, an understudied aspect of identity research in the South African context. Ultimately, the aim of the study is to: inform interventions relating to, on behalf of, and involving unemployed youth, and assist intervention developers to have a sense of how best to conceptualise their interventions given the lived experiences and narratives of unemployed youth. The study also served as an intervention aimed at empowering unemployed youth in Kayamandi, a township on the outskirts of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape region of South Africa.

1.4 Research Context

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Kayamandi is a township nestled on the northern outskirts of Stellenbosch. The most frequently spoken language is isiXhosa (Stats SA, 2018). Kayamandi was established in 1941 as a settlement for black workers and is inhabited predominantly by farm, factory and migrant workers (Rock, 2011). Initially there were approximately 55 houses (Darkwa, 2006) but with the steady growth on account of migrants from the Eastern Cape (Darkwa, 2006; Rock, 2011), the population of Kayamandi has since grown to 24 645 as per the 2011 census (Stats SA, 2018).

In 1968, when the apartheid government removed the Influx Control Act, more people migrated to the Western Cape (the province in which Stellenbosch is located) for better employment prospects. This led to a strain on already limited resources such as housing, water, sanitation, electricity and schools (Darkwa, 2006; Rock, 2011). Informal housing known as shacks were erected in commons and open spaces. However, strides have been made in turning male hostels into family units (Darkwa, 2006).

Over the years, Kayamandi has grown and more informal settlements have been erected. A new area called eNkanini – directly translated,"by force" – has mushroomed, housing at least 4500 people (Toms, 2015). Recent protest actions by residents have highlighted the overcongestion in Kayamandi, which is hemmed in by farmlands and an industrial complex. The infrastructure in Kayamandi includes a multi-purpose centre/business and tourism centre known as the Kayamandi Economic and Tourism Corridor (colloquially referred to as the Kayamandi Corridor). There are two high schools, three primary schools, a library, a medical clinic, a police station and a number of churches (Toms, 2015). Kayamandi has other facilities such as a BMX track, a children's recreational area as well as an incomplete stadium (Toms, 2015). There are also local shops (spazas), a local restaurant (Amazink) and small businesses such as street vendors selling barbeque meat (colloquially referred to as 'tshisa nyamas'), hair salons in

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prefabricated containers, as well as tourist guesthouses (homestays) (Albien, 2013, 2018; Dube, 2011; Toms, 2015). A community assessment conducted by Toms (2015) also found 19 active support organisations that offer services in Kayamandi.

1.4.1 **The Career Life Project**

The Kayamandi Career Life Project is a service learning project of Stellenbosch University's Psychology Department comprising of a number of action research interventions run by postgraduate students under the supervision of Professor Anthony Naidoo. As part of their coursework, Career Psychology honours students and Community Counselling and Clinical Psychology master's students are involved – as a practical component of their respective modules – in Kayamandi. There are also master's students (Albien, 2013; Matshabane, 2017) and doctoral students (Albien, 2018; Rabie, 2017) who have conducted their research projects in Kayamandi. I am one of the doctoral students who have been involved in the project. The Career Psychology honours students, as well as and volunteers from other psychology honours classes, render career guidance and counselling to the high school learners at the two secondary schools in Kayamandi.

1.4.2 **Entry**

I developed an engaged relationship with the Kayamandi community over several years having spent a year in 2011 as part of the Community Counselling and Clinical Psychology master's community service module that was located within Kayamandi (Dube, 2011). At the time, I enlisted the support of community organisations and key community structures in order to gain access, legitimacy and credibility within the community. Through this process, I got the opportunity to familiarise myself with the community-based organisations in Kayamandi. In 2015 the Career Life Project hosted an unemployed youth symposium in which I played an

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organising role. The symposium aimed to facilitate dialogue between unemployed youth and the community-based organisations that offered support to unemployed youth. The need for an intervention with and for unemployed youth was voiced at this forum.

Following the symposium, I began to introduce holistic career guidance sessions to unemployed youth at the Entabeni Cyber Cafe at the Kayamandi Corridor where the youth could also access the internet resources. A career life advisor was present at the Kayamandi Corridor to help youth with their career concerns and decide how best to proceed in achieving their career goals. The career life advisor was a research assistant registered for a psychology master's degree, who also co-ordinated the Career Life Project. Later, two unemployed youth were recruited and trained in ethical practice in the community and took on roles as research assistants. In 2015, a regular presence was maintained at the Entabeni Cyber Café where, either myself or a research assistant were available at least 3 days a week. This presence began to create the building blocks for the research and intervention reported in this dissertation and in the master's thesis of the research assistant (Matshabane, 2017).

Upon entry into the community I made contact with several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to create awareness about the study and to enlist their assistance in the recruitment of potential participants. After several months of establishing a presence in Kayamandi alongside the Career Life Project that was offering career counselling at the local internet café, I contacted eligible participants to commence with the initial individual life story interviews. This was followed two weeks later with the start-up of a focus group/action group intervention where, as a group, we discussed and sought to find ways of addressing the challenges that the youth were experiencing. We looked at job search skills, Curriculum Vitae (CV) writing, internet search techniques, presentation and communication skills as well as how

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to prepare for an interview. We explored their career aspirations and goals and then analysed internal and external resources that they could leverage in order to move towards their goals.

Throughout this process, the aim was to better understand the experience of being an unemployed young person beyond the impersonal statistics that often characterise studies relating to youth unemployment. Thus, the current study employed a qualitative research design comprising suitable methodology to engage with their life stories. In particular, social constructivism highlights the power of language and how it mediates reality and relationships in general (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). It locates interactions and phenomena within a social, cultural and historical context where traditional notions of objective 'Truth' are problematised (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). Therefore, social constructionism seemed to be an apt theoretical framework to underpin the study. The study seeks to understand how unemployed youth make sense of their current circumstances from their own vantage point. Narrative inquiry and Participatory Action Research served as the methodological framework used to effect the study. Since the study sought to elicit narratives from the unemployed youth, to analyse the data, Template Analysis and Narrative Analysis were enlisted as lenses to make sense of the data. Template Analysis offers structure in the process of analysis without prescribing a theoretical or philosophical framework as well as flexibility in the coding structure (King, 2012). Narrative analysis facilitates nuanced engagement with narratives (Crossley, 2007).

1.5 Key Constructs Defined

Narratives, narrative identity, ubuntu and unemployment are the key constructs that are expatiated in the study. Ahead of this, they are first defined here.

1.5.1 ***Narratives***

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Narrative can serve as both a mechanism to examine identity and the conduit by which identity is formed (McAdams, 1993; Hammack, 2008; McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010). Narratives are significant in that they can be transformative; they can facilitate learning and self-discovery. Narratives can also serve as sites of creativity and play, since they can help to explore different aspects of the self.

1.5.2 ***Narrative identity***

McAdams (2008) elucidated how personal narratives and the life story are helpful in better understanding the area of narrative identity. It is through narrative identity that the self comes to terms with society. McAdams (2008) elaborates on six common principles in relation to the narrative study of lives: that the self is storied, that stories integrate lives, and that stories are told in social relationships. Moreover, he outlines the ways in which stories change over time, that stories can serve as cultural texts and, lastly, that some stories are better than others. Narrative identity is then contextualised in terms of how it fits in with personality studies, how it emerges, and how it develops.

1.5.3 ***Ubuntu***

Ubuntu is a nuanced concept with no simple or singular definition though common features include respecting the human dignity of others, treating and respecting others as human beings, group solidarity, human interdependence, caring, and sensitivity to others' needs (Watson, McMahon, Mkhize, Schweitzer, & Mpofu, 2011). This is expressed in the adage "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" – translated, "a person, is a person because of others". Ubuntu essentially refers to our common humanity, our interconnectedness, and our spiritual connectedness (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Ramokgopa, 2001; Watson et al., 2011).

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1.5.4 ***Unemployment***

Unemployment is described as a multifaceted and complex construct that comprises situational (joblessness), motivational (job search) and medico-legal aspects (availability and capacity to work; de Witte, Rothman, & Jackson, 2012; Moser, 2006). Unemployment pertains to people who are available and have the capacity to work (de Witter et al., 2012), but are thwarted in their endeavours to attain gainful employment.

1.6 Chapter Overview

Having introduced the study in this chapter, Chapter Two follows where the pertinent literature undergirding this study will be reviewed. Identity is discussed; narrative identity that serves as the organising theory will be elucidated, along with Erikson's stages of psychosocial development and including an understanding of identity in the South African context. Chapter Three provides a brief overview of the psychology of unemployment, and youth unemployment is discussed along with the psychological impact thereof. The study's methodology, theoretical framework and research design are covered in Chapter Four. Ethical considerations are provided, along with an account of my reflexivity as researcher. Chapter Five presents the findings of the study. It comprises a thorough engagement with the narratives emanating from the life story interviews and focus group discussions. The participants are first introduced, and the findings of the template analysis are then presented. Chapter Six presents the discussion of the findings. Grand narratives emanating from the findings are unpacked in an attempt to make sense of the youth narratives. The dissertation concludes with Chapter Seven which summarises the main findings of the study, presents the study's limitations, and offers recommendations and suggestions for further research.

1.7 Summary

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Kayamandi is a township bearing the structural scars of apartheid - overcrowding, poor infrastructure, facilities and services, and limited employment opportunities. The community is riddled with *inter alia*; significant youth unemployment, poverty, crime, housing concerns and much substance abuse (Dube, 2011). In such a context, young people looking for work may encounter numerous structural and invisible barriers that can affect the development of their identities (Kroger, 2007) and life trajectories. Many youth in Kayamandi have to contend with the reality of unemployment; this at a time in their development where work, career, and employment are tied to their sense of identity. In designing programmes aimed at intervening with unemployed youth, there is a paucity of research elucidating who comprises this group, what their stories are, and what it is that they want for themselves. An introduction to the study has been proferred, the impact of poverty as it relates to unemployment was discussed. The aim and rationale were presented along with an outline of the research context, a definition of key concepts, the research methodology pursued in the study and a chapter overview. In the ensuing chapter, the literature review pertinent to the study is presented.

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CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams for when dreams go, life is a barren field frozen with snow."

Langston Hughes

The voices of the unemployed youth of Kayamandi are foregrounded in the current study so that who the youth are is better understood (narrative identities); the discourses that inform who they are, their experiences and what kinds of influences (barriers, needs, resources and supports) play a role in their aspirations for a better life (narrative content) are explored.

This chapter affords the reader with an in-depth appreciation of the study's key constructs. Identity is unpacked bearing in mind that the study is not a treatise on identity. Prominent theories of identity in as far as they relate to the study and context are highlighted and explored. Narrative identity as the organising theory of identity employed in this study is examined, followed by a presentation of Erikson's psychosocial theory of development. Identity construction in the African context and the role of ubuntu are also explicated. Identity is a contested construct, and the reasons for this are foregrounded. Lastly a contextualisation of identity in the South African context is provided.

2.1 Unpacking Identity

The period from from age 16 until 24 denotes a developmental transition from adolescence into adulthood. During this phase of life, the individual undergoes rapid changes concurrently at a physical, social and psychological level. At a physical level there is an increase in muscle strength, weight and endurance; maximum height is reached by age 20 for males

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(Kroger, 2007). At a social level, this period usually marks the end of schooling, and a move either to an institution of higher learning or the world of work. Psychologically, this is the period when the identity formation process is consolidated; a time for individuals to consolidate a sense of self, values, choice of career and a better sense of their sexual and sex role identity (Curtis, 2015; Kroger, 2007). A number of theories have sought to explicate navigation between these stages. What follows is a discussion of identity studies, narrative and narrative identity, Erikson's psychosocial theory of development, Marcia's identity status theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development, and lastly, vocational/career identity along with narrative career counselling.

2.1.1 **Identity studies**

A central task of adolescence is the development of identity - gaining a sense of who one is in relation to others (Erikson, 1968). To create a compendium of identity is a daunting exercise, given the extensive literature base. There are few disciplines within the social sciences that have not, in one way or another, made a contribution to the arena of identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). An exhaustive account of identity as viewed by the myriad other disciplines is beyond the scope of this study. Thus, what follows is not a detailed literature review of identity studies, but a cursory engagement with a few prominent theories that have been influential in social psychology and have resonance in relation to the youth in Kayamandi. These include the theory of Narrative Identity that grounds the study, Erikson's developmental theory of identity as well as Marcia's identity status theory. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development will also be evinced, culminating in an elaboration of African conceptions of identity development.

2.1.2 **Narrative and Narrative Identity**

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In South African society, different groups try to keep a sense of continuity, coherence as well as collective identity in the wake of political and social transition by constructing different forms of narratives (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012). Once life experiences have been filtered through the narrative lens, the narratives created can be purposefully used (Singer, 2004). These stories can be employed to "raise our spirits, guide our actions or influence others as a tool of persuasion or rhetoric" (Singer, 2004, p. 437). Culture resides within individual identities and personalities - it is not merely 'out there' (McLean et al., 2017). Narratives afford us a mechanism by which to examine how the role of culture impacts personality and identity development.

Narrative identity speaks to the way in which we make meaning of our autobiographical past and outlines our perceptions of the future, thus providing life with a measure of meaning, purpose and unity (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Narrative identity should not merely be understood as the result of reflective consciousness that ignores prereflective experience, but rather, that narration and reflection serve as background processes which inform deliberation and articulation (Frie, 2011).

Narrative identity develops through autobiographical reasoning (McLean, 2008). Autobiographical reasoning is a self-reflective process where people form connections between themselves and the past, in the way they think and talk about their pasts, as a way of understanding themselves and creating a life story (McLean, 2008). Singer, Blagov, Berry and Oost (2013, p. 5) explicate that narrative identity:

> consists of a dual memory system that generates autobiographical memories, some of which, because of their relevance to long-term goals and enduring conflicts, evolve into self-defining memories. Convergences among self-defining memories lead to the creation

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of narrative scripts that schematize repetitive action outcome-emotional response sequences. Both self-defining memories and narrative scripts serve as the ingredients for an overall life story that, with time, grows in complexity as it adds "chapters" across the lifespan. One can think of the pool of self-defining memories and scripts as possessing a synchronic existence within narrative identity; they accumulate associations and connections, while remaining relatively static in the personality. One can think of the life story as diachronic – it moves forward in time and continually amends itself in light of new experiences.

Life-story memories are memories that relate to "important self-dimensions salient in a particular life period of an individual" (Singer et al., 2013, p. 9). They are connected to the pursuit of long-term goals, are significant, detailed, evocative and well-rehearsed vis-a-vis other autobiographical memories (Singer et al., 2013; Thomsen & Berntsen, 2009). Self-defining memories are those memories that are glaring, intensely affectively charged and also well-rehearsed. They build upon life-story memories through links to other key memories across one's life where there is a shared theme and sequence of narratives (Singer et al., 2013). A "scene" is a basic cognitive-affective unit of personality and comprises of an affect and the object of that affect. The repetitive linking of associated scenes leads to the creation of "scripts". Scripts are defined as the rules a person uses to predict, interpret, respond to and control a large set of scenes (Singer et al., 2013; Tomkins, 1979).

As adolescence unfolds along with cognitive development, so too, does narrative identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 2001; Pals, 2006). During the teenage years, the capacity to create links between present and past experiences in relation to the self, matures. As adolescents explore who they are and prepare for adulthood, these links form the bedrock of

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narrative identity. These links help to prepare the adolescent for the subsequent phase of development that commences in late adolescence and continues to the 20's – a period referred to as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Pals, 2006). Power and oppression play a critical role in identity development. Defining the self is more challenging when one's life does not conform to societal master narratives (McLean et al., 2017).

Right across the lifespan, identity continues to have relevance (Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2015; McAdams, 2015; McLean & Lilgendahl, 2019). New experiences may present themselves such as the birth of a child, divorce, retirement or other changes in a person's life. There is increased reflection and integrative meaning-making occurring right through mid-life and in later adulthood, coalescing in a more stable understanding of the self (McLean & Lilgendahl, 2019).

In uncovering discourses and the content of narrative identity, key constructs (life story constructs) in the participants' narratives can be highlighted. Some examples of the life story constructs in research on narrative identity are: agency communion, redemption, contamination, meaning-making, exploratory narrative processing and coherent positive resolution (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Agency refers to the extent to which the individual feels able to effect change in their lives or have an influence on others and the environment, either through demonstration of self-mastery, empowerment, achievement or status. Stories high on agency denote accomplishment and the ability to control one's fate. Communion refers to whether the individual shows or has an experience of interpersonal connectedness through love, friendship, dialogue or connectedness to a larger collective. Here, the emphasis is on intimacy, care and a sense of belonging. Redemption refers to when a particularly 'bad' or seemingly negative experience or circumstance leads to a markedly 'good' or seemingly positive positive. Thus, the result redeemed the initial unpleasant effect. Contamination marks experiences deemed

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good/positive which then shift to becoming negative, such that the negative completely mars or scars the initial positivity (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

Further, meaning-making refers to when an individual learns something from an event. This ranges from finding no meaning, to garnering a concrete lesson or a meaningful deep insight about life. Exploratory narrative processing refers to the degree to which the story is about the individual's personal explorations ranging from deep exploration to the development of a sophisticated, nuanced understanding of self. Coherent positive resolution outlines the degree to which tensions in the story are pressed so as to bring about a sense of closure and a positive ending (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

Two distinctions are drawn in the narrative identity literature that focus on difficult or identity-challenging experiences. Some researchers tend to look at the correlation between narrative characteristics and markers of developmental maturity. Others correlate narrative characteristics with markers of mental health and well-being (Pals, 2006). This study will be adopt the former approach. It will look at participants' experiences of unemployment and from those experiences, uncover these marginalised narratives and ascertain if there is room for co-construction of alternative narratives as well as scope for transformative discussions.

2.1.3 **Erikson's psychosocial theory of development**

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development purports that individuals need to negotiate eight stages across the course of their lives (Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2015). Psychosocial challenges or crises are faced by the individual at each stage. These psychosocial challenges and crises are not catastrophes (Branje & Koper, 2018). They can be moments of reckoning rendering an individual particularly vulnerable however, within them, there also lies significant

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potential for growth and well being. The way an individual resolves a particular crisis impacts the manner in which subsequent crises are resolved (Branje & Koper, 2018; Kroger, 2010). Not resolving a crisis adequately can impact personality development negatively and can result in a decreased state of well-being. Later experiences can influence successful resolution of stages at a later time (Branje & Koper, 2018).

Erikson posited the following eight psychosocial stages of development across the life span: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and, lastly, ego integrity versus despair.

Trust versus mistrust is the initial stage that is encountered during infancy between birth and 18 months. Here the key lesson is whether the infant's world is trustworthy and whether they can trust themselves (Kroger, 2007). If the infant's caregivers are able to provide a good enough and secure environment where the child's basic needs and needs for comfort and affection are provided, they are then able to learn that people are dependable and reliable. They can develop a sense of security, optimism, confidence and trust (Branje & Koper, 2018). When caregivers are unable to provide a good enough, secure environment and do not meet the child's needs through abuse and/or neglect, the child learns that the world is a dangerous place that is unreliable and unpredictable.

Autonomy versus doubt is confronted by children from the ages of 18 months to 3 years. At this stage the children need to grapple with whether they can be themselves (Erikson, 1968). The question is whether the child can satisy its own needs as s/he begins to discover her/his strengths and weaknesses (Branje & Koper, 2018). If caregivers are supportive and encouraging of healthy autonomy this can result in a sense of independence and healthy self esteem. Whereas

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if a child's caregivers are overly restrictive, demanding and critical, this can facilitate low self-esteem as well as shame and doubt in being able to cope with adversity (Branje & Koper, 2018).

Initiative versus guilt is the stage encountered between the ages 3 and 5 years. Here children are learning whether agentic action and movement is permissible (Branje & Koper, 2018). This is when preschoolers are eager to act more independently, taking initiative, making their own choices and feeling secure in their ability to plan and effect activities alone and with others. If this is thwarted, children may feel they are bothersome to people and a sense of guilt about their desire and needs may ensue. In adult life a sense of initiative is foundational to ambition and creativity (Branje & Koper, 2018).

Industry versus inferiority is negotiated by children between the ages of 5 and 12. The key question at this stage is whether the child can cope in the world. The aim is to develop a sense of competence and confidence in being able to make and do things in the world. A challenge at this stage will leave the child questioning her/his capability, may lead to the development of a low self esteem and a lack of motivation and lethargy (Branje & Koper, 2018).

Identity versus role confusion is faced between the ages of 13 until approximately 20 years. Here the aim is to discover who one is, while negotiating and struggling to be a part of social contexts (Erikson, 1968). Adolescents are often focused on how they are seen by others (Kroger, 2007). Role confusion reflects their uncertainty with how they fit in society and their inability or reluctance to make commitments (Branje & Koper, 2018; Danielsen, Lorem, & Kroger, 2000). They may delay entrance into adulthood and there may be a withdrawal from responsibility (Branje & Koper, 2018).

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Erikson (1968) locates identity development on a one-dimensional continuum, with identity synthesis in relation to identity confusion; identity consolidation pertained to the reciprocal relationship between identity synthesis and confusion (Bogaerts et al., 2019). Thus, healthy development requires synthesis and confusion. There is an association between exploration and commitment processes with identity confusion, because in the face of disatissfaction with their current identity structure, individuals may then begin engaging with their identity (Bogaerts et al., 2019; Schwartz et al., 2012).

When adolescents are unclear about how best to proceed on their life path, a reconsideration of commitments may occur resulting in a search of better fitting commitments. Proactive exploration and commitment processes do not necessarily predict identity synthesis and the reason for this remains unclear (Bogaerts et al., 2019). It is surmised that it may be because success in commitment and exploration is not guaranteed and that outcome, may or may not lead to synthesis. "[I]ndividuals may need to experience some degree of self-knowledge and internal coherence before they can explore which way they want to proceed in life and before they can evaluate their current commitments" (Bogaerts et al., 2019, p. 25).

Intimacy versus isolation features between the ages of 20 and 40 (Erikson, 1968). Once synthesised identity is resolved upon, the individual is then able to make meaningful, long-term and reciprocal commitments to others even in the face of ideological differences (Branje & Koper, 2018). If identity remains confused the individual may avoid intimacy or develop intimate relationhips that can be promiscuous. A fear of rejection as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation can occur with those who do not develop intimate relationships (Branje & Koper, 2018).

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Generativity versus stagnation ensues during middle adulthood between ages 40 to approximately 65 years (Erikson, 1968). Here the question is whether a person's life contributes meaningfully to society. Individuals who struggle at this stage develop a sense of stagnation and experience a lack of meaning and purpose (Branje & Koper, 2018; Erikson, 1968).

Ego integrity and despair is the final stage occurring from around age 65 onwards (Erikson, 1968). At this stage there is a slowing down of productivity and awareness of one's mortality (Branje & Koper, 2018). Adults who feel their lives were meaningless and unproductive may have feelings of guilt about their past (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). If there is a sense of having failed to achieve their goals, a sense of despair and hopelessness may result. Individuals who have a sense of acceptance and contentedness with their lived lives, significant others, and contributions they've made to society attain integrity (Erikson, 1968; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). Wisdom is developed, which allows them to reflect upon their lives with a sense of closure and completeness, and their inevitable and impending death is accepted (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001).

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development posits an influential theory of psychosocial development that views development as a fluid structure incorporating within the individual, psychological, social and biological forces (Erikson, 1968; Hammack, 2008). This stage based theory accounts for changes in individuals over time. Encountering and resolving conflicts or obstacles has been noted by some authors to be linked to more mature identity development. However, it is intimated that a plethora of obstacles and conflicts that seem overwhelming may impede identity formation (Danielsen, Lorem, & Kroger, 2000).

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Erikson's theory acknowledges the role of both nature and nurture in development. However, there has been criticism that Erikson's theory tends to have more of a focus on nature, a greater focus on the intrapsychic forces that inform behaviour vis-à-vis nurture (Archer, 2002; Ramokgopa, 2001; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Erikson's theory in its reference to a dynamic self that both responds to and is reproduced by the cultural, historical and social context, resonates with current theorising on human behavioural and psychological development (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Developmental psychologists have emphasised the need for the consideration of the particularity of experience in self-construction (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Feminist critique implores researchers to be mindful of imposing certain interpretations on people's experiences. When investigating development processes, markers of difference as well as commonality should be sought (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Thus, whilst there may be dissatisfaction with aspects of the theory, its usefulness should not be dismissed.

Erikson's theory has also been accused of being androcentric (Archer, 2002; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). The allusion to women's relationships as a reflection of the anatomical structure of their reproductive organs has been viewed as deeply problematic. Sorell & Montgomery, (2001, p. 115) add that:

> Just as their vaginas are designed to take in penises and their uteruses are designed to hold, grow, and nurture the babies conceived through penetration and incorporation, so their identities are designed to enfold, hold, and nurture others. The ultimate healthy psychosocial manifestations of this developmental mandate are marriage and motherhood. The gender-role standards and arrangements prevalent among the White middle class in the pre- and immediate post-World War II context in which Erikson formulated his theory were patriarchal and conservative. The theory is undoubtedly based

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to some extent on his observations of these arrangements and thus may be primarily descriptive rather than prescriptive.

Whilst Erikson's theory might indeed be descriptively androcentric and middle class, it need not bar scholars from testing the goodness of fit of its stages with different exemplars (Archer, 2002).

Ramokgopa (2001) further critiques Erikson's theory's emphasis with age regarding psychosocial development. He adds that there is no focus on rites of passage in Erikson's theory which are often significant markers of transitions in African traditions. Rites of passage can be important developmental adjuncts that can serve to facilitate entry into a new life stage as well as allow for the learning of pro-social behaviour (Ramokgopa, 2001). Ramokgopa (2001) disputes the universal applicability of Erikson's theory of psychosocial identity development and asserts that in African cultures stages of development are defined based on individual readiness as opposed to age. Further, in African cultures cooperation is often valued over competition as a measure of the normal development of self-identity. African society tends to be communal in nature and can prescribe that the African child be more collaborative in his/her engagement with others, share and refrain from being competitive. African cultures also emphasise interdependence over independence, in contradistinction to Erikson's psychosocial stage of autonomy and independence versus dependence (Ramokgopa, 2001).

Ramokgopa (2001) interviewed 150 elderly individuals who were residing in the rural village of Ga-Modjadji – the Balobedu area in Limpopo – about their life experiences from nascence to current life stage. The aim of his study was to ascertain the nature of indigenous African livelihood and explore the developmental stages of boy and girl children. Ramokgopa

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(2001) concluded that Erikson's psychosocial stages are viable for African children, however in the African context, the content of these stages is significantly influenced by cultural practices and may differ from one culture to the next.

This study considers a broader and more nuanced reading of Erikson's theory. There is resonance with sentiments espoused by Schacter (2015, p. 153) that Erikson's theory is:

> rich enough in concepts and insights to be able to transcend those that are particular to the specific era in which the theory was formulated…a dialogue between Erikson and the postmodern may produce significant new insights regarding identity. As a result of such a dialogue, Erikson's theory would not remain exactly the same.

In the current study there is a juxtapositioning of the urban and rural, on account of exposure to traditional African values and the globalised western mores. The conception of what it means to be human may possibly be hybrid – traditional African values (Ubuntu) and western conceptions of individuality informing the individual.

Thus, this study does not adhere to an essentialist view of Erikson's theory, rather accommodating aspects that are relevant and adapting those that don't resonate as noted by Ramokgopa (2001). Erikson's theory has particular relevance for this study precisely because it takes into account the social context of the individual in his/her development trajectory. As well articulated by Schacter (2015, pp. 154-155):

> Erikson would claim that there is a leeway also regarding the structure of identity and that the structure of identity formed should also be evaluated only relative to the cultural system, its goals, and its values. Erikson might claim that there are outlying constraints that are universal: A completely fragmented identity may be pathological, as would be a rigidly homogeneous one; however, that leaves ample room for a wide range of possible

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> structures of identity that are culturally constructed. And so, in such a rereading of Erikson, we may speak of a universal structure of identity only in a very loose way. … [Further,] identity researchers should not continue to insist that a specific structure is universally necessary. The empirical variation in structure should not be hierarchically ordered and evaluated by a supposedly universal standard, but rather should be described and then evaluated vis-à-vis the supposed social or personal goal that they were constructed to serve.

2.1.4 **Marcia's Identity status theory**

Erikson's psychosocial theory of development was further elaborated upon by Marcia (1966) and colleagues (Marcia et al., 1993). James Marcia posited four different styles that adolescents and young adults have to negotiate when considering identity defining decisions in, ideological, vocational and sexual domains. These are identity achievement (commitment following exploration), moratorium (in the process of exploration, vague commitments), foreclosure (commitment without exploration), and diffusion (no commitment, with or without exploration) (Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

The identity development process unfolds commencing with diffusion where the individual has made no identifications in any direction and is still exploring. This is followed by foreclosure where s/he can choose to cease exploration and settle on identifications as outlined by important people in her/his life. Moratorium can then ensue as one again looks at one's identity, embarking on deeper exploration and perhaps taking into consideration one's interests, preferences, worldviews and capabilities. This is followed by identity achievement which then informs one's life decisions such as career choice (Kroger et al., 2010; Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Marcia, 1966; Marcia et al., 1993).

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Numerous studies have looked at the trajectory of identity status shifts over the developmental course particularly towards the end of adolescence and during early adulthood (Kroger et al., 2010). These studies reveal both progressive and regressive patterns of identity status change over time. Progressive patterns of identity status change pertain to the move from diffusion through to identity achievement. Regressive patterns of identity status refer to the movement from moratorium or identity achievement to either diffusion or foreclosed. New research methods have highlighted the relationship between Erikson's theory vis-à-vis actual identity formation. However, the normative developmental course of change in identity status remains unclear (Kroger et al., 2010).

Construct validity for the identity statuses has been facilitated by hundreds of studies that have demonstrated that the statuses are consistent theoretically on certain personality development indicators (McLean, Köber, & Haraldsson, 2019). Both quantitative and qualitative studies of the identity statuses continue to corroborate that consolidated identity in late adolescence (identity achieved status) is associated with healthy development, deemed adaptive and a marker of general well-being (Kroger & Marcia, 2011; McLean, et al., 2019). Meta-analyses on individuals with identity achieved status reveal higher ego development that is maintained over time. However, by 36 years of age many individuals have yet to attain identity achieved status (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010; McLean, et al., 2019).

Generally, it seems as though descriptions of individuals in young adulthood classified as having the identity statuses - diffuse or moratorium - tend to outline some measure of distress. It is unclear as to whether the distress is as a result of elements unrelated to identity that make identity commitment a challenge or whether the distress is on account of not making an identity

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commitment (McLean et al., 2019). Marcia (2007) further notes though, that we are a composite of statuses and we do not just fit into a single status.

2.1.5 **Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development**

Bronfenbrenner posited an ecological theory which has recently morphed into what is more recently referred to as the bioecological theory of life-span development (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Darling, 2007). Bronfenbrenner emphasised the interrelationship between different processes and contextual variation (Darling, 2007). Ecological theory sees development occurring within a number of interlinked contexts (referred to as systems) bound by culture and history: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The microsystem refers to the proximate environment the child inhabits; the microsystem pertains to close relationships/organisations or institutions with which the child interacts including the school, friends and family (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). The mesosystem, on the other hand, refers to the interrelationships between the microsystems. The exosystem, in turn, has an indirect influence on the developing child namely the parents' workplace and the neighbourhood (Dirksen, 2010). Finally, the macrosystem refers to the society, values, economic climate, material resources and opportunity structures within which an individual finds her/himself (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). Interactions between and within these systems are examined in order to ascertain how they influence each other and their impact on the individual's development (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015).

Bronfenbrenner's theory has since been updated and is now known as the bioecological model (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). This updated version of the theory is concerned with the differentiation between the following concepts as they relate to human development: the environment, the individual, 'proximal process', and time (Ashiabi &

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O'Neal, 2015). Proximal processes were described by Bronfenbrenner as "engines of development" (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). An example of enduring patterns of proximal processes for a developing child are his/her interactions with his/her parents (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). These proximal processes represent the ways through which developmental potential flourishes and strongly influences developmental outcomes more so than contextual factors (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). These proximal processes can be individuals, things or undertakings that manifest with regularity in an uninterrupted fashion and gradually becoming more complex (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model was operationalised in this study in order to identify proximal and distal factors impacting the experiences of the participants and to categorise the findings. The model was helpful in facilitating the analysis by informing the a priori themes and thus helping to group the narratives according to the 'systems' they fitted into. This is elaborated in detail in Chapter Five.

2.1.6. **Vocational/career identity**

A central task of adolescent development has been considered the development of vocational identity along with a future orientation to career development and planning (Diemer & Blustein, 2007; Hirschi, 2011, 2012). Vocational identity pertains to an individual's evolving sense of forms of abilities, goals, and interests relating to work including insights from life experience (Gupta, Chong, & Leong, 2015; Holland, Gottfredson, & Power, 1980). From the age of three years, children purportedly develop career aspirations through compromising on the basis of social evaluation, gender and power as well as the process of circumscription (Hirschi, 2012). Circumscription is that process undertaken by young people of narrowing their career

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aspirations (Gottfredson, 2002). Over time, in adolescence, there is alignment of aspirations with the nascent unique self and an awareness of prevailing social conditions; thus, self-reflective vocational identity begins to form (Gottfredson, 2002; Hirschi, 2012). Individuals with a strong vocational identity tend to have a clearer sense of vocational interests, abilities, and aspirations and tend to be more successful in conjuring suitable career options for themselves (Gupta et al., 2015). Vocational identity as a construct is associated with personality elements such as the nature of a person's interest in terms of differentiation and consistency (Hirschi, 2011; Holland, 1997) and competencies. Vocational identity, in Donald Super's (1990) research, is also presented as an important factor in facilitating the transitioning from school to work, and aids with well-being and adjustment (Hirschi, 2012; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007).

Super (1990) understood career development as an evolving process of assessment and integration of knowledge of the self and the world of work as both change over the life span. In his career development theory, Super (1990) posits that individuals face certain vocational tasks and life roles relative to their life stage. These are presented in Table 1 below.

During adolescence and early adulthood these tasks include formulating a general vocational goal through awareness of resources, contingencies, interests, values, and planning for the preferred occupation (Super, 1990). They also engage with learning distinct but interdependent roles of home and family, student, employee, spouse, parent and citizen, among others. Roles are conceptualised as a set of expectations that arise from the individual's ascribed status (sex, race, and age) and achieved status (educational level, and occupation). The roles an individual assumes, as well as decisions about how to act out these roles, define both the career-life course and its direction over the life span. These career development tasks and roles are influenced by internal and external factors (Herr & Cramer, 1988). External factors may include

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parental socio-economic status (SES), sex, level of education, race, culture, place of residence, and environmental press (Naidoo, Bowman, & Gerstein, 1998).

Table 1

Super's career development tasks

Career developmental task	Age	General characteristics
Crystalisation	14-18	A cognitive-process period of formulating a general vocational goal through awareness of resources, contingencies, interests, values, and planning for the preferred occupation.
Specification	18-21	A period of moving from tentative career preferences toward a specific career preference.
Implementation	21-24	A period of completing training of career preference and entering employment.
Stabilisation	24-35	A period of confirming a preferred career by actual work experience and use of talents to demonstrate career choice as an appropriate one.
Consolidation	35+	A period of establishment in a career by advancement, status, and authority.

Excerpt from Zunker (1990, p. 26)

The young participants in the current study find themselves thwarted in developing a general vocational goal (and therefore developing a vocational identity) because of the confluence of internal (e.g., self-confidence, external locus of control, self-efficacy) and overwhelming external factors that they face. This impedes their ability to take the necessary steps to engage with enacting their planning for their preferred occupation. In the process they

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may find themselves investing in other roles (for self expression) such as in the family, peers and the community (Brown, 1990).

Future orientation seems to play a key role in nurturing adolescent career adaptability and the key thrusts for the development of a future orientation appears to be impetus from the context towards forming life goals and educational plans (Marko & Savickas, 1998, as cited in Diemer & Blustein, 2007). However, there may be structural barriers whereby adolescents, like those living in Kayamandi, may not have access to contextual spurs or stepping stones that can lead from career goals to implementation. The development of 'vocational hope' may be an important developmental task for the urban adolescent who may encounter structural challenges and have limited access to such contextual spurs (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). Vocational hope is a contextually sensitive conceptualisation that encapsulates aspects of the urban adolescent's socio-structural reality (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). Thus, future orientation will require a dogged focus on the individual's future whilst simultaneously surmounting socio-structural challenges.

2.1.6.1 **Narrative career counselling**

Narrative career counselling is a dynamic conglomeration of ideas and methods. A range of techniques – namely, creative writing exercises, card sorting interventions, genograms, collages, time/life-lines, life-space maps, pattern identification and activities to facilitate the remembrane of early memories – can be used to evince 'thick' stories (McMahon & Patton, 2002). Narrative approaches facilitate the creation of a meaningful and actionable career narrative through holistic meaning-making mechanisms that are emotion-laden, geared toward implementation and engagement (Albien, 2013; McMahon & Patton, 2002).

In the narrative approach, storytelling processes are leveraged in order to create a

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conducive platform for: meaning-making, reflection, learning as well as a sense of agency and connectedness (McMahon & Watson, 2008). Individuals are viewed as having volition and agency with regard to their own lives and are thus able to create their own career narratives (McIlveen & Patton, 2006; Savickas, 2002).

2.1.7. **Identity construction in the African context: Ubuntu and cultural variation in the self-concept**

Ubuntu is about what it means to be a person – that which qualifies a person to be considered a person and the base that guides the manner in which people relate to one another (Dandala, 1996, as cited in Kamwangamalu, 1999). Ubuntu problematises western ideals of identity and self-definition (Watson et al., 2011). When using ubuntu as a lens, community – rather than the intra-psychic elements of thinking and feeling – is the pivotal nexus in identity and self-definition. It is within community where growth and development occurs; it is communities that enable individuals to be able to be at their best and it is back to the community that contributions should be ploughed (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Ramokgopa, 2001; Watson et al., 2011). This is in contrast to the western notion of the transitioning to greater independence and individual action as a means of fulfilling one's own interests rather than in the interest of the community (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Ramokgopa, 2001).

Colonialism facilitated the distortion of African identity by creating a schism between modernity and traditionalism (Murove, 2014). The rural villages serve as sites for 'traditionalism' where African practices such as ubuntu pervade, whilst in urban areas such as towns and cities, modern values abound with a greater individualist focus (Murove, 2014). This presents a challenging context to many Black adolescents who have to navigate the prescriptions of the values and expectations of a western educational system and the norms of their traditional

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cultural context (Albien & Naidoo, 2017). Murove (2014) argues that pivoting from atomic individualism which has been central to western ethical philosophical discourses, requires the refashioning of an African identity through ubuntu. "Within ubuntu, western individualism is seen as an illusion to the reality of our common belonging" (Murove, 2014, pp. 41-42).

Chuwa (2014) asserts that the individual is interdependent with other people. Because of this interdependence, reciprocity is sine qua non within the culture of ubuntu. The idea that rationality is that which premises a person's identity and affords the individual uniqueness as per the Cartesian rationale is rejected as a representative of western individualism (Chuwa, 2014; Murove, 2014). This individualism sets a person apart from others because 'a person is because they think.' In contrast, ubuntu moves from the premise that "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" – translated, "a person is a person because of others." As this Zulu adage highlights, ubuntu foregrounds the primacy of relationship. As posited by Murove (2014, pp. 41):

> "Personhood is derivative from relationship with other persons, hence it is not an incorrigible property of the individual but something that is shared with others and finds nourishment and flourishing in relationships with others. But the uniqueness of ubuntu is mainly in the fact that community is presumed to be an organic whole because individuals do not come together to form the community, rather their identities are formed by the community."

Further, community comprises not only of the human living but encompasses ancestors, those who have passed on and are no longer with us physically, encompassing nature in general as well (Chuwa, 2014; Murove, 2014).

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There have been some criticisms levelled at the philosophy of ubuntu. One such criticism is the lack of clarity regarding the definition of the concept (Bennett, 2011, as cited in Makoba, 2016). Further, the notion of ubuntu can create hierarchies and can limit individual independence. Ubuntu has also been slated as being patriarchal and that it tends to oppress African women (Keevy, 2009, as cited in Makoba, 2016). These arguments are countered by notions that central to ubuntu is human dignity as a key value (Mapaure, 2011, as cited in Makoba, 2016). Treatment that is pejorative and oppressive goes against the principles of ubuntu and thus the tenets of patriarchy cannot be associated with ubuntu. Ubuntu prescribes that people are treated with respect and in an equitable fashion (Makoba, 2016; Watson et al., 2011). Ubuntu is characterised by being helpful, respectful and treating others equally and fairly, which purportedly makes notions of patriarchy incompatible with this philosophy (Kamwangamalu, 1999; Makoba, 2016; Watson et al., 2011).

In summary, Edwards, Makunga, Ngcobo, and Dhlomo (2004), as cited in Watson et al. (2011, pp. 282-283) distil the phenomenological explication of ubuntu into 5 characteristics: "(1) the meaning of life through human relations; (2) the meaning of life emerging from the quality of human relatedness; (3) communal spirituality and ceremony; (4) the humanity of caring, helping, and healing; and finally (5) the centrality of essentially human and humanly essential relationships." These essential characteristics of ubuntu are pertinent in engaging in an understanding of the discourses that may inform identity development of young African adults, as is the focus of this study.

2.2 Identity as a contested social construct

Studies of identity previously placed greater focus on individuation when looking at identity (McLean et al., 2010). Individuation refers to the process of becoming an independent

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person whilst simultaneously maintaining close relations with others. The contemporary shift is that the concepts of self and society are also highlighted during the process of identity development (Hammack, 2008). Not only are identities formed by sociocultural and discursive practices, but they are also informed by our reactions and interpretations to these practices (Frie, 2011). Therefore, questions of personal and social meaning are inextricably tied with the concept of identity (Hammack, 2008; Stevens, 1997).

An individual ego identity garnered from choice may be less relevant to psychosocial adaptation as opposed to other factors such as physical strength, in cultures where structural attributes of the social order prescribe selfhood (Côté, 2000; Côté & Allahar, 1996). Identity is problematised by the conflict that arises from choice. Unconscious and conscious choices, set people apart from one another, thus promoting an individual sense of identity and emphasising individuality. In modern Western societies people are often required to define themselves descriptively, in contrast to social orders where possibilities and choices are limited and prescriptive identity definitions are imposed on individuals (Côté & Allahar, 1996). This broadening of possibilities and choices is likely to increase variability among individuals and thus, considerably restrict the legitimacy of generalisation across multiple lines of distinction (Sorell & Montgomery, 2001).

Pertinent social factors, notwithstanding living in a particular community, such as being a certain ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’ or speaking a particular language, may colour a person’s experience of cultural identity. This determines how we interact in the community and how others may interact with us. Social and cultural contexts shape and affect the way in which we reflect on our identities (Frie, 2011). It is in the exploration of individual identity that the processes of social change can be seen. Individuals engage with master narratives as they begin to construct their

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own personal narratives of identity that will ground them in the cognitive and social milieu within which they will develop. Master narratives pertain to the dominant discourses or grand narratives which are the stories in society that are more dominant and are subscribed to by people in positions of power, in contrast to those of individuals or marginalised members of society (Beyer, Du Preez, & Eskell-Blokland, 2007; Hammack, 2008). The impact of social influence on individual identity formation is thus not straightforward, and the role of subjective agency in the context of deprivation needs to be looked at more closely, as is the aim of the current study.

2.3 Identity in Context

In making reference to developmental processes, these are impacted by the structural conditions of poverty, unemployment and inequality which the youth are exposed to on a daily basis (Kroger, 2007). Stevens and Lockhat (1997) explored how black adolescents were negotiating the developmental challenges that they were faced with in a significantly altered post-apartheid South African context. Erikson's psychosocial theory and Bulhan's analysis of identity development within oppressed social groups were used as their theoretical framework. They interrogated the impact of what they term 'apartheid-capitalism' in relation to the oppressive conditions that affected primarily the black majority, contrasted to the wealth accumulation by white South Africans. The study gives an account of how racism was juxtaposed with capitalist accumulation that resulted in significant structural, social, economic and psychological consequences for a vast number of black South Africans (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997).

Race has always been a defining factor of inequality in the South African context. Since the end of apartheid, questions relating to identity remain closely connected to this legacy (Bradbury & Miller, 2010). Racism, did not 'end' with apartheid, but simply morphed into more

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covert and not necessarily always explicit forms which make it challenging to address (Bradbury & Miller, 2010).

Stevens and Lockhat (1997) posit that the post-apartheid South African context has spawned a Coca-Cola culture: one that is a more western, competitive and has an individualistic worldview. This 'Coca-Cola' culture becomes a means of maintaining psychological and material equilibrium and represents a new grand narrative. Whilst the 'new' South Africa may have brought freedom, the necessary programmes that facilitate the development of healthy independent judgement were overlooked, particularly when the impact of violence is framed as a process or condition whereby a group or individual transgresses the physical, social and/or psychological integrity of another group or person (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997).

Swartz and Scott (2014) provide insight into how a bleak context of extraordinarily high levels of violence and violent crime may impact young people. In order to defend their dignity, young people define social positions and in the absence of institutional action, use violence or the threat of violence. There is rational decision-making in the seeming 'lawlessness.' Swartz and Scott (2014) argue that young people's raw experiences of violence as both victims and perpetrators, offering accounts of violence from the perspective of the participants, in an attempt to understand what is occurring and what leads to those occurrences. Hence, giving an ear and voice to township youth's narratives and attempting to understand what comprises their narrative identity may be transformative.

2.4 Summary

The aim of the study is to centre the voices of unemployed youth back from the proverbial margins. The study is concerned with narrative identity, as articulated by the

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unemployed youth participants. Narrative identity and how it talks about how we story our lives is a great fit in terms of a theoretical framework relating to making sense of the identities of the unemployed youth. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is presented, at first glance it does not quite connect on account of its seemingly Eurocentric, androcentric and middle-class origins. Nevertheless, Erikson's theory has utility. Ramokgopa (2001) tested the viability of Erikson's theory with African children in South Africa and found that it could stand the muster, of course it was stressed that the content of the stages needed to factor context and cultural practices. Aspects like rites of passage need to be incorporated. Erikson's theory need not be read as pertaining to a fixed, unresponsive dictum but a fluid, evolving one that is responsive to the social, cultural, individual and historical context.

The engagement with identity in the African context has been through the philosophy and practice of ubuntu. However, as Murove (2014) notes, colonialism created a bifurcation where Africans now have to engage with both modern and traditional values as they negotiate identity development. However, overall identity is a robustly contested social construct.

Theoretical formulations of adolescent development, identity and career identity drawn from western theorists are presented together with the African-centric construct of ubuntu and research from South African studies. Together, these will provide a context in which to locate an understanding of the lived experience of the unemployed youth in this study.

The next chapter hones in on unemployment, as understood in psychological literature, and then its manifestation globally, on the continent, and within South Africa, specifically.

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CHAPTER 3

An Overview of the Psychology of Unemployment

"To be left alone on the tightrope of youthful unknowing is to experience the excruciating beauty of full freedom and the threat of eternal indecision."

Maya Angelou

3.1 Introduction

The meaning of work in people's lives has undergone a metamorphosis, whereas in pre-modern and modern societies, work was the clear and definitive fulcrum around which everything relating to living revolved – a basis for social identity (Bendassolli & Tateo, 2018). In the late post-modern period, work – on account of its ever-changing and shifting nature – no longer serves as the stable foundation around which identity is developed. The world of work has changed. Gone are the days of life-time employment and traditional career progression (Albien, 2013). Globalisation, economic crises, advances in technology and shifts in patterns of employment have been game-changers in the world of work (Savickas, 2017).

This chapter looks at the psychology of unemployment and theories pertinent to the study. Key themes in the psychology of unemployment are elaborated. The focus then shifts to a discussion on youth and unemployment, addressing questions such as who the youth are, and what constitutes unemployment, globally, on the African continent and, lastly, in South Africa. The discussion concludes with an overview of the psychological impact of unemployment and proposed measures on how to cope with unemployment.

3.2 Key Theories in the Psychology of Unemployment

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The psychology of unemployment highlights that work plays an important role in a person's well-being and identity. Paid employment can facilitate a sense of shared purpose by being a part of an organisation (Jahoda, 1982). One's personal identity is also impacted because of the way a person views him or herself in relation to the work role, and/or in the role of breadwinner or provider. There are three influential theories in the psychology of unemployment pertinent to this study: the latent deprivation model (Jahoda, 1933), the vitamin model (Warr, 1987) and the agency restriction approach (Fryer, 1997; Paul, 2005; Paul & Moser, 2006).

3.2.1 **Latent deprivation theory**

One of the most influential theorists on the psychology of unemployment has been Jahoda (1933), who developed a theory of the psychosocial impact of unemployment. Referred to as the latent deprivation theory, this model was based on research conducted during the Great Depression (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, & Ziesel, 1933). Jahoda saw unemployment as a loss of the social and psychological elements that work offers. Jahoda was of the view that work facilitated psychological and social effects that were important for a person's well-being. Such effects include 'manifest functions,' such as the opportunity to earn money, and 'latent functions,' such as time structure to the day, a schedule of activities to be performed, status and the identity afforded by employment, being a part of a collective enterprise with shared *raison d'etre* as well as being able to spend time with colleagues both at work and socially (Price, Friedland, & Vinokur, 1998).

For Jahoda, it was the loss of both these latent and manifest functions that were the key elements to the negative psychosocial effects of unemployment. Where there was an absence of formal institutions for employment, the latent and manifest functions were obtained through "community activities, rituals, and religious practices that provided a sense of shared purpose

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and identity to those who participated in them" (Price et al., 1998, p. 305). Thus, the manifest function focuses on earning money, whereas the latent functions pertain more to one's personal and social identity vis-à-vis one's work. Jahoda (1933) stresses that work provides people with a sense of personal identity that may be connected to a work role or a more general social role of breadwinner in a family. She adds that remunerated employment can provide a sense of social identity or shared purpose. People often have an affinity to the organisation they work for or the profession they work in. When people lose their job, their claims on the identity and financial resources provided by work become more precarious (Price et al., 1998). In contrast to workers who have lost their employment due to an external event (whether retrenchment or downsizing as with the depression), most of the participants in this study have not been able to enter the formal job market.

Jahoda (1933) was of the view that of the latent benefits, time structure was the most important. However, there does not seem to be empirical evidence corroborating this outlook (Creed & Bartrum, 2006). Creed and Macintyre (2001) observed that a notable latent benefit predictive of employment is psychological well-being; in contrast, unemployment is linked to psychological distress. Historically, studies on unemployment may have neglected the perspectives of women, as men were once perceived to be the primary income earners (Creed & Bartrum, 2006). There is a need for mindfulness in the evaluation of gender and its interactional effects because women are as much part of the labour force as men are. Also, the idea that all paid employment and related latent benefits is always helpful has been shown to be fallacious as it fails to appreciate that individuals view situations and experience things differently on account of their unique make-up (Creed & Bartrum, 2006).

3.2.2 **Vitamin theory**

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As with Jahoda's deprivation theory, Warr (1987) proposed that just as vitamins have an impact on one's physical health, so, too, does the environment. The environment is viewed as a key determinant of an individual's mental health with certain characteristics of the environment able to indicate well-being (Paul, 2005). Warr (1987) espoused nine environmental characteristics that, if present, augur well for mental health: the opportunity for control, the opportunity to be able to use a skill, externally crafted goals, variety, clarity of the environment, having access to money, physical security, the opportunity to have interpersonal contact as well as status. Low levels of these nine characteristics can lead to poor mental health, whilst an increase beyond a certain level does not result in extra-ordinary improvements beyond mere well-being. There are some environmental factors that, in very high doses, have no impact (i.e., physical security), whilst some, such as variety, can impact mental health negatively in high doses. Unemployment may lead to individuals being starved of the nine environmental 'vitamins', hence the resultant deterioration in well-being (Paul, 2005). Warr (1987) and Jahoda (1982) share the premise that the social environment is a key factor in a person's mental well-being, and that employment is crucial to this status.

3.2.3 **Agency restriction theory**

Fryer (1997a) was of the view that people are volitional agents who want to be able to charter their own paths in life, and they desire to assess, craft, direct and manage things in alignment with their own values, goals and perspectives of the future (Paul, 2005). Unemployment seriously curtails this human agency as low social power, insecurity of the future as well as poverty may hinder the individual's capacity to plan and effect purposeful action. Fryer advocates looking at what individuals have to offer in unfamiliar and challenging situations, rather than merely looking at what they do not have. Fryer's agency restriction theory purports that as the individual is self-directed, unemployment and the associated poverty

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significantly frustrates this desire, which then results in agony and diminished well-being (Paul, 2005). Creed and Macintyre (2001) found that financial strain (manifest function) was correlated more strongly with psychological well-being. Financial distress in their study was correlated with psychological distress. Thus, financial improvement can be helpful in reducing psychological distress amongst unemployed individuals.

3.2.4 **Summary**

Jahoda's latent deprivation model has received some empirical support, with studies highlighting the correlation between latent functions and well-being (Paul, Geithner, & Moser, 2007). Paul et al. (2007) further expound that evaluations of Jahoda's model have often been restricted to members of the labour force (employed and/or unemployed) when the need for the latent functions of employment can be seen as human needs. Jahoda noted the lack of access to latent, rather than merely the manifest functions of employment as key reasons for the deteriorating mental health following unemployment, In contrast, other theorists like Fryer (1986, 1997) viewed the deprivation of manifest functions as central factors leading to distress following unemployment (Paul et al., 2007). Conclusive empirical results regarding which theory fits best remain elusive. Thus, further research is required.

Investigations of both the manifest and latent benefit variables could provide a more holistic account of the psychological well-being of the unemployed (Creed & Macintyre, 2001). Jahoda, Warr and Fryer are key theorists who have made an impact in the psychology of unemployment. They have posited seminal ways of how to conceptualise the experience of unemployment.

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3.3 Youth and Unemployment

In October 2015 students at the University of the Witwatersrand in their numbers, took to the streets in protest of imminent planned fee increases. This protest action soon spread to other campuses and became an indomitable campaign known as #feesmustfall. Many campuses were closed as the students expressed their vociferous call for free tertiary education. There was a pervading sentiment that graduating from an institution of higher learning was the best route to quality employment, healthy salaries and a better standard of living vis-à-vis having no university qualification (Badat, 2015). This is reminiscent of the Arab spring protest in Tunisia where in December 2010 Mohamed Boazizi, a poor street vendor, set himself alight following the confiscation of his goods by municipal officials (Honwana, 2013). This became the catalyst to various dissatisfied groups rallying together against the prevailing system (Honwana, 2013). There seemed to be fermenting discontent by youth about the ever increasing levels of youth unemployment, inequality, government corruption and a sense of not being heard, to which end the protest action was rallying against. This may only be the tip of the iceberg, when the burgeoning high level of general youth unemployment is considered.

3.3.1 **Who are the youth?**

Countries differ in the way they operationalise the term ‘youth’. The United Nations (1992) defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The South African National Youth Policy (NYP, 2009) defines youth as individuals between ages 14 to 34 years. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 outlines that it is only at age 15 that individuals can enter the labour market. The current study used the UN definition to operationalise youth as those individuals aged between 15 and 24 (van Aardt, 2012).

3.3.2. **Unemployment**

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Statistics South Africa (2011, p. 18) distil unemployment into four categories, namely:

- The discouraged work-seeker: "a person who was not employed during the reference period, wanted to work, was available to work/start a business, but has not taken active steps to find work during the last four weeks, provided that the main reason given for not seeking work was any of the following: no jobs available in the area; unable to find work requiring his/her skills; lost hope of finding any kind of work.
- The underemployed (time-related): employed persons who were willing and available to work additional hours but whose total number of hours actually worked during the reference period was below 35 hours per week.
- Underutilised labour: This comprises three groups: persons who are underemployed, persons who are unemployed, and persons who are discouraged.
- Unemployed persons are those (aged 15-64 years) who:
    - Were not employed in the reference week, and actively looked for work or tried to start a business in the four weeks preceding the survey interview, and;
    - Were available for work, i.e., would have been able to start work or a business in the reference week or";
    - Had not actively looked for work in the past four weeks, but had a job or business to start at a definite date in the future and were available (van Aardt, 2012).

3.3.3. **A global look at youth unemployment**

Globally, more and more young people have been experiencing challenges when seeking employment (International Labour Organisation, 2001). In most countries and across regions internationally, youth employment is now a priority. In 1998, the ILO posited that the rate of

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youth unemployment in some countries was higher than the adult unemployment rate. The youth labour force – the number of economically active youth – declined by 29.9 million between 1991 and 2014, while the overall youth population escalated by 185 million. During this period, the youth labour force participation rate receded by 11.6% points from 59.0% to 47.3% (ILO, 2015). There are a number of initiatives with varying actors and institutions in different countries looking at crafting meaningful partnerships for effective co-ordination and policy coherence on youth employment.

A significant factor relating to the participation rate of youth was their involvement in secondary and tertiary education. The global youth unemployment rate for the period 2012-2014 was at 13.0%, with an estimated 73.3 million unemployed youth in 2014 (ILO, 2015). Of the global unemployed, 36.7% were youth in 2014. This is an improvement from 2004, where the youth constituted approximately 41.5% of the global unemployed. While this decrease of youth in global unemployment is welcome, it needs to be noted that in 2014, youth constituted one sixth of the global population. Thus, amongst the unemployed, youth were overrepresented (ILO, 2015).

Youth unemployment was highest in North Africa and the Middle East in 2014 at 30.5% and 28.2% respectively, and the lowest in East Asia (10.6%) and South Asia (9.9%). The youth unemployment rate in the developed economies and European Union (EU) decreased between 2012 and 2014 from 18.0% to 16.6%, and this downward trajectory is expected to progress to approximately 15.1% in 2020 (ILO, 2015).

In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the higher the level of education, so, too, the youth unemployment. Youth with primary education or less were

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more likely to be employed than youth who completed their tertiary schooling in the three regions. However, youth with lower education have a greater challenge in acquiring employment in the higher income regions (ILO, 2015).

Regarding gender differentials, discrepancies in youth unemployment rates are small at the global level and in most regions. However, in the Middle East and North Africa, the unemployment rate of young women exceeds that of young men by as much as 22 and 20 percentage points, respectively (ILO, 2015).

3.3.4. **Unemployment in Europe**

When discussing youth unemployment in Europe, a distinction is made between 'poorly integrated new entrants' and 'those left behind'. The former have qualifications, but have difficulty finding secure work. They find themselves with insecure work opportunities and experience periods of unemployment or become economically inactive. The 'youth left behind' on the other hand, tend to be without qualifications, of immigrant or minority background and/or live in disadvantaged, rural or outlying areas (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

O'Reilly et al. (2015) outline five characteristics that distinguish the current period of youth unemployment in the EU. Firstly, labour market flexibility makes it more difficult for young people to find stable work. Secondly, the expansion of education has not been coherently aligned to the shifting needs of employers, hence the debate about skill and qualification mismatch. Thirdly, moreso than in other recessions, youth migration has been more widespread and discerning. Fourthly, family legacies affect the trajectories and availability of resources amongst the youth as they look to make their transition into adulthood. Fifthly, they note how the

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EU has increased its scope in the promotion and investment in policies in support of national and EU initiatives.

3.3.5. **Unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa**

Most parts of the world's populations are aging. Africa, in contrast, is the world's youngest continent (ILO, 2001). In 2011, half of the Sub-Saharan African population was under 25 years old (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Youth unemployment is aggravated by underemployment and poor quality jobs in the informal sector in developing countries (ILO, 2001). As new entrants, young people are at a disadvantage when competing with older more experienced workers in the labour market.

Unemployment and underemployment plague the continent. Thus, young people in Africa often find themselves engaging in low-productivity and low-wage activities in order to survive (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Fox, Senbet, & Simbanegavi, 2016). Young people in rural and semi-urban areas struggle to find work with remuneration that enables them to sustain themselves and their families. Urban youth, on the other hand, are more conspicuous in their job seeking and are more vocal about their travails and expectations (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

The transition from school to work is not easy for young Africans. Filmer and Fox (2014, p. 7) aptly captured the essence of this experience by young Africans in the following extract of their report on youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa:

> Many lack the means, skills, knowledge, or connections to translate their education into productive employment. Nor is there a structured path to follow. Many young people combine school with work for many years. Some move straight into apprenticeships and similar arrangements, but others do not. Moreover, first-generation school leavers

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aspiring to be wage workers lack a family history in formal employment. They may not have networks to help them to find jobs. Young women may be particularly disadvantaged by other dimensions of the transition, such as family formation, compared with young men. Social norms tend to enforce job segregation by gender. For instance, young women in the household enterprise sector work mostly in narrowly defined fields such as dressmaking, even though a range of other occupations could be more lucrative.

Youth employment is a complex challenge requiring focus on multiple elements such as the quality of basic education and training, the removal of obstacles to the access of opportunities in agriculture, entrepreneurship and formal employment (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Fox et al., 2016). The current generation of Africans is more educated than their parents' generation, however, their work and earning prospects do not differ much from that of their parents. Young people who are not connected to the world of work in any way are at a greater disadvantage. Young women, in particular, have limited choices due to social norms (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

Fertility rates also play a role. A continued decline thereof, as in some African states, can lead to the increase of adults in relation to dependents thus creating room for savings, investment and continued economic growth (Fox et al., 2016). This scenario is moot if fertility rates do not decline and those individuals who can work are not productive (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

Almost all African countries remain dependent on primary commodities despite several years of economic growth in Africa (Fox et al., 2016). It is not just work in the formal sector that needs to be created but also addressing the underemployment that characterises the informal economy (Filmer & Fox, 2014). University graduates represent a small proportion of the labour force (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Seekings, 2014). The formal sector would only be able to absorb a

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limited number of individuals (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Filmer & Fox, 2014; Seekings, 2014; Yu, 2013). The smallholder farms and household enterprises are noted as key for further economic development in Africa (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

This youth unemployment challenge can also be seen as a latent opportunity. The world can benefit from Africa's burgeoning labour force. The key is how best to employ this labour force in the global arena and unlock its potential. Sub-Saharan Africa can look at offering goods and services as well as sending workers to areas in the world where there is a shortage. Manufacturing wages are increasing; African youth can also look at competing in the manufacturing realm. Rapid increases in the concentration of workers can also serve as a reservoir of creativity and spur economic growth (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

3.3.6. **Youth unemployment in South Africa**

In the first quarter of 2019, official unemployment in South Africa was 27.6% with youth unemployment at a staggering 55.2% (Stats SA, 2019). Youth aged 15-24 make up approximately 20% of South Africa's population. There were approximately 10.3 million people aged 15-24 years, and 31.6% of these youth were not in employment, education or training (NEET; Stats SA, 2018). Youth may be stymied from accessing opportunities on account of the depth of poverty. Financial reasons were identified as one of the main explanations given for dropping out of school or university (Letseka, Cosser, Breier, & Visser as cited in Altman, Mokomane, & Wright, 2014).

Often young people reside in poor communities with poorly resourced schools and thus have limited, if any, support. They tend to have minimal if any access to social networks that could link them to job prospects – in part because many of their parents have themselves been

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unemployed for a substantial amount of time (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014). These young people often do not know how to go about accessing further training institutions that could help improve their prospects for employability or assist them set up their own businesses (Bernstein, 2014; Yu, 2013). According to Seekings (2014, p. 77):

> [t]hese young people are 'outsiders,' typically lacking social capital (i.e., useful connections through kin, friends or neighbours); cultural capital (including both knowledge of how labour markets work, and the conventional aesthetic markers of success), financial capital and educational credentials. They struggle to find employment; if they find work they often struggle to retain it, and if they lose it, they battle to find new employment.

There is a need to address economic growth and labour intensity with urgency on account of the high levels of unemployment – particularly, youth unemployment – in South Africa (Bernstein, 2014). Poverty and inequality, which are closely correlated with race, remain high concerns in post-apartheid South Africa. A number of factors contribute to the problem of poverty, inequality and unemployment such as the enduring legacy of apartheid policies, the capacity of the public sector and the leadership of the post-apartheid government, efficacy (or lack thereof) of policies and interventions employed to tackle poverty, inequality and unemployment, the political and economic frameworks that inform decision-making in the country and South Africa's readiness and capacity to manage external impacts (Simkins, 2011). Inequality in South Africa can also be attributed to inequality in educational attainment. There are challenges faced by previously disadvantaged groups in obtaining high levels of education. The imbalances within the educational system not only in respect of access but also the quality of the education offered and provided need to be examined (Chibba & Luiz, 2011).

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Honwana (2013), commenting on research done with youth on numerous parts of the continent including South Africa, notes that youth in Africa are living in limbo; between childhood and adulthood because they are marginalised by the societies they inhabit. They have to contend with inadequate educational systems, a dearth of meaningful jobs that pay living wages and the difficulty of establishing their own families. Poverty and unemployment brought about by ineffectual neoliberal economic policies have resulted in the scouring of social processes that used to facilitate the transition to adulthood. Honwana (2013, p. 165) posits that the majority of youth find themselves:

> stuck in waithood, an indefinite period beyond childhood in which they cannot expect assistance from parents or the state but do not enjoy the prerogatives of full fledged adulthood. Increasingly pervasive and prolonged, waithood is becoming the norm, gradually replacing conventional adulthood. The social contract, under which society educated children and integrated them into the economy, has been broken.

Klasen and Woolrad (2009) noticed that unemployed youth in rural areas either postpone leaving their families of origin or return to families of origin or extended families for ongoing support. Only those who secure employment marry and create their own families. Hence, this may account for the high rates of rural unemployment because the unemployed may retreat to the rural areas in search of support (Klasen & Woolrad, 2009). However, this may place a heavy weight on households, as this may sink some deeper into poverty. This may hinder mobility by keeping the unemployed away from accessing work opportunities on account of being further from where the work opportunities are (Bernstein, 2014; Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Klasen & Woolrad, 2009). Households with pensioners or recipients of state grants offer support to some unemployed individuals. Those who do not have access to an individual receiving some sort of state grant may have to contend with abject poverty (Klasen & Woolrad, 2009).

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3.4 Psychological Impact and Scarring Effect of Youth Unemployment

A 21-year longitudinal study in New Zealand by Fergussun, Horwood, and Woodward (2001) evaluated connections between employment during adolescence and psychosocial adjustment concerns such as mental health concerns, the use of substances, participation in crime and suicidality. The study found links between unemployment and the increased risk of the development of psychosocial disorders. Factors such as social disadvantage, family dysfunction, individual characteristics, personal adjustment and affiliations were also purported to be antecedent confounding factors (Fergussun et al., 2001).

Long-term unemployment has a scarring effect, leaving a legacy of reduced lifetime earnings (Fergussun et al., 2001), an increased risk of future spells of unemployment (Gregg & Tomney, 2004, 2005; Kuchibhotla, Orazem, & Ravi, 2017, McQuaid, 2015; Petreski, Mojsoska-Blazevski, & Bergolo, 2017), an increased likelihood of insecure employment (Gregg & Tomney, 2004, 2005; Kuchibhotla et al., 2017, McQuaid, 2015) and is associated with decreased well-being and health along with diminished job satisfaction possibly 20 years in the future (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

The cost of youth unemployment to society is high (Mlatsheni, Murray, & Leibbrandt, 2011). A study with youth in Sri Lanka showed a strong link between unemployment in the first year post-school and unemployment 4 years later (Kuchibhotla et al., 2017). Those young people who experienced early worklessness were more likely to experience further future joblessness (Gregg & Tomney, 2004, 2005; Kuchibhotla et al., 2017, McQuaid, 2015).

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Studies conducted in Brazil and Argentina as well as the United States of America, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, New Zealand, the UK and Germany also show that a history of unemployment and 'early' inactivity economically has a positive relationship with the risk of future unemployment (Helbling & Sacchi, 2014). Along with monetary scarring, a history of unemployment has a psychological impact, facilitating psychological distress and impacting satisfaction later in life (Helbling & Sacchi, 2014).

The youth labour market has become more protean, and the transition from education to work seems to be more individual-centric, complex and more challenging to engage by those with less qualifications and/or poorer backgrounds (McQuaid, 2015). There are a few, interconnected reasons for scarring: 1) the way employers looking to hire respond to individuals who have been unemployed, 2) the youth's human capital; 3) experiences in the youth's early life; 4) the expectations the youth has; 5) the search for work, and 6) the impact of exogenous factors on society and the economy (McQuaid, 2015). These reasons are closely linked to demand and supply-side labour market factors along with contextual and intervening factors.

Periods of unemployment can be perceived negatively by employers as either signals of a lack of work experience or lowered productivity (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Filmer & Fox, 2014; Seekings, 2014; Yu, 2013). Human capital refers to actual technical and/or 'soft' skills that a person possesses. The ability to learn and process information can be stymied by unemployment, hence the importance of skills development for unemployed youth. Additionally, childhood health and developmental challenges can also influence the scarring effect of youth unemployment. Scarring may also alter the way that young people view the future, and a sense of hopelessness regarding prospects of meaningful work can set in (McQuaid, 2015).

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Youth who remain unemployed for an extended period can also begin to fear future unemployment (McQuaid, 2015). Youth may not have access to networks to aid them in obtaining work opportunities (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Filmer & Fox, 2014; Seekings, 2014). Individual resources like a positive attitude in life, self-efficiency and self-esteem can make a difference (Helbling & Sacchi, 2014). However, these same individual resources can also be affected negatively by the experience of being unemployed and can manifest as negative occupational outcomes (Helbling & Sacchi, 2014; McQuaid, 2015). Factors such as poverty, inequality and economic climate have an impact on youth employment (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Filmer & Fox, 2014; McQuaid, 2015; Seekings, 2014; Yu, 2013). Good quality career guidance can go a long way in reducing unemployment and *ipso facto* scarring (McQuaid, 2015).

Scarring is not guaranteed for all unemployed youth (Gregg & Tominey, 2004, 2005; Kuchibhotla et al., 2017, McQuaid, 2015; Petreski et al., 2017), but there are increased chances thereof, especially in light of the following factors: how long and how often unemployment has occurred, how one has come to be unemployed (voluntarily, by dismissal, struggling to enter labour market, etc.), personal characteristics (human capital, resilience) and the response of others to the youth and their unemployment status – that is, whether or not the individual is adequately supported (McQuaid, 2015).

Unemployment, when young, scars the youth because they are without income in the present, and this can portend lower future income (Gregg & Tominey, 2004, 2005; McQuaid, 2015). For low-skilled youth, unemployment when young was also associated with later unemployment whilst higher-skilled youth were not affected (McQuaid, 2015). This is corroborated by research in Macedonia by Petreski et al. (2017) in relation to employment scarring in a labour market where youth unemployment is extremely high. This study also found

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employment scarring, but not wage scarring; a finding also obtained by studies in high unemployment environments like the Italy (Lupi & Ordine, 2002), as well as and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Fares & Tiangson, 2007).

3.4.1 **Coping**

McKee, Song, Wanberg, and Kinicki (2005) conducted a meta-analytic study on psychological and physical well-being during unemployment. The literature revealed that there are four coping resources that can be enlisted: personal, social, financial (McKee-Ryan & Kinicki, 2000) and time-structure (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Personal resources are those resources within individuals that they can draw upon. Personal resources are linked to physical and psychological well-being in periods of unemployment, and are related primarily to all aspects of core self-evaluation – i.e., perception of control over life events, individual self-perception of worth as well as affective dispositions (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Core self evaluations pertain to a variety of personality traits in reference to how people evaluate themselves in relation to others (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

Social resources are those coping mechanisms relating to social support and social interactions (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Social resources contribute to physical and psychological well-being in two ways. Firstly, being a part of a social milieu helps a person to feel good about themselves and their lives, which may help the unemployed individual maintain a hopeful outlook during the period of joblessness. Secondly, social resources can mitigate the stress and negative somatic consequences that can result from joblessness. Further, the quality of social contacts had a positive relationship with subjective well-being (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Negative social support, known as social undermining, has been found to have a deleterious impact beyond social support absence (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

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3.4.2 **Resilience**

Seery (2011, p. 390) notes, quite aptly, that, “bad things happen." At some point in our lives, we are bound to encounter negative experiences (Bonanno, 2004; Seery, 2011). Psychological problems ensue when individuals encounter a preponderance of adversity. However, there are some individuals who are not negatively impacted by adversity. Seery (2011) reviewed the literature in the attempt to ascertain whether under certain circumstances adversity can indeed be beneficial vis-à-vis the absence of adversity, or too much adversity.

There was an assessment of a history of adversity and cumulative lifetime adversity, where the latter is reference to the aggregate number of adverse events a person has encountered along with other studies on chronic pain (Seery, Leo, Holman, & Silver, 2010). Seery (2011, p. 393) concludes that “relative to a history of either no or high cumulative lifetime adversity, a history of some adversity is associated with better mental health and well-being and less distress and disruption in the face of pain.” Seery (2011) further notes that there may be some upside to adversity that may help to facilitate resilience.

Resilience refers to the “process of adjusting well to significant adversity, [it] is supported by a complex interplay of personal (including genetic), relational, and contextual protective mechanisms” (Theron, 2016, p. 635). Resilience is not merely about intrapsychic factors, but the interaction of young people and the environments that they inhabit. A social-ecological perspective towards resilience is deemed critical in facilitating positive adjustment as it takes into account social support and contextual factors, as well as individual factors such as social aptitude and personal agency.

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Masten and Wright (2010) highlight the key common resilience-facilitating characteristics featured in the literature as cited by Theron and Theron (2013, p. 393):

- "positive attachments, or being able to form and benefit from constructive relationships;
- agentic manoeuvres and outcomes of mastery, or being motivated to adjust to a given ecology and experiencing success in the course of this;
- self-regulation, or socially appropriate adjustment of behaviour and emotion;
- cognitive skill, with an emphasis on intelligent problem solving;
- meaning making, or appraisal and/or reappraisal of life experiences, followed by constructive meaning attribution; and
- cultural traditions and religion, which offer protective resources that support resilience-promoting processes, such as attachment, meaning making, and self-regulation."

The caveat with the list above is that it pertains primarily to western settings, to the exclusion of African experiences (Theron & Theron, 2013). Thus, Theron and Theron (2013, p. 408) explored resilience with black African youth and found that "there was protective value of belonging to a network of kin [that] lay in the example-focused and expectation-dominated transactions this engendered, and how these were concomitantly resilience-supporting." It was from the collective that the motivation to persevere and defy the odds was cultivated. "Elders and siblings supported resilience by exemplifying positive adjustment and expecting behaviours and dreams that furthered constructive adaptation" (Theron & Theron, 2013, p. 408). However, the study by Theron and Theron (2013) featured youth who were academically successful and about to graduate. When kinship experiences were constructive for the participants, it strengthened them. Theron and Theron (2013), however, caution against an interpretation that all kinship

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experiences are resilience-promoting. As noted by Panter-Brick and Eggerman (2012), demands made by family that youth may not be able to meet can obstruct resilience.

Nevertheless, the idea of the universal application of resilience-facilitating characteristics was challenged by Theron and Theron (2013, p. 409) as they highlighted that for black youth in South Africa living in poverty "resilience is nurtured by complex culturally informed customs that facilitate resilience-supporting processes… that are articulated and supported by a family system." Later, Theron (2016), as part of a larger resilience study in South Africa, the Pathways to Resilience Study in South Africa, sought to answer two questions: which processes of resilience, as reported by black South African youth themselves, characterise positive adjustment amidst economically disadvantaged, rural life-worlds? Moreover, how do cultural and contextual realities shape the ways in which these processes play out? In their study involving 1,137 youth in a disadvantaged rural region, they noted that the youth are socialised to observe the values of ubuntu (Theron et al., 2013; Theron, 2016). Save for social justice, the resilience factors purported by Ungar et al. (2007) mirror those of the black youth participants in the study. Further, the qualitative data in the SA Pathways Study highlighted the following themes: the absence of men and the presence of strong women in the lives of the youth, the ubiquity of suffering, an emphasis on human and spiritual care (Christianity and ancestral cultural practice) as well as a valorisation of education by the youth.

The role of strong female figures, such as grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters was noted by the youth. This finding is neither a new revelation, nor one exclusive to black South African youth, but it is reiterated because of its salience – especially with regard to facilitating resilience (Theron & Theron, 2010; Theron, 2016; Werner, 2013). The need for greater (constructive) involvement by fathers, grandfathers and other men more generally was stressed.

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Theron (2016) cited Panter-Brick et al.'s (2014) recommendation for a greater focus on interventions for parenting and, in this way, paying attention to the socio-structural factors of poverty, cultural practices, and the damages of migrant labour and their possible effect on father participation.

Theron (2016) avers that community-based service providers to youth become resilience-supporting when they engage youth in a kin-like, caring manner that mirrors the cultural ethic of ubuntu with which the youth are socialised. This echoes the resilience literature that has been leaning towards the thesis that it is relational quality, and not merely the services in and of themselves, that are resilience promoting. The young people's determination for access to higher education means that there is a responsibility for the investment in the development of quality education that is accessible, has utility and can facilitate further resilience. Theron (2016, p. 663) makes an excellent point worthy of noting that this "also raises questions about the morality of perpetuating cultural values (e.g., the valorisation of education) when a broader social ecology disregards them (e.g., valorising education in the absence of government provision of quality education). In such contexts, this potentially sets youth up for failure. In their study of the resilience processes of Afghan youth, Panter-Brick and Eggerman (2012) called this "entrapment" (p. 383) and warned that the non-critical maintenance of cultural values leverages vulnerability rather than resilience".

Theron (2016) further argued that black South African youth's failure to speak of social justice may allude to the failure of the environment and structural factors that may not necessarily lend themselves easily to engagement by the youth and thus, may not be deemed resilience-promoting. It may be, that young people find themselves having to adjust to the toxic nature of the environment within which they find themselves, they may turn to social resources,

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community based faith and cultural practices for support in attempts to cope. There is a sense that it is the young people who need to adjust to the environment as opposed to the move towards changing the toxic lifeworlds that they inhabit and that hold them in a state of waithood. The reality of discriminatory acts and attidudes that impact upon the healthy development of young people is probably not a unique feature to the context of this study's participants (Theron, 2016). Theron (2016) noted that this led to the call for socially just change in order to subvert the unreasonable expectation that young people must accommodate to unfair societies.

3.5 Summary

The current study focuses on youth's narrative identity and their endeavours to find employment. The study adopts the United Nations' definition of youth, which regards this category as comprising individuals aged 15-24 The problem of unemployment is not just a concern in South Africa, but affects youth around the globe. This phenomenon is particularly pertinent in Africa because the continent has the largest population of youth in the world. In South Africa, amongst black South African youth in particular, a number of intricate, culturally-based customs supported by a family system, nurture and facilitate resilience. Community-based services offered with a focus on the relational quality, and not just the service, can be resilience-promoting. The often toxic nature of environments which young people inhabit and society's discriminatory processes and unfair expectations can impinge on young people's healthy development and their identity formation (Theron, 2016).

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CHAPTER 4

Methodology

"*The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*"

Lao Tzu

In this chapter, the dissertation's theoretical framework, meta-theoretical underpinning of the qualitative research design, data collection methods and modes of analysis are presented. Template and narrative analysis, and how these two approaches were employed in the study, are also elucidated. A description of how access to the research context and the participants was effected is provided. The process by which the narratives were collected is presented. Ethical considerations are noted, and an account of reflexivity as clinician-collaborator-researcher is offered.

4.1 Philosophical Approach

4.1.1 **Theoretical framework: social constructionism**

Social constructionism serves as the theoretical framework for this study. Social constructionism moves from the basic premise that knowledge of self and of the world is socially constructed as well as located in a historical and cultural context (Gergen, 2009; Gergen & Gergen, 2008). Language is the vehicle by which knowledge is created and conveyed. Social constructionist theory problematises traditional beliefs held by certain groups such as scientists as being ultimate authorities on knowledge and 'Truth' (Gergen, 2009). Social constructionism focuses on what research brings forth and the process of research, rather than a mere strict focus on truth and objectivity (Gergen & Gergen, 2008).

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Social constructionism problematises the notion of objectivity of constructs such as identity, and highlights that such conceptions are socially constructed and circumscribed by history, social context, culture and language (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionism takes cognizance of the multifariousness of identity and how identity can intersect at different levels such as class, race, gender, class and (dis)ability (Gergen, 1985).

In this study, social constructionism helped in facilitating a mindful approach in how participants and their narratives were approached and engaged. It helped me as researcher to be aware of the salience of language, the youth's and my own positionality, as well as the historical and cultural context undergirding our narrative-making.

4.2 Methodological Design: Research Design and Methods

The study falls within the qualitative, interpretivist research paradigm. Qualitative methods can help facilitate more attuned understanding of phenomena, illuminate social discursive practices and help give voice to disenfranchised populations like unemployed youth, whose experiences may not be as prominent in the research literature (Rubin, Bell, & McClelland, 2018). Narrative inquiry and participatory action research are the primary methodologies employed in the study, and an elaboration on the mechanism thereof ensues.

4.2.1 **Narrative inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is about engaging, it is not about research done 'on' people, but that which is done 'with' people (Bleakley, 2005). A researcher is undertaking narrative inquiry when s/he has a recognition for and embraces the idea of a dynamic interchange between the researcher and the researched. Stories are mainly used as data and analysis, with the appreciation

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that knowledge is context-dependent, rather than acontextual, and that narrative-knowing is essential (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) indicate that there are four turns which indicate the extent to which a researcher has embraced narrative inquiry in their thinking. The concept of 'turns' makes reference to shifts from one way of thinking to another. These turns are outlined as follows:

> 1) a change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject (the relationship between the researcher and the researched), (2) a move from the use of number toward the use of words as data, (3) a change from a focus on the general and universal toward the local and specific, and finally (4) a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 7).

In narrative inquiry and in the current study, both the narratives and the individuals are foregrounded. Narrative inquiry aids in understanding people's experiences. It brings focus to the relationship between the researcher and the researched, noting the interactions over a period of time and in the different contexts wherein these interactions occur (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry seeks not merely the valorisation of individual experience, but begins with a respect for everyday lived experiences. The contextual narratives within which people's experiences are informed and performed are explored in a way that focuses on the lived stories of the people involved in the inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). It is in this study of experiences by individuals and the world they inhabit, that ways of enlivening and creating shifts in that experience for others and themselves is sought (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Narrative inquiry is located within an ontological and epistemological framework that is transactional, attentive to

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the relations an individual has with his or her environment, and thus creates room for experience of a novel nature to arise (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

Narratives are described as receptacles depicting human experience as it evolves through time (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Continuity is emphasised by this ontology of experience, in that it is out of experiences that other experiences emanate. Continuity is ontological, and not merely perceptual. Experiences are continuous; it is not a matter of them appearing to be connected through time (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Narratives are social activities where individuals share stories; this entails conversations with others or audiences. Individual stories take place in the context of social relationships (Elliott, 2005).

Narrative inquiry is concerned with the manner in which people relate their experiences through stories (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Therefore in this study, narrative inquiry will focus specifically on how the unemployed youth define themselves when telling their personal stories through life story interviews, in focus group discussions and in all the conversations had.

As used in this study, a life story is "the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another… A life story is a fairly complete narrating of one's entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects… putting one's life as a whole, one's entire lived experience, into story form" (Atkinson, 2007, p. 11).

The individual's life story seeks to foreground the identity one has shaped, providing a glimpse of the personality they have developed and the important interpersonal and social

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relationships that they have formed (Atkinson, 2007). A sense of the individual's values, beliefs and worldview in her/his own words is also ascertained. In this study, the life story interview is used to elicit these life stories. The life story serves important subjective psychological, sociological, spiritual and philosophical functions for the storyteller (Atkinson, 2007).

4.2.2 **The role of stories in African traditions**

Oral traditions make up an important aspect of the African narrative, but they are a resource not widely acknowledged or readily drawn upon. Maree and Du Toit (2011, p. 22) define the oral tradition as comprising "folklore, orality, orature, storytelling, folktales, fairytales, myths and fables." Ubuntu is described as being at the heart of the African oral tradition. For many decades, ahead of writing systems, oral traditions were the mechanisms through which custom was passed down from one generation to the next. It was through oral tradition that "the spiritual, ethical, cultural, and moral wisdom of the community" (Maree & Du Toit, 2011, p. 23) was preserved and protected. Storytellers and poets in days of old were societies' key chroniclers (Maree & Du Toit, 2011).

Tenets of the oral tradition have also been used as tools to teach children lessons in morality as well as certain knowledge and skills, namely through rhymes and poems (Maree & Du Toit, 2011). The oral tradition would thus facilitate the learning of moral behaviour in children, and it was hoped that this would then inform the adult individuals they became. However, Africa's oral tradition no longer has as central a role as it used to have given the advent of modernity. The oral traditions are performative; therefore, they are dynamic, fluid and dependent on the performer and his or her given audience. Thus, oral traditions are not easily amenable to traditional western scientific investigation. An open question has since surfaced in relation to the utility of the oral tradition and whether or not it has "been almost unrecognizably

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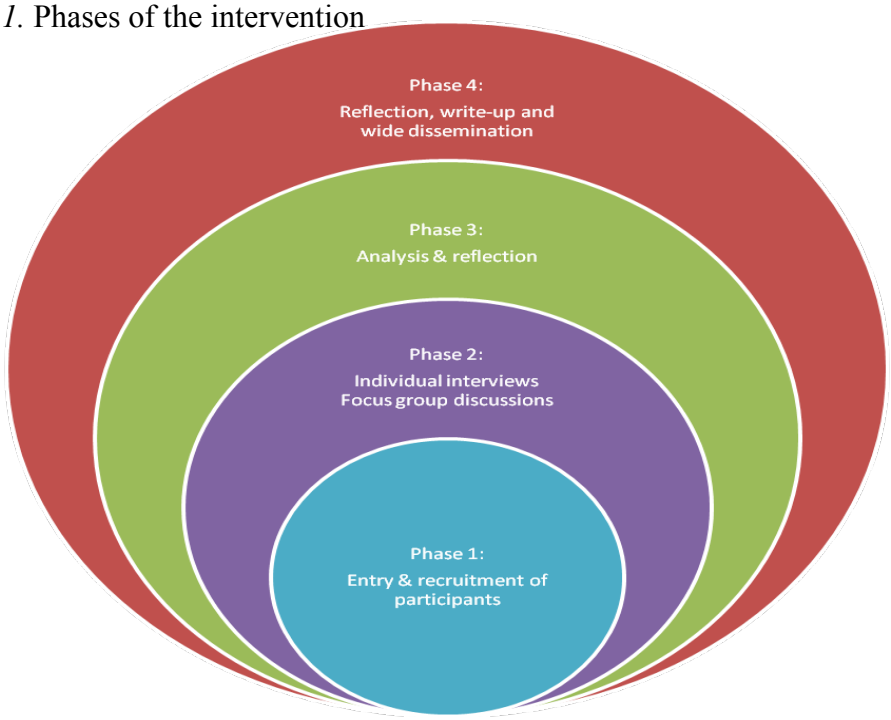
transformed through globalization, technocratization, and urbanization, thereby losing its power to provide a means through which people can attain some understanding of aspects that affect their lives" (Maree & Du Toit, 2011, p. 24).

People's daily lives are shaped by the stories of who they and others are. Further, people also interpret the past in relation to these stories (Atkinson, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Story is a metaphor used to signify the way in which people's experiences in the world are interpreted and made meaningful. Narrative inquiry studies experience as story, and is a way of exploring experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It is the stories of the unemployed youth that informed the participatory research intervention and how it unfolded in Kayamandi. The individuals who were involved in the study will be foregrounded and introduced in Chapter 6 when the findings are explicated. Now we take a look at how the study unfolded.

4.3 Phases of the Study

The study unfolded in the following 4 phases (See Figure 1 below):

Figure 1. Phases of the intervention



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4.3.1 **Phase 1**

The first phase began when the research proposal was approved by all the necessary boards, i.e., departmental, faculty and ethics boards. After ethical approval (Proposal number: HS1134/2014) was obtained for the study, the recruitment process was initiated. This entailed meeting with the community-based organisations in Kayamandi and enlisting their assistance in helping to identify potential participants. Toms' (2015) study provides a host of NGOs and CBOs who offer a range of services and programmes specifically in the Kayamandi community. Because of my previous involvement in the community with my masters' community placement (see Dube, 2011), I was able to make contact with several NGO staff members and community stakeholders.

In April 2015, the Kayamandi Career Life Project planned a Kayamandi Unemployed Youth roundtable discussion where community-based organisations in Kayamandi working with unemployed youth could meet and outline the nature of their work, particularly in relation to unemployed youth. The roundtable discussion aimed to highlight the assets and resources that young people had at their disposal, and afforded the Kayamandi Career Life Project the opportunity to outline the services that they render. This also served as a platform for me to recruit participants for the study. A number of unemployed youth came forward following the roundtable discussion expressing interest in participating in the study.

4.3.2 **Phase 2**

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The second phase was the interview/action phase. While there were 22 volunteers who expressed initial interest in the project, only 10 volunteers were eligible. The eligible paricipants were the participants who were available and expressed willingness to participate for the duration of the study. Some of the ineligible volunteers did not meet the age requirements to be eligible for the study. From 5 October 2015 until 12 October 2015, individual life story interviews were conducted with 10 people. The interviews were, on average, approximately 90 minutes. The individual life story interviews were followed by a two-week group intervention. The aim of the group intervention was to engage with the questions and issues that surfaced for the participants during the life story interview, and to facilitate meaningful discussion and collective action. The group interventions comprised a series of daily group sessions facilitated by the researcher, where the participants discussed what unemployment meant to them and how they had been affected by unemployment. The participants also discussed what they perceived to be their needs. Through a series of activities, collective brainstorming and problem solving exercises, we looked at ways of addressing the concerns raised by the group members. The group identified more assets and resources in the community which could be accessed to assist with their needs. The participants interviewed community resources and returned to give feedback to the group on what they had gathered from their interviews.

Along with information about available resources within the community, there were discussions on the job search process, which is where I offered practical support. There were discussions on resumes: how to draft a good quality CV, how to prepare for an interview, how and where to search for employment opportunities as well as how to enlist feedback on applications submitted. There was a focus on individual needs, given that the participants presented with markedly varied circumstances. However, there was also engagement on each individual's goals and implementation plans, where the latter denotes the ensuing steps the

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individual would take to hopefully obtain gainful employment. Observations of the individual and group processes were noted, and are incorporated within the research findings.

4.3.3 **Phase 3**

Analysis of the narratives, which came after transcription and translation, occurred in mid-2016. I immersed myself in the narratives endeavouring to identify emerging features (themes) and differences (variations) in the individual participants' narratives. As a way of developing the initial template I used Bronfenbrenner's levels as a priori themes. All salient themes were then clustered according to the five ecological systems: individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. In locating the themes in ecological systems, superordinate themes also began to emerge with their subsidiary subordinate themes.

Thus, the final template consisted of a priori themes that comprised of the ecological systems and then emerging superordinate themes comprised of further subordinate themes. The superordinate themes are the distillation of the subordinate themes emerging from the narratives. After completing this process, I then reflected on the relationship between the manifesting themes in the narratives and literature vis-à-vis the research question, thus effecting a more in-depth narrative analysis represented in the discussion chapter.

4.3.4 **Phase 4**

Once the analysis had been concluded, I convened a reference group with research consultants to ascertain whether the analysis aptly captured the research collaborators' sentiments. Where there were amendments, these were duly noted and incorporated into the final manuscript. The final dissertation will be shared with the participants and the findings will be

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presented to the community-based organisations in Kayamandi, the municipality and role players who interact with unemployed youth.

4.3.5 **Reference group process**

As indicated, a reference group was formed in order to validate the themes emerging from the individual and group narratives. Two masters' in Research Psychology students were enlisted as research consultants. These research consultants were paid to review the research data (individual and group narrative transcriptions, memos and completed group exercises) and provide feedback on their independent perspectives regarding the data. At the end of each day we, as a group, discussed our observations and shared our reflections on the narratives as well as their impact on us.

During this exercise, it became clear that the data were not benign. The data were intensely evocative, with the participant narratives triggering poignant emotional reactions within the research consultants as they did with the researcher. One of the research consultants had a life story that mirrored the lived experiences of the participants – albeit with the marked difference that she had two degrees, was working towards a masters qualification and had access to a myriad work opportunities – was jarred by the process. The material was so moving that she was unable to engage with the material for a while, and returned to the exercise after requiring some time away from the data to recover. It seemed as if the material had a triggering effect when one had a similar experience of being poor and unemployed. The other research consultant had never personally experienced poverty and unemployment, but she was also impacted by the material. However, this was not in a destabilising fashion – she found herself reflecting on her own life circumstances and how she had come to be where she is at present in her own life.

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Thus, the emergent themes are a synthesis of the rigorous engagement with the material by the research collaborators, my research supervisor, the research consultants' inputs and myself, the primary researcher. The research consultants and I then further reflected on all the emergent themes and further distilled them and it is the fruit of this process that informs this dissertation's findings and discussion. Participatory Action research (PAR) methodology informed the principles and the mechanisms of the study.

4.4 Participatory Action Research and Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) and Action Research (AR) are traced back to the work of Lewin (1946, 1947, 1948), who sought to improve upon the methodology of the natural sciences (Blichfeldt & Andersen, 2006). Lewin saw PAR as a way to creating a closer link between theory and practice, as well as a means to develop theories that speak to ways of addressing real world problems (Blichfeldt & Andersen, 2006). PAR is practiced in a variety of contexts in different ways and political orientations. However, there are key tenets that guide the practice of PAR and AR; namely, the collaborative interrogation of a concern or phenomenon in all stages of the research process, the primacy of reflexivity in the investigative process, and meaningful action that facilitates problem resolution in respect to the phenomenon or concern being investigated as an important part of the process (McIntyre, 2008).

PAR aims to make the community within which the research occurs, active participants in the study so as to determine ways in which to enliven the research and lead to meaningful action (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006). The research endeavour ceases to be static but becomes dynamic, informed and driven by the community members so as to better inform interventions. PAR allows the researcher not only to gather narratives through in-depth interviews, but to also conduct focus group discussions that invite participants to help co-

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construct alternative narratives that inform the interventions so as to address their needs and aspirations.

PAR projects are tailored to the participants' needs. Given the specified need, participants act based on the topics emerging from the PAR process. The questions brought forth by the participants within the PAR process inform the action. McIntyre (2008, p. 6) notes that the "process of questioning, reflecting, dialoguing, and decision making resists linearity. Instead, PAR is a recursive process that involves a spiral of adaptable steps that include the following:

- Questioning a particular issue
- Reflecting upon and investigating the issue
- Developing an action plan
- Implementing and refining said plan"

Action and research, practice and theory, development and research are integrated with the aim of improving practice and creating knowledge. Change does not occur at the end of the research endeavour but rather that it is occurring throughout the research process (Harrison & Callan, 2013). Action Research seeks to create novel forms of understanding through reflection by working towards practical results (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Mutual learning drives sustainable change and the generation of knowledge (Greenwood & Levin, 2006).

PAR takes into account the nature of knowledge and who it serves. Thus, PAR questions whose interests knowledge serves; the powerful and those with positions of authority in society, or whether it affirms experiential learning as a legitimate source of knowledge that has an impact on practice (McIntyre, 2008). The work of Freire in adult education strongly influenced PAR.

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Freire supported poor communities' efforts in seeking and understanding the structural reasons for their oppression. Thus, the methodology thrived as research became an agent of change because of its collaborative component with communities. It is through change that (P)AR seeks to understand and make a contribution in the world. Collective self-inquiry informs action and helps facilitate an appreciation for the local context, the culture and history subsumed in social relationships (Baum et al., 2006).

PAR has philosophical roots in Marxist theory with its focus on the need for critical reflection regarding power, class and oppression. Critical theory also informs PAR's focus on context – economic, social, political, racial and cultural. Feminist theory has infused PAR "with perspectives that have evolved out of a refusal to accept theory, research, and ethical perspectives that ignore, devalue, and erase women's lives, experiences, and contributions to social science research" (McIntyre, 2008, p. 3). PAR focuses on enabling action through the research process. Participants are collaborators involved in the collection and analysis of data and, upon reflection on the data, action to be undertaken is determined. This was effected in the study through the focus group action research intervention. The action that ensues is researched, and further action follows in an iterative cycle. Key to the PAR focus group intervention and in this study is empowerment and social change, as well as the sharing of control and power (Baum et al., 2006; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). The participatory action research process can help diminish participants' fear and shame, prop up self-confidence, self-esteem and control as well as help participants be more attuned to their own value (Ahari et al., 2012).

Increasingly, youth participatory action research has proven an effective vehicle to highlight the voices of young people, facilitate youth engagement and the development of

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programmes and interventions that seek to address the concerns of young people within a given community (Foster-Fisherman et al., 2010). PAR is now also being applied in health research. Initially, it was used primarily in needs assessments, planning and in the evaluation of health services in low-income countries. Recently, affluent countries have begun using PAR. It is now seen to be of value in indigenous health research because of its emphasis on empowerment and focus on collaborative action with communities (Baum et al., 2006).

PAR is premised on relationship. The success of a PAR intervention hinges on the quality of the relationships between the researcher, the community within which the researcher is working and the participants. Trust is vital. It is therefore important as a researcher to honestly communicate expectations, notwithstanding the researcher's commitment to empowerment and collaborative participation. Reflection is also necessary to help the researcher be mindful of any attitudes that might impede relationship building. There has been criticism of PAR especially with respect to peer review. Thus, constant critical reflection is important in the research report in order to allow for other researchers to be able to independently evaluate conclusions (Blichfeldt & Andersen, 2006; Grant, Nelson, & Mitchell, 2008).

PAR seemed the most responsible and respectful way of working with the youth. Together with the youth, we reflected on their experiences in an attempt to see what would emerge from the process of trying to make sense of their experiences in reflective and practical ways. It was important to engage the study in a way that was not merely extractive, but would be of value and meaningful for everyone who was involved with the aim of addressing participants' needs and ensuring participant empowerment.

4.5 Recruitment Process and Data Collection

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In this section, purposive sampling is described and the qualitative methodologies employed such as the life story interview and group sessions are explicated. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the participants for the study. Purposeful sampling is ideal in qualitative research when there are limited resources and there is a need to identify and select cases that are relevant to the research endeavour (Palinkas et al., 2015). Individuals or groups with experience and knowledge about the particular area of interest are enlisted. These individuals or groups need to be willing and available to be part of the research endeavour, and be open to reflecting upon and sharing their experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Community-based organisations in and around Kayamandi were approached for assistance in identifying and referring unemployed youth for participation in the study. Unemployed young people aged between 18 and 25 years were invited to participate in the study. Individuals who were interested in participating in the study communicated their interest to the community-based organisations, and their names were referred to the researcher. The Career Life Project also hosted a Career Life Indaba/roundtable discussion along with a number of community-based organisations who offer services to youth, particularly in relation to employment. The Indaba also served as a way to market and recruit volunteers for the study.

Qualitative methodologies were integrated in order to capture as much of the lived experiences (data) of the youth as possible. The data consisted of narratives of the 10 youth participants obtained via conversations with the unemployed youth, face-to-face individual life story interviews, and focus group discussions that formed part of the participatory action research strategies. Memos and a journal of observations served as additional data in the data collection process.

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4.5.1 **Life story interview**

There are three steps to a life story interview: first, the planning that denotes the preparation for the interview and an appreciation for the significance and value of the life story interview (Atkinson, 2007). Second is the actual interview process where the interviewee is guided by an interviewer in the telling of his/her story that is recorded. The third and final step is the transcription of the interview – removing the comments and questions by the interviewer along with any repetition so that what remains is the coherent, flowing narrative, in the words of the person giving an account of his/her story. The transcribed life story is then given to the interviewee for vetting. Upon approval, the interviewer can then proceed with the analysis of the life story interview (Atkinson, 2007).

The life story interviews were conducted in a language of the participant's choosing – I, the primary researcher, am conversant in both English and isiXhosa. Participants were offered a meal after the interview and during the focus group/intervention sessions. Interviews were transcribed and isiXhosa interviews were translated into English. Two interviews were done in both English and isiXhosa (primarily English), whereas the rest of the interviews were conducted in isiXhosa and then translated into English.

The individual interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. Once all the individual interviews had been completed, there were 9 group sessions that followed with each session lasting approximately four hours per day. These focus group sessions entailed discussions and intervention. In the focus group sessions, there were activities such as CV writing, work readiness skills and feedback on activities done in the session. Digital audio recorders were used and narratives were transcribed verbatim by transcribers. The personal details of the participants were kept confidential. Observations by the primary researcher were also captured in order to

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inform the analysis. I conducted life story interviews and group sessions at the Entabeni Cyber Café, which is in the heart of Kayamandi at the Kayamandi Corridor.

Participation was limited to individuals who were able to avail themselves for both the individual life story interview and the focus group/intervention sessions. Participants who did not meet the criteria for participation were offered the opportunity for career counselling provided at the Kayamandi Corridor's Entabeni Cyber Café by the Psychology Department's Kayamandi Career Life Project, of which this study is a part.

4.6 Transcription

Interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim – where possible noting tone, and interactional cues in a manner somewhat akin to the Jefferson (2004) model. The interview narratives in isiXhosa were transcribed thereafter translated into English and then analysed.

4.7 Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

In qualitative research, the data collection process, the analysis of the data and drafting of the report do not need singular steps, they can be interrelated and occur simultaneously throughout the research process (Cresswell, 2007; Nowell et al., 2017). Data analysis may be indistinguishable from the data (Thorne, 2000; Nowell et al., 2017). The qualitative research software ATLAS.ti was used to organise, manage and make sense of the voluminous interview material. Template analysis (TA) and Narrative analysis (NA) were used in order to analyse the narratives.

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4.7.1 **Template Analysis**

Template analysis is a variant of thematic analysis that facilitates the creation of an analytic template that then aids in the categorisation of the data (Cassell & Vicky, 2018; Waring & Wainright, 2008). Template analysis has no theoretical or philosophical affiliation to which it is wedded (King & Brooks, 2018). Template analysis offers the researcher flexibility, clarity and systematic analysis of data in qualitative psychology research (Brooks et al., 2015).

King and Brooks (2018) outline a sequence of seven steps in the process of analysis:

1. Familiarity with the data. Have a good understanding of your data and engage with it several times.
2. Preliminary coding. The researcher examines the research material for anything that speaks to the research question(s). Paying attention to elements that seem particularly salient. At this point you can begin to see if there is any material that can corroborate a priori themes. A priori themes are themes that a researcher tentatively defines in advance of analysis as part of the template given the theoretical or relevant interests pertaining to the research endeavor. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems served as the study's a priori themes.
3. Clustering. Based on the initial analysis surfacing themes and a priori themes, themes are clustered together into cogent groups and placed in order hierarchically; smaller themes feed into larger broader themes.
4. The initial template. The initial template will then comprise of clustered themes that become the first interaction of the coding template. The template's hierarchical organisation of themes comprising each cluster can then be graphically represented in a diagram.

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5. Building on the initial template. The initial template then becomes a living tool because it can be amended in an iterative fashion if there are aspects of the data it cannot compute. There is room for emendation and addition to the template.
6. Using the final template. Once no more amendments are deemed necessary to the template the template is then used on the entire data set. The template will then be able to aid the researcher in making sense of the data.
7. The write-up. The final template will also serve as a guide in how to structure and present the analysis in the research report.

4.7.1.1. **Limitation of Template Analysis**

Template analysis tends to be geared moreso, towards across case rather than within case analysis, that can impact in-depth analysis of individual accounts (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley, & King, 2015). This may be ideal for qualitative analysis of large numbers of participant narratives. The current study had a small number of participants and ensuing idiographic narratives therefore the richness of the analysis was not significantly affected (Brooks et al., 2015).

Neophyte researchers may find that template analysis' initial template development structure unsettling in comparison to other forms of thematic analysis (Brooks et al., 2015). Other forms of thematic analysis provide progression guidelines regarding themes and coding. The other concern is that researchers may tend to veer off the path of their intended research aims. The template then becomes an end in and of itself rather than a way of achieving their stated research goals (Brooks et al., 2015).

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Aware and mindful of the limitations of template analysis, it seemed best suited for the current study. With the template analysis, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system levels were used as the template's *a priori* themes. The themes were further analysed using narrative analysis and emerging discourses were highlighted and elaborated upon.

4.7.2 **Narrative Analysis**

Narrative-based analysis is more of a theoretical approach to ways of intepreting people's stories, rather than just a method (Stephens & Breheny, 2013). Robert and Shenhav (2014) cite Stanley and Temple (2008) in noting that narrative analysis tends to be an open intellectual arena with many differences and cleavages.

In psychology, narrative analysis focuses on our own and others' personal narratives, learning about them and how they allow for a closer glimpse into social and psychological realities. The substantiveness and multifariousness of meanings within which narratives are nascent is important. This is an arduous endeavour, as meaning does not merely appear easily from within a transcript or an interview. Instead, meaning is achieved through a process where the text is interpreted and engaged with (Crossley, 2007).

In analysing the translated transcripts, I adopted Crossley's (2014, p. 139) six analytic steps to guide the narrative analysis:

1) Reading and familiarising oneself with the data

2) Identifying important concepts to look for (specifically tone, imagery and themes)

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3) Identifying 'narrative tone'

4) Identifying narrative themes and images

5) Weaving all of this together into a coherent story

6) Writing-up as a research report

The desired outcome is a rich and nuanced, insightful and in-depth analysis into the narratives of interconnected individuals and groups (Crossley, 2014). Narrative analysis facilitates the systematic analysis of meaning and personal experience, helping to underscore how people understand and make things happen in their lives (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

I read and reread all the individual interviews and focus discussion transcripts and highlighted salient, emergent and recurring themes. I then looked at whether the themes related to one another in any way, and then resolved to use Bronfenbrenner's nested systems as a guide in arranging the themes. This process recurred until there was a sense of saturation of the themes. The results of this process appear in the results section, and are represented by Table 2. These themes were further distilled and then interrogated in relation to theory. The outcome thereof makes up the discussion chapter. Thus, together, TA and NA allowed for a rich explication of the narratives of unemployed youth involved in this study.

4.8 Rigour

In quantitative research, reference is made to validity and reliability. Validity is a way of ensuring whether the research instrument is indeed measuring that which it sets out to measure, and not something else (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Reliability is whether

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the instrument is able to offer the same results when conducted at different times, therefore ensuring replicability of the results (Morse et al., 2002). However, in qualitative research, the research occurs in the context where the phenomenon in question may be occurring live and is not necessarily 'replicable,' per se. In qualitative research, 'rigour' is defined as trustworthiness and comprises of the following: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Golafshani, 2003; Morse et al., 2002; Nowell et al., 2017).

4.8.1 Credibility

Credibility tells the reader of a study about the "fit" between the research collaborator's perspective and the researcher's representation thereof (Nowell et al., 2017). A number of techniques are offered to facilitate credibility such as researcher triangulation, data collection triangulation, prolonged engagement and persistent observation (Golafshani, 2003; Morse et al., 2002; Nowell et al., 2017). Peer debriefing also provides an external check on the research process as well as looking at referential adequacy so as to assess the initial findings and the interpretations in relation to the raw data, this can also serve to bolster credibility. Member checking can also be carried out to check the findings and interpretations with the collaborators (Nowell et al., 2017). In the present study, data collection triangulation through interviews, focus groups, captured group exercises, persistent observation, the reference group process, supervision and researcher reflexitivity were employed. Characteristics of the researcher also play a role, as the researcher must endeavour to "be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances, holistic, having processional immediacy, sensitivity, and ability for clarification and summarization" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 15).

4.8.2 Transferability

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Transferability pertains to the generalisability of the study (Nowell et al., 2017). This means case-to-case transferability given that this is qualitative research. This can be operationalised through thick descriptions so those wishing to transfer the findings to their own context can determine transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). As far as possible a thorough account of how the study unfolded has been provided in order to ensure transferability.

4.8.3 Dependability

Dependability can be achieved by ensuring that the research process is clearly documented, traceable and is logical (Nowell et al., 2017). An audit trail can also offer readers with the rationale for the theoretical and methodological concerns of the study. The audit trail is maintained by good record keeping of the raw data, transcripts, a reflexive diary and field notes (Nowell et al., 2017). Reflexivity is vital to the audit trail. An audit trail was duly maintained throughout the research process, the interview recordings, the material from all the activities as well as my reflexive diary notes were securely stored.

4.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability assures us that the researcher's interpretations and findings flow logically from the data and it thus behooves the researcher with the responsibility to illustrate how interpretations and conclusions are attained (Tobin & Beglay, 2004; Nowell et al., 2017). This dissertation and the manner in which the results are presented aims to demonstrate confirmability by clearly outlining in detail, the manner in which the study unfolded. When dependability, credibility and transferability are established, then confirmability can be achieved (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017).

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Research is only as good as the researcher. It is the researcher's creativity, attunement, deftness and skill in using the verification strategies that determines the trustworthiness of the evolving study (Morse et al., 2002). If the researcher is not responsive at all phases of the research endeavour, that can negatively impact trustworthiness in a way difficult to note through post hoc methods of assessing for trustworthiness (Morse et al., 2002).

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Approval was first obtained from the university's ethics committee before the study commenced. Informed consent was verbally discussed with the participants in their first language, and they were informed of their rights as participants, of the voluntary nature of their participation as well as their right to discontinue participation at any point. Participants were informed that no identifying details would be divudged without their consent, and that all research assistants and transcribers signed confidentiality agreements. Arrangements were made so that in the event of undue emotional distress, participants could be referred to Welgevallen House, of the Stellenbosch University Department of Psychology's community clinic, where free therapeutic services are offered to the community. Along with Welgevallen House, participants were also given the option to consult the Psychologist at the Kayamandi Clinic should they feel that there were aspects of their life stories that remained raw and unprocessed following participation in any of the interviews. None of the participants requested or seemed to require a referral to Welgevallen House for counselling. Participants were also reminded to direct enquiries to the researcher should they have any questions pertaining to the research and the use of their narratives.

As a clinician, I also had the privilige of being able to detect signs and symptoms that may have required further intervention and I also would have have been able to recommend that

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the participants consider psychological treatment if it was indicated. There were no participants that required psychological intervention or further debriefing.

4.9.1 **The decision to not pay participants**

The psychology of money notes that money as a variable has the potential to influence people in significant ways. Money is psychologically interesting and complex, and its effects go beyond the instrumental (Lea & Webley, 2014). Moller and Deci (2014, p. 180), in looking at the psychology of getting paid, aver that:

> it is important to recognize that payments are fundamentally interpersonal. They are financial transactions that are always made between people, or organizations made up and controlled by people; they are not, for example, transactions made with machines, animals, or any other agents. Furthermore, in most financial transactions, payers pay payees in order to bend the payees' will in some manner—to control or persuade them—to behave in a way that they might otherwise not. This dynamic of interpersonal control may be subtle or overt in nature, and may take a variety of forms.

Further, Moller and Deci (2014) contend that while the overt act of paying someone is nearly always conscious (e.g., to whom, and how much), the underlying aspects of motivation for payment may often be unconscious, and controlling. A central motive or reason for why people pay others at the core, is often interpersonal control, the attempt to control another person. This may manifest in ways that are subtle or overt and conscious or unconscious. I did not want to set up such a dynamic as described by Moller and Deci, nor did I wish to create a situation where participation was *solely* for remuneration. After much personal deliberation and discussion with my supervisor, I opted for participation to be completely voluntary.

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Before arriving at this decision, I deeply pondered the following questions: what of the very real material conditions that the participants faced? How would remuneration impact their participation in the process? A case could be made that payment can make a difference, however marginal. However, the payments would be time-limited until the study ended. Another way of looking at it, is that by introducing money one creates a power differential, setting me up as a one with resources, and the participants as needing to comply due to the payment. Neither of these scenarios seemed appropriate. Apart from the fact that there were no extensive research funds to pay the participants from the onset, the very idea of paying the participants seemed reactionary and not helpful in any meaningful way to either the participants or the study. Hence, I resorted to ensuring that healthy meals were available for all of us to enjoy throughout the research endeavour. I was of the view that the nature of the study would afford the participants more value and benefit, and I did not want money to confound the reasons for the youth's participation.

4.10 Reflexivity

Given the epistemological and ontological positioning of this study as constructivist and interpretive, it is necessary for me as participant-researcher in this process to reflect aloud on my own positionality. Reflexivity is defined as "the practice of researchers being self-aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes, and their personal effects on the setting they have studied, and self-critical about their research methods and how they have been applied, so that the evaluation and understanding of their research findings, both by themselves and their audience, may be facilitated and enhanced" (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 191). Reflexivity helps us to gain an understanding of the premises that underpin our evaluation of social phenomena by exploring the strengths and limitations of forms of knowledge. Thus, researchers are able to undertake research informed by a desire to understand, rather than control, social phenomena (May & Perry, 2014).

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I grew up in a township and know all too well the experience and sequelae of being unemployed. As an undergraduate, I struggled to obtain employment. In as much as I could relate as one who looks like the participants and speaks the local language, I am not of Xhosa heritage. I am a Zulu-speaking, somewhat short in height, somewhat soft-spoken, recently-married, black woman (I look much younger than I actually am) who grew up in Johannesburg. My primary and high school education was initially in a township school, and then later at a multiracial school. I graduated at two top universities in South Africa (Wits University and Stellenbosch University). It was not lost on me that I found myself in a privileged position as a Clinical Psychologist and as a researcher. I was the one who, at the end of the day, locked the group room and hopped into my car whilst my participants went off on foot to their respective homes which were, for the majority, informal settlements. I had both the latent and manifest resources associated with employment. I had access to resources (material, psychological, social, etc.), and I was mobile.

Given my clinical training, I was intent on creating safety and space for open expression. The interviews were long and intense, and I struggled to separate my role of researcher from that of clinician. This was a real challenge because the narratives were often laden with trauma and pain. I was also a participant in the research process along with the participants with whom we collaboratively worked in understanding the barriers to employment and how best to traverse them.

My default role was one of listener, actively creating space for engagement. The aim was to let the participants drive the conversations. Where I had expertise in a particular area, I shared this with the participants and we also enlisted the assistance of others. It is in this way that we

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were learning more about the assets and resources within the community of Kayamandi. This was important for sustainability, because the research intervention would come to an end and the participants would still need support. Thus, it is in making community links and connections that the participants are then able to draw upon existing structures within the community (and within themselves) independent of me – thus facilitating agency and empowerment.

During the interviews and the group processes, I thought I was fine, but just incredibly exhausted throughout the duration of the project. However, I struggled when it came to engaging with the narratives during data analysis. There were days which turned into weeks where I dreaded returning to the research narratives because of how they made me feel. I would be overcome by a myriad of feelings, sometimes hopeful but often a sense of hopelessness and stuckness set in. Other times I just felt angry, frustrated and – more often than not – simply drained. So, I would abandon the narratives and avoid engaging with them for weeks at a time. I thought that maybe it was a personal failing and garden variety tardiness on my part (my personal default thinking pattern is that there must be something wrong with me, or that I have done something wrong). Hence, when the research consultant was triggered and reacted in the way that she did, I could relate to what was happening to her. I felt incredibly guilty though when I saw how the material made her come undone in the way that she did. I felt as though I had inflicted the pain upon her by exposing her to these narratives. However, I truly did not in anyway anticipate the ensuing emotional responses. However, I was able to offer both research consultants containment and they had access to their own psychotherapeutic support structures.

The context of the narratives mirrored my own lived experience. Witnessing the pain of the participants, having to sit with it over an extended period of time was challenging. The narratives were triggering; these are narratives lived by my own extended family and relatives,

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this could easily have been me. Simultaneously, I had to grapple with the sense of seeming the same as my research collaborators, but actually realising that this is not the case. Whilst I too grew up in a township with my own family drama, I was always emotionally and financially supported. We were not wealthy or middle class, but I never went to bed without a meal (I can't say the same for my parents, though. Whilst they were caring for me, I know that they often made do without in order for me and my sister to be cared for). There were days when my family and I would live off cooked cabbage and as an infant, my solid food for a long while was mashed green-beans and potato. Thus, I came to realise my own unacknowledged privilege of caring and supportive parents that had facilitated my own development.

I also wonder about my impact as a researcher-participant in the process. I wonder what perceptions the participants had of me and how their perceptions of me may have impacted their motivation and the manner of their participation in the study. I wonder whether there were some who saw in me a 'privileged other' who could never appreciate their circumstances. Perhaps a symbol of the distance between where they want to be and where they are was amplified in our interaction. I wonder if there was unexpressed inspiration, envy or even anger regarding the exercise. Inspiration at seeing a 'young' educated professional working with them, envious of that which the clinician-researcher has achieved and anger/frustration at themselves for being in the situations they find themselves in as well as the circumstances they face.

My research collaborators' narratives were descriptions of poverty, having no one to turn to (no social support), having nothing to eat, not knowing where to go, not knowing what to do, not knowing who to turn to for help and sometimes, asking for help and not receiving it. They were describing problems at multiple systemic levels simultaneously, and when one started to unpack these narratives, it was staggering. This realisation only became clearer to me after the

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reference group process some 2 years later. The report-writing phase was somewhat better (my own process of psychotherapy as well as discussions with Professor Naidoo, my supervisor, may have played a big part in this too), despite the fact that deeper explication highlighted the challenges even more pointedly. Supervision was a welcome oasis to make sense of the vast and scorching landscape of material I was engaging with. An appreciation of the resilience of the participants as well as the meaningful impact of the intervention also helped to mitigate the heaviness.

This process of self reflection helped me note, clarify and appreciate my own perceptions of unemployment, the experience of being unemployed and its impact in my life and that of my loved ones (Brooks et al., 2015). This critical examination assisted me in seeing how my engagement with the collaborators and their narratives impacted the study and I. Analysis was challenging because the themes were evocative, they oft felt disorganised, disorganising and seemingly contradictory. However, as a clinician I can't help but wonder about empathic resonance and counter-transference manifesting in the analysis process.

4.11 Summary

This chapter unpacked social constructionism, which served as the study's theoretical framework. Narrative inquiry and participatory action research methodology were discussed and a glimpse into the role of stories in African traditions was outlined. The chapter then looked at the recruitment process and data collection mechanisms. Atlas.ti, template analysis and narrative analysis were discussed, along with an account of rigour. I proffered a clearer description of the research in action. I noted how I gained entry into the community where the study took place, which was followed by a presentation of the phases of the study and how the project unfolded. Ethical considerations were highlighted along with an account of my reflexivity. The dissertation

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now moves on to the heart of the study, where the youth participants are introduced and the analysis of their narratives is presented.

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CHAPTER 5

Findings

"When all is said and done, how do we know but that our own unreason may be better than another's truth? For it has been warmed on our hearths and in our souls, and is ready for the wild bees of truth to hive in it, and make their sweet honey."

William Butler Yeats

5.1 Introduction

The study's aim was to foreground the narrative identities of unemployed youth in Kayamandi, and to reflect on the discourses that undergird who they are, their lived experiences and influences, and how they construct meaning in their lives in the context of impoverished socio-economic conditions. These key elements were explored from a social constructivist framework using narrative inquiry and participatory action research methodologies. This chapter now looks at the fruit of the research endeavour.

The participants are first introduced, with a brief biography of each participant given. The names used are pseudonyms, and not the participants' actual names in order to preserve their confidentiality and anonymity. The biography comprises responses to questions from their initial screening interview (what their education level is, their home circumstances, whether they have a crminal record, whether they have ever been arrested, whether they drink and/or use substances), as well as input derived from the life story interview, group intervention (whether they have a mobile phone/an e-mail address/a Linkedin profile, previous work experience, their opinion on skills they have as well as what their goal(s) is/are, as defined by them).

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These screening questions in particular were considered, as these tended to be the reasons posited by employers as to why candidates were not considered for employment. This is followed by an account of the life story interviews, the focus group/intervention session discussions as well as my observations during the study. In the latter part of the chapter, a template of the data is presented. This will be supplemented in Chapter 6 by a deeper narrative analysis and discussion of the participants' narratives, as well as the key emerging discourses.

5.2 Biography of the Participants – Simulated CVs

5.2.1 **Akhona**

Akhona is a 23 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. She lives in a hall (a large empty community structure that houses several other families) with her sister, her mother, her two cousins and her daughter. Akhona is unemployed, and is supported by her mother and cousin. Akhona has never had a job. She notes that a skill she has is the ability to care for children. She fell pregnant in high school and did not complete school after attaining Grade 10. Akhona's goal upon leaving school was to get work as soon as possible in order to adequately care for her child, and then to pursue further education.

5.2.2 **Fezeka**

Fezeka is a 22 year old female. She was also born in the Eastern Cape. She resides in a hostel with her aunt and members of her extended family. Fezeka's parents live in the Eastern Cape. Fezeka supports herself when she is able to find work, or turns to her aunt for support when she is unemployed. Fezeka worked at a crèche (nursery school) for some time. She has been without work for 8 months. Fezeka completed Grade 10 and her goal is to get an e-mail address in order to make job applications online, and look at continuing her education thereafter.

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5.2.3 **Nhlakanipho**

Nhlakanipho is a 21 year old male, born in Kayamandi. He lives with his mother and sister in a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) house. Nhlakanipho's father is alive, but he does not live with them. Nhlakanipho is supported by his mom and dad, given that he is unemployed. Nhlakanipho views himself as a team player. He has an interest in music production (and has a song that he created that garnered a lot of interest from music industry musos). Nhlakanipho also notes that he is a great soccer player. He has never been employed since he finished Matric three years ago. After Matric, Nhlakanipho started an internship in agriculture, but he did not complete it because he did not enjoy it – the language of instruction at the College was Afrikaans, which he struggled with. He then applied to do a marketing qualification at Boland College in Stellenbosch. At the time of the interview he was awaiting feedback (at the end of the intervention, we learnt that he had been accepted by Boland College to pursue marketing). Nhlakanipho's short-term goal is to get any job. His medium-term goal is to obtain a qualification. His long-term goal is to get employed in a field that he is passionate about, then start a company and buy franchise businesses.

5.2.4 **Kamva**

Kamva is a 20-year-old male, born in Kayamandi. He lives with his mother and two sisters in an informal dwelling (shack). Kamva's mother is his primary support system as his father does not live with them. Kamva says that he is a notable team player. He states that he has demonstrated leadership skill by being nominated as captain of his soccer club, and by having had leadership roles in various community-based initiatives that he has been a part of. He also lauded his communication skills on account of some of the responsibilities that he was entrusted with when he was studying. Kamva completed Matric and then obtained a National Certificate in Human Resource Management from Boland College. He is computer literate and completed a-

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year-long learnership in agriculture. He has also volunteered for a community-based organisation in Kayamandi, where he assisted with administrative tasks. Kamva noted that his short-term goal is to get an internship in order to complete his certificate's requirements. Kamva's medium-term goal was to work as a graduate human resources (HR) intern and in the long-term, he wants to finish his internship, obtain a diploma and work in HR, whilst also studying part-time for a degree.

5.2.5 **Ntombi**

Ntombi is a 20 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. She lives with her siblings in a hostel. Ntombi's parents are in the Eastern Cape. Ntombi is not working so her older sister is helping to support her. Ntombi considers herself to be a team player. Ntombi has knowledge of basic first aid, and has evidenced leadership skills as part of the community-based interventions that she has been entrusted to play a leadership role in. Ntombi is also a sports enthusiast – she is a keen runner who has won a race. She also enjoys playing volleyball and netball. Ntombi prides herself on her communication skills and her community development involvement. She worked at a faith-based organisation for 9 months doing office administration and some facilitation work. Ntombi completed an internship at a well-respected Child and Youth Care Programme – Chrysalis Academy Youth Development. Ntombi has completed Matric, and her goal is to get meaningful work and then look at studying social work.

5.2.6 **Owami**

Owami is a 24 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. She lives with her mother, sister, two nieces and her daughter in a shack. Owami's mother and sister support her because she is unemployed. Owami has never had a job, and notes that a skill she possesses is that of

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caring for children (child care). Owami attained Grade 11 and her immediate goal was to get work as soon as possible in order to take care of her child, and then to study.

5.2.7 **Ongavumi**

Ongavumi is a 20 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. She lives with her mother and brother. Ongavumi receives support from her mother. Ongavumi says she is a good team-player. She used to work at a factory making jam. She has been unemployed for 5 years. She attained Grade 9, and her goal is to find employment as soon as possible.

5.2.8 **Samkelisiwe**

Samkelisiwe is a 25 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. Samkelisiwe lives with extended family in the halls who also support her when she needs assistance. She has a child that is living with her parents in the Eastern Cape. Samkelisiwe does whatever seasonal work is available. She noted that she is very good with children and considers that a notable skill. She completed Grade 10 and her goal was to get an email address in order to make job applications online and at some stage in the future perhaps consider furthering her studies.

5.2.9 **Thando**

Thando is a 22 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. She lives alone in an informal settlement (shack). Thando's parents reside in the Eastern Cape. Thando has never been employed. She supports herself and also looks to her siblings for financial support. Thando says she is a team-player and is open to learning. She completed Grade 10 and exclaims that her goal is to go to school again so that she can get a better life.

5.2.10 **Thatheka**

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Thatheka is a 23 year old female, born in the Eastern Cape. She lives with the father of her child. She has a brother and sister who also reside in the Western Cape. Thatheka's boyfriend and her siblings support her. Thatheka notes that she is also a team-player. Thatheka, like Ongavumi, once worked at a factory making jam. Thatheka attained Grade 10, and her goal was to get work as soon as possible in order to take care of her child, and then study.

In the screening interview I was mindful of possible enablers and barriers to entry into employment, namely: secondary education qualification, post school qualification, work-related experience, substance abuse and a criminal record. Only three participants had obtained their Matric certificates, and of these, one had a post-school qualification. Whilst some of the participants admitted to drinking recreationally, there was no one who indicated that they were abusing substances. In the group intervention I also asked the participants whether or not they had an e-mail address or a Linkedin profile, where the latter refers to a professional social media platform often used for job search and self-promotional/marketing purposes. Three participants had an e-mail address, and none of them had a Linkedin account. The nature of the job market at present requires one to be accessible via e-mail, and having a presence on platforms like Linkedin gives employers a sense of who you are as a job candidate. Only three of the participants could comfortably navigate the internet beyond Facebook. In the current job market, having an e-mail address is vital in the job-search process.

5.3 *A priori* themes

The pervading picture that seemed to emerge from the narratives appeared to locate the participants as embedded in an overwhelming matrix of systems – either the presence or lack thereof. In making reference to systems, this relates to the ecological metaphor that outlines forces that impact people's lives at five different levels. These include the *individual* – age,

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personality, health, race, academic ability, etc., the *microsystem* – family, friends, school, work, township, church, community-based organisations; the *mesosystem* – the interactions between the microsystem, the interconnections (i.e., relationship between a person and school or the individual and the township); and the *exosystem* – the exogenous factors not necessarily impacting directly on the individual, but that affect the individual; namely, a parent's job loss and its impact on the young person or the sudden illness of a close relative of a young person; the *macrosystem* that relates to the culture and structural factors that act upon the youth's lives – poverty, homelessness, the cultural group the individual belongs to, the society which s/he inhabits and the mores thereof; lastly, the *chronosystem* – the sociohistorical circumstances relating to the individual and beyond; this is akin to the spirit of the times and the pervading global discourses at play (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Visser, 2007). Given the manner in which Bronfenbrenner's theory is operationalised in the study, the chronosystem will not be elaborated upon.

Thus, the emergent themes will be discussed in terms of the various systemic levels they best fit into. This will then be followed by a discussion to make sense of the themes as a coherent whole – noting the inter-relationships between various themes and levels. The table below provides the working template - a graphical representation of the categories, superordinate themes and subordinate themes.

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Table 2: Template - graphical representation of the categories, superordinate themes and subordinate themes

A priori themes	Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Individual	*Intrapersonal* • What work means to the participants • The nature of unemployment and the meaning thereof • The appreciation for the space to reflect • Expectation of the intervention to have a material impact • Sense of efficacy and resilience • Hope and goals: creativity and problem-solving • Insight into self • Sense of responsibility and agency • Perseverance, hard-work and not giving up • Motivation	• The possibility of the burden of dreams and goals • Relative deprivation and the sense of being stuck • The importance of health • Coping mechanisms
	Affective Elements • Anger • Guilt and regret • Hopelessness and helplessness • Feelings of loss	
Microsystem	• Where the participants grew up • The rural areas and what they mean to the participants • Academic challenges • Social support • Key recreational and support mechanisms • Pregnancy and its sequelae	• Social support: impact of family and community • Social support: family conflict • Social support: father absence • Social support: perception of pressure from loved ones as killing hope • Social support: peer influence – often negative and distracting • Social support: church as a support structure
Mesosystem	• Highlighted resources	• Highlighted resources: Job search strategies – orality • Highlighted resources: Share information
Exosystem	• Township associated with negativity • Politics: distrust because of perceived corruption • Deep poverty and deprivation	
Macrosystem	• Structural Challenges • Equanimity/Distancing and learned helplessness • Cultural Rites • The value of education	

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5.3.1 **Individual**

At the individual level, two superordinate themes were discernable - intrapersonal and affective elements, each comprising a number of constituent themes and subordinate themes. The themes that comprised intrapersonal are: what work means, the nature of unemployment and the meaning thereof, the appreciation of the space to reflect, expectation of the intervention to have a material impact, sense of efficacy and resilience, hope and goals, creativity and problem-solving, insight into self, sense of responsibility and agency, perseverance, hard-work and not giving up as well as motivation. The subordinate themes were: the possibility of the burden of dreams and goals, relative deprivation and the sense of being stuck, the importance of health and coping mechanisms. Secondly, the affective elements comprised of the feelings that the participants expressed. These included anger, guilt and regret, hopelessness and helplessness as well as feelings of loss.

5.3.1.1 ***Work means…***

The discussions centred on unemployment, however, there were many occasions when the participants spoke about what work means to them. Primarily work seemed to highlight something quite important to the youth, the value of being able to contribute.

> *"It was when I was working at Oksa, I was getting some money, so I found an opportunity to be a mother, taking care of my child's needs…. I used to feel happy and I could go and put away money for my child. I wish I could have a job that won't finish so that I can take responsibility for my child… It was a good life (sigh), I was able to buy things and buy things for the child and I was able to show my mother that I am happy with the things she's done for me and offer her support (silence)."* Akhona

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"My high point was when I got employed at the Department of Agriculture. Jah, well, firstly, it was my first working experience especially after high school and I was just happy that I could also, I was also able to help at home. When things were needed, I will, I mean, I could also provide. So, I mean, being such a wonderful…[laughs]… It was a wonderful experience and a wonderful feeling… Jah and I was happy, I was; I could also buy things for myself then…. Uhm, being that I'm the eldest son… Uhm, you know, when you grow up being the older one at home, it almost feels like you have to help when maybe your mother is struggling. So, when I was working then, I had the means to help when I needed to. So, I did and it was a blessing. It was a blessing… I could contribute at home. Jah." Kamva

"Jah or let's say, the electricity is finished at home and you find out that eish, your mother has no money you see so, if I was working, then these things I would buy them myself or there are things they need but now we'll have to wait until mom is paid, you know… So, you're just, you feel like eish, if I was working, I was going to do this thing. I was going to take care of the bills, I was going to pay for the water, pay for the electricity and all those things but you can't because you are not working." Nhlakanipho

Work means an opportunity 'to be a mother' to one's child – to be able to meet one's child's needs. Work means being able to contribute at home, support one's parents, to add value, be of value and to make a difference.

5.3.1.2 ***Nature of unemployment and meaning thereof***

Having looked at what work means, the participants also highlighted the nature of unemployment and what being unemployed meant for them. This pertained to the heart of the

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study and it was the most excruciating discussion to have with the youth. The youth spoke of heart-wrenching pain, the frustration of dependence on loved ones who are also stretched and being constrained from being able to do things they would like to do.

> *"Being unemployed is very painful, especially when you live with people that are not your parents, it is very difficult. So, it becomes like even you, as you sit in the township, you like it but actually it's because you can't find work."* Fezeka

> *"It's frustrating at times, let me not say at times, more often because I'm at this age but I have things that I would love to do and to have for myself. So, I can't have them without having work. So, jah, its frustrating and so now, you have to limit yourself in the things you do because you don't pay for all the things you do…"* Kamva

> *"Yoh, I think it's very frustrating, yoh, I think especially to me. You know, at home, you know that you were supposed to be working, uhm, you know. So, you become afraid of asking for things, you just know the response will be that they don't have it. Ja uhm… I think frustrating is an understatement, it's something more than that, you know, when you hear those words being spoken, maybe some of them, you know, it goes straight to the heart."* Nhlakanipho

> *"Being unemployed is very painful because sometimes there are things that you shouldn't have to ask for, perpetual dependence on parents, you see. So, so it's painful in that way, being unemployed means you're perpetually asking, it's not nice."* Thando

Being unemployed is painful and frustrating. The dependence on others was unbearably

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difficult for the youth.

5.3.1.3 ***Appreciation for the space to reflect***

The youth were appreciative of the space to reflect not only on their own life stories, but also on their circumstances and how best to address their situations. For most, there was openness and engagement with the interview and group processes. Many youth expressed never having had the space to sit down and talk about who they are, where they are from, what they wanted to achieve in their lives and the challenges that they encountered.

> *"(sigh).. talking today was alright, like, I don't often talk about the fact that I have a child and how I feel and stuff. I've never spoken about the fact that my mother and I left the rural areas to come here, we never speak about what happened. Today I was able to talk about how I feel and my sentiments regarding the child. I felt able to talk today, like, I never talk about those things (silence)."* Akhona

> *"What I've learnt today is quite a lot because, as we were writing our presentations there, a person wrote what they wanted there, so now we are able to make decisions, and write them down. I wish we don't give up on persevering."* Fezeka

> *"Thinking about it was especially mind opening. You know, uhm, because you find the opportunity to go into depth of the things you want. So, it was good… Just thanking you. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity for being here."* Nhlakanipho

> *"Okay, who am I, I know everything about me. My name, my surname, how old I am but I don't know who am I really. I know my neighbours in details, I know my friends in*

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details, I know more than ten people in details but, I don't know who am I. This is so flabbergasting because I always wash myself, feed myself, reflect myself on the mirror but, I don't know who am I. Do I have a time to do introspection, do I have a time to look after myself? Do I love myself? If the answer is yes, I'm struggling to answer this question. Maybe this is the time to look myself in camera, maybe this is the time to look at myself and get the answer, maybe this is the time to mind my own business, who am I, what kind of a person am I. So, after that I was left with a question of who am I, but now I think I know who am I... it helped me a lot. My strengths, I know my strengths now and what I can place in the box is that let us be concerted and commit ourselves perhaps we can get the assistance we need." Ntombi

We see the silencing nature of unemployment manifested in the statement by Akhona. The intervention seemed to have also opened up space for (self) exploration and, as alluded to in the statement by Ntombi, it also created some room for hope.

However, there were also some participants who found the interview and group process quite frustrating, especially upon realising that the process would not directly lead to employment or remuneration. It was notable that a number of these participants who found the interview frustrating were either absent in the group process, or attended irregularly. This was a sentiment conveyed by a participant commenting on the drastic drop in participation from the individual interview to the group process/intervention phase.

5.3.1.4 **Expectation that the intervention will have a material impact**

All the participants expressed interest in participating in the intervention. However, it emerged that some participants had an explicit expectation in mind and were hoping that in

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participating, they would indeed find work. Upon learning that this was not an explicit outcome, some were disappointed and subsequently either did not return for the group process, or participated reluctantly in the group processes often being absent for the group sessions. The participants were not paid in order to ensure that participation was truly volitional and not merely on account of the money, as elaborated in the earlier section on ethical considerations.

> *"Because, I've been sitting doing nothing but now there's something to keep me occupied even though it doesn't involve money this thing makes me happy (silence) I was happy because I've been circling the sun for so long in the location sitting around."* Thando

> *"(Sigh). I came because you said I should come to the interview today. I felt hopeful that what I want I will get. It was as if by the time we met you could tell me that here's a place where you will work."* Fezeka

For Thando, doing something is better than doing nothing. Fezeka expresses appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the study, but one can also read the sub-text of an unmet need – that of a tangible outcome, namely, obtaining work.

5.3.1.5 ***Sense of self-efficacy and resilience***

A sense of belief in self and aspects of being resilient were discerned primarily from the 3 participants with post-Matric qualifications and/or experiential learning (i.e., internships). These three participants were a lot more vocal and expressive throughout the group process and in their individual interviews.

> *"Uhm, I'm quite a positive person. So, when I was not accepted, I thought to myself there*

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are other things that I can do. That was not the end of the world. I knew that for a fact and I knew that I will continue living and giving in to the life of Kayamandi, that's something I never wanted to do. So, I never wanted to give in. So, instead I continued, I persevered and I think that's actually how I ended up doing the internship I did at the Department of Agriculture… Knowing that I decided from, well in 2013 that I wanted to go to school, that I wanted to study and actually did and accomplished that goal well. I can only feel proud and happy about myself, jah." Kamva

"I decided no, let me just apply in Boland college let me see, I applied for marketing I said let me just do marketing and see how it works and at CPUT I applied and 'cause I didn't have my results and my certificate and at least they were allowing me to enter into the varsity and then I applied for entrepreneurship and then I'm still waiting on them I just wanted to have many options you know, so I applied here at Boland and they accepted me. So I just said let me just do marketing that one year and six months and then take it from there, let me just have a qualification see if it works and then if I'm fortunate enough, if I get a job or something like that I will just go and do sound engineering, ja pay for it myself even if it's a short course I will just go to [inaudible 22:23] and attend classes there you know that was my plan as it's still my plan now." Nhlakanipho

"Tell me about yourself. Firstly, I'm Ntombi. Uhm, you always see a smile on my face. I'm friendly, I'm talkative, I like to communicate. Uhm, sometimes I'm just confused what kind of a person am I because some way I used to wear a mask. I used to be a pretender, to be something out, in opposite of the inside because sometimes, when you hurt me, I just smile and pretending there's nothing happened but deeply inside, I'm just, wow, very,

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very hurt. Mhm, I'm a hard worker, everything I do, I just put, I, I just want to do the best in everything that I do." Ntombi

The sense of self-efficacy and resilience was not explicitly expressed by the other participants, whereas it was prominent in my interactions with Nhlakanipho, Kamva and Ntombi.

5.3.1.6 ***Hope and goals: creativity and problem-solving***

In the interviews and during the group process, the youth shared their hopes and outlined their goals. As a group, we also looked at creative ways of facilitating the realisation of these hopes and goals. Thus, we engaged in some problem-solving – we looked at available resources, what the obstacles in their paths were and how best they could maneuver around the obstacles and move closer to their hopes and goals.

"Next year, I'm not coming back if I leave for the rural areas. You can't repeat Grade 12 here. I will stay there and continue studying and come back when I have it [Matric]." Akhona

"I'm waiting for my success. I feel as if I can start by finding work so I can get money and go back to school but the first thing is to find work." Fezeka

"Yoh… My goals, my short term goals uhm, would be uh, looking at a company that would be able to help me with an internship. Then, my medium term goal would be by next year, starting to work at a company as a graduate intern for HR and then my long term would be finishing, finishing up an internship and probably start working, oh jah, by finishing the internship, I would be… I would then qualify for a diploma. So, after that I

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would want to work and study part time for a degree." Kamva

"Uhm, my medium goals, my medium term goals, I would like to go to school, get myself a qualification, you know, do marketing and stuff. Uhm, my long term goals, I want to, you know, get employed in the thing I studied and then start my own company which looks quite impossible now but I know it would be possible, uh jah, buy franchises and you know, jah. Uhm, difficulties, yoh, fear, you know, jah fear. Uhm, you know, uh, I wanted, at some point I wanted to go and do marketing and then when I finish marketing do sound engineering. … Jah, I've been playing guitar for a long time. I've started this year and also I'm learning piano too uh… I wanna play professionally. So, I'm learning to play it. Now, I'm gonna buy books because I wanna be able to read music, I wanna be able to play a song even if I've never heard it before, you know. I just wanna read the [chord progression] and all that. So, I'm learning it professionally, so jah, I'm getting there." Nhlakanipho

"(Silence). Now the thing I am waiting for is to study and work. (Silence) so that I can be independent and be able to take care of my parent." Ongavumi

"(Silence) I have a single hope (Silence) My hope (Silence) in my life is to work (Silence)" Samkelisiwe

"Build my own place sister because staying at home won't help. If I am staying at home (silence) at the end of the day, one day I will die and I'll leave my child without a place. Home is just a place (silence) my own place is also necessary, my own home is necessary." Thando

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The youth were clear about what they needed – to study and to work – as well as what they wanted to achieve. The critical isssue seemed to be *how* to go about effecting their respective hopes and goals.

5.3.1.7 ***Sense of responsibility and agency***

The youth also expressed a very strong sense of responsibility for the well-being of their families of origin. Those with children further expressed a desire to be able to adequately care for their children without having to rely on others.

"Because I want to raise my child, take responsibility and it can't only be my mom alone who's taking care of the child." Akhona

"I just believe that if I want something to be done, then I have to do it myself especially if I want it to be done the way I want to, then I have to do it myself." Kamva

"Well, I like helping people, to me it felt normal like it felt like something I had to do you know, I was going to blame myself if I never did that you know. If I never did what I had to do for somebody's life to be saved, I was going to blame myself you know, so it made me feel good in a way, but ja, it felt like something I had to do." Nhlakanipho

"I don't give up easily because I always taught myself that life is not about waiting for the storms to pass but is about learning how to dance in the rain." Ntombi

"Changing the situation at home (silence). Given that my younger brother he doesn't

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have much of anything and there's nothing he is thinking that can put him anywhere [ngungantweni engenanto ayicingayo engambeka endaweni], I'd like to change that as well. That when I speak, he can listen to me. I wish we could all do those things that our parents always wanted us to do and they must wait on us, it mustn't be them who work for us but us for them. Be the things they wanted us to be." Thando

This theme is closely linked to the theme of sense of self-efficacy and resilience, and we see that clearly reflected for Kamva, Nhlakanipho and Ntombi. However, for Akhona and Thando, it is as if the sense of responsibility and agency is in relation to their circumstance and or/others. Akhona is thinking primarily about easing the burden on her mother, and Thando wants to change the situation at home because her brother is not able to do so.

5.3.1.8 ***Hard work, perseverance, and not giving up***

A very strong sentiment expressed by the youth was that of perseverance. A sense that hard work is required in order to move towards their goals was voiced. Giving up was not an option for them. Of all the themes, this was emphatically reiterated by all the participants at some point during the individual interview and the group process.

"Jah because through my uhm, hustling and hardworking, And always looking for something when something else doesn't work, I managed to get the internship." Kamva

"That's how I can analyse it, that's what it says about me, that you know, yeah I am still breathing. Let me just keep on trying you know, maybe at some point in life I will have to encourage people who are facing the same thing that I'm facing so hence I said it's just a lesson, so that moment you know, it made me to realise that yeah, something will work

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out." Nhlakanipho

"So, I always keep on moving forward although it's so hard, I know it's hard but I'm always pushing. I uh, I also, I'm also enthusiastic. Uhm, I'm willing to remove mountains in order to get success." Ntombi

"I know that people's lives are not the same. In the end, having grown up struggling, you're not going to struggle indefinitely. In time things will get better as the years go by. The years are not the same. I see the difference. When I promise myself, I say that I'm still going forward and towards progress." Owami

All the participants made reference to overcoming challenges with perseverance and endurance, and not giving up, at some point. These sentiments were juxtaposed by feelings of hopelessness and defeat at other instances.

5.3.1.9 ***Motivation***

Undergirding the strong theme of perseverance, hard work and not giving up, was a sense of being motivated. Several participants spoke about how they remained motivated.

"[Sighs]... being from Kayamandi in Cape Town and going to Gauteng visiting a Premier League soccer team, it taught me that everything is possible and if you work hard enough, you can achieve anything you want. If you only work hard enough, you can actually achieve anything you want in life." Kamva

"*It was when I saw these people that were changed by my mentor and I said wow, so I*

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started looking down on the problem that I have right now, but it was when I bought that book, started reading it and I love people who speak words that are encouraging, people who inspire, you know. It was when I started reading that book you know, it made a lot of sense to me, it was, I know it might sound crazy, but it was when I bought that book, I started reading it and I saw that wow, okay, so things like these do happen in life. So my mentor grew up in a village, so but now when I look at his life now, I'm like wow. So ja it was when I bought that book, so it inspires me a lot, that's the most important right now, that's the most important thing." Nhlakanipho

The above quotes by Kamva and Nhlakanipho are not the only examples, but they offer us a glimpse of what inspires them. Both Kamva and Nhlakanipho were profoundly impacted by the football tour. It left an indelible impression on both of them. Further, Nhlakanipho saw his pastor's life story, his book and what he had achieved as a testament of what was possible. Kamva similarly looked at his mother's capacity to endure as a reason to perservere. For many of the other participants, the sense of responsibility for their children and/or family was a key driver, along with the desire for success.

5.3.1.10 ***Burden of dreams and goals: vague/mystic entity – success?***

There were references to success in an almost vague and mystic way like something out there to be obtained. However, what this 'entity' – success – was, and what it entailed, was seldom explicated; it was merely something to be obtained or a state to be achieved. Upon closer examination, it became clear that 'success' was linked to studying and working.

"What are the goals? I need success in my life to be a HR… I'm waiting for my success. I feel as if I can start by finding work so I can get money and go back to school but the first

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thing is to find work." Fezeka

"Jah, I have this dream of owning properties and people renting." Nhlakanipho

"You know, I once wanted to go and do Law when I was in high school, I thought of going and do Law." Kamva

"I am awaiting good things about me. I am awaiting good things to me… I wish I can find school and succeed in all things." Samkelisiwe

"(Silence). My future (silence) is (silence) I (silence) have desires that I would like to fulfil when I start working. I have a part of me that wants to show that I am working at home. I'd like to make changes. I'd like for there to be changes inside home in the yard at home (silence)… Yes, there are other dreams sister, (silence) because at home there is no produce in the farm. I'd like to create a farm and build an enclosure for the cattle. I wish (sigh) there are lots of things sister, there's a lot, I wish I could clean the graves and make them right, there are many things that I would do, (silence) and go back home." Thando

I wonder whether dreams, hopes, wishes and goals may often feel like oases in their minds that are potentially unachievable, hence the struggle to elicit them. For many, it was very difficult to conjure up wishes, hopes and dreams and it almost seemed rather painful.

5.3.1.11 **Relative deprivation/envy and a sense of being stuck**

Relative deprivation theory posits that individuals will be displeased if there is an

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unfavourable disjuncture between 'value expectations' and 'value capabilities' (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). In other words, relative deprivation denotes the state where a person feels they want more than they have**,** and has less than what they feel they ought to have (Mummendey et al., 1999). This may result in feelings of relative deprivation such as grief, moral outrage, anger or resentment (Mummendey et al., 1999). This resentment can instigate behavioural responses (Dubé & Guimond, 1986; Mark & Folget, 1984 as cited in Mummendey et al., 1999). Relative deprivation**,** or perhaps envy and the sense of being stuck, was apparent in many statements made by the participants when comparing their circumstances vis-à-vis their peers who were deemed to be faring better than them. It almost seemed as though the challenge of being unemployed was made particularly acute when comparing their circumstances to that of their peers**,** and this made them feel stuck.

> *"Uhm, I was hurt, my heart was sore and I thought to myself what is it with me that I am not called. Others with whom I wrote the test were not called for interviews. There was a handful of us at the interviews (silence) I think there were two of us from Kayamandi and only one was selected (silence) we went to Bellville. One was selected to go and work, they are working now. I keep asking them now as to what's happening with my application because I went to the interview and others didn't, they say that we're on a waiting list. Still, even now we remain on the waiting list I don't know what that's about. I never again submitted my form elsewhere (silence)."* Fezeka

> *"Jah. What I'm worried about is the fact that time is ticking, it's not stationary you know. What if nothing happens even though I applied to as many companies as I applied to? What if nothing happens? But then again, I don't let that make me lose hope. Something will come up for sure."* Kamva

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"And my father, he always tells me that, don't compare yourself with other people, just wait for your time. You know what to do, just do the right thing, you see. Leave other people to achieve what they are achieving. You know what to do, just do the right thing. He always tells me the same thing that, don't compare yourself with other people. So, jah and also my friends, like he also, you know; when I'm in his place, jah, we always speak about these things." Nhlakanipho

"I've fallen behind my peers, they are in school now. I am sitting and the year is ending and I'm not doing anything, so I'm behind and I don't want that. I wan't to study. My parents aren't educated, I want to be educated, I also want to study and not be behind and be like other children who are studying." Ongavumi

"I worry a lot because one finds that my friends or people I went to school with… Are higher, they are at the right places, I mean that they know, they see in which direction their lives are going. So, I have yet to see the direction my life is taking and we're the same age. So, I worry about that." Thando

Fezeka, Nhlakanipho and Thando lament how others seem to be 'making it' in life when things don't seem to be working out for them, which sounds like relative deprivation made manifest. Kamva is concerned by the passage of time and a sense of stuckness. The statements by Ongavumi and Thando poignantly capture both relative deprivation and a sense of stuckness. This theme seems like a complex hybrid; however, the two aspects in the way they are presented by the youth appeared to be interconnected.

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5.3.1.12 ***Importance of health***

There were also considerations regarding health – especially mental health – that impacted the participants. It was either that they were directly affected by the (mental) health concern, or that a loved one with whom they are very close was affected, and it had quite a significant impact on them. With two participants, the mental health concern led to them having to leave school in order get treatment for said mental health concern. The one participant was able to get better, return to school and matriculate. The other participant was not able to continue her education post Grade 10 when she was afflicted with said mental health concern.

> *"I don't know what happened really to me but, I was very sick you know blood… even when I went to the loo blood was just coming out of me. I wanted to ask my mom these things, that, what happened to me that time, I never forgot that time you know I had to sleep at the hospital."* Nhlakanipho

> *"My sister is the person that had been ill but the way she got sick confused me as to how it happened. Because, she used to see people. Other times we'd be sitting, the three of us and she'd look at us and say that we were gossiping about her and she'd leave her work. Other times she'd say that we're the ones killing her and she'd swear at us… She went to the hospital and they said it was depression. We just saw her packing and we heard from her nine year old saying that she's leaving. Mom said she saw her at another house where she was most probably booking. Indeed she left and arrived at Xhosaland and continued to do the things that she had been doing to us. I mean, we don't know how she'll be when she arrives wherever she goes."* Owami

> *"The doctor didn't see anything but I was also going to black people [traditional*

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healers]. That's what lead me to stay at the church. I'm alright now, I don't hear anything [reference to auditory hallucinations]." Ongavumi

We see that mental illness is often not well understood, that and health concerns in general are not elaborated upon on account of a lack access to information pertaining to said illness. Ongavumi also highlights how traditional and western medicine are enlisted.

5.3.1.13 ***Coping mechanisms***

It was notable that the three participants with post-matric qualifications used active, problem-focused mechanisms such as physical exercise (self-controlling) and talking to people in order to cope with stress. The other participants preferred either going to church, listening to music or logging into social media (escape-avoidance).

"How to handle istress and pressure, uhm, I take my phone and log on to facebook." Fezeka

"I first check the cause of stress and pressure. I first check what made me to be stressed and what brought this pressure to me and then I try to find the solution because there's a solution for every problem and then I do the opposite of what brought the stress and pressure to me. That's all." Nhlakanipho

"When I'm stressed, I just go to exercise, I like to run, uh I, I like to be involved with people to talk a lot. When I'm talking, uhm, I miss my stress, to play a lot with kids, I love kids…[laughs]… to play a lot and I like also to do a lot of writing when I'm stressed." Ntombi

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"I'm going to church and I'm going to listen to music." Thando

The active, problem-focused mechanisms of coping offer the participants contact and engagement with real others, whereas going to church, listening to music and social media are more escape-avoidant as well as passive and offer less engagement with others. The participants who attended church would not necessarily interact with others, but would be present for the sermon and then leave.

5.3.1.14 ***Affective elements***

There were a myriad feelings and emotions expressed, but herewith are the most salient that emanated from the interviews and group discussions.

5.3.1.14.1 ***Anger***

Anger was never expressed directly, but often came through in tone and in demeanour – particularly during the individual interviews. There were interviews where the silences did not feel benign, but were pregnant with frustration and anger.

"(Sigh). Going back, this is going back sister because if I was working it would be moving forward (silence). I am going back to becoming a child again, over and above having my own child. I have to ask, I am guided by older people because I need guidance. This going back is because I have to ask for money when I have to buy something. I have to beg because if I was working I wouldn't have to beg for anything especially money from my parent. (Silence) I'm going back (silence) to childhood (silence) I'm going back to childhood because things have to be bought for me, I am given money to buy things

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when I actually if I was working, nothing would have to be bought for me, I would buy things myself (silence).” Thando

“(Sigh) He didn’t want to see us. He said mom mustn’t go to where we used to live in town in Dutywa and he said that when we’re there we must never call him he does not want us there. Mom said she also had to work she can’t just sit and wait to be supported by him. My father [said] that if she wants to work he’s never going to pay us any attention. The times when the three of us stayed together as a family were good (sigh) but mom came here and the two of us lived here… It means that perhaps we shouldn’t have come here, perhaps my mom and dad may have gotten married, and we’d live happily if we hadn’t moved here. We would not be struggling like this, perhaps he would have done things for us as he used to in the past (silence).” Akhona

The transcription cannot begin to capture the frustration and anger that was reflected on the faces, voices and silences of the participants.

5.3.1.14.2 ***Guilt and regret***

There were moments where the participants expressed regret – particularly for not following the precepts outlined particularly by their parents, especially that of focusing on education.

“Regret, like when I failed Grade 12 my mom said I must stay and repeat Grade 12, I didn’t want to. I left for the rural areas. In 2013 I fell pregnant, I regret that I didn’t stay, I may not have had the baby instead I may have gotten Grade 12… (Sigh) You mustn’t do things done by your friends. All my friends had children, the only person without a child

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was me and another friend of mine, so all my friends had children, me and her without children. We then also got children, when they talk about the father of the child doing this that and that, he brought my child such and such. We thought that by having a child the same things would happen with us as it did with our friends." Akhona

"(Silence). I regretted not going back to school. I regretted why I didn't repeat Grade 11 for the third time, I may have passed. It was difficult going back (silence)." Fezeka

"I felt regret about this thing about having agreed to date this boyfriend. I didn't feel regret about feeling regret. I didn't know that this would happen. I regretted why I had agreed to date him then this thing happened." Samkelisiwe

"(Sigh). A low point sister has to be (silence) boys are the low point, not listening to things said at home served as low moments, because when you don't listen to your parent who else are you going to listen to? There is no one else who can tell you the right things except your parent (silence)… Yes… (sigh) it bothers me, it bothers me a lot because now I say if I had listened to my parent then perhaps I wouldn't have fallen pregnant (silence) perhaps even at school, if I had listened that time perhaps I would've passed (silence)." Thando

It was painful to observe the participants prostrate themselves as they reflected on their regrets.

5.3.1.14.3 ***Struggles with hopelessness and helplessness***

There were many moments when the sense of hopelessness and helplessness was

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manifest in the discussions with the participants.

> *"I was called again for an interview, I went. Even there, they said they'd call me back to start working. I think that was July then. I've been waiting since, that call has yet to arrive for me to go and work there but others who I went there with are working but not all of them. They said we are on the waiting list up until now (silence) so I don't know what's happening with that thing at KFC."* Fezeka

> *"Painting the whole city with your CV but you don't receive a single call. You just lose hope, so it's more than frustrating. It's more than that... It's, yoh, it just makes you want to give up about everything. You know… at some point I just made up my mind, you know, I was studying… Those are the things that uh, I think about, you know, when it comes to work and right now, to be quite honest with you, I've given up on getting a job, long time ago, you know. I was just trying to see uhm what might work but I've given up a long time ago, you know. I was just thinking about going back to school, studying, getting myself a qualification. That's all, you know and I hear people saying give me your CV and I'll send it there but as for me… Jah, I've tried my best."* Nhlakanipho

> *"A low point (silence) there are many things that are happening at home. Even this year there are lots. This past month my brother who comes after me born in [redacted] was involved in a local gang here in Kayamandi. They killed a person, the parents buried the person, and he was sent to the rural areas. He came to court this past month and the date is coming up soon. My uncles and I went to the township he is staying in. The car we were travelling in, overturned and no one else was injured just my uncle and I. I was stitched and had something put in on my neck. He was in Tygerberg Hospital for two*

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weeks." Ongavumi

"I am awaiting good things about me. I am awaiting good things to me." Samkelisiwe

"And sometimes you end up seeing it as useless or a waste because you get there and there is this box, then you put your CV in there. That box is full and you get there and add yours at the top. You'll find that there's not a single person in that box who has been phoned. At the end of the month it is taken and thrown away, more especially at Checkers… So, you just see handing in CV applications as a waste… Like, I just have no desire to hand in CV applications because you know. So, you just give up." Thando

The statements by Thando and Nhlakanipho really capture the utter hopelessness and helplessness that youth often feel. Nhlakanipho has simply given up on finding work, and studying seems like a more achievable option. Ongavumi is overwhelmed after enduring one tragedy after another. Samkelisiwe's statement underlines a sense of deep resignation.

5.3.1.14.4 ***Loss***

Some of the participants had experienced loss either of a child or of a loved one, and it had a searing impact on their lives.

"… But I had a really good relationship with my grandmother in Eastern Cape… I always called her and we would always speak on the phone even though I was still a child then … But I really had a great relationship with her. So, this one time, I think it was Easters, jah. I was 5 years old and I pressured my mom about wanting to go see grandma in the Eastern Cape. So, she let me, I went and I stayed there for about two

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weeks with her and she died. Jah, she died…[laughs]…jah. … I feel that I have lost one other person that would have been the great influence in my life. That's one other person that I know that would have encouraged me to strive for being the best, jah." Kamva

"A person that left us at home was my uncle. My mother took him like her own child and to me he was like my brother. He died at home sitting with me and my gran. He was sleeping on my bed. He had just come from getting pills he rushed back and slept on the bed, it was as if he had hiccups but then he switched off. My gran arrived as he was on the bed looking as if he had hiccups… (Sigh) On other times his space is glaring (silence) you can see his space (silence)." Ntombi

"(Silence). So I will speak about the time when I lost my boyfriend. (Silence) that really disturbed me. I went to the counselling place, and I arrived and the counsellours weren't there, I turned around and never went back there." Samkelisiwe

Not only do the youth have to endure the challenges of unemployment, but they also have to endure life's vicissitudes that include the pain of loss and bereavement.

5.3.2 **Microsystem**

This section examines the following themes: where the participants grew up, the rural areas and what they mean to the participants, academic challenges, the key factor of social support, key recreational support and support mechanisms as well pregnancy and its sequelae.

5.3.2.1 ***Where we grew up***

The majority of the participants grew up in the Eastern Cape and then came to Cape

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Town to further their education or to seek work opportunities. Some were born in Kayamandi, but a duality of urban and rural connections was evident.

> *"I was born in Stellenbosch and grew up here in Stellenbosch."* Kamva

> *"I was born here in Kayamandi here in Stellenbosch. I grew up here in Stellenbosch Kayamandi and also Khayelitsha."* Nhlakanipho

> *"I grew up in the Eastern Cape, I was born in Butterworth."* Thando

> *"I am from Gatyane, [Eastern Cape]."* Owami

> *"I grew up here in Kayamandi but in December I'd go to Xhosaland, at Cofimvaba."* Ongavumi

Reference to Stellenbosch is actually reference to Kayamandi. Kayamandi and Khayelitsha are both townships; however, Khayelitsha is much larger, with 391,749 inhabitants in contrast to Kayamandi's 30,000 inhabitants (Stats SA, 2011). Butterworth (just over 44,000 inhabitants), Gatyana (a rural area that had 154 inhabitants in 2011) and Cofimvaba (just over 8,800 residents) are towns in the Eastern Cape (Stats SA, 2011). These towns in the Eastern Cape are often referred to as the rural areas by the participants.

5.3.2.2 ***Rural areas***

It was notable that there were many references to homes in the rural areas. It is significant to highlight these mentions, and to reflect on the possible significance thereof.

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"Times of joy are when we have left for the rural areas when we are all together as a family because everyone is there and we all sit as a family." Akhona

"I went to submit my form in 2013 (silence). Me and N, I went to submit my form at Boland College, but nothing came up. Its like just going there to no end or submitting your CV to no end. There wasn't even a phone call that came in for me to go there, to try (silence). I sat last year (silence) last year 2014, I sat and sat, looking for work but still I didn't find work. In June I went back to the rural areas, I stayed in the rural areas. I came back this year in February. I started all over again looking for work but I haven't found work. I want work with all my heart but because my background is very bad and I want school but I would like to work first (silence) because my parents are suffering a lot in the rural areas as well as my aunt and her children (uhm)." Fezeka

The rural areas/Eastern Cape are where family is for many. The way the rural areas are spoken of suggests that, that is where they feel their homes are. There is a fondness, depth and a sense of rootedness regarding the rural areas that is not spoken about in relation to Kayamandi. However, there was strong consensus among the participants that better employment prospects were to be found in Cape Town as opposed to the rural areas in the Eastern Cape.

5.3.2.3 ***Academic difficulties***

Academic challenges often forced the participants out of school and into the search for employment. However, seeking employment without having the Matric qualification proved to be a stumbling block for many. There were some, though, who did not let being without Matric stand in the way of their hustle for employment.

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"I got to ten but I didn't pass." Akhona

"I did Grade 10 here in 2010, then in 2011 I did Grade 11. I did Grade 10 in Khayelitsha, I came back and did Grade 11 here at Makupula High School. I did Grade 11 and failed in 2011. I repeated in 2012 and I failed again, then I gave up because I had failed twice. I left school in 2012." Fezeka

"I wanted to do physiotherapy and jah, they didn't offer physiotherapy at CPUT. So, I applied at UWC and at CPUT I applied for Technology, jah and in both careers I didn't meet the requirements." Kamva

"A very sad moment is when I dropped out of school, at Elsenberg College, because of Afrikaans and because I found out that this is not what I wanted to do you know all these…when you say career guidance is necessary, when you say we need career guidance it's true. I went to Elsenberg College, because I just wanted to have a qualification." Nhlakanipho

"My intentions were to continue with my education. I had applied to Northlink College. So now, when I failed, I couldn't go and study. I tried again to apply at Boland, here at Boland I haven't been accepted. I've been waiting since. They had said they would call me in June, I've been waiting for their call." Owami

"I left [school in Grade 10] because of my health, that's the same thing that has made me stay in church." Ongavumi

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"(Silence). I also liked school but I kept failing… The first time I repeated a class, I repeated Grade 6, Standard 4. Then I failed Grade 10. I failed Grade 10 but I kept going back to school not wanting to leave… I didn't leave but I then gave up when I failed again in 2013. Ever since 20 (silence) 2010 I started with high school, 2011, 2012 repeating the same class, I gave up in 2013. … (Silence) I fell pregnant in 2010 … 2010 (silence), but I didn't give up in 2010. I gave up when I failed, thinking that it's better to go and work for my child." Thando

Fezeka repeated the same grade twice, and there was no intervention following each of the unsuccessful attempts at grade 11. Thando failed grade 10 ***three*** times. She gave up after her third attempt, and who can blame her. Fezeka and Thando gave their best, but to no avail. How can one improve or do better when one does not know where they are struggling and how to address the areas with which they are struggling?

5.3.2.4 ***Social support***

Social support was a significant theme that comprised the ways in which the youth were impacted by family and the community, family conflict, father absence, the perception of pressure from loved ones as killing hope, peer influences were deemed distracting and often negative, church was experienced as a key social structure as well as recreational and support mechanisms like sports. The role of the family came to the fore as a critical factor, with many desiring positive family support. Where such support was absent, the impact was glaring. Family impact deemed negative by the participants was said to 'kill hope.'

5.3.2.4.1 ***Importance of family and community***

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The participants valued the support received from family and community members like Nhlakanipho, who is mentored by his pastor. Support from family was seen as an important variable in order for them to achieve their goals.

"It's my mother and her sister because they did everything I wanted, the two of them." Akhona

"What makes me happy is that my parents are still alive, they live for me, both of them." Fezeka

"Uhm, for me, I get support from my mother, jah and sometimes I talk about things with this guy [Nhlakanipho] and that helps a lot, jah." Kamva

"Ja, I believe in mentorship, I don't believe in learning from mistakes… I get it… I get help from my mentor and I get help from my parents most of the time… And my father, he always tells me that, don't compare yourself with other people, just wait for your time. You know what to do, just do the right thing, you see. Leave other people to achieve what they are achieving. You know what to do, just do the right thing. He always tells me the same thing that, don't compare yourself with other people. So, jah and also my friends, like he also, you know; when I'm in his place, jah, we always speak about these things." Nhlakanipho

"I need a parent guardian so that [I can] achieve my goal or I need a job so that I achieve my goal." Thando

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Nhlakanipho is encouraged by his father who says he must do the right thing and not compare himself with others. Thando, on the other hand, lives alone, and it is she who has to support her child and family – what a weight to shoulder alone.

5.3.2.4.2 ***Family conflict***

Family conflict weighed heavily on the participants and was very disruptive, facilitating many a move from one household to another for Nhlakanipho.

> *"My mom and my dad as well my aunt who is now mentally ill, because of losing her son and the other one who is at Port Elizabeth those are the people who raised me you know. I spent a lot of time with my aunts, more than my parents, because at some stage my parents used to fight a lot so that's why I went to stay at Crossroads so, my aunts took me and then I grew up there at Crossroads and Khayelitsha and also, because I was also sick when I grew up. I was epileptic so I went to… because my parents were fighting a lot so I needed a bit of attention so my aunt took me there and I also enjoyed staying there, ja so I grew up there so those were noteworthy people in my life."* Nhlakanipho

Nhlakanipho highlights the disruptive impact of tumultuous family relations on his well-being. He expresses a need for care that could not always be adequately provided by his immediate family, so his extended family was able to step in.

5.3.2.4.3 ***Father absence***

At some point Namibia had the highest father absence rate and South Africa was second (Richter, Chikavure, & Makusha, 2013). A child's clan name comes from the father and there were instances where fatherlessness was a source of humiliation (Richter et al., 2013). Ramphele

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(2002) asserts that fatherlessness can engender a sense of confusion and loss. The absence of a father weighed heavily on most of the youth. There was a longing for this gap to be filled, and the pain thereof was penetrating.

> *"(Sigh). I haven't lost anyone, no one has died. The only person who is lost to me is my father as we used to live together. We used to phone when we first arrived here but we never contacted each other thereafter. He does phone but he does not give us money, he was true to his word about what he'd do, now he just phones."* Akhona

> *"The only negative memory was growing up without my father. Mhm, that's one thing that I wish was quite opposite to my life. … When I was still growing up, I never minded it. I actually didn't think about it that much but now that I'm old as I am now, I now know that he was needed a lot and jah. Jah, that's it. … I don't know, since I grew up with that I guess I got used to it, I got used to it, and jah. Whenever I thought of it, I just look at my mother and jah, I just thank God for the person she is."* Kamva

> *"(Sigh). A day that made me happy was my birthday party. On the [redacted] when I turned twenty. It was nice because I was with my family and friends… There at home at the dams. My father didn't come, he didn't buy anything, everything was done by my mother."* Ongavumi

The absence of fathers in the participants' lives was palpable and melancholic. Father absence in a child's life does not necessarily relate to negative outcomes, however, research indicates that father absence in general, tends towards poorer outcomes for women and children (Eddy, Boor, & Mpheka, 2013).

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5.3.2.4.4 ***Pressure form loved ones kills hope***

There are instances when what the young person desires is at variance with family expectations, and this can cause some ruction. This ruction can really affect the youth and can result in fear, trepidation and demotivation.

> *"And now, the question was, at home they asked where are you going to work with that thing you intend studying you know, and now they shifted my focus to another thing saying just go and study what you can do. Forget about your dreams, forget about everything you are passionate about, just go study in the direction of something that will give you money, you know. So, like I said the thing holding me back from achieving my goals is that fear, and that fear came to me because I got influence from the people who were going to pay for my transport to go to school, from the people who were going to pay for my fees, from the people who were going to pay for everything, to buy my books and stuff. So, jah, they influenced me in a bad way. Uhm, also losing the willingness to do what I want to do, you know, jah."* Nhlakanipho

It almost feels as if Nhlakanipho had to either choose to concede to his family's wishes, or forego his own desires. Nhlakanipho chose the difficult path of leaving the unfavourable institution in order to do what he wanted, much to his family's chagrin, and he continues to endure his family's ire.

5.3.2.4.5 ***Peer influence as often negative and distracting***

Peer influences were seldom seen as benign. Peers were often deemed negative and distracting. However, in a few instances peer influences were very helpful.

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"Don't take everything that is done by another person and think that it will be good for you. Friends when they talk about the father of the child bringing certain amounts of money, and think that the same will happen to you. So a person must act based on how they see things not based on someone else." Akhona

"Thank God I had friends like Kamva they were always with me so they knew that when that thing happens [petit mal seizures], they knew that thing you know, even the drivers when that thing happens they would think that I did it on purpose, some would want to beat me – why would I just walk on the road like that, but thank God I had friends like Kamva and [redacted] so I grew up like epileptic and then my pastor prayed for me and yeah I got healed from epilepsy and that thing." Nhlakanipho

Friends are viewed as both misleading at times, and helpful at other instances. For the female participants, peer influence also seems to be related to certain ideas about pregnancy and the sequelae thereof. Akhona was under the impression that she would be financially supported by her boyfriend when she fell pregnant – as was the case with her friends. However, this was not borne out. In actuality, her boyfriend was still a student, and remained dependent on his parents. He was in no position to offer Akhona the kind of financial support she was expecting.

5.3.2.4.6 ***Church as a support structure***

Going to church was not only a noted as a coping mechanism, but church also seemed to be a vital part of many of the participants' lives.

"Firstly, I'm a Christian, you know. I'm a Christian and I'm a person who has values and

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I don't just take life as it is. I don't just take life as it comes. I don't do everything that everyone else is doing." Kamva

"It was when I started church I started giving my life to Christ. I grew up in Kayamandi you know, so I was… actually I was on my way, I was going to do crime you know… my life changed and maybe I was not going to be as fortunate as these guys are, maybe I could have been dead a long time ago, maybe I was not going to be lucky, maybe escape in one of the things that we were going to do, maybe I was going to die. So hence I chose this moment that my life changed, that's what makes me glad you know, and there is one thing about me when you look at me you can never see a guy who wanted to be a thug or a guy who wanted to be friends with those guys who did those things. There are a lot of things that I can do, I was very good in soccer. As I am still good. So I chose this moment, because my life changed, because I can assure you that I could've been dead by now, because I know that I was not going to be lucky as these guys are. So at least my mom is not crying, because of me you know at least my parents are happy with the way I am now, you know, I am just fortunate, I'm privileged, you know, from escaping the things that are happening. My cousin was stabbed and he died, three weeks back." Nhlakanipho

"It's not like the time when I was not religious. I knew that on weekends I go, we'd go as a group, when it is said let's go to Mbekweni we'd go. But now, I stay at home. I left that because now I've become religious, it is said that such and such would happen and I saw this myself, the things that won't help build the person that I am." Owami

Faith was a protective factor for the participants. Christianity was the dominant faith

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espoused. Faith also served as the source of their well of hope.

5.3.2.4.7 ***Key recreational and support mechanisms***

Sports and community-based organisations also left an indelible impression on the narrative identity of the participants.

> *"Wow, wow, wow! Uhm, the team management, the team that I play for, the management organised the tour with Kaiser Chiefs for us and luckily, uhm Kaiser Chiefs agreed and we went to Gauteng and we stayed at the Highveld College Village that is the academy of the development side of Kaizer Chiefs. We stayed there for a week and wow, we did so many things. We were exposed to so much in football. Jah that was quite, that was exciting… Oh, we did soccer clinics and they invited a motivator to speak to us and we watched the Kaizer Chiefs first team training."* Kamva

> *"You know, when you're in an environment like this one even if people from SABC they are just coming, just to take news SABC news so we as children we see that as an opportunity to appear on TV for a while so we will want to be in front of the camera jumping there. So when I saw myself on TV you know people from SABC they came just to take this episode and yoh I felt great. I felt like jumping up and down. I was just playing football for fun, but now I appear on TV, playing football, yoh, it meant a lot to me like wow I just can't explain it. So, I guess it's everybody's dream to maybe appear on TV once or twice you know maybe to some people they just don't care about TV, but when you are in an environment like this, when you appear on TV you just know that no, at least I'm going somewhere."* Nhlakanipho

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Sport also served as another key protective factor. It facilitated positive conceptions of the self as capable and impactful. For Kamva and Nhlakanipho, sport also gave them access to different perspectives – they were able to travel outside their community and interact with different communities. Participants who were actively involved in sports were a lot more open and expressive in both the individual and group interventions. In this study, the participants who were active in sports were also the participants who had attained Matric and had post-Matric qualifications or experiences (Kamva, Nhlakanipho, and Ntombi). None of the other participants were actively participating in sports.

5.3.2.5 ***Pregnancy and sequelae***

A notable marker on several of the female participants' narrative identities was pregnancy and the sequelae thereof.

> *"(Sigh) In 2013 I fell pregnant. I felt bad (silence)… Mom wanted me to study. I had failed Grade 12 in 2012 and so she wanted me to continue studying but I fell pregnant… It means that I am a mother now, I am no longer a child (sigh)… It means that when your child needs things you as a mother need to find a way, but I'm not working there's nothing I can do (silence)."* Akhona

> *"As I've already said that I am Thando. I grew up in the Eastern Cape, I was born in Butterworth… I grew up there, went to school there from my lower grades until Grade 10… and then I left when I got a child. I saw that I couldn't stay with my child when the child doesn't have anything. Things like that… uhm… I stayed with my mother but mom didn't live with us here, she lived in the location (township) and came home on weekend … My most important value (silence) is to make my child happy (silence) and my*

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parents." Thando

"I regret having fallen pregnant. I had just arrived. I arrived in 2009 and in 2011 I just became pregnant, indeed I think I regret that. I used to struggle without a child but the struggle was better… It's like it was better when I was struggling alone without a child." Owami

For Akhona, pregnancy served as a disappointment to both her mother and herself. Pregnancy also catapulted the young woman into the role of a mother. Akhona was of the view that being a mother means she ceased being a child, and now had to see to the needs of her own child. However, she feels that she is unable to be an effective mother to her child because she is not working and is unable to meet the needs of her child. Meeting the child's needs becomes the primary focus following pregnancy. Yet, as with Owami, it can also be a huge regret.

5.3.3 Mesosystem

Here, the themes centre on the resources that were highlighted within Kayamandi, within the youth themselves and other resources the youth deliberated upon are presented.

5.3.3.1 ***Highlighted resources***

The focus/intervention group process shed light on resources accessible to the participants. There were some resources in the community that the participants outlined, but there were instances when the youth were not aware of the resources latent within themselves and in their community. Often, there was a lack of knowledge with regard to how to utilise the community resources, as well as how to employ and/or highlight latent personal resources that could be of assistance to them in their search for employment. There also seemed to be a

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devaluing of community-based work opportunities.

> *"In 2013 I tried to look for work. From then, I never found work but I had a brief stint at the creche. I worked with Ntombi she had just passed Grade 12. We just worked (silence) helping out there getting that cent we were getting (uhm), following that we left there because we got tired. You know being employed by a black person, a person looking like you, they start telling you a lot of things. We then left that work, since then I haven't worked there but I keep putting in my CVs out there but there are no work opportunities appearing… I left because their money was little, we weren't treated well."* Fezeka

> *"So, we've looked at CV writing, internet access, employment agencies and even free education."* Thembelihle [Input during group process]

> *"Okay, the way I see it is that unemployment is a big issue that we have and it is caused by many things, it's not that we're all lazy. Some people are not lazy, it is the problems that people have that they can't solve that make them unemployed."* Ntombi

> *"You know being employed by a black person, a person looking like you they start telling you a lot of things..."* Fezeka

Fezeka's statement is pregnant with multi-layered meaning. Could this be a sense of worthlessness projected outward onto "a black person, a person looking like you" that is then rejected? Again, when Ntombi has the realisation that unemployment is not on account of laziness – does this not allude to similar sentiments of worthlessness? However, Ntombi seemed to have been able to realise that there's more to the initial appraisal of their circumstances – that

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they are not merely lazy.

5.3.3.2 ***Job search strategies – relying on orality***

During the group process, we looked at the different ways of searching for work – primarily on the internet. It became apparent that the participants also relied on the use of orality in the job search process.

> *"Like you'll hear people talking you see, that jah, maybe at that garage they are employing people and then you go. I remember, uhm, was it 3 months back at Distell, jah, they were employing people. A number of guys from eKayamandi went there because they heard from other people that jah, there are spaces there at Distell. I think that's how, they find work."* Nhlakanipho

5.3.3.3 ***Sharing information***

In looking at ways of continuing the work we were doing together, the participants felt that the only way we could do so was through sharing the information learned in the group process with others.

> Thembelihle: *Alright, so, before we, I mean, I know we've got [to wrap up] but before we go, I'd like to ask you guys, we're busy trying to find out whether, you know, we're trying to improve ourselves, are there ways that we, as a group, we can actually help other people that are not working, is there something that we as a group can do to kind of address unemployment, us? Jah, what could we as a group do to actually make changes?*
> Kamva: *Other than inviting people to come here?*
> Thembelihle: *Mhm. I don't know, I mean, what did you say, inviting them to come?*

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Kamva: *Jah.*

Thembelihle: *Okay.*

Kamva: *Or sharing the information that we are receiving here, passing it on to them*

Thembelihle: *Okay. Any other ideas? So, just sharing information with them?*

Kamva: *Jah and telling them about these recruitment agencies*

The primary way of obtaining information about work opportunities was through relying on word of mouth. A move from the Eastern Cape to Cape Town was seen as the best way to access opportunities. The best way of sharing the lessons garnered from the intervention was again through word of mouth – the youth telling others of what they had learnt as part of the study – including how to access work opportunities, go about continuing their studies, draft a CV and prepare for an interview, the important things to note.

5.3.4 Exosystem

The exosystem comprised of the following superordinate themes: how the youth associated the township with negativity, politics and distrust thereof because of perceived corruption then the felt sense of deep poverty and deprivation that characterises the lived experiences of the participants was foregrounded.

5.3.4.1 ***The township as associated with negativity***

The township, the environment within which the participants lived, was associated with negativity.

"I think they [guys in Kayamandi] don't take things seriously because just yesterday there's a guy I told and he said he'd come here today but he's not here. I called him and

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his phone went straight to voicemail." Kamva

"The environment was just working against me. So I started drinking you know, at an early age, you know there is a stage whereby you just don't take anything seriously, you just chill with friends you know, and then you come back home and then your drinking will start to become serious now and you know, unfortunately you start never being serious because I did not have money to buy alcohol also and most of the time the friends that I had back then you know, we were all young so we put in money and then on that day maybe that weekend and we would go and buy alcohol or maybe my brothers my big brother's cousins they would drive, take me as young as I was, they would not stop me from drinking they would buy Heinekens they would buy everything. So I would drink with them. We would go to Khayelitsha with them we would go to… at that young age, so now I never imagined myself going to church, because the role models I had back then I knew that if football doesn't work then surely thug life will work or maybe along the way I will work try and sell drugs and stuff. Like those were the things that came into my mind you know." Nhlakanipho

This highlights the myriad of challenges that the youth have to overcome – not only in terms of internal motivational resources, but also in terms of structural concerns such as the lack of access to helpful job search services and materials. The context also entices them to do things that may not be in their best interest in the long run, as described by Nhlakanipho.

5.3.4.2 ***Politics: distrust because of perceived corruption***

Participants were mainly either oblivious to, or chose not to engage in any way, with contemporary political happenings. In some instances, participants had very strong views about

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political events, expressing a distrust of politics and politicians on account of a perceived sense of being corrupt.

> *"Things relating to politics, I pay absolutely no attention to them."* Fezeka

> *"Politics. Here in this neighbourhood, things that happen in this neighbourhood just as some people belong to the United Democratic Movement (UDM), when there are houses being distributed despite being from that place, people are selected based on the party the person belongs to. Things aren't done the way they are supposed to be done. If there are work opportunities they choose their own people."* Thatheka

> *"I don't pay attention, however I see that people do politics but I don't pay too much mind."* Thando

> *"... I live at Nkanini, people when it comes to voting go to Nkanini but once they have voted, when electricity is needed it is said that there is no knowledge of people living at Nkanini. How can they canvas there when there aren't any people staying there. They say it's a place where animals live. I see that they do have some measure of discrimination. We don't get anything but we vote."* Owami

Politics appeared to be distal, at best, with little to offer participants' predicament. Although there appeared to be disillusionment with party politicking to garner votes, most participants appeared disaffected by policits in general. Malila (2013) also noted a disinterest and mistrust of political institutions and political parties by South African youth.

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5.3.4.3 ***Deep poverty and deprivation***

Most of the participants did not live in brick houses with regular services, but in shack dwellings or shared 'hostel' dwellings where the difference between one home and another is a curtain in one big hall-like structure. Thando lives alone in a shack and had no immediate family close by. Thus, Thando literally had to fend for herself day by day, not knowing where her next meal would come from. Not only was she thinking of her next meal but there was a constant worry about her family and child who were in the rural areas for whose well-being she felt responsible for.

> *"The greatest challenge that I think about now was when my mother lost her job. Being the only one who's working at home and losing her job, it was really difficult at home, it was unbearable. You know, and having three children because there is three of us…"* Kamva

> *"Now people are being visited by their families, I was just sleeping in that [hospital] bed waiting for my mom and I was crying so now my mom would come maybe just carrying me mash potato you know, you just watch these white boys their family members they come with nice foods and all those stuff..."* Nhlakanipho

> "*What was difficult whilst I was studying in high school, I was staying with my gran, mom was living here in the Cape. Everything was my gran's responsibility. My gran had to buy things for me, money had to be taken out from her thank you money [old age state grant]. This is what makes me not feel okay (silence)."* Owami

Again, the resounding difficulty of dependency – especially when survival is on the basis

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of one's grandmother's meagre state pension. Nhlakanipho found himself in Stellenbosch Hospital next to white children, and could see the glaring difference between them and him on the basis of what they were brought to eat by their families. The white kids got yummy goodies because their parents could afford them, whilst his parents could only afford to give him what was absolutely necessary.

5.3.5 **Macrosystem**

In the individual interviews and group sessions, the participants often discussed the structural issues they encounter, a question then arose whether what the participants were exhibiting was equanimity – as cited in the literature – or distancing, as well as concerns regarding the construct of learned helplessness. The role of cultural rites and the value of education is heavily underscored.

5.3.5.1 ***Structural problems***

In the discussions with the youth, the dire structural problems that they had to navigate surfaced frequently.

> *"This one happened I think a month ago, it was around 12:00 a.m so I decided to open the door of my home and then I came out. It was hot and then I sat outside on the porch, I did not know why I was just seated there. Now I saw this woman I know she was going to the police station I said no, this lady said she's walking by herself can I walk with her, I said okay why not. I went there, when I got to the police station there was a lady, the same lady who was beaten by the thugs, she was stabbed, now being pregnant she was stabbed here, and there was a guy who entered her house she had a birthday of her child, now the guy was offended by someone else and now the guy entered the house and*

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stabbed this lady and the other guy. So, when I got there I just didn't know what to say… so you know ambulances they take time to come so now this lady said that she was dying now she was losing lots of blood and I was like wow a pregnant lady now when she said she was dying and now I could see now that people, that everyone was just crying there even the police did not know what to do. So, I just said okay let me go here at Happy Rest I saw a car that I know. I will ask that guy to come and take this lady to the hospital so I will ask that guy, I know he won't say no to me. I will ask him to take this lady to the hospital as soon as possible, a car is just a car you know it can go to the car wash, but this is a human being dying right now and the police are not doing anything about it they are just waiting to take statements and all that, they said they have phoned the ambulance, but the ambulance is nowhere to be found so I went there and I asked one of the guys to call brother [redacted] at Happy Rest and then I explained the whole story. I told him no man, there is a lady that I know she's dying and she's pregnant and has been stabbed so can't you take us to the hospital you know, this is just a car, but you know, a car is not more important than a human being. So he said no let's go, where are they? I said they are here at the police station he took blankets and then we took this lady and then we took her to the hospital and then she was attended to and lucky enough she never died on the way and then she was okay..." Nhlakanipho

This account by Nhlakanipho highlights how he, as a young person, had to rally his own personal/social resources to help a community member who he did not know. I, like Nhlakanipho, wonder what would have happened to that woman had Nhlakanipho not done something. The fact that a young person had to be creative and garner community resources in order to help another community member when there were other, more mature members of the community who did not react, is disconcerting. This probably characterises the experience of the

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youth – if they cannot figure things out themselves, nothing will likely happen.

5.3.5.2 ***Lack of resources***

The participants noted that there was a general lack of resources in Kayamandi.

> *"There was a talk last year that there would be free Wi-Fi. ... And it was going to be of great assistance ... But that didn't happen, I'm not sure what to make of that."* Kamva

> *"Jah, there's not enough. So, if you want enough resources, you will have to go out yourself. ... Don't depend on Kayamandi resources."* Nhlakanipho

Only three participants had email addresses. They had no knowledge of job search websites, only gaining this knowledge through our group process. Except the three who had e-mail addresses, most participants were unfamiliar with the internet, save for Facebook. We were working at the Entabeni Cyber Café that had to date been operational intermittently, and there was also another internet café – Silulo Internet Café. The challenge was that both internet cafés required you to have money to access the services. Free internet connectivity was due to be rolled out by the municipality in Kayamandi; however, this had yet to be fully realised at the time when I was interacting with my participants. Access to resources was indeed a challenge.

5.3.5.3 ***Equanimity/distancing and learned helplessness***

The literature on resilience makes reference to young people displaying equanimity; a sort of peaceful or calm acceptance of the circumstances that the youth endure. Participants appeared to be experiencing this phenomenon. That is, they seemed to be experiencing their reality not with bitterness or despair, but taking things as they are.

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"So, we just have to go on with life and it happens, it happens and it happens to anyone." Kamva

"And then I just I got used to it at some point, when you know that there is nothing I can do about it, so I just got used to it and then that was it. You wake up, you go to school and study and if they fight, they fight, so what. I just got used to it… You know when you face a bad situation like for a very long time you get used to it, that situation you know. I got used to it." Nhlakanipho

"Nothing happened, perhaps say that I have been raped or abused, nothing happened." Samkelisiwe

Some of the participants exhibited this trait dubbed 'equanimity.' however, I wondered whether what seemed to be 'equanimity' was not merely distancing. This appeared to be a way of coping with overwhelming structural circumstances in order to assail feelings of helplessness. Could it be that distancing (exteriorising) allows youth in marginal circumstances to be able to persevere in spite of the pervading hardship and structural challenges that they encounter? I wonder whether those young people who cannot effect this distancing are those who are then said to be hopeless, or have succumbed to 'learned helplessness.'

5.3.5.4 ***Cultural rites***

There are many aspects to one's identity. Faith and spirituality is another sphere. This theme, titled 'cultural rites,' looks at the youth's spiritual/faith influences. Some youth acknowledged traditional cultural rites like 'imbeleko' that is often performed when a child is

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young to fortify them from 'evil spirits.' However, if not performed in childhood, it is done whenever the individual is able to organise the ceremony that requires the presence of one's family and an animal sacrifice to the ancestors. There are specific animals that are required depending on one's family lineage – either a goat, sheep or cow is slaughtered. There are other participants who did not observe traditional cultural rites who note that their families have been 'saved' which means that they practice organised religion and have eschewed traditional belief systems. There are some who observe both traditional cultural rites and organised religion.

> *"I do them if they are necessary for me to perform them, I don't believe that a dead person can do certain things. However, when there are traditional events at home I go and do them. But I don't believe that a person who has passed on can show you certain things and guide your way."* Akhona

> *"I'm a good person. ... I don't want to be a bad influence to people."* Fezeka

> *"I observe all the things that my family observes. There is nothing that I don't observe."* Samkelisiwe

> *"I don't know too much about cultural practices, I just know that (silence) there is slaughtering, imbeleko is done those kind of cultural practices, I can't tell you the history thereof as to where it came from because I grew up things being done this way… Doing imbeleko which is a cultural rite done for a child who continues to wet themselves even when they are older. A goat is slaughtered and for others a sheep is slaughtered."* Thando

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"(Silence). The main thing (Silence) is to listen to parents. Respecting adults and don't rush into things that are far from you and wait until the time comes." Ntombi

"The people at home have been saved… Traditional rites are not done." Owami

There seems to be compliance with family-observed cultural rites, even when an individual like Akhona does not personally believe in said traditional practice. Traditional practice entails a belief in ancestors who act in one's favour, and who can be entreated to assist through ceremonies that entail the preparation of traditional beer and animal sacrifices (chickens, goats, sheep and cows). Fezeka and Ntombi talk about being good and listening to parents. This alludes to the principles of ubuntu that espouse compassion for human beings and respecting elders. The principles of ubuntu also permeate the traditional cultural rites, which aim to strengthen family ties amongst the living and those who came before the living.

5.3.5.5 ***The importance of education***

The importance of education emerged as a very strong and important value that all the participants and their families subscribed to.

"I have to pass Grade 12. When you have Grade 12 there are many opportunities perhaps becoming a police officer, there are many opportunities to be something, if I can just pass." Akhona

"When I was growing up, I used to enjoy going to school. My parents used to push me so that I can go to school. They used to say they don't want an uneducated child, these days a person needs to be educated. My brothers also encouraged me noting that it's hard to

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find work when you're uneducated so a person must study. I tried all means and I was unsuccessful (silence).” Fezeka

“... yeah because my mother had always encouraged me to go study. She had always said to me all my life. Even when I passed matric, she told me that Kamva there is nothing and you know it, that there is nothing I want from you more than studying. She said you can study whatever you want to study but just study… Jah, whatever you wanna be, you can become if you just focus and know that education is the key.” Kamva

“In my future, first of all I want to be a studious person, somebody who has knowledge and is successful as well, because I notice that many people, they say that knowledge is power, and I saw that [you don't have power] when you don't know things. I see myself as somebody who is very studious and somebody who is well educated you know, that is my plan and I hope that everything will go according to plan. The success, the education you know, and the travelling. I want to travel the world I just love travelling.” Nhlakanipho

“The most important thing in everything is that you study because if you don't study you won't have anything, you'll struggle/suffer your whole life, you must study in order to find better work.” Ongavumi

“... I wanted to learn, just like I still do right now, want to study. It's not okay to be uneducated because the available jobs are for people who are educated (silence)… when I'm sitting by myself thinking about the idea that jobs are unattainable. I can't find a job because I am not educated. When I think about that I worry because I have a child that I

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came with, that thing affects me… I want to go to school so that [I can] achieve my goal." Thando

There is a grand narrative that education is important. As also noted in the resilience literature there was a valorisation of education in this study. Education is seen as the key that opens all doors of success. Education can lead one to find work, which will afford one 'success.' However, when one is unable to get Matric or further their studies, there seems to be a serious problem. The problem is not merely a perceived sense of inadequacy, but also the reality of not having access to employment opportunities. Most employment opportunities require one to have completed Matric. Thus, the unemployed youth often find themselves in a bind where they may experience academic challenges that may result in them leaving school. However, in leaving school, they may become unemployable because there are not many decent work opportunities if one is without Matric. Career aspiration becomes replaced by the need to survive.

5.4 Summary

Using Bronfenbrenner's systems as *a priori* themes was helpful in creating the intial template and making sense of the narratives for ease of engagement with them. At the individual level, the participants spoke at length about what work means for them: the opportunity to contribute at home and to be 'mothers' to their children; to fulfil what they felt was their responsibility. Unemployment was described as painful and frustrating. The resulting dependency on others was too much for them to bear. The intervention seemed to have opened an avenue for exploration of participants' sense of stuckness, and created space for reflection on the question of 'where to from here' – their hopes and goals, as well as insights into the self. The intervention also highlighted the youth's sense of responsibility and desire for greater agency.

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The participants struggled with the continued dependence on loved ones for support when they felt that they should be offering this support to their families.

The participants did their best to remain motivated and had an appreciation for perserverance, but longed for the opportunity to exercise being hard-working. The study was wamly welcome by some. However, there were other youth who seemed to have been frustrated on account of a thwarted expectation of the intervention to have an immediate material impact, i.e., provide them with a job or remuneration. Many other emotions were strongly elicited by the intervention, namely: anger, guilt, hopeless and helplessness as well as feelings of loss and grief.

At the microsystemic level, participants spoke with much sentiment about where they grew up and how the rural areas represent 'home,' but that work opportunities were perceived to be abundant in the Western Cape. Most of the particpants outlined academic challenges that embattled them, which lead to them being without a Matric certificate, save for 3 participants. The grand narratives of social support, key recreational and other support mechanisms as well as pregnancy and its impact were also considered.

At the mesosystemic level, the intervention was able to highlight resources intrinsic to the participants, within Kayamandi and online. It seemed that at times, opportunities in the township were overlooked and the idea of working for a black person by one of the participants was unappealling. Practical job search strategies were unpacked, and it was felt that the best way to share the lessons garnered from the intervention was through word of mouth by the participants to other youth.

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At the exosystemic level, what was salient were the ways in which the environment impacted upon participants and the indelible influence it had upon them. The township was associated with negativity and participants spoke about the ways in which political influences impact them. There was much disillusionment with politics on account of perceived corruption and cronyism. There was distrust of politics and politicians whilst the participants continue to live in penetrating poverty and deprivation.

Looking at the macrosystemic level, participants spoke about the environment in which they live and the structural problems that they needed to navigate, where the latter includes: a shrinking economy that made finding work a challenge, unresponsive police and inaccessible community resources like ambulances in times of need. Kayamandi has a single, overburdened clinic. It seems as though young people then have to find creative ways of coping in these circumstances.

In the resilience literature there is the notion of equanimity, but I wonder if this is not merely distancing the overwhelming circumstances as a coping mechanism. Those who cannot effect this distancing are then seen as acquiescent and demonstrating 'learned helplessness.'

Another aspect of their identity, cultural and/or spiritual rites – and whether these were observed – was also touched upon. There was a sentiment by some, that traditional cultural rites were observed despite a lack of 'belief' in their 'efficacy' or purported effects. Some families eschewed traditional cultural rites and were firmly religious. The family's leaning on cultural/spiritual practices were those adopted by the youth. Again, this surfaces the principle of ubuntu in the respect of the elders' perspectives regarding cultural/spiritual matters, sometimes in lieu of their own sentiments.

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CHAPTER 6
Discussion

"The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken."

Audre Lorde

The study sought to understand the narrative identities of the unemployed youth living in Kayamandi. Whereas the previous chapter presented the findings of the template analysis using the framework of Bronfenbenner's ecosystemic framework as *a priori* themes, in this chapter the content, salient constructs and discourses that inform the youth's narrative identities are discussed. This chapter attempts to makes sense of the youth narratives in the context of the literature on narrative identity. It closes the loop by responding to the question of what comprises the narrative identity of the unemployed youth in Kayamandi by presenting the key narrative identity themes. A synthesis of the in-depth narrative analysis offers further insights, these are presented and explicated as key discourses emanating from the findings.

6.1 Making Sense of the Youth Narrative Identities

McAdams and McLean (2013) identified seven types of themes that characterise most narratives in the literature on narrative identity: 1) agency – a sense of one's ability to effect change in one's own life, and to have an impact on others as well as the environment; 2) communion – a demonstration of connectedness with others through dialogue, friendship and connectedness to a larger collective; 3) redemption – when a narrative commences with a negative course of events but shifts to more positive circumstances; 4) contamination – when the

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narrative moves from positive circumstances to negative circumstances; 5) meaning-making – when there is learning from an event that results in either deep or concrete insights; 6) exploratory narrative processing – this is reference to stories about an individual's own exploration veering from deep exploration that can lead to a rich comprehension of self, and 7) coherent positive resolution – the extent to which the story is told in such a way as to culminate with a sense of closure and a happy ending.

Of the youth narratives presented in this study, agency, communion and meaning making were the defining leitmotifs. Agency – the negotiation of the world based on the internal and external resources at one's disposal. To a large extent, there was a significant perceived sense of a lack of agency by many of the participants. The participants desperately wanted to change their own and their families' circumstances but, due to a lack financial resources, felt that they could not. They did not feel like they could make a meaningful contribution or impact on others or their environment. Being without a Matric certificate and without employment made some of the participants feel stuck. They found themselves without what was required to access opportunities, echoing the reasons proferred in the literature regarding why youth remain unemployed (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Filmer & Fox, 2014; Seekings, 2014; Yu, 2013). Making job applications and receiving no feedback was also very difficult for the participants, and made them feel despondent. Nhlakanipho eventually gave up on employment and focused his energies more on furthering his studies. Nhlakanipho was of the view that he would be more likely to succeed in education rather than continuing the fruitless search for employment.

Communion was displayed primarily by those participants who had strong social support and belonged to community-based organisations. Notably, most of these individuals also had post-Matric qualifications and had some work experience. With the rest of the participants, there

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was greater emphasis on their filial duty to support loved ones. There was also a sense of the importance of being a good person and of being a good influence in the community. Super (1990) refers to this as finding role salience in home and family. However, there was no deep sense of belonging, per se. The environment that participants inhabited in the township was associated with negativity, and such sentiments may not necessarily correspond with a sense of connectedness and communion.

Meaning making, in this instance, pertained to the manner in which the youth narratives revealed the youth's iterative reflection on meaning and purpose on account of the environment and the circumstances that they found themselves living in. Since the emergent themes have been proffered, this chapter proceeds to unveil the encapsulated discourses.

6.2 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis highlights content, form and the function of the data of stories. It looks at how interpretations are made by the main character of the story being told. The following questions are asked: How does this story come about in a particular context? How is this story taken up? How are stories silenced, challenged or accepted? (Frost et al., 2010). There were a number of grand narratives that emanated from the youth narratives: how poverty fuels unemployment, what it means to be a responsible man/woman, the double edge of education, the importance of social support and the connection between social support and pregnancy. Further discourses that percolated were: how ubuntu manifests in the youth's narratives, freedom of expression, gender and engagement as well as the enduring impact of racism and the salience of capitalist principles.

6.2.1 **Poverty fuels unemployment**

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The participants appear to foreground a discourse that there is societal expectation that once they have finished school, they should either continue their studies through institutions of higher learning or enter the world of work. This expectation can be significantly derailed, leaving the young person feeling thwarted. What happens when the social environment within which the young person resides is characterised by deprivation, poverty and unemployment? The narratives seem to be suggesting that in such circumstances, the focus shifts primarily to modes of survival and escapism. This shift to survival pertains to a focus on how to get through each passing day and prioritising the attaining of basic needs: security, shelter, food, water and clothing. This has much resonance with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs.

Maslow (1943) posited a theory of human motivation that was underpinned by five basic needs that ought to be met: the physiological need, the need to feel safe, the need to feel loved and to belong, the need for esteem and a sense of efficacy and a need for self-actualisation, where the latter denotes the ability to maximise one's potential. In the complex modern environment within which the participants inhabit, basic needs can only be attained at a cost. One needs money to meet basic needs. Living and sustaining a livelihood become the substitute for working and generating an income, and the higher level of aspiring and pursuing a career seems elusive.

Some participants live in households where family members include either members of the family of origin, and/or extended family members (Klasen & Woolrad, 2009). Other participants live independently in shacks, not knowing where the next meal will come from and how to get through each day. It is on account of this reality that all the participants felt a weight of responsibility and pressure to cease being dependent on limited family resources, and instead wanted to be able to make a contribution to their families' well-being. There was the discourse

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that work would afford the youth a means to make a contribution, rather than be a drain on their families, who were already struggling.

6.2.2 **The very real lack of resources and the overlooking of internal resources**

The participants noted a lack of resources in the community and the high level of crime (Swartz & Scott, 2014). The participants depicted the township as negative and they did not want to give into its negativity. While there were community-based organisations that offered support to youth, participants were so focused on getting a job and an income they often overlooked or devalued other opportunities that they had access to. Notably, both Fezeka and Ntombi were given some early childhood development training in order to work at a crèche. Fezeka spoke about the low pay, the idea of working for a black person (Fezeka is also black) and how it did not sit well with her. Fezeka then quit that job due to low pay and she did not want to have to endure feedback from a black employer. For Fezeka, there seems to have been a sense that somehow, a job was only legitimate if offered by someone outside her community. She did not see the community-based job as a real opportunity offering her meaningful and tangible skills as well as notable work experience. There may be certain ideas about what work should be like, i.e., "an office job" - traditional notions of career and work as permanent and stable (Mkhize, 2015) or perhaps an overvaluing of opportunities outside the community. It could also be internalised oppression made explicit. Black internalised oppression refers to the process of absorbing the oppressor's beliefs and values which leads to the belief of some or all stereotypes and false information (Alleyne, 2004). This process can result in self-loathing, a person disowning their 'group', decreased self-esteem complicated defensive relational behaviour that impacts quality of life (Alleyne, 2004).

6.2.3 **What it means to be a responsible man/woman**

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The young men seem to be invoking what it means to be a responsible man which, to them, seemed to mean the ability to provide for one's family and oneself. The failure to enact this core responsibility because of unemployment rendered them emasculated and unable to effect a seemingly key societal and cultural duty.

For the young women with children, there was a sense of wanting to be a responsible parent who was able to meet their child's needs. Those without children expressed a desire to be able to contribute and be of assistance, rather than to be an added financial burden. This foregrounds the youths' experience of having to negotiate developing their own identities; the different roles of being both mother and child. This was deemed as particularly difficult, especially because they could not contribute to their families and thus be 'mothers' to their children – where being a 'mother' to one's child meant being able to meet all the child's needs, particularly material needs.

There were two instances where participants made reference to the importance of respecting their womanhood and not rushing too quickly into sex and relationships. This was not explored, and may be an interesting area of study – conceptions of womanhood and what it means to be a woman: perspectives by young women in a low-income community.

6.2.4 **The double edge of education**

Society, the families of the youth and the youth themselves emphasise the importance of education. However, it seemed that for some of the participants, the education system had failed them. How could an individual fail the same grade multiple times without some sort of intervention being effected? No one seems to have been alert to the academic challenges that some of these young people were experiencing. Education was venerated in the community as

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the only way out of poverty. Thus, when one experienced academic challenges and was unable to get through mainstream education, there was a sense of failure that they then had to shoulder. Then, having failed, they sought work, only for the selfsame educational credentials to be necessary to be able to get work.

These experiences by the youth mirror the general state of the quality of education in South Africa which leaves a lot to be desired at present (Modisaotsile, 2012). South African classrooms in public schools tend to be overcrowded and there is often a teacher to learner ratio of 1:32 (Modisaotsile, 2012). There is a high, school dropout rate and low numeracy and literacy levels. "Other challenges include: poor teacher training; unskilled teachers; lack of commitment to teach by teachers; poor support for learners at home; and a shortage of resources in education despite the large budgetary commitments by government" (Modisaotsile, 2012, p. 2).

Education was seen as a silver bullet. When Nhlakanipho gave up on work, he then set his eyes on education as his saving grace. For all the participants, whilst they were seeking work, work was merely a means to being able to continue studying later on. However, they were not aware of ways of getting around their academic challenges until we had our group sessions where we discussed opportunities within Kayamandi and they had to go and inquire about whether helpful services existed. In this instance, they were able to find out about how to complete Matric at the local high school. However, whether these avenues will be pursued is unclear because of the pressure to earn an income, take care of their children and be self-sustaining. There was also no screening/assessment for possible learning disabilities which may be necessary, given the nature of the academic challenges.

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The grand societal discourse is that education provides access to freedom. It is through education that a person can lift themselves from poverty to self-sufficiency. Education is seen as a panacea, but when education is unattainable on account of academic difficulties and poor quality secondary education, it can be impervious for some (Theron, 2016).

6.2.5 **The importance of social support**

It became apparent, as highlighted in the resilience literature that the participants with Matric and/or post-Matric qualifications were those who had healthy social support from family, friends and the community. Kamva, Nhlakanipho and Ntombi had supportive relationships with at least one parent, had access to some supportive extended family members, excelled in sporting activities, had relationships with some community-based youth-oriented organisations and were regular churchgoers. All the other participants had academic challenges, precarious relationships with their families of origin and extended families, were not connected to any community-based organisations and were not active in church activities. Social resources and the quality thereof do indeed contribute to well-being (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

A supportive social network can aid adolescents in their attempts to make necessary life decisions and this facilitates development into a coherent and agentic sense of self (Bogaerts et al., 2019; Erikson, 1968). Expectations by family that cannot be met by the youth can impede resilience (Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012). This was observed with youth in Kayamandi in that negative family support served to act as an emotional thorn. As an example, for Nhlakanipho the negative comments from his family when he decided to drop out really hurt him. He internalised the negativity metered to him by the family which facilitated inner conflict and lingering self-doubt. Nhlakanipho, in being true to himself and realising that he was struggling at the college, decided to leave, but he was vilified for this. Thus, I wonder if this creates a sense that doing

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what you are passionate about is dangerous and comes at a high cost. Nhlakanipho's family did not heed his exhortations, instead he was judged a failure for not completing the course. Again, we see the reverence of education despite the impact. It is almost as if Nhlakanipho was expected to forego his desires and do whatever it took to get through the course and then, upon graduating, was expected to get a good job to care for himself and his family of origin. What an inordinately heavy weight of responsibility for a young person to carry.

6.2.6 **The connection between social support and pregnancy**

Most of the female participants who lacked strong social support had experienced pregnancy. There seemed to be a connection between tenuous social support and pregnancy. It made me surmise that perhaps the underlying driver that led to pregnancy may be the desire for connection – a corroboration of earlier research that attributes teenage pregnancy to social factors (McLeod, 1999; Mkhwanazi, 2010). Thus, in the face of tenuous social support, the female participants may seek connection through romantic relationships.

Whilst the youth's aim may not necessarily be to fall pregnant, the ability to negotiate using a condom may become difficult, as there may be a fear of losing the relationship by not acquiescing to demands for unprotected sex. There may be instances when pregnancy is a demonstration of fertility, and childbearing a marker of femininity (Preston-Whyte, 1991). The role of mother may also be a more 'respectable' marker as opposed to that of 'unemployed.' There may also be fantasies that falling pregnant can be an opportunity to start their own family but, often due to economic factors, this is thwarted and their circumstances of poverty and deprivation are unwittingly exacerbated (Fox et al., 2016; Mkhwanazi, 2010), thus making the need for work ever more acute in order to feed families of origin, the additional child and themselves.

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Whilst the purported societal discourse of pregnancy affording youth access to financial resources through the child support grant may indeed, at times, be a real phenomenon for the youth who were a part of this study, the motive was not exclusively money. Pregnancy may also be a desire for relationship, belonging and connection. When feeling isolated, closeness with another may offer some meaning that may oft lead to pregnancy and inadvertently create further financial strain. The youth's estrangement from their own homes may lead to a search for intimacy, care and closeness through intimate relationships outside of the family (Moyo, 2014).

The institutions of 'home' and 'family' are complex sites of opression and generational trauma, on account of the legacy of apartheid, colonialism and slavery (Malherbe, Suffla, & Everitt-Penhale, 2019). Indeed, as Theron and Theron (2013) and Theron (2016) highlighted in their work on resilience with black South African youth, social support is resilience-promoting, especially when provided by family. However, as Theron (2016) aptly notes, not all kinship relationships are necessarily fortifying. Social undermining which refers to negative social support, can have a harmul impact (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Helman and Ratele (2016) refer to *problematic constructions of gender* where gender inequality is perpetuated through constructions of masculinity as dominant and highly sexually active and femininity constructed as acquiescent. An important arena wherein these constructions of femininity, masculinity and gender inequality are enacted and constructed is the family.

6.2.7 **Ubuntu manifests**

Majority of the participants live in abject poverty in Kayamandi, but remained cognizant of responsibilities to their families of origin and the importance of being a good influence in the community. This links back to traditional values of ubuntu. There seemed to be a sense of pride

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that came with being able to contribute to one's family and being independent. Ipso facto not being able to make any financial contribution to their families of origin and in the care of their children, the seemingly unremitting dependence on family for their own livelihood was hard to bear. Furthermore, relative deprivation vis a vis the circumstances of their peers made the youths' subjective experience of stuckness particularly poignant.

This echoes the findings by Matshabane (2016), who found that the community of Kayamandi had an African cultural orientation of ubuntu. The youth narratives highlight narrative identities that seem to exhibit the internalised colonial schism Murove (2014) alluded to between 'traditionalisms' of ubuntu (that appear to characterise rural areas) and individualistic strivings (characteristic of urban areas). However, the youth seem to be guided by both individualist ideals and values of ubuntu. There seems to have been a dynamic synthesis of values which possibly allows the youth to straddle both their own worldviews, and those of their parents and grandparents (Albien & Naidoo, 2016, 2017).

Often, navigating these two worldviews is seamless. However, Nhlakanipho, for instance, had to decide to continue to suffer and please his family, or make an individual decision to quit college because he was struggling and did not enjoy what he was doing. His action was not without consequences. This demonstrates that there may be socialisation mechanisms that instil these values (Albien & Naidoo, 2017), and that deviations from these expectations have consequences. Career decisions made by adolescents in Kayamandi were often not taken in isolation, but made with due consideration of the homestead, family and culture (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Matshabane, 2016).

6.2.8 **Freedom of expression**

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In the interview and group sessions, a number of emotions came to the fore. Many expressed a sense of gratitude for the space to explore in the group process, and Kamva and Ntombi were grateful to have mothers who were there for them through challenging times. There was much guilt and regret for academic opportunities missed and time lost through falling pregnant. There was a collective spirit of perseverance and a sense by all participants that giving up was not an option for them no matter how defeated they may oft feel.

There was also frustration and anger, but it was muted and often I could feel it viscerally more than it being stated. When Akhona expressed that she often thinks that things would be different had her mom not insisted on moving to Cape Town, I could sense the sadness tinged with anger. There were instances when I would ask the participants questions (perhaps they did not understand the purpose of the question or they had thought that the interview was in relation to work opportunity), and I would sense the anger and frustration. When the participants who had agreed to participate for the group process did not arrive or would come and participate reluctantly, there again I wondered whether frustration was also not an underlying factor. What struck me was that even when there were opportunities for the participants to express how they felt, there was a reluctance to openly disclose feelings of anger or frustration.

Perhaps ‘negative’ feelings of dejectedness and anger were difficult to hold within, so they were dissociated from or split off. However, they would still manifest as absence in group sessions, or lengthy silences in the interview. Perhaps there was a desire to be seen to be ‘good’ participants conflicting with their own felt sense of having their own needs and desires thwarted because there was no real, remunerating job on offer. Another possibility could be related to traditional values of ubuntu. It may have been difficult to express ‘negative emotions’ like anger to an elder lest I (as the elder/researcher) deem it disrespectful.

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However, I also wonder if some of the participants felt that the interview and group processes were a waste of time. I surmise that as an unemployed young person, time becomes one's currency. Thus, one spends time doing those activities that will likely be most beneficial. For example, Akhona expressed that she could not make a few group sessions because she had to babysit her aunt's child and do her hair. It can be said that her aunt is part of her support network. Akhona's aunt assists in meeting Akhona's needs because Akhona is not working. Thus, babysitting her aunt's child is of higher utility and in terms of a cost-benefit ratio, babysitting for her aunt is more likely to payout more in the long term (financially and through further social support) than a time-limited engagement in a non-remunerative research group process. Doing her hair, an endeavor sponsored by her boyfriend, means that she is more attractive and is able to keep her boyfriend who can then be there for her emotionally, relationally and financially.

6.2.9 **Gender and engagement: aphi amajita? (translated, "where are the guys?")**

There were more female participants than male participants. The male participants noted that there was no drive by other unemployed male youth to participate**,** as they had informed some of their friends who did not avail themselves. Kamva and Nhlakanipho were of the view that unemployed male youth in Kayamandi just "don't take things seriously**.**" This statement cannot be taken at face value. The participants added that the search for job opportunities was often by word of mouth through others who had secured a work opportunity. Thus, it seems that only once there is a sense for clear, explicit outcomes (a type of opportunity vetting) will unemployed male youth act. This hearkens back to the African oral tradition which seems to be exercised. Again, I also wondered whether it was only when an opportunity was deemed 'worthwhile' or legitimate – namely that there was a real remunerative payoff – that unemployed

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youth would possibly engage. This may be a learned behaviour to offset the frustrations of unsuccessful job-hunting to optimise one's limited resources. Unemployed workers who exhibited increased job seeking activities exhibited decreased psychological health (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). The job search process is challenging and comes with uncertainties and rejections (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). The fruitless search for work can have a particularly negative impact on jobless workseekers (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

6.2.10 **The enduring impact of racism and the salience of capitalist principles**

The circumstances of the youth in the study reflect the theses posited by Stevens and Lockhat (1997). The marked impact of racism and capitalist accumulation continue to have indelible effects on the psychological, structural, social and economic spheres of the majority of black South Africans. The importance of subjective agency was highlighted and indeed, the impact of social influence on identity is evident, but not simple to map. Where there might be slight digression, is with respect to the idea of the 'Coca-Cola culture' characterised by a western, competitive and individualistic worldview. This does not occur in a vacuum, it is in juxtaposition with traditional values of ubuntu.

There seems to be co-occurrence of the 'Coca-Cola culture' and traditional values of ubuntu for the participants in the study. Basic needs are prerequisites for psychological and material well-being. In modern society, one needs money – which is obtained through some sort of remunerative activity – to obtain these basic necessities. To add to this, the observation by Stevens and Lockhat (1997) that freedom did not plan for programmes that would allow for the flourishing of healthy, independent judgement is indeed apt and valid.

6.3. Summary

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The study aimed to uncover the narrative identities of unemployed youth in the peri-urban community of Kayamandi in South Africa. Agency, communion and meaning making were the salient narrative identity themes. There was a significant lack of agency by most participants save for those with strong social support and had completed Matric. Communion for many was through responsibilities to loved ones and being a 'good' person and member of the community not necessarily through reciprocal processes of dialogue and a sense of belonging. Meaning making highlighted how the participants reflected on their experiences and felt that they learnt important lessons.

There were ten key discourses that emerged: that poverty fuels unemployment, there was a spotlight on the very real lack of resources and the overlooking of internal resources; and there were reflections by the youth on what it means to be a responsible man/woman. The double edge of education was discussed, how the valorisation of education then creates an imbalance for those without access to academic institutions because they then essentially become locked out of the economy. There is a need for schools to be more attuned to students who fail and find ways of offering them support so they do not eventually give up and drop out. The importance of social support came to the fore and there seemed to be a connection between social support and pregnancy. The value and importance of social support at community level by community based organisations cannot be overstated. So, too, is the importance of constructive support from family because negative support can impede resilience.

The principles of ubuntu manifested as a guiding philosophy for the youth despite the ubiquitous capitalistic, individualistic and globalisation-based influences. Another discourse was freedom of expression – the youth participants were afforded the space within which to ponder on, identify and articulate their thoughts and feelings – an opportunity that was not necessarily

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readily available to them otherwise because of the pressures of trying to survive, get through each day and the perennial search for employment. This was welcomed by some but frustrating to others, for whom finding work was an apex priority and anything that was not directly linked to obtaining employment and remunerated activity seemed a waste of time. There was also the discourse of gender and engagement – aphi amajita? (translated, "Where are the guys?"). There was a lot more interest shown by female youth than male youth in participating in the intervention. The participants highlighted that males would only turn up if there was a sure thing; if someone they know successfully obtained employment or clinched an opportunity, only then would they likely engage.

Lastly, the enduring impact of racism and the salience of capitalist principles was glaring. The very fact that these black youth reside in a township speaks to apartheid spatial planning which, in turn, would invariably lead to conditions of overcrowding, and disproportionate resource allocation even in the face of corrupt political leaders. The township circumstances of poverty, significant (youth) unemployment, crime, teenage pregnancy are symptoms of a broader structural malaise, and it will take a long time, and concerted initiative to transform Kayamandi into a conducive, developmental environment. Capitalist principles pervade on account of the reality that a person needs money to gain access to certain things, and because mobility of any kind requires money.

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CHAPTER 7
Conclusion

"If poverty is a disease that infects an entire community in the form of unemployment and violence, failing schools and broken homes, then we can't just treat those symptoms in isolation. We have to heal that entire community. And we have to focus on what actually works..."
Barack Obama

7.1 Introduction

The current study sought to understand the narrative identities of the unemployed youth of Kayamandi. In so doing, template analysis and narrative analysis were employed to foreground the discourses which inform the perceptions that the unemployed youth have about themselves, reflecting on their past experiences, their current experiences and their ideas regarding their futures. Grounded by a social constructivist theoretical framework, the study engaged with the individual life stories of 10 participants, presenting key events, the significant people and other elements that the young people feel have played an important role in their lives. The focus groups formed part of the participatory action that ascertained their perceptions of barriers to the achievement of their goals, and enlisted them into discussions about possible ways of engaging with those barriers. The participatory action research component sought to contribute in empowering the unemployed youth and engendering a sense of inclusion given the marginalising nature of the marker of being unemployed.

The ILO (2015) posits that youth employment is of seminal significance for economic growth, health, civil unrest, demographics, environmental sustainability and certainly personal

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levels of happiness and life satisfaction. Improved efforts to drive youth towards productive employment can enhance hopes for bolstering the positive spirit of young people, and can make progress toward the broader framework of inclusive development.

In the face of structural factors such as an economy in recession, fewer job opportunities, poor political accountability of elected local authorities and academic difficulties (possibly exacerbated by learning disorders), agency was thwarted. Communion was displayed by participants who had good relationships with members of their family and participated in community and faith-based organisations. One can imagine that it may be "hard to enjoy a sense of togetherness with others in society when one is seriously impoverished. One feels a sense of shame, inferiority or at least distance when one's basic needs are not met while substantial segments of one's society enjoy great wealth" (Thaddeus, 2011, p. 550). Notwithstanding, meaning making emerged as a dominant theme because the youth expressed a deep desire to persevere and a desire to make meaning of their circumstances.

The grand narrative running through the youth's narratives relates to the impact of institutions on the participants. Often, it seems as if the participants who struggle the most are those who have the least connection with sustaining institutions – family of origin, social support in their homes, school, and tenuous or no relationship with community-based organisations. When institutions do not effect their roles optimally, the youth suffer.

This study corroborates observations made by Jahoda (1982) and the literature on resilience (Theron & Theron, 2010; Theron, 2016; Ungar, 2013). Jahoda (1982) noted that participation in community and religious activities and rituals can engender a sense of shared identity and purpose that can also offer latent and manifest functions. As with the black youth in the SA

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Pathways Study and in other resilience studies, the powerful impact of women was noted in the lives of the youth (Matshabane, 2017), the pain of the experience of having absent fathers, the perennial struggle to get by, the depth of poverty and deprivation, the valorisation of education, and the importance of kin-like service provision by organisations that seek to support youth. It is clear that the socio-structural reality (including, *inter alia*, unsupportive family structures and negative peer influences, the township, employers, government representatives and the economy) that the youth have to contend with, requires them to accommodate and adjust to this socio-structural reality as it is. Those youth who are resilient lean on empathic social resources and other responsive community-based resources such as sport and church as coping mechanisms.

This study echoes the thesis by Mkhize (2015) that a social and ethical understanding of what it means to be a human being needs to be considered in African contexts when career assessments are conducted. An appreciation of conceptions of what it means to be a human being forms part of the principles of ubuntu. Further, consideration needs to be made for complexities that may arise from differing notions of the self within the individual, many of which stem from family and community expectations (Albien & Naidoo, 2017).

The current study highlights that these youth find themselves having to straddle both western (individualistic) and African norms of ubuntu simultaneously. Often, the youth who struggle are isolated without strong familial or community bonds to leverage. The post-apartheid society the youth find themselves living in has become a lot more individualistic and requires them to be able to compete not only with national players, but international players, as well.

Both nature and nurture are vital, and when there are significant disturbances in either spheres, this impinges identity development. For the youth in Kayamandi, structural

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impediments remain a significant barrier (Naidoo et al., 2016). However, good enough social support often by family, as well as by engagement in community based activities like sport and religious activities – can act as buffers that allow the youth to be able to persevere and exhibit resilience (Matshabane, 2016). In a sense, this promotes a general movement towards mature identity development.

7.2 Recommendations

In reviewing 13 qualitative studies that investigated the contextual factors which influence the experience of unemployed individuals, Du Toit, De Witte, Rothmann, and Van den Broeck (2018) found that society at large, the surrounding community as well as the individual had an impact on the experience of unemployment. They recommended the organisation of unemployed individuals in community subgroups so as to facilitate community cohesion, equality amongst members and the fostering of collaborative attitudes. Social scientists were urged to be more sensitive (tolerant and understanding) to the experiences of the realities encountered by unemployed individuals. This review by Du Toit et al. (2018) resonates with the findings of the current study.

Based on the findings and my interactions with the participants, I deduce that there is a need for engagement with youth on multiple levels if we want to assist them. I will now outline a proposed plan of action I term, the Unemployed Youth Development Strategy. Organisations working with youth need to desist from seeing unemployed youth as a homogenous group. Individual youths need to be assessed to ascertain what unique needs they may have, what areas of interest they have and strengths and weaknesses that they possess (Alexander, Buthelezi, & Seabi, 2009). Some of these things they may be able to articulate, and many they may not. Therefore, more appropriate qualitative methodologies may be warranted beyond the quantitative

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psychometric assessment measures (Naidoo et al., 2019) in exploring career attributes within a context such as Kayamandi. Examples here include narrative assessment exercises, such as the *Career Flower* devised by Naidoo (2016) or Albien's *Shaping Career Voices Intervention* (2018). Additionally, a formal assessment of an individual's career attributes should be done – preferably in the youth's mother tongue. These initial assessments will then outline what further areas need developing, and once a unique career plan has been mapped out for the individual, the young person can be directed to a course of interventions that aim to assist him/her along their career development plan. Each young person, however, needs a point of contact (a case manager or career counsellor) that will mentor the young person along the career development plan. This point of contact thus develops a personal relationship with the young person and becomes the young person's mentor and champion. Their primary role is to support and help the young person to do what needs to be done to reach his or her career development goals. They will be the young person's go-to person in challenging times so that the case manager can help the young person cross any hurdles s/he may encounter along the way. It is this case manager who will help refer the young person to other agencies, should the need arise, if there are psychological, health or psychosocial issues that may need intervention by other professionals such as psychologists, medical professionals or social-workers. This is what I term the Unemployed Youth Development Strategy.

In implementing the Unemployed Youth Development Strategy, I propose the use of narrative career assessment and the assessment of career attributes because I found that the youth were not always clear of what they needed. Even if they had a need, unless it was *clear to them that they had a particular need/area of development* and how that area of development related to finding employment, they may be reticent in engaging with whatever assistance may be offered if it does not speak to them directly and does not appear to have immediate utility. Hence, the

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significance of a case manager because they can play the role of mentor, coach and overall accountability partner. As noted, often these young people have no one who holds them in mind and helps them think through challenges that they encounter. This case manager would do exactly that, they would oversee the young person's journey from assessment all the way through to placement into "courses" that address areas of development (CV drafting skills, online job search skills, communication skills, interview preparation, etc.), until a work opportunity is secured or entrepreneurial venture is clinched. The case manager, as noted in the resilience literature, needs to be of a kinlike nature; the case manager needs to become a quasi family member to the youth – however as far as possible exemplifying the positive attributes of family including support, care and concern. In light of Matshabane's (2017) suggestion, this case manager may also offer the youth the benefit of a role model. While this may be quite a challenge to ask of any institution, based on the conversations that I had with these young people this is possibly what may be of help to them. Figure 3 below graphically represents the Unemployed Youth Development Strategy.

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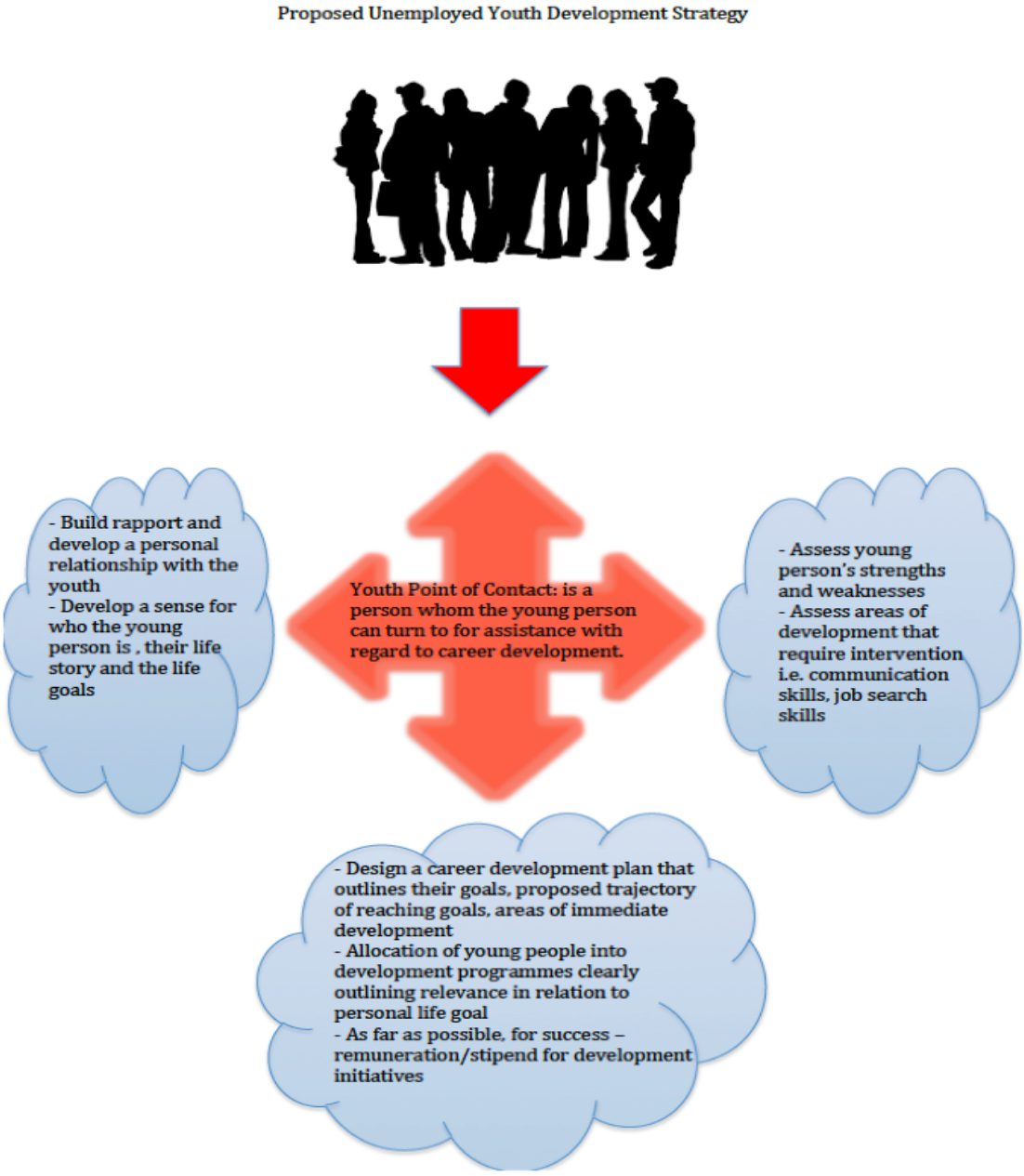
Figure 3: Proposed Unemployed Youth Development Strategy Graphic



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7.3 Limitations

The study was not without limitations. The small participant pool, convenience sampling technique and qualitative research design inherently limit the generalisability of the findings. The findings also do not reflect the sentiments and experiences of all the unemployed youth of Kayamandi. The aim of qualitative research is not generalisability of results, but rather, to produce knowledge on account of investigations done in certain contexts with particular people, to obtain thick discriptions and to create theory (Ledford, 2018; Levitt et al., 2018). Qualitative studies can also reveal intimate details of behaviour in normal settings that can lead to further research that is more quantitative (Levitt et al., 2018).

That the participants were not paid may have influenced dynamics and the findings of the study. I felt that payment had the potential to reduce an interaction into one that is transactional in nature (Lea & Webley, 2014; Moller & Deci, 2014), where the participants participate in order to obtain payment rather than participating volitionally on the basis of a genuine interest in the research endeavour. Money can set up power relations (Lea & Webley, 2014; Moller & Deci, 2014) such that there is compliance merely so as to access money. To avoid this trap, a healthy meal was provided to serve as sustenance for us all. The participants may have initially agreed to participate with the hope of perhaps getting employment, and then later dropped out of the intervention when it became clearer that there was no remunerated work. Although the action component did not lead to employment, however it was significant. We covered many of the key aspects that participants would need to know with respect to job search skills, we explored their sentiments regarding the experience of unemployment, and we looked at how best to address this given their sphere of influence and their unique circumstances.

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The intervention occurred over a month in September in 2015 after a full year of having a presence in Kayamandi with scant reception from unemployed youth. Following the interviews and focus groups, I had to exit the community to commence a new work opportunity. The nature of PAR is such that the initiatives are driven by the community. However, the challenge in this study was that participants did not want to remain 'unemployed,' and all activities and endeavours by unemployed youth were thus directed at finding employment, rather than a theoretical solution for addressing this situation in relation to others. That is, the aim was immediate change of *their own* circumstances from being unemployed to being employed by any and all means necessary.

The idea of banding together to 'address the unemployment challenges of youth' was not a cause worth championing because that was not an employment opportunity or remunerated activity. The unemployed youth were not open to using their time in ways other than those that would facilitate remuneration, get them employed or into an institution of higher learning so that they would become employable.

Thus, the study's main vulnerability was its ephemeral nature. However, it mirrored the youth's circumstances and was true to the reality of the situations of unemployed youth. Even whilst the intervention was in progress, there was an awareness that should interviews or opportunities arise, that the youth needed to respond to these, which would be given priority over the group process. The unemployed youth were not in a position to hold a space when there was the urgency of escaping the undesirable marker of being unemployed. If the space were to continue, I would have had to hold it. I was not in a position to remain in the community longer, and could not duly remunerate unemployed youth in a sustainable manner and leverage

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interventions with other community organisations using participatory action research methodologies (Lazarus, Taliep, & Naidoo, 2017).

A mechanism that may have strengthened the PAR component and facilitated sustainability of the intervention could have been locating the intervention within a community-based organisation that could hold the space for the youth and continue to drive the intervention. The closure of the Entabeni Cyber Café stymied this possibility.

7.4 Conclusion

The study's aim was to give a platform to the voices of the unemployed youth of Kayamandi, through an examination of their narrative identities. Agency, communion and meaning making were the salient themes in the narrative identities of the youth. The study was an attempt to better understand the unemployed youth of Kayamandi, to reflect on the discourses that inform who they are, and to highlight their lived experiences and the key influences in their lives through narrative inquiry and participatory action research methodology.

Ten discourses came to the fore: how poverty fuels unemployment, the very real lack of resources and how the youth tend to overlook internal resources. There were reflections by the youth on what it means to be a responsible man/woman, the double edge of education, the valorisation of education as well as the vital importance of social support and the connection between social support and pregnancy. The principles of ubuntu manifesting, freedom of expression, the discourse of gender and engagement – aphi amajita and the enduring impact of racism and the salience of capitalist principles was discussed.

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Participants were able to make sense of their affectively loaded experiences through the individual life story interviews and the participatory action research focus group intervention. At the end of the intervention each participant had a clear plan of action – how to proceed with respect to attaining their own goals, who and where to turn to for assistance and additional support. They had also been equipped through the intervention with skills that they can use in finding employment, following up on job applications made, compiling their own CVs and how to further their education.

The Unemployed Youth Development Strategy is worthwhile considering. The youth of Kayamandi can benefit from a responsive youth desk that takes a relational look at the challenge of youth unemployment. The pairing of an individual unemployed youth with an adequately trained, compassionate and empathic case manager would be impactful. This case manager should have a gestalt view of who the unemployed youth are as individuals within their particular community, help to highlight internal and external individual youth resources and needs, and then support the youth in attaining their individual goals by leveraging available resources and addressing defined needs through individual and/or group interventions. This alternative approach can go a long way in addressing the challenge of unemployment. The current homogenisation of unemployed youth and the gross blanket dissemination of youth unemployment programmes can only continue to bleed taxpayer resources with no meaningful results.

Currently, there are youth development intiatives such as after-school interventions and youth hubs in communities. However, these interventions need to be structured in a 'kin-like,' relational way so as to better support the youth (Theron, 2016). This way, as outlined in the proposed Unemployed Youth Development Strategy, the youth can be afforded assessment, a

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personalised life plan and access to modules that they can access, i.e., lessons in CV writing, online job search skills, communication skills, how to prepare for an interview, professionalism skills, managing a budget, boundary setting and time management skills. This could be supplemented with some sort of remuneration or stipend in order to be able to effect their life plan. Their life plan would contain their strengths and areas of development, the challenges they encounter, career goals and a step-by-step guide on how to achieve their goals that outlines the resources which they can make use of. The assigned case manager will then track the youth's progress and assist, where necessary, by guiding the youth to the requisite resources that will help them to achieve their goals.

7.4.1 **Implications**

The study contributes to the literature on narrative identities, as it offers a glimpse of the narrative identities of unemployed youth in an low socio-economic environment. This is in contrast to the contexts within which most narrative identity research has been conducted. The study also corroborates much of the precepts purported by the South African literature on resilience (Theron & Theron, 2010; Theron, 2016; Ungar, 2013). The study offers extensive guidelines for praxis with regard to the design of interventions for unemployed youth. In terms of implications for further research, this study can be replicated with an unemployed youth population from a different geographic location, and with greater time and resources invested emulating the Unemployed Youth Development Strategy proposed earlier in this chapter. Such an endeavour should also involve more participants and also consider (if viable and appropriate) locating the study within a credible, respected existing community based organisation that reflects the research endeavour's values.

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The recommendations that flow from this study are important. especially in light of the alarmingly high rate of youth unemployment in South Africa. This study's findings and the proposed Unemployed Youth Development Strategy can significantly enhance the impact of interventions delivered to unemployed youth. Thus, this study is an interventionist's guide that provides important insights into the lived experiences of unemployed youth and the discourses that underpin and inform their meaning making, as they persevere in attempting to integrate the work role into their identity. These insights may offer useful stepping stones that can help guide how to conceptualise and effect interventions with and for unemployed youth.

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Appendix A

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IMVUME YOKUTHABATHA INXAXHEBA
KUPHANDO KWIYUNIVESITHI YASESTELLENBOCH

Narrative Identities: Voices of the unemployed youth in a low-income community in South Africa

Igama lam ndinguThembelihle Dube, osuka kwiSebe leSayikholoji kwiYunivesithi yaseStellenbosch kwaye ndingathanda ukuba ngumlingane kwesi sifundo sophando. Imisetyenzana neziphumo zophando ziya kubanjwa kwidizetheyishini ye-PhD yam. Wena uthatyathwe njengomntu onokuba ngumlingane kwesi sifundo ngenxa yokuba awusebenzi ngoku kwaye uphakathi kobudala beminyaka eli-18 nengama-25.

1. INJONGO YESIFUNDO

isifundo sifuna ukuqaqambisa amazwi olutsha olungasebenziyo lwaseKayamandi, ukuze kubekho ukuqondana okungcono kokuba ungubani na, ukubonakalisa zonke izinto ezikwazisayo ukuba ungubani na, ukuba ayintoni na amava wakho, kwanokuba zeziphi na iindidi zempembelelo (izithintelo, izidingo, izibonelelo neenkxaso) ezidlala indima kumabhongo wakho kubomi obungcono.

2. IINKQUBO

Ukuba uyavolontiya ukuthabtha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo isifundi siya kubonakala kwezi zigaba zi-4 zilandelayo:

Isigaba 1: (phakathi – ekupheleni ku-2014)	Ukugaywa kwabathathi-nxaxheba
Isigaba 2: (ekuphela ku-2014 – ekuqaleni ku-2015)	Ukwenziwa kodliwano-ndlebe ebantwini Udliwano-ndlebe olujolise kumaQela (olu-5 kwiseshoni nganye)
Isigaba 3: (phakathi ku-2015 – ekuqaleni ku-2016)	Uhlalutyo: ukukhutshelwa + ukuguqulelwa kokubhaliweyo
Isigaba 4: (phakathi ku-2016)	Ukucinga: Ukubhalwa & ukuprizentwa kubathathi-nxaxheba ukuze kuqinisekiswe

Isigaba sokuqala sisigaba sokugaywa, oku kubandakanya intlanganiso nemibutho esekeke ekuhlaleni eKayamandi kwanokucela uncedo lwayo ekundincedeni ndichonge abanokuba ngabathathi-nxaxheba njengawe. Ugayo luya kwenzeka de kuchongwe abathathi-nxaxheba abali-15. Isigaba sesibini sisigaba sodliwano-ndlebe/sentshukumo. Abathathi-nxaxheba baya kuba nodliwano-ndlebe olupheleleyo olulandelwa ziiseshoni zodliwano-ndlebe/ungenelelo olugxile

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emaqeleni apho kuya kuqala amaqela ama-3 abathabathi-nxaxheba aba-5 baya kuthabatha inxaxheba kuze kamva amaqela ama-3 abe nokusebenzisana kungenelelo olumanyeneyo olusekelwe kwiiseshoni ziiseshoni ezigxile emaqeleni/kungenelelo. Okuqwalaselwayo kwiinkqubo zabantu nezamaqela kuya kuqatshelwa kubhalwe phantsi. Udliwano-ndlebe kumele lwenzeke kakuhle ukuya phakathi ku-2015. Phakathi ku-2015 isigaba sesithathu: uhlalutyo, luya kubonakalisa. Ndakuba ndilugqibile uhlalutyo siya kuhlangana kwakhona kumaqela ekugxilwe kuwo kunye nabanye abathathi-nxaxheba ukuze undazize ukuba ingaba uhlalutyo luzibambe ngenene na izimvo zakho. Apho kukho khona izilungiso ezi ziya kuqatshelwa ngokufanelekileyo zize zihlanganiswe kwidrafti yokugqibela yephepha. Isigaba sesine siya kwenzeka phakathi ku-2016 kwaye idizetheyishini kumele ibe ilungele uvavanyo phakathi ku-2017.

Ukwenziwa kodliwano-ndlebe ebantwini kuya kusukela kwiyure enye ukuya kwezimbini. Ingxoxo yamaqela ekugxilwe kuwo kunokuba neeyure ezi-3-4 ubude kuxhomekeke eqeleni. Kuzo zombini iingxoxo zabantu nezama qela ekugxilwe kuwo kulindeleke ukuba ube nguwe kwaye wabelane ngokuphandle kuzo. Isiphumo sesifundo sixhomekeke kuwe kunye nabanye abalingane.

3. IMINGCIPHEKO KUNYE NOKUNGAZIVA MNANDI OKUNOKUBAKHO

Eminye imibuzo endinokukubuza yona ingakuzisela ukukhubeka nokudana. Nceda undazise ukuba ezi mvakalelo ziyakugubungela ngokukodwa mna ndiya kukuthumela eWelgevallen House, inkonzo enikezwa licandelo leSayikholoji yezoNyango kwiSebe leSayikholoji kwiYunivesithi yaseStellenbosch apho kunikezwa khona mahala ngeenkonzo zonyango. Ikwakhona nengcali yeSayikholoji ebona iiklayenti kwiKlinikhi yaseKayamandi ongenza idinga lokuyibona.

4. AMAQITHI-QITHI ANOKUBAKHO KUBATHATHI-NXAXHEBA KUNYE/OKANYE EKUHLALENI

Isifundo siya kunceda abaphandi, abenzi beenkqubo neepholisi babe nengqiqo engcono ngamava wakho njengomntu omtsha ongasebenziyo. Ndiyathemba ukuba uphando lunganceda ekuqaqambiseni izinto ezinokuthi zikhokelele kwiziphumo ezakhayo kuwe nakwabanye abalingani abathabatha inxaxheba.

5. INTLAWULO YOKUTHABATHA INXAXHEBA

Ukuthabatha inxaxheba kokokuzivolontiya kwaye awuyi kuhlawulwa ngokuba yinxalenye yesifundo, kodwa nangona kunjalo uya kufumana isixhaso sokudla ngexesha ngalinye sidibanela udliwano-ndlebe okanye sisiba neengxoxo ezigxile emaqeleni.

6. IMFIHLO

Naluphi na ulwazi olufunyenwe ngokunxibelelene nesi sifundo nolunokuthi luchongwe nguwe luya kuhlala luyimfihlo kwaye luya kuchazwa ngemvume yakho kuphela okanye ngokufuneka ngokwasemthethweni. Ukuba yimfihlo kuya kugcinwa ngokusetyenziswa kwegama elahlukileyo kwelo lakho lokwenene ukuze kungabikho mntu uya kukwazi ukuba wena ubukwesi sifundo. Kuya kusetyenziswa izirekhodi-mazwi zekhompyutha kwaye ulwazi luya kugcinwa kwizixhobo ezikhuselwe ngephaswedi ezifikeleleka kumphandi nakumncedisi wophando oqeqeshiweyo. Wamkelekile ukuba uzimamele izirekhodi-mazwi liqela lam lophando kunye nam kuphela abaya kufikelela kwizirekhodi. Okurekhodiweyo kuya kusetyenziswa kuphela njengendlela yokubamba nokuqonda amava wakho. Okurekhodiweyo kuya kuhlala kuyipropati yeYunivesithi yaseStellenbosch. Idizetheyishini epheleleyo iya kuqinisekisa ukuba awalatheki nangayiphi na indlela.

7. UKUTHABATHA INXAXHEBA NOKURHOXA

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Usengakukhetha ukuba kwesi sifundo okanye ukungabikho. Ukuba uyavolontiya ukuba kwesi sifundo, usenako ukurhoxa nangaliphi na ixesha ngaphandle kweziphumo nezaluphi na uhlobo. Usenako ukwala ukuphendula nayiphi na imibuzo ongafuniyo ukuyiphendula kodwa uhlale ukuso isifundo. Ndisenako ukukucela ukuba uphumele ngaphandle kwesifundo ukuba ndiva ngathi inkqubo inefuthe lovakalelo elingakhiyo kuwe. Ukuba awunako ukuthabatha inxaxheba kuzo zonke izigaba zesifundo awuyi kuyithatyathelwa ingqalelo yokuba kwisifundo.

8. UKUCHONGWA KWABAPHANDI

Ukuba unayo nayiphi na imibuzo okanye iinkxalabo ezimalunga nophando, nceda uzive ukhululekile ukuqhagamshelana nam. Unganditsalela umnxeba ku-079 230 9084 okanye undithumelele I-imeyile ku-: td@thembelihledube.com.

9. AMALUNGELO ABATHABATHI-NXAXHEBA BOPHANDO

Usenokuyirhoxisa nangaliphi na imvume yakho kwaye ungaqhubeki nokuthabatha inxaxheba kwakho ngaphandle kwesohlwayo. Awunikezi ngawo nawaphi na amabango asemthethweni, amalungelo okanye izilungiso ngenxa yokuthabatha inxaxheba kwakho kwesi sifundo sophando. Ukuba unayo nayiphi na imibuzo ephathelele kumalungelo wakho njengomthabathi-nxaxheba wophando, qhagamshelana noNkszn Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] kwiCandelo loPhuhliso loPhando.

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ISIGNITSHALA YOMTHABATHI-NXAXHEBA WOPHANDO OKANYE UMMELI WASEMTHETHWENI

Ulwazi olungasentla lwachazwa ku_____ *[umthabathi-nxaxheba]* nguThembelihle Dube nge[*siAfrikaans/isiNgesi/isiXhosa/olunye]* kwaye mna _____ ndiyaluqonda olu lwimi okanye luye lwaguqulelwa ngokwanelisayo ku_____ [*umthabathi-nxaxheba] kwaye* uye walinikwa ithuba lokubuza imibuzo kwaye le mibuzo iye yaphendulwa ngokwanelisayo ku*[m/ye].*

Ndiyinikeza ngokuzithandela imvume yokuthabatha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo kwaye ndiyinikiwe ikopi yale fomu.

_____

Igama loMthabathi-nxaxheba

_____

Igama loMmeli waseMthethweni (ukuba kuyimfuneko)

_____ _____

Isignitshala yoMthabathi-nxaxheba okanye uMmeli waseMthethweni **Umhla**

ISIGNITSHALA YOMPHANDI

Ndivakalisa ukuba ndiluchazile ulwazi olunikezwe kolu xwebhu ku_____ [*igama lomthabathi-nxaxheba]* kunye/okanye ummeli [wakhe] _____ [*igama lommeli].* *[He*/she] uye wakhuthazwa kwaye wanikezwa ixesha elaneleyo lokundibuza nayiphi na imibuzo. Le ncoko yaqhutywa nguThembelihle Dube nge[*siNgesi/*siXhosa/*Olunye*] akukho mguquli-ntetho usetyenzisiweyo.

_____ _____

Isignitshala yoMphandi **Umhla**

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Appendix B

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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Narrative Identities: Voices of the unemployed youth in a low-income community in South Africa

My name is Thembelihle Dube, from the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University and I would like you to be a participant in this research study. The activities and results of the research will be captured in my PhD dissertation. You were considered as a possible participant in this study because you are currently unemployed and are between the ages of 18 and 25.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to highlight the voices of the unemployed youth of Kayamandi, so there is better understanding of who you are, reflect on all the things that inform who you are, what your experiences have been, and what kinds of influences (barriers, needs, resources and supports) play a role in your aspirations for a better life.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study the study will unfold in the following 4 phases:

Phase 1: (mid – end of 2014)	Recruitment of participants
Phase 2: (end of 2014 – early 2015)	Individual Interviews Focus Group Interviews (5 per session)
Phase 3: (mid 2015 – early 2016)	Analysis: transcription + translation
Phase 4: (mid 2016)	Reflection: Write up & presentation to participants for verification

The first phase is the recruitment phase, this entails meeting with the community based organisations in Kayamandi and asking for their assistance in helping me identify potential participants like you. Recruitment will occur until 15 participants are identified. The second phase is the interview/action phase. Participants will have individual in-depth interviews followed by focus group interview/intervention sessions where initially 3 groups of 5 participants will participate and later the 3 groups may collaborate on a joint intervention based on focus group/intervention sessions. Observations of the individual and group processes will be noted and written up. The interviews should happen well into mid 2015. In mid 2015 the third phase: analysis, will unfold. Once I have completed the analysis we will meet again in the focus groups with other participants so you can let me know if the analysis really captures your views. Where

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9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to _____ *the [participant]* by Thembelihle Dube in [*Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other]* and I _____ understand this language or it was satisfactorily translated to _____ [*the participant] and* was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to *[my/his/her]* satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study and I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Subject/Participant

_____
Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____ _____
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the participant]* and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative]. [*He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted by Thembelihle Dube in [*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and *no translator was used.*

_____ _____
Signature of Investigator **Date**

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Appendix C –Life Story Interview in English

The research seeks to uncover your story as an unemployed young person. There are 3 parts to the research process, completing a biographical questionnaire, an individual interview and participating in a focus group discussion. The biographical questionnaire just seeks to get a basic sense of you and your home environment. The in-depth individual interview will really focus on getting to know you, a sense of who you are and looks at really understanding your story. The group process will be with a few other unemployed youth like yourself and there we will discuss what it is like to be unemployed, look at the barriers to employment and how you think these barriers could be addressed. Lastly, where possible you may be referred to an existing life-skill programme or you might be asked to participate in a life-skills programme that may be designed based on the feedback from all the interviews. If you have any questions please feel free to ask me.

Would you be interested in becoming a participant in this study?

Script for the individual interview
(Adapted from McAdams' Life Story Interview, 2007)

This is an interview about the story of your life. I am interested in hearing your story, including parts of the past as you remember them and the future as you imagine it. The story is selective; it doesn't include everything that has ever happened to you. Instead, I will ask you to focus on a few key things in your life – a few key scenes, characters, and ideas. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Instead, all you have to do is tell me about some of the most important things that have happened in your life and how you imagine your life developing in the future. I will guide you through the interview so that we finish it all in about two hours or less.

Please know that my purpose in doing this interview is to hear your story everything you say is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Do you have any questions?

A. Overview of your life

We're going to start by setting the stage for the story of your life, to get a broad overview of your life-story. Please tell the story of where you were born, where you grew up, the place or places you have lived and noteworthy people in your life. Did you go to school? How far you went in school? Whether you have ever been employed?

B. Major Events in One's Life

Now we are going to focus on some of the major things that have happened in your life and what these events are. I will ask you to please describe what happened and the people that were involved. What you were thinking and feeling at the time. Lastly what makes this event stand out for you and what it says about you as a person or about your life.

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How did the challenge or problem develop? How did you address or deal with this challenge or problem in you own life story?

4. ***Single value.*** What is the most important value in human living? Please explain.
5. ***Other.*** What else can you tell me that would help me understand your most fundamental beliefs and values about life and the world? What else can you tell me that would help me understand your overall philosophy of life.

F. Life Theme

Looking back over your entire life story with all the events and challenges, and extending back into the past and ahead into the future, is there a central theme, message or idea that runs throughout the story? What is the major theme in your life story? Please explain.

G. Reflection

Thank you for this interview. I just have one more question for you. Many of the stories that you have told me are about experiences that standout from day-to-day. For example we talked about a high point, a turning point, a scene about your health, etc. Given that most people don't share their life stories in this way on a regular basis, I'm wondering if you might reflect for one last moment about what this interview, here today has been like for you. What were your thoughts and feelings during the interview? How do you think this interview has affected you? Do you have any other comments about the interview process?

Thank you for your time.

have you coped with this failure or regret? What effect has this failure or regret had on you and your life story?

E. Personal Ideology

Now I would like to ask a few questions about your fundamental beliefs and values and about questions of meaning and morality in your life. Please give some though to each of these questions.

1. ***Religious/Ethical Values.*** Consider for a moment the religious or spiritual aspects of your life. Please describe in a nutshell your religious beliefs or values, if indeed these are important to you. Whether you are religious or not, please describe your overall ethical or moral approach to life.
2. ***Political/Social Values.*** How do you approach political or social issues? Do you have a particular political point of view? Are there particular social issues or causes about which you feel strongly? Please explain.
3. ***Change, Development of Religious and Political Views.*** Please tell the story of how your religious, moral, and/or political views have developed over time. Have they changed in any important ways? Please explain.

Signature of Investigator **Date**

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Appendix D – Biographical Information of Participants

Biographical Information

How old are you? _____

Have you ever gone to school? _____

What is the highest grade you passed? _____

Where do you live? _____

Have you always lived here? _____

If not, where else have you lived? _____

Who do you live with? _____

Do you have a brother or a sister? _____

Is there a member of your family who is working? _____

Which family member is working and what do they do for a living?

Have you ever been in trouble with the law? If, so why?

Do you have a criminal record? _____

Do you drink and/or smoke? _____

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Appendix E – Focus Group Script and Questions

Focus Group Script

Today I'd like us to discuss what it is like to be unemployed, the barriers we have experienced and some ideas of how to overcome some of those barriers. We have two hours for this discussion. Please can I request that this discussion occur in a respectful manner whereby we give each other time and space to reflect and freely express how we feel. The feedback that you provide will be anonymous.

What does it feel like to be unemployed?
How do you feel most of the time?
What are some of the thoughts that go through your mind?

What have been the challenges to finding employment?
Money? Parental/Community Support? Health Concerns? School?

What are some of the ways that these challenges/barriers can be overcome?
Take each challenge/barrier and note possible solutions to overcoming it.

What else do you feel you need that could be of assistance to you?

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Appendix F

Uphando lufuna ukutyhila ibali lakho njengomntu omtsha ongasebenziyo. Kukho izahlulo ezi-3 kwinkqubo yophando, ukuzalisa uludwe lwemibuzo yobomi bomntu, ukwenza udliwano-ndlebe nomntu kunye nokuthabatha inxaxheba kwingxoxo yeqela ekugxilwe kulo. Uludwe lwemibuzo yobomi bomntu lufuna nje ukufumana ingqiqo engundoqo ngawe kwanokungqonge ikhaya lakho. Ukwenziwa kodliwano-ndlebe nomntu ngokupheleleyo ngenene kuya kugxila ekwazini wena, ingqiqo yokuba ungubani na nokujonga ekuliqondeni ngokwenene ibali lakho. Inkqubo yeqela iya kuba kunye nolunye ulutsha olungasebenziyo njengawe kwaye apho siya ngokuba kunjani na ukungasebenzi, sijonge kwizithintelo zokungafumani msebenzi kwanendlela ocinga ukuba zithintelo zingaxazululwa ngayo. Okokugqibela, apho kunokwenzeka khona ukuba ugqithiselwe kwinkqubo yezakhono zobomi (life-skill programme) ezikhoyo okanye unokucelwa ukuba uthabathe inxaxheba kwinkqubo yezakhono zobomi enokuyilwa esekeke kwingxelo esuka kulo lonke udliwano-ndlebe. Zive ukhululekile ukundibuza ukuba unayo nayiphi na imibuzo.

Ungaba nawo umdla wokuthabatha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo?

Isikripthi (Script) sodliwano-ndlebe lomntu
(Ilungiselelwe kuDliwano-ndlebe lweBali loBomi likaMcAdams, 2007)

Olu ludliwano-ndlebe olumalunga nebali lobomi bakho. Ndinomdla wokuva ibali lakho, ukuquka izahlulo zexesha langaphambili njengoko uzikhumbula kwakunye nexesha elizayo njengoko ulicingela. Ibali liyakhetha; Aliyi kuyiquka yonke into eyakha yenzeka kuwe. Koko, ndiya kukucela ukuba ugxile kwizinto ezimbalwa eziphambili ebomini bakho – iindawo zezehlo, abantu, kunye neengcinga ezimbalwa eziphambili. Azikho iimpendulo ezilungileyo okanye ezingalunganga kwimibuzo. Endaweni yoko, konke ekumele ukwenze kukundixelela ngezinye zezinto ezibaluleke kakhulu ezenzekayo ebomini bakho kwanendlela ocingela ukuba bungaphuhla ngayo ubomi bakho kwixesha elizayo. Nam ndiya kukukhokelela kudliwano-ndlebe ukuze silugqibe lonke malunga neeyure ezimbini okanye ngaphantsi.

Ndicela wazi ukuba injongo yam ngokwenza olu dliwano-ndlebe kukuva ibali lakho kwaye yonke into oyitshoyo uyitsho ngokuzithandela, akukho mntu uyokwazi ukuba ungubani na kwaye iyimfihlelo. Ingaba unayo nayiphi imibuzo?

- **Ushwankathelo lobomi bakho**

Siza kuqala ngokuseta inqanaba lebali lobomi bakho, ukufumana ushwankathelo olubanzi lwebali lobomi bakho. Nceda ubalise ukuba wazalelwa phi na, wakhulela phi na, indawo okanye iindawo okhulele kuzo kwakunye nabantu ababalulekileyo ebomini bakho. Ingaba uyile esikolweni? Ingaba uye kangakanani esikolweni? Kwanokuba wawukhe waqeshwa na ngaphambili?

- **Izehlo ezikhulu zoBomi boMntu**

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Ngoku siza kugxila kwezinye zezinto ezinkulu ezithe zenzeka ebomini bakho kwanokuba zizehlo zini na ezo. Ndiya kukucela ukuba uncede uchaze ukuba kwenzeka ntoni na kwakunye nabantu ababandakanyekayo. Wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njalo ngelo xesha. Okokugqibela, yintoni esenza siqaqambe esi sehlo kuwe kwaye sitsho ukuthini ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho.

Indawo ephezulu: Nceda uchaze ngexesha ebomini bakho eliphuma phambili njengamava awakhayo ngokukodwa. Oku kungaba yindawo ephezulu kubomi bakho bonke okanye amaxesha awonwabisayo, awovuyo, awemincili okanye amangalisa ngokukodwa ebomini bakho. Nceda uyichaze ngokupheleleyo le ndawo ephezulu. Kwenzeka ntoni, nini, phi, ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Kwakhona, ngegama elinye okanye amabini chaza ukuba yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba eli xesha litsho ukuthini ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?

- ***Indawo ephantsi:*** Nceda uchaze ngexesha ebomini bakho eliphuma phambili njengendawo ephantsi, amava angakholisiyo ngokukodwa. Oku kungaba lelona xesha lilusizi kakhulu kubomi bakho bonke okanye ixesha elibuhlungu okanye elinzima ngokukodwa ebomini bakho. Nokuba kunzima kangakanani na ukukhumbula nceda uyichaze ngokupheleleyo le ndawo ephantsi. Kwenzeka ntoni, nini, phi, ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba eli xesha litsho ukuthini ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?
- ***Indawo yotshintsho olukhulu:*** Xa ujonga emva ebomini bakho, kunokukwazeka ukwalatha amaxesha athile abalulekileyo athi aqaqambe njengeendawo ekuxhomekeke kuzo izinto ezibalulekileyo – iindawo ezithi ziphawule utshintsho olukhulu kuwe ebalini lobomi bakho. Nceda walathe indawo ethile ebomini bakho esebenza njengendawo yotshintsho olukhulu. Okanye nceda ixesha apho waba notshintsho olubalulekileyo lohlobo oluthile. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba esi sehlo sitsho ntoni ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?
- ***Inkumbulo yoBuntwana eYakhayo:*** Nceda uchaze ixesha elakhayo ngexesha owakhula ngalo, njengomntwana okanye umntu omtsha. Oku kungaba lixesha elakhayo okanye lokonwaba kakhulu kwiminyaka yobutsha bakho. Nceda ulichaze ngokupheleleyo eli xesha lakhayo. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba le nkumbulo itsho ntoni ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?
- ***Inkumbulo yoBuntwana eNgakhiyo:*** Nceda uchaze ixesha elingakhiyo ngexesha owakhula ngalo, njengomntwana okanye umntu omtsha. Oku kungaba lixesha elingakhiyo okanye lokungonwabi kakhulu mhlawumbi

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eliqaqambisa usizi, inthungu, ubunzima okanye ukoyika kwiminyaka yobutsha bakho. Nceda ulichaze ngokupheleleyo eli xesha lakhayo. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba eli xesha litsho ntoni ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?

- ***Inkumbulo eCacileyo yaKutshanje:*** Ungabuyeli emva koko ubusele ukukhankanyile, nceda uchaze ixesha lakutshanje eliqaqambe njengelicacileyo okanye elibe nentsingiselo. Eli liya kuba lixesha elikhumbuleka ngokukodwa, elicacileyo okanye elibaluleke ngokwakhayo okanye ngokungakhiyo kutshanje. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba eli xesha litsho ntoni ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?
- ***Isehlo soBulumko:*** Nceda undichazele ngesehlo ebomini bakho owabonisa ubulumko kuso. Isehlo sisenokuba apho wenze isenzo kanye unxibelelene ngendlela elumke ngokukodwa okanye unikeze ngecebiso, wenze isigqibo sobulumko, okanye kungenjalo uziphethe ngendlela elumke ngokukodwa. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Yintoni eyakwenza ukhethe eli xesha ngaphandle kwalo naliphi na elinye, ingaba esi sehlo sitsho ntoni ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?
- ***Amava ezoNqulo, aseMoyeni okanye aNtsokothileyo:*** Nokuba ngawonqulo na okanye hayi, abantu abaninzi banika ingxelo yokuba babe nawo amava ebomini babo bave khona ingqondo yokugqitha okanye yokundiliseka, ingqondo kaThixo okanye amanye amandla obungangamsha okanye okugqibela, okanye imvakalelo yobunye nendalo, nehlabathi, uthungelwano lweenkwenkwezi. Xa ucinga ubuyela emva kubomi bakho bonke, nceda uchonge isiqendu okanye ixesha oweva into enjengale. La anokuba ngamava awenzeka kuwe ngokwemeko yonqulo olulolwakho, ukuba unalo, okanye inokuba ngamava asemoyeni okanye antsokothileyo alo naluphi na uhlobo. Nceda uwachaze ngokupheleleyo la mava asemoyeni. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani omnye owayechaphazeleka kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye wawuziva njani? Ingaba la mava atsho ntoni ngawe njengomntu okanye malunga nobomi bakho?

Ngoku siza kuthetha ngekamva.

- **Isikripthi seKamva**
    - ***Likhangeleka linjani kuwe ikamva:*** Ibali lobomi lakho liquka izahluko nezehlo eziphambili kwixesha langaphambili, njengoko ubuzichazile, kwaye liquka indlela obulicingela ngayo ikamva lakho. Nceda uchaze indlela ocinga ukuba liya kukhangeleka ngayo ikamva lakho. Yintoni ekulindeleyo kwikamva lakho?

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- ***Amaphupha, amathemba nezicwangciso zekamva.*** Nceda uchaze izicwangciso, amaphupha okanye amathemba akho ekamva. Unethemba lokuba uya kufezekisa ntoni kwikamva kwibali lobomi bakho?
- ***Iprojekthi yobomi.*** Ingaba unayo iprojekthi ebomini? Iprojekthi yobomi yinto obuyisebenza kwaye uceba ukusebenza kuyo kwikamva kwibali lobomi bakho. Iprojekthi inokuquka usapho lwakho okanye inokuba yinto oyithandayo, ubizo okanye into yokuchitha ixesha. Nceda uchaze nayiphi na iprojekthi osebenza yona ngokunje okanye oceba ukusebenza yona kwikamva. Ndixelele ukuba iyintoni na iprojekthi leyo, uzibandakanye njani kwiprojekthi leyo, ingaphuhla njani iprojekthi, kwaye kutheni ucinga ukuba iprojekthi leyo ibalulekile kuwe kunye/okanye kwabanye abantu.

- **Imiceli-mingeni**

Icandelo elilandelayo lithabathela ingqalelo imiceli-mingeni eyahlukeneyo, iintsokolo neengxaki ohlangabezene nazo ebomini bakho. Ndiza kuqala ngomceli-mngeni gabalala, ndize ndiqwalasele kwiinkalo ezithile ezintathu apho abantu abaninzi bathi bafumane imiceli-mingeni okanye iingxaki.

- ***Umceli-ngeni wobomi.*** Xa ukhangela emva kubomi bakho bonke, nceda walathe kwaye uchaze ukuba ngoku yintoni na oyithabathela ingqalelo njengowona mceli-mngeni mkhulu kakhulu omnye owajamelana nawo ebomini bakho. Uyintoni okanye wawuyintoni umceli-ngeni okanye ingxaki? Wakhula njani umceli-mngeni okanye ingxaki leyo? Ingaba wajamelana njani nalo mceli-mngeni okanye ingxaki kwelakho ibali lobomi?
- ***Impilo:*** Xa ukhangela emva kubomi bakho bonke, nceda walathe kwaye uchaze isigaba sexesha ebomini bakho, apho wena okanye ilungu losapho lwakho lahlangabezana nengxaki okanye umceli-ngxaki omkhulu wempilo. Nceda uchaze ngokupheleleyo yintoni na okanye yayiyintoni na ingxaki yempilo yakho kwanokuba yakhula njani. Ukuba kuyimfuneko, nceda uxoxe ngawo wonke amava owaba nawo nenkqubo yokhathalelo lwezempilo ephathelelene nale ngxaki. Ukongezelela, nceda uthethe ngendlela owamelana nengxaki kwakunye nokuba leliphi na ifuthe eyaba nalo le ngxaki yezempilo okanye umceli-mngeni kuwe nakwibali lobomi bakho bonke.
- ***Ilahleko.*** Njengokuba abantu baya bekhula, ngokungaguquguqukiyo bafumana ilahleko yohlobo olunye. Ngelahleko ndibhekiselele ekulahlekelweni ngabantu ababalulekileyo ebomini bakho, mhlawumbi ngenxa yokufa okanye yokwahlukana. Ezi ziilahleko zabantu – ilahleko yomntu ngendlela enye nangenye. Xa ukhangela kubomi bakho bonke, nceda uchaze eyona lahleko inkulu yomntu wakha wayifumana. Le ingaba yilahleko owayifumana nangaliphi na ixesha ebomini bakho, ukusukela emva ebuntwaneni ukuza kuthi gaa namhlanje. Kwenzeka ntoni, phi, nini oku? Ngubani owayechaphazeleka, kwaye wena wawucinga ntoni kwaye

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wawuziva njani? Ingaba wamelana njani nelahleko leyo? Ilahleko leyo yaba nafuthe lini kuwe nakwibali lobomi bakho?

- ***Ukusilela, ukuziSola.*** Wonke umntu ufumana ukusilela nokuzisola ebomini, nkqu nakwabona bantu bonwabileyo nabanethamsanqa kakhulu. Xa ukhangela kubomi bakho bonke, nceda uchonge futhi uchaze okona kusilela okanye ukuzisola kakhulu wakha wakufumana. Ukusilela okanye ukuzisola kungenzeka nakweyiphi na inkalo ebomini bakho – kusapho, ebuhlobeni, okanye nakweyiphi na enye inkalo. Nceda uchaze ukusilela okanye ukuzisola kwakunye nendlela ekwenzeka ngayo ukusilela okanye ukuzisola. Ingaba wamelana njani nokusilela okanye ukuzisola? Ukusilela okanye ukuzisola oko kwaba nafuthe lini kuwe nakwibali lobomi bakho?

- **Ingcinga yoMntu uqobo**

Ngoku ndingathanda ukukubuza imibuzo embalwa malunga neenkolelo zakho ezingundoqo nezinto ezilixabiso futhi namalunga nemibuzo yentsingiselo nendlela yokuziphatha ngokusesikweni ebomini bakho. Nceda undinike ezinye kumbuzo ngamnye kule mibuzo.

- ***Izinto ezilixabiso zezoNqulo/zeeNqobo ezisesikweni.*** Okwexeshana khawuthabathele ingqalelo iinkalo zezonqulo okanye ezomoya ebomini bakho. Nceda uzichaze ngokufutshane iinkolelo zezonqulo okanye izinto zakho ezilixabiso, ukuba ezi zinto zibalulekile ngenene kuwe. Nokuba ungumntu wezonqulo na okanye awunguye, nceda uchaze yonke indlela yakho ebomini ngokweenqobo ezisesikweni okanye ezokuziphatha ngokusesikweni.
- ***Izinto ezilixabiso zezoPolitiko/zezeNtlalo.*** Uyivelela njani imibandela yezopolitiko neyezentlalo? Ingaba unendlela ethile ozibona ngayo ezepolitiko? Ingaba ikhona imibandela yezentlalo okanye izizathu oziva shushu ngayo? Nceda ucacise.
- ***Utshintsho, uPhuhliso lweeMbono zezoNqulo nezoPolitiko.*** Nceda ubalise ibali lokuba zavela njani izimvo zakho zezonqulo, ezokuziphatha ngokusesikweni, kunye/okanye ezopolitiko ekuhambeni kwexesha. Ingaba ziye zatshintsha ngazo naziphi na iindlela ezibalulekileyo? Nceda ucacise.
- ***Ixabiso elinye.*** Leliphi elona xabiso libaluleke kakhulu ekuphileni kwabantu? Nceda ucacise.
- ***Enye.*** Yeyiphi enye into onokundixelela yona enokundinceda ndiziqonde ezona nkolelo zakho ezingundoqo nezinto ezilixabiso malunga nobomi nehlabathi? Yeyiphi enye into onokundixelela yona enokundinceda ndiyiqonde iyonke ifilosofi yobomi bakho.

- **Umxholo woBomi**

Xa ujonga emva kulo lonke ibali lobomi bakho kunye nazo zonke izehlo nemicelimingeni, futhi ekubuyeleni emva kakhulu kwixesha lakudala nakwelangaphambili kwikamva, ingaba ukhona umxholo okanye umyalezo ophambili ohamba ebalini? Ngowuphi umxholo omkhulu kwibali lobomi bakho? Nceda ucacise.

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- **Ukucinga**

Enkosi ngolu dliwano-ndlebe. Ndinombuzo nje omnye endifuna undiphendule wona. Uninzi lwamabali ondixelele wona amalunga namava awadlulisileyo ukusuka kusuku nosuku. Umzekelo sithethe ngendawo ephezulu, indawo yotshintsho olukhulu, isehlo esimalunga nempilo yakho, njl-njl. Xa inkoliso yabantu ingabelani rhoqo ngale ndlela ngamabali ayo obomi, ndiyamangaliswa ukuba unokucinga ngexesha elinye lokugqibela elimalunga nokuba luyintoni na olu dliwano-ndlebe, apha namhlanje bekunjani kuwe. Beziyintoni iingcinga neemvakalelo zakho ngexesha lodiwano-ndlebe? Ucinga ukuba lukuchaphazele njani olu dliwano-ndlebe? Ingaba unazo ezinye iikhomenti ezimalunga nenkqubo yodliwano-ndlebe?

Enkosi ngexesha lakho.

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Appendix G – Focus Group Script and Questionaire in isiXhosa

Isikripthi seQela ekugxilwe kulo

Namhlanje ndingathanda ukuba sixoxe ngokuba kunjani na ukungabi nangqesho, izithintelo esizifumeneyo kwakunye nezinye iingcinga zokuba kuhlangatyezwana njani na nezinye zezo zithintelo. Sineeyure ezimbini zale ngxoxo. Ndingasenza isicelo sokuba le ngxoxo yenzeke ngendlela endilisekileyo apho sinikana ixesha nethuba lokucinga kwanokuyivakalisa ngokukhululekileyo indlela esiziva ngayo. Ingxelo osinikeza yona awuyi kuxelwa igama lakho.

Kuvakala njani ukungabi namsebenzi?
Uziva njani inkoliso yexesha?
Zeziphi ezinye zeengcinga ezihamba engqondweni yakho?

Ibiyintoni imiceli-mingeni ekufumaneni ingqesho?
Imali? Inkxaso yaBazali/yaBahlali? Iinkxalabo zeMpilo? Isikolo?

Zeziphi ezinye zeendlela ezingahlangabezana nale miceli-mingeni/izithintelo?
Thabatha umceli-mngeni/isithintelo ngasinye kwaye uqaphele izisombululo ezinokubakho ukuhlangabezana naso.

Yeyiphi enye into oziva uyidinga enokuba luncedo kuwe?

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Appendix H – Biographical Information of Participants in isiXhosa

Inkcukacha engoBomi bomntu

Umdala kangakanani? _____	
Wawukhe waya esikolweni?	
Leliphi elona banga liphezulu walipasayo? _____	
Uhlala phi? _____	
Ingaba wawusoloko uhlala apha? _____	
Ukuba akunjalo, yeyiphi enye indawo owawuhlala kuyo?	
Uhlala nabani? _____	
Ingaba unaye ubhuti okanye usisi?	
Ingaba likhona ilungu losapho lwakho elisebenzayo? _____	
Leliphi ilungu losapho elisebenzayo kwaye lenza msebenzi mni?	
Ingaba wakha wasengxakini nomthetho? Ukuba kunjalo, kutheni?	
Ingaba unayo irekhodi yolwaphulo-mthetho?	
Ingaba uyasela kwaye/okanye uyatshaya? _____	

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Appendix I – Ethical Clearance Certificate

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Approved with Stipulations
Response to Modifications- (New Application)

01-Dec-2014
DUBE, Thembelihle

Proposal #: HS1134/2014
Title: **Narrative identities: Voices of unemployed youth in a low-income community in South Africa.**

Dear Ms Thembelihle DUBE,

Your **Response to Modifications -** ***(New Application)*** received on **18-Nov-2014**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **01-Dec-2014**.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **01-Dec-2014 -30-Nov-2015**

The following stipulations are relevant to the approval of your project and must be adhered to:
Regarding the researcher's response in her letter to the REC (point 5.1):

The researcher should note that if she plans to use the data/information obtained from the envisioned life-skills programme as an additional data source to her study, she needs to apply for an amendment to this effect to her ethics application before the programme is launched. On the other hand, if the researcher is going to develop and present the life-skills programme to participants in her capacity as a therapist, without it informing her research, she does not need to apply for an amendment to her ethics application.

Please provide a letter of response to all the points raised IN ADDITION to HIGHLIGHTING or using the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate ALL the corrections/amendments of ALL DOCUMENTS clearly in order to allow rapid scrutiny and appraisal.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**HS1134/2014**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

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Appendix J

Session No.	PAR Intervention Schedule
Session 1-2	*Research Assistant Preparation for Focus Group Intervention*
Session 3-8	*Individual Life Story Interviews*
Session 9	*PAR Focus Group Intervention | 6 participants* • Introduction by researcher outlining the study and its purpose • Introductions by participants and general discussion with participants: • Who are you? What is your story? • What are you good at? What are your hobbies? • What made you agree to be part of the study?
Session 10	*PAR Focus Group Intervention | 5 participants* • Outlining expectations – what would you like to get from this process? • Take a moment and reflect on your experience of being unemployed – what has that experience been like and what are some of the challenges that you've experienced with being unemployed? • What do you need to address these challenges?
Session 11	*PAR Focus Group Intervention | 5 participants* • Reflections • Discussion of things required to address challenges • Ascertaining how to access those resources
Session 12	*PAR Focus Group Intervention | 4 participants* • Addressing the barriers • Individual reflections and presentations • Presentations and feedback thereof
Session 13	*PAR Focus Group Intervention | 5 participants* • Addressing the barriers • Community stakeholder engagement/asking the different community based organisations if they can assist us with our needs • How can you complete Matric via Adult Based Education and Training (ABET) • Where do you get bursaries and scholarships?

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Session 14	*PAR Focus Group Intervention	5 participants* • Reflections and feedback • Addressing the barriers • CV Writing Workshop • Online Job Search Tutorial • Discussion on obtaining feedback when we've made an application
Session 15	*PAR Focus Group Intervention	5 participants* • Reflections on the Focus Group Intervention • Anything else that you feel you need that we did not cover? • What can we do in order to provide this support to other unemployed youth?