PARENTS LEFT BEHIND IN SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE EMIGRATION OF THEIR ADULT CHILDREN: AN EXPERIENTIAL JOURNEY

by

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PROMOTER: DR CL CARBONATTO

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For Hannes

"Everybody likes to think that to somebody, you are the most important person and I am not the most important person now to anybody."
Author Unknown

And for Johan

And for Soanne

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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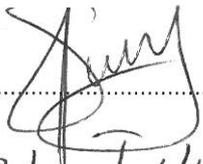
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ABSTRAK

Titel: *Ouers wat agterbly in Suid-Afrika na die emigrasie van hul volwasse-kinders:*

'n ervarings-reis

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Department: Maatskaplike Werk en Kriminologie

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Hierdie studie ondersoek en beskryf die persoonlike en subjektiewe ervarings van ouers wat agtergelaat is na die emigrasie van hul volwasse-kind(ers). Die doel van hierdie navorsingstudie was om die bevindinge en aanbevelings te gebruik ten einde maatskaplike werkers en ander gesondheids praktisyne in staat te stel om die leef-wêreld van die agtergeblewe ouer beter te verstaan. Die vooropgestelde doel was om praktiese riglyne te formuleer, as hulpmiddel vir gebruik deur professionele persone om die impak van emigrasie op die ouer wat agter gelaat is, aan te spreek.

Beperkte wetenskaplike navorsing veral in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks is beskikbaar rakende die emosionele impak van emigrasie op ouers wat agtergebly het na die emigrasie van hul volwasse-kinders. Hierdie studie poog om 'n bydrae te lewer tot die kennis-veld van hierdie fenomeen deur middel van die kontekstualisering van die ervarings van hierdie ouers.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is geïdentifiseer as die mees gepaste, ten einde die navorsingsvraag te be-antwoord en sodoende die doelwitte van hierdie studie te bereik. Hierdie benadering het bygedra tot die begrip en interpetasie van die *betekenis* wat deelnemers aan hulle ervarings gee. Toegepaste navorsing met 'n eksploratiewe en beskrywende fokus was die mees aangewese vir die studie aangesien daar weinig rakende die spesifieke onderwerp in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks bekend is.

'n Fenomenologiese navorsingsbenadering met die fokus op menslike ervaring en die soeke na strukturele betekenis van die ervaring, is gevolg. Hierdie studie het die riglyne en doelwitte van fenomenologiese navorsing gevolg, aangesien die doel was om ryk en *in diepte beskrywings* van die emosionele ervarings van die agtergeblewe ouers ná die emigrasie van hul volwasse kinders te voorsien. Aangesien fenomenologie beide 'n filosofie en 'n metodologie is wat poog om sosiale en maatskaplike verskynsels vanuit die deelnemers se oogpunt te verstaan beskou die navorser dit as die mees gepaste ontwerp vir hierdie navorsing. Die buigsaamheid en kunssinnige aspek van hierdie benadering skep 'n platform vir die navorser om "kreatief" te wees en om ander media soos kuns te gebruik ten einde die fenomeen te beskryf.

Duidelike en spesifieke steekproefnemingskriteria is opgestel en 'n doelbewuste nie-waarskynlikheids-steekproefneming is uitgevoer ten einde die eerste deelnemers te identifiseer. Die deelnemers aan hierdie navorsingstudie was Suid-

Afrikaanse burgers wat ook ouers is tussen die ouderdomme 50 tot 80 jaar, wat in Gauteng in Suid-Afrika woonagtig is. Beide geslagte en enige ras of kultuur-agtergrond kon verteenwoordig word. Sneeubal steekproefneming is daarna uitgevoer ten einde die res van die deelnemers te identifiseer wat aan die kriteria voldoen.

Die vernaamste metode van data-insameling was ongestruktureerde onderhoudsvoering. Ten einde 'n ryk, gedetailleerde weergawe van die ouers se ervaringe te ontlok, is data tydens negentien in-diepte onderhoude ingesamel. Die onderhoude was van aangesig-tot-aangesig, enkel en gekombineerde onderhoude, met 24 deelnemers, waaronder vyf egpare gesamentlik aan die onderhoud deelgeneem het. Alle deelnemers het hulle vrywillige en ingeligte toestemming gegee om aan die studie deel te neem, en 'n klankopname is van elke onderhoud gemaak. Die klankopname is verbatim getik, met elke deelnemer se toestemming. Die ATLAS.ti-program is gebruik om die ontleding van die enorme hoeveelheid ongestruktureerde data te vergemaklik. Hierdie program het daartoe bygedra dat die navorser temas kon identifiseer en sodoende 'n substansiële data-analise kon maak.

Die teoretiese raamwerk vir die uitvoer van hierdie navorsings studie is gebaseer op Bowlby se "Attachment Theory" (Gehegtheid-teorie) en Boss se "Ambiguous Loss" (Dubbelsinnige verlies). Die "Attachment Theory" het 'n raamwerk voorsien om ondersoek in te stel na die belangrikheid van ouer-kind verhoudings. Dit bied voorts die geleentheid om die menslike eienskap, om sterk bande van toegeneentheid met ander te vorm, beter te begryp. Dit bied 'n manier om die kragtige emosionele reaksie wat plaasvind wanneer daardie bande bedreig of selfs verbreek word, beter te verstaan.

Met die emigrasieverskynsel, vind daar 'n versteuring van hierdie primêre affektiewe bande plaas. Emigrasie is 'n voorbeeld van "ambiguous loss" wat gevolglik lei tot die tweede teoretiese veronderstelling, naamlik "ambiguous loss." Die konsep van "ambiguous loss" (dubbelsinnige verlies) dra daartoe by om unieke persepsies, emosies en gedragspatrone te herken en beter te begryp. Die agtergeblewe ouer staar drastiese lewensveranderinge in die gesig as gevolg van die verlies aan 'n verhouding soos dit geken is, nie slegs met die volwasse-kind(ers) nie, maar ook dikwels met die kleinkinders. Die dubbelsinnigheid van die verskynsel maak dit moeilik om die verlies te aanvaar, en daar is geen voorgeskrewe rituele wat die hantering van "ambiguous loss" as gevolg van emigrasie vergemaklik of aanspreek nie.

Die volgende literatuur-studie is uitgevoer en verteenwoordig die mees belangrike aspekte wat die navorsing opgelewer het:

Hoofstuk 2: Emigrasie en transnasionale kommunikasie
Die ontwikkeling van inligtingskommunikasietegnologieë het 'n effek op die emigrasie-ervaring van die volwassekind(ers) wat die land verlaat het, asook op die ouer wat agter gebly het. Hierdie hoofstuk het gefokus op verskeie aspekte rakende emigrasie en op die impak van transnasionale kommunikasie op emigrasie.

Hoofstuk 3: Post–ouerskap inter-generasie verhoudings

Ten einde die volwasse-kind-ouer verhouding beter te verstaan, is aandag gegee aan die middeljare en post-ouerskap-fases. Die sosiale dinamika tussen ouer en volwasse kind, en die verbondenheid tussen ouer en volwasse kind is ondersoek.

Hoofstuk 4: "Dubbelsinnige verlies ("Ambiguous loss"), gehegtheid en rou

Dubbelsinnige verlies is 'n onsekere en onvoltooide verlies wat die rou-proses vertraag of belemmer. Hierdie tipe verlies vries die rouproses en mag aanleiding gee tot die ervaring van kroniese hartseer. Soos bevestig deur die literatuur, het hierdie navorsing bevind dat die agtergeblewe ouers verlies ervaar. In 'n poging om die konsep van verlies te verstaan, het die navorser gefokus op die gehegtheid ("attachment") tussen die ouer en die volwasse-kind.

Vanuit die navorsingsbevindings is temas en sub-temas geïdentifiseer, wat die mees innerlike, subjektiewe ervarings van die ouer wat agter gebly het uitbeeld. Hierdie temas en sub-temas het aanleiding gegee tot die beantwoording van die navorsingsvraag. Sleutelbevindinge is voorsien vir die empiriese studie deur middel van die volgende temas: **Tema 1** - Emigrasie van die volwasse-kind; **Tema 2** - Emigrasieverlies; **Tema 3** - Intergenerasie verhoudings en **Tema 4** - Trans-nasionale kommunikasie.

Die bevindinge van hierdie studie dui daarop dat ouers dit moeilik vind om die dubbelsinnigheid van die verlies te begryp. Die onsekerheid van die verlies bemoeilik die verwerking daarvan. Die verlies van "wat kon gewees het" maak 'n belangrike deel uit van hierdie twyfelagtigheid. Verskeie intergenerasie verhoudings is deur die emigrasie geraak; nie slegs dié tussen ouer en volwasse-kind nie, maar ook tussen grootouers en kleinkinders. Die gehalte van die verhouding tussen die ouer en volwasse-kind vóór emigrasie het 'n invloed gehad op die gehalte van die post-emigrasie verhouding. Indien die verhouding met die volwasse-kind reeds vertroebel was, kan aspekte rondom emigrasie die bestaande verhouding verder vertoebel. Dit stem ooreen met die "Attachment" (gehegtheid) teorie wat van die standpunt uitgaan dat 'n reeds gevormde band van gehegtheid nie maklik verander nadat dit eers gevorm is nie.

Die ontwikkeling van inligtingskommunikasietegnologieë, veral rekenaargerigte kommunikasie, het 'n impak op transnasionale kommunikasie. Verskeie kommunikasiemedia word deur ouers in hierdie studie gebruik. Ouers wat vertroud was met rekenaars en internetkommunikasietoestelle het gereeld e-pos en Skype gebruik ten einde met hul kinders te kommunikeer. Vir die gemaklike, onmiddellike en spontane kontak het ouers die gebruik van selfone gerieflik gevind; ouers het dikwels kort en alledaagse of selfs oppervlakkige boodskappe ontvang en gestuur. Verskillende tydsones het die vloei van kommuniksie belemmer.

'n Intervensiebenadering is ontwikkel in die vorm van praktiese riglyne, ten einde die professionele persoon te bemagtig om die agtergeblewe ouer by te staan. Drie fases van die emigrasie-proses is omskryf en 'n vierde fase het die herkonstruksie van betekenis aangespreek. Met hierdie inligting was dit moontlik om die impak van emigrasie op hierdie ouers se leefwêreld beter te verstaan en om die professionele persoon te bemagtig om hulle by te staan op hul reis van verlies, asook om ondersteunings-dienste wat vir hierdie ouers beskikbaar is, te verbeter.

ABSTRACT

Title: *Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children*: *an experiential journey.*

Candidate: Sulette Ferreira

Department: Social Work and Criminology

Degree: DPhil (Social Work)

Promoter: Dr C. L. Carbonatto

This study explores and describes the personal and subjective experiences of parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult-child(ren). This study attempts to contribute to the knowledge base of this phenomenon by contextualising the experiences of these parents. The purpose of this research was to use the findings and recommendations to assist social workers and other helping professionals in understanding the life world of the parents left behind. Ultimately, the aim was to formulate practice guidelines for professionals with regard to addressing the emotional impact of emigration on these parents.

A qualitative research approach was identified as the most appropriate to answer the research question and achieve the goal and objectives of this study. This approach aided in understanding and interpreting the *meaning* that research participants give to their experiences. Applied research with an exploratory and descriptive focus was found to be most applicable.

A phenomenological research design, focusing on human experience and searching for structural meaning of the experience, was utilised. This study was consistent with the aims of a phenomenological study in that its purpose was to provide rich, *in-depth descriptions* of the experiences of parents left behind. Since phenomenology is both a philosophy and a methodology seeking to understand social phenomena from the participants (actor's) perspective, the researcher found it to be the most appropriate design for this research. The flexibility and artistic side of this approach provided a platform for the researcher to be "creative" and to use other media like art to describe and explore the phenomenon.

Clear and specific sampling criteria were set and non-probability purposive sampling was used to identify the first participant. The participants in this study were South African citizens and parents between the ages of 50 and 80 years, living in Gauteng province in South Africa, from both genders and from any race or cultural background. Snowball sampling was subsequently used to identify the rest of the participants that matched the sampling criteria.

The principal method of data collection was unstructured interviews. To elicit a rich detailed account of the parents' experiences, data was collected during nineteen in-depth face-to-face interviews with 24 participants, of which five couples were interviewed jointly. All participants gave voluntary and informed consent to take part

and every interview was audio recorded and typed verbatim, with their permission. The ATLAS.ti program was utilised to assist in the analysis of the vast amount of unstructured information and aided in identifying the categories yielded from within each theme. This program facilitated the researcher to identify patterns or themes from direct quotations to provide rich data representation.

The theoretical framework for conducting this study was based on Bowlby's Attachment theory and Boss's Ambiguous loss. Attachment theory provided a framework to explore the importance of parent-child relationships and provided a way to conceptualise the human characteristic of forming strong bonds of affection with others. It is a way to understand the strong emotional reaction that occurs when those bonds are threatened or broken. With the phenomenon of emigration, there is a disruption of these primary affective bonds which subsequently leads to the second theoretical premise, that of ambiguous loss.

Emigration is an example of ambiguous loss. Boss's term, ambiguous loss, was relevant to this study in order to understand the nature of loss and emigration. The concept ambiguous loss aided in understanding the unique perceptions, emotions and behaviours associated with losses that are incomplete and that defy closure. The parent left behind faces drastic life changes due to the loss of a relationship as it was known, not only with the adult-child(ren), but also with their grandchildren. The ambiguity of the phenomenon makes it difficult to come to terms with. In addition, the lack of prescribed rituals in dealing with ambiguous loss complicates the grieving process.

Literature supporting this study is divided into three chapters and represents the most important aspects that were derived from the research:

Chapter 2: **Emigration and transnational communication**
This chapter focused on various aspects regarding emigration and the impact of transnational communication on emigration. The development of computer-mediated communication had an effect on the experience of emigration for both the adult-child(ren) and the parent(s) left behind.

Chapter 3: **Post-parental intergenerational relationships**
To understand the parent adult-child relationship, attention was given to the mid-life and post-parental phases. The social dynamics and interconnectedness between parent and adult-child(ren), were reviewed. Intergenerational relationships are affected by emigration, not only between the parent and the adult-child, but also between grandparents and grandchildren.

Chapter 4: **Ambiguous loss, attachment and grief**
Ambiguous loss is an uncertain and incomplete loss and impedes the grieving process. This type of loss freezes the grief process and may lead to the experience of chronic sorrow. In line with literature, this research study confirmed that the parents left behind experienced loss and in order to clarify this concept of loss, the researcher focused on attachment between the parent and the adult-child(ren).

From the research findings, themes and sub-themes were identified, demonstrating the innermost subjective experiences of the parents left behind when their adult-

child(ren) emigrates. These themes and sub-themes led to answering the research question. **Theme 1**: Emigration of the adult-child; **Theme 2**: Emigration loss; **Theme 3**: Intergenerational relationships and **Theme 4**: Transnational communication.

The findings of the study reflected that parents found the ambiguity of the loss hard to comprehend. The uncertainty of the loss made it difficult to deal with. The loss of "what could have been" was an important example of the ambiguity. The quality of the relationship between the parent and adult-child(ren) prior to emigration influenced the quality of the relationship post-emigration. When in an already problematic relationship with an adult-child, aspects relating to emigration aggravated the existing relationship. This correlates with the attachment theory claiming that an established attachment bond does not change once it has been formed.

The development of information communication technologies, specifically computer-mediated communication, had an impact on transnational communication. Parents in this study used various mediums of communication. Some of the parents who were familiar with computers and internet communication applications often used e-mail and Skype to communicate. Participants found the use of cell phones very convenient to stay in contact as this form of communication is instantaneous. Cellular phones and e-mail enabled some of the parents to send and receive short phatic messages. However, residing in different time zones was found to hinder the flow of communication.

An intervention approach was developed in the form of practice guidelines to empower the professional to assist the parent left behind. Three stages of the emigration process were outlined and a fourth stage dealt with the reconstruction of meaning. With this information, it was possible to explore and describe the impact of emigration on these parents and to empower the professional to better understand the life world of the parent in order to assist them on their journey of loss.

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1. CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has lost many former citizens to emigration, especially over the last two decades. This is due to people seeking a better, crime free life in other countries or better working circumstances and remuneration. This phenomenon has led to many parents being left behind. Limited scholarly work has examined the notion of these parents being left without their adult-children. By focusing on the lived experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren), this study attempts to contribute to the knowledge base of this phenomenon. The parent adult-child relationship appears to be part of our whole lifespan even after one has moved on or passed away. The present study attempts to explore the meaning of this phenomenon for the parent.

This chapter highlights the contextualisation of the topic by focusing on the prevalence of emigration, as well as the emotional "cost" of emigration. Key concepts are outlined and the theoretical framework used in the research is presented. The rationale of the research and the problem to be studied are discussed. The research question is outlined and the goals and objectives of the study formulated. A brief summary of the research methodology is presented after which significant limitations and strengths of the research study are indicated. Lastly, the outline of the structure of the thesis was provided.

1.2 KEY CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Parent

Wordnet (2014) defines a parent as a mother or father, one who begets or one who gives birth to or nurtures and raises a child.

A parent is defined as a natural or adoptive parent, managing or possessory conservator, or court-appointed legal guardian of a person. The term does not include a step-parent (University of Texas at Austin, 2014).

In the context of this study, the researcher defines a parent as the biological father or mother of a child who has emigrated. A step-parent is not considered a parent for the purpose of this study.

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1.2.2   Child

According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006:246), a child is defined as "a young human being below the age of full physical development, a son or daughter of any age." The *South African Oxford School Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1998:76) defines a child as someone's son or daughter.

For the purposes of this study, children are defined as biological sons or daughters who have emigrated and left their parents behind in South Africa.

1.2.3   Adult

The *South African Oxford School Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1998:7) defines an adult as a fully-grown or mature person. The period of adulthood covers the largest part of the life span. Louw, Van Ede and Louw (1998:471) state that early adulthood stretches from approximately the age of 20 to 39, middle adulthood from 40 to 59 and late adulthood begins at about 60 years.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2004:350) consider the primary task of becoming an adult as leaving home, but staying connected to one's family of origin. Young people, regardless of class and cultural background, continue to rely on families for tangible and emotional support as they prepare for work and attachments outside the family.

The researcher defines an adult as someone who has completed his/her school career and is providing for her/himself. An adult can be either single or married and with or without children. An adult can function independently from the parents and make his or her own decisions based on his or her own needs.

For the purpose of this study, referring to a child means referring to the adult-child(ren) of the parent left behind.

1.2.4   Experience

Businessdictionary.com (2014) gives the following definition of experience: "Familiarity with a skill or field of knowledge acquired over months or years of actual practice and which, presumably, has resulted in superior understanding or mastery."

The *Collins Essential English Dictionary* (2006:306) defines experience as "direct personal participation or observation of something, a particular incident or feeling that a person has undergone and accumulated knowledge, especially of practical matters."

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines experience as the unique experience of each parent concerning his/her child's emigration.

1.2.5   Emigration

Emigration is defined by Van Rooyen (2000:1) as "... the departure of a person from the country of which he or she has citizenship to another with the intention of acquiring permanent residence abroad and usually, but not always, with the intention of relinquishing the rights and duties of the former country's citizenship."

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006:466) defines emigration as "... to leave one's own country in order to settle permanently in another." The *Free Dictionary* (2014) states that emigration and immigration are used only of people and imply a permanent move, generally across a political boundary. Immigration is described by the *Free Dictionary* (2014) as the entering and settling in a country or region to which one is not native.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines emigration as the movement of people from South Africa to another country in search of, among other things, better living conditions.

1.3   CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE TOPIC

1.3.1   Prevalence of emigration

Migration across continents and regions has been part of human existence for many years. "Millions of people migrate each year. They do it alone or in organised aggregates, by their own decision or forced by decisions of others or by natural cataclysms, carrying with them truckloads of household items or a bundle of essentials" (Sluzki, 1979:379).

South Africans are no exception. The South African Institute for Race Relations estimates that around 800,000 white South Africans emigrated in the decade from

1995 to 2005 (The Economist, 2008). Unofficial estimates are that 250,000 South Africans emigrated in the period 1989 to 1999 (De Chaud & Thompson, 2001). The Human Science Research Council (De Chaud & Thompson, 2001) found that close to 20 percent of South African graduates are living abroad - a fact that costs the South African Receiver of Revenue R20-billion per year. Some sources estimate that only a third of real emigration is represented in official statistics. In this regard, Van Rooyen (2000:26) indicates: "... the number of people leaving South Africa each year is at least double and could be triple the official numbers."

Stern and Szalontai (2006:127) state the following:

> The total number of skilled emigrants that left South Africa from 1989-2003 was close to 118 000 (about 7 per cent of the total stock of professionals employed in South Africa). The recalculated data indicates that South Africa has been losing over 6 900 skilled professionals annually. Moreover, the net loss of skills per year has worsened since 1994.

What causes skilled South Africans to emigrate? During the apartheid era, political upheavals such as the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the states of emergency in the late 1980s were major driving forces for the exodus of professionals (De Chaud & Thompson, 2001). More recently, however, research shows that highly skilled persons are leaving because of crime, perceptions of high costs of living and levels of taxation, as well as a perceived decline in the standard of public services, notably health and education delivery. At the same time, professionals in South Africa are eager to take advantage of the attractive salary packages and career opportunities in the advanced industrialised countries of the world (De Chaud & Thompson, 2001).

Pattundeen (2007:3) states, "… prior to the 1980s, South African emigration was predominantly white professionals, entrepreneurs and businessmen with only a small, but growing number of black political activists and exiles." The "White Flight," as it became known, emerged from mounting political tensions based on an intensifying anti-apartheid struggle, international economic sanctions and disinvestment (The Economist, 2008). The periods 1988 to 1992 and 1994 to 2000 showed the greatest mobility of professionals across the racial spectrum, both into and out of South Africa (De Chaud & Thompson, 2001). Both periods have been characterised by political instability and economic transition.

The loss of professional and skilled labour in post-apartheid South Africa accelerated after 1994 and has been attributed to several variables, including dissatisfaction with the newly elected ANC (African National Congress) lead government, the declining South African currency, high levels of taxation, poor service delivery, affirmative action policies, poor career opportunities, under-resourced working environments, as well as escalating crime. Van Rooyen (2000:74-75) aptly states the following:

> In the nineties South Africa's own killing fields led to the non-political deaths of approximately 250 000 South Africans who were criminally murdered in their homes, in their cars, on the streets, on the sports fields and even in places of worship. Of this number about 150 000 died during the six-year period of democracy between 1994 and 1999. The victims were predominantly ordinary men, women and children going about their day-to-day business who became prey to ruthless killers who robbed, abducted, raped, tortured and murdered them at a rate and with a level of impunity that is beyond comprehension … about 750 000 violent crimes are reported each year, or one every 17 seconds. With regard to other types of crime, such as car hijackings, house break-ins, attempted murder, serious assault, and rape in particular, South Africa has also achieved the reputation of a world leader. About 49 000 cases of rape were reported in 1998, that is, about 134 per day, or one in every 10 minutes.

1.3.2   The emotional "cost" of emigration

The available literature on the phenomenon of the exodus of professionals from South Africa has focused predominantly on its economic effects and on the losses in the health and technology sectors, while studies on the social and psychological impact of emigration on those remaining behind are markedly missing (Aviram-Freedman, 2005:10). When the researcher undertook a synoptic literature scan, it indicated that literature and research related to the emotional effect on people left behind are scant. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that Miltiades (2002:33) points out that the impact of emigration, on parents left behind, has been largely ignored in the literature.

During an international workshop held from 10 to 11 March 2005 in Hanoi, Vietnam, on the impacts of migration on the "left behind" in Asia, health and social impacts of emigration on the left-behind family and community were explored. The closing statement sums it up: "While there are a few studies on the socio-economic impacts of migration on the population left behind, the number of studies on the

psychological impacts of migration on the population left behind is even scarcer" (Nguyen, Toyota & Yeoh, 2005:5).

The conference offered the following suggestion:

> Migration is a complicated process that involves not only the migrants but also other members of the household as well as those who are not members. Hence, studies that look at the impacts of migration on the population left behind may want to look at not only the migrants but also the structure of the complicated relationships that link migrants to the related individuals (Nguyen, Toyota & Yeoh, 2005:5).

In her study on the social and psychological effect of an adult-child's emigration on non-immigrant Asian Indian elderly parents, Miltiades (2002:33) points out that her research might be one of the first studies ever to focus exclusively on the effect of an adult-child's emigration on non-emigrant parents. In her research, she asked the following questions:

- What impact does emigration of an adult-child have on the family support system of aging parents in India?
- How does the emigration experience impact on the parent's psychological wellbeing?

She found that the absence of an emigrant child appears to have a negative effect on the parent's psychological wellbeing and states the following:

> … since the parents feel that their children have better lives in America, in terms of economic and career development, they suppress their wish for their child's return so that the child's family will prosper. This is consistent with the values of harmony and tolerance within family relationships (Miltiades, 2002:33).

Marchetti-Mercer (2009:130) explained that emigration is a complex psychological and socio-cultural phenomenon that has enormous impact, not only on those who leave the country, but also on those who have to deal with the aftermath of this decision. Marchetti-Mercer (2009:130) explains:

> Migration must be seen as a relational phenomenon that affects a number of interconnected family systems. The people who leave the country of their birth are not the only ones affected but also those who stay behind. A number of psychological symptoms are known to be triggered or aggravated by the process of migration, for example depression, anxiety, psychosomatic illnesses, addictions or behavioural problems and these

can be triggered at different times of the migration process or even at a much later stage.

From the preceding discussion, it should be clear that there is a void in our knowledge of the emotional impact of emigration in the South African context and that very little research is available. In order to gain insight into the life world of the South African parent, the researcher interviewed professional people dealing with the phenomenon. During an interview with Burgers (2009), social worker from the Mary Potter Oncology Unit, Little Company of Mary Hospital, Pretoria, she explained that there are many cases where the dying person's closest family is abroad. These family members need to be contacted and assisted with regard to how best to deal with this traumatic situation. Burgers said that this relatively new phenomenon is definitely on the increase and has implications for all parties involved – the patient, the children abroad and the family in South Africa.

In an interview with Hofmeyer (2009), Chairperson of the Interest Group for Retirement Homes, he mentioned that many of the residents of the various retirement homes have children living abroad. This phenomenon leads to numerous problems for the aged. Hofmeyer (2009) explained that older persons usually do not have the necessary facilities to accommodate the children who are visiting, since their new homes are only one- or sometimes two-bedroom apartments. Another aspect is that the children expect the facility to take care of their parent(s), and thus shift their responsibility to the facility. The management of the retirement home has to make important decisions that are usually made by the children, for instance funeral arrangements. Hofmeyer (2009) sees this phenomenon as a white social problem (as most of the older parents whose children have emigrated are white South Africans). This phenomenon is on the increase and needs to be addressed.

Kruger (2009), a minister of religion in the service of "*Ons Tuis*," a home for the aged in Riviera, Pretoria, was interviewed and it was clear that parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child is a very real and serious matter. As a result of his initiative, the congregation of a local church denomination is subsidising the installation of Skype at "*Ons Tuis.*" Kruger (2009) felt that the parents need to communicate with their children abroad and that Skype would have a positive effect on these long-distance relationships. The children "forget" their parents and the

parents become extremely lonely as a result. Kruger (2009) stressed the need for communication between the parents and children abroad in order to maintain healthy relationships.

These interviews clearly confirmed that the parents, specifically older persons in South Africa, are deeply affected by the emigration of their children. This problem is escalating and has various repercussions and practical implications.

Marchetti-Mercer (2009:131) states in an article:

> This has attempted to show that immigration is a complex psychological and socio-cultural phenomenon, which permeates present South African society and is having an enormous impact on the family life of many people. More and more mental health professionals are encountering people who choose to leave the country, as well as those who have to deal with the aftermath of the decision.

It is clear to the researcher that emigration and its experience and emotional effects are very real for the older parent(s) left behind and need much more attention than they presently receive.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.4.1 The attachment theory

Attachment theory stems from the influential work of John Bowlby. Bowlby (1979:127) views attachment as "the propensity of human beings to make affection bonds to particular others." John Bowlby (1961:317) highlighted separation with its implications of anxiety and loss. Bowlby (1979:129) explicates that attachment behaviour continues throughout one's life. He expresses attachment behaviour as follows: "It characterise(s) human beings from the cradle to the grave" (Bowlby, 1979:129).

The parent-child bond is the most fundamental of all human relationships and this bond can be grasped by referring to the attachment theory (Climo, 1992:1). Attachment theory provides us with a framework to explore the importance of parent-child relationships and how disruptions of these primary affective bonds can result in negative affects. Frayley (2002:135) emphasises that the way we think, feel and behave in our adult relationships is a reflection of our attachment history. Bowlby (1979:129) explains that attachment behaviour continues throughout one's

life. A child's basic notion about his/herself, others, and about human relationships as a whole, is built upon early relational experiences (Goldberg, 2000). A child who is exposed to responsive and consistent caregiving develops the expectation that others will be available and supportive when needed. Therefore, disruptions in parent-child relational bonds can be disastrous for children's sense of self-worth and belief in the dependability and trustworthiness of others.

Internal working models are central to attachment theory. Colin (1996) states: "Internal working models are cognitive and affective maps of the self, others, and relationships that include feelings, beliefs, expectations, behavioural strategies, as well as rules for directing attention, interpreting information, and organising memories." These working models are influenced by early attachment experiences and are formed from an early age. Bowlby (1973) explains, "Internal working models predispose individuals to certain patterns of affect, cognition, behaviour and ways of relating to others. Individuals with positive internal representations are more likely to be confident, flexible and open in their interactions with others."

"Attachment and separation occur many times during development" (Sullivan & Sullivan, 1980:93). Life cycle transitions challenge attachment bonds among family members since they tap into primary emotions. Transitions, like emigration, evoke our attachment needs and heighten our attachment behaviours. During these transitions, the support of the family members is needed to cope with stress and the ability to explore and learn how to deal with the new challenges posed by changes in the family. Transitions affect one's sense of competence, thereby increasing the need to know that others are securely there for you. If attachment figures respond in a caring manner to such attachment needs, the attachment behaviours may help reduce the transition stress (Sullivan & Sullivan, 1980:93).

Dankoski (2001:185) emphasises that secure attachments provide the safe haven and secure base that is needed to deal with life cycle transitions. Without the secure base of a safe attachment, transitions may be experienced as particularly stressful. "If bonds are already insecure, or the relationship cannot accommodate such needs, life cycle transitions may become even more stressful." The nature of these transitions entails the renegotiation of attachment bonds among family members.

"During family life cycle transitions, we need others to be there for us and family relationships need to change to fit new demands" (Dankoski, 2001:185).

1.4.2   Ambiguous loss

Loss makes the world a less predictable place. Janoff-Bulman (1992), in her book *Shattered Assumptions*, argues that stressful or traumatic events have the potential to challenge and disrupt the fundamentally positive, adaptive assumptions that most people hold about their place in it. People want closure but according to Boss (2004a:561), closure is never really possible. Even with a clear-cut death, "closure is a myth valued by a culture intolerant of ambiguity."

In her Burgess Award Lecture, *Ambiguous loss research, theory and practice: Reflections after 9/11*, Pauline Boss (2004a:553) described the background of her theory development on ambiguous loss. The basic theoretical premise is that ambiguous loss is the most stressful loss because it defies resolution and creates confused perceptions about who is in or out of a particular family. Boss (2001:94-95) explained that when there is ambiguity regarding a family member's presence or absence in the family, the situation could be called ambiguous loss. The family's interpretation or perception of ambiguous loss could be labelled boundary ambiguity and as such is a risk factor or barrier to the family's management of stress, increasing feelings of disenfranchisement. With a clear-cut loss, there is more clarity and Boss (2004a:553) gives the example of a death certificate or mourning rituals. However, with ambiguous loss, none of these markers exists. The irresolvable situation tends to block cognition and freeze the grief process (Boss, 1999).

Boss (1993:365-378) explains that emigration is an example of ambiguous loss. Other types of ambiguous loss are addiction, divorce and aging parents. "With ambiguous loss the problem comes from the outside context and not from your psyche" (Boss, 1993:367). People experiencing ambiguous losses are deprived of the physical access to someone they care about. The ambiguity makes them feel helpless.

Boss (1993:367) indicates, "The loss is so bizarre that traditional grief and coping strategies used after a death in the family simply don't work." She identifies two types of ambiguous loss: (i) where people are physically absent but psychologically

present, for example, the family with a soldier missing in action, the non-custodial parent in a divorce and the migrating relative and (ii) where the family member is physically present but psychologically absent, for example, an Alzheimer sufferer. Boss (in Falicov, 2005a:198) explains that migration represents "crossover" in that it has elements of both types of ambiguous loss.

Falicov (2005a:198) explains migration loss as follows:

> Migration loss has special characteristics that distinguish it from other kinds of losses. Compared with the clear-cut, inescapable fact of death, migration loss is both larger and smaller. It is larger because migration brings with it losses of all kinds.

Migration loss makes grieving ongoing, delayed and ambiguous. It creates an intermingling of emotions, ranging from sadness to elation, loss to restitution and absence to presence (Falicov, 2005a:198).

"Emigration is a systemic interactional phenomenon that never really ends. The family consists not only of the system left behind but also includes, at least in their minds, the émigré who has gone to a new land" (Boss, 1993:368). Leaving home is about loss and change or the resistance to change. In this regard, Boss (1993:376) explains: "For the émigré as well as the family left behind, it remains an ambiguous loss. Parents and siblings are still alive but may never be seen again. Family boundaries become blurred." Family systems seem to lean toward homeostasis and resist change. Families split and will never again be together in the same way (Boss, 1993:377).

In the words of Boss (2004b:551), "… when a child emigrates the family left behind begins a journey towards healing that continues, realistically speaking through the rest of their lives." Boss is telling us in no uncertain terms that we can learn to live with the tragedies life brings us, but resolution is less likely to be attained (Boss, 1999:140). "The dilemma for all of us is to bring clarity to an ambiguous situation. Failing that, the critical question is how to live with ambiguous loss. For each of us, the answer will be different. However, the answers are less critical than the questions" (Boss, 1999:140).

When reading about ambiguous loss by Pauline Boss, the researcher could relate to her theory as it rings true with her personal experiences of trying to understand the meaning of loss due to emigration of a child in the life of a family. The pioneering work of Pauline Boss (1977, 1987a, 1987b, 1999, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) on ambiguous loss, boundary ambiguity, and subsequent stress in families can be used to better understand the nature of loss and emigration. Boss's ambiguous loss model is highly relevant for families experiencing a child(ren) that has emigrated. Parents experience the child(ren) as physically absent but psychologically present. In Chapter four this will be discussed in depth.

1.5   RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

The researcher's rationale for this study is the basic premise that the parent-child relationship is important to children and parents throughout their life course. Adult-children and their aging parents typically remain very involved with one another, although not all relationships will be of the same nature. The unique characteristics of the parent-child relationship establish their importance and quality for parents and children throughout the life course.

It is clear from the above that the structural circumstances, of both parent and child, have an impact on the quality of the parent adult-child relationship. If the feelings of the parents left behind are not addressed and they are not emotionally supported, serious implications such as depression and other psychological and physical problems could occur. The broad aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the life world experiences of parents left behind after their adult-child(ren) have emigrated, with a view to developing a practice guideline aimed at addressing the problems they experience. The findings of this study could contribute to the services, expertise, training and education of social workers and/or other health professionals who might be assisting loved ones left behind.

A good research undertaking starts with the selection of the topic, problem or area of interest, as well as the paradigm (Creswell, 1994; Mason, 1996). After volunteering at the oncology section at the Wilgers Hospital, Pretoria, the researcher became aware of the vast number of terminally ill patients who had children living abroad. The researcher noticed the numerous implications it had for the patients concerned and especially the terminally ill patient. It was evident that this

phenomenon had a ripple effect, not only for the patient, but also for the immediate and extended families.

What the researcher found most thought provoking were the decisions the patient and the family had to make with regards to the last phase of the patient's illness. Questions such as, should the children be informed of the seriousness of the illness and how much information should be given to the children abroad, were asked. When should the child return to South Africa? For the funeral or before the funeral when the patient is still "compos mentis", or after the funeral, to assist the parent or family still alive? It was so striking that apart from the normal difficult end of life decisions the family had to deal with, they also had to cope with the fact that their children were not physically available. It was evident how important the parent adult-child relationship was, especially in times of crises.

The intention of this research, at the outset (preliminary focus), was to gather data regarding the perspectives of research participants about the phenomenon of being left behind in South Africa after the adult-child had emigrated. The name initially given to the study was: *The experience of parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children*. The researcher changed the title to: "*Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: an experiential journey*" in order to stress the ongoing nature of this phenomenon and the ongoing effect on intergenerational relationships.

1.6   THE RESEARCH QUESTION

"Research questions form the heart of one's research proposal" (Schurink, 2005a:13). In qualitative research, a research question is chosen over a hypothesis, as the research is engaging in enquiry and does not have a proposed answer. Schurink (2005a:12) points out that while posing research questions focuses the study, this type of research proposal should remain flexible in order to allow for data collection to increasingly refine research questions. In this regard, Schurink (2005a:13) states: "A well-known virtue of qualitative studies is their ability to uncover the unexpected and to explore new avenues."

It is well recognised that many South Africans have emigrated (Van Rooyen, 2000) and numerous citizens are still in the process of emigrating. This phenomenon has

an effect on the parents left behind. Yet currently in South Africa there is scant knowledge and little understanding of the innermost feelings and experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren). Marchetti-Mercer (2009:133) emphasises that the impact of emigration on those left behind should not be underestimated and that the trauma with regard to the loss must be carefully considered.

Based on literature findings conducted for the purpose of writing the research proposal for the Research Ethics Committee, parents whose children have emigrated experienced loss and grief related to migration, which had a significant emotional effect on their lives. The emotional "cost" of emigration on parents left behind has gained little attention in scientific literature. The researcher believes that the leaving of the adult-child has a ripple effect on the family as a whole and on the parents in particular. The life cycle phase in which parents finds themselves will have an effect on their experience of the loss.

The broad research question posed is the following: *What are the experiences faced by parents left behind after their adult-child(ren) emigrates?*

1.7   GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1.7.1   Goal

Fouché and De Vos (2005:105) conceptualise the research goal as, "The intended result of the study." The goal of a research study therefore refers to its purpose, or what is hoped to be achieved by undertaking it. The goal of the study may be formulated as follows: *To explore and describe the experiences of parents left behind in South Africa after their adult-child(ren) have emigrated.*

1.7.2   Objectives

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1995:938) defines the word objective as: "Aimed at, something sought or aimed at." Objectives are the steps taken, one by one, realistically at grass-roots level, in a certain time span, in order to attain a goal, purpose or aim (Fouché, 2002:107-109).

The objectives of the study are:

- To contextualise experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren);
- to describe emigration and the impact on the family members left behind as a global phenomenon;
- to provide a broad theoretical overview of the phenomenon of emigration from a South African perspective;
- to explore and describe the experiences of South African parents left behind as a result of the emigration of their adult-child(ren);
- to formulate practice guidelines for helping professionals with regard to addressing the impact of emigration on the parents left behind after the emigration of adult-child(ren); and
- to provide conclusions and recommendations as well as to heighten the awareness of the helping professions regarding these parents.

1.8   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach followed in this study was qualitative. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) offer the following definition of qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. At this level, qualitative research involves and interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Gilbert (2001:9) adds:

> Some qualitative researchers believe that the ultimate goal of research is to enter the world of others in such a way as to allow the researcher to see life through their eyes. In order to do this, one cannot see this as a purely intellectual exercise, but as a process of exploration and discovery that is felt deeply, that is, research is experienced both intellectually and emotionally.

For Neergaard and Ulhoi (2007:4), the goal of qualitative research is to develop concepts that enhance the understanding of social phenomena in natural settings, with due emphasis on the meanings, experiences and views of all participants. The primary goal of studies using a qualitative research approach is defined as describing and understanding (*verstehen*) human behaviour rather than explaining it (Babbie & Mouton, 2005a:270).

Patton (1985:1) explains:

> Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of the setting - what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting … the analysis strives for depth of understanding.

Merriam (2002:5) says that qualitative researchers undertake a qualitative study because there is a lack of theory or an existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon. The experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren) is a topic that has not been thoroughly investigated in South Africa, thus this research study will fill this void.

Applied research with an exploratory and descriptive focus was applicable because there is little known on the subject of the parent left behind, especially in the South African context. The purpose of the study is to gain a broader understanding of this situation. Grinnell (1997:20) infers that most applied research has implications for knowledge development. Applied research aims at contributing towards the practical issues of problem-solving, decision-making, policy analysis and community development (Durrheim, 2006:45). The purpose of this research is to use the findings and recommendations collected to assist social workers and other health practitioners in understanding the life world of the parent left behind. Therefore, this research study can be categorised as applied research.

The *Free Dictionary* (2014), defines a phenomenological research design as "an inductive, descriptive research approach developed from phenomenological philosophy; its aim is to describe an experience as it is actually lived by the person." A phenomenological research design was used in order to describe the phenomenon of emigration and its effect on the parent left behind. The aim is to contextualise the experiences of parents in totality, to illuminate the specific and to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. Lester (1999) explicates that in the human sphere this normally translates into gathering "deep" information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews.

Phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. Phenomenology is powerful in understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Lester, 1999). The epistemology of phenomenology focuses on revealing meaning rather than on arguing a point or developing abstract theory. Phenomenological knowledge reforms understanding, it affects us, and leads to more thoughtful action (Van Der Zalm, Bergum & Van Der Zalm, 2000:4).

Hamill and Sinclair (2010:16) recommend delaying the literature review when conducting phenomenological research until after data collection and analysis. This is to ensure that the researcher is not phrasing questions or analysing data for themes that they know exist in literature. As a result of the researcher's voluntary work at the Oncology Division at the Wilgers Hospital in Pretoria, she realised that some of the patients had children that have emigrated and these parents faced different challenges due to the emigration of their adult-child(ren). In order to prepare and write the initial research proposal for the Departmental Research Panel and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, the researcher did conduct a brief literature review in order to broaden her knowledge about the phenomenon of emigration in general in the South African context. In order not to have preconceived ideas and influence the research participants or have leading questions, the researcher postponed an intensive literature study until *after* data collection and analysis.

Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling were used as the researcher wanted to interview participants that would provide the best perspective on the life world of the parent left behind. Data was collected using voice recorded, unstructured interviews in which the participants were free to share as much information as they wanted too. The data analysis commenced after all the interviews were conducted and was completed by transcribing the interviews and repeatedly reading the typed verbatim transcripts. The ATLAS.ti program was used to assist the researcher to determine categories, themes and sub-themes.

During a phenomenological study data collection and analysis run concurrently (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010:16). The researcher decided to incorporate her findings of the current study with the literature chapters as an intensive literature study was conducted *after* the gathering of her research data and the analysis of the data. During the writing of the literature chapters the researcher linked her research findings to her literature chapters with the aim to show their relevance and interconnectedness.

The research methodology will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5, together with trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

1.9 LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF RESEARCH STUDY

Several limitations and strengths of this study were identified and reflected on.

1.9.1 Limitations

1.9.1.1 Sample size

As suggested by the Departmental Research Committee and the Faculty of Humanities Postgraduate Committee, at least twenty research participants were to be selected. This study included a total number of twenty-four participants. A pilot study was conducted but the information collected from the pilot study was *not* included during the data analysis phase. Thereafter, nineteen interviews were conducted after which data saturation was reached. In five of the nineteen interviews, both parents participated. Although it was a small sample of twenty four participants, the study produced vast amounts of unstructured data, which made analysis and interpretation cumbersome and time consuming. This small sample size had a clear effect on the generalizability of the research findings (Frazier, Tix & Barron, 2004:115).

1.9.1.2 Lack of literature and previous studies

Little research, especially in the South African context, is available concerning the research topic. The researcher had to rely on literature on similar studies but in different contexts. The reasons why people emigrate from South Africa are to a certain extent unique due to the complex political situation and violent crime.

1.9.1.3   Data collection

In order to obtain rich data, interviews were planned to accommodate one research participant at a time. However, during five interviews, both parents participated because they saw the emigration as "their" experience. The researcher might have gained more "in-depth" data by interviewing these parents separately and then jointly.

1.9.1.4   Understanding the cultural context

Research participants that were from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to that of the researcher were in a disadvantaged position because the researcher found it challenging to grasp certain cultural expressions of feelings and thoughts. In order to gain rich information, it would have been beneficial if the researcher were able to speak their mother tongue or if she had a better understanding of their cultural background.

1.9.1.5   Use of the ATLAS.ti program

The researcher was not familiar with the software, it was expensive to purchase and it took a vast amount of time to master. Courses and private consultations were necessary to get to know the programme. Future studies will be less time consuming, as the researcher is now familiar with the programme and its capabilities in assisting with data analysis.

1.9.1.6   Practicalities

The appointed data typist was instructed to type each interview verbatim; however, she typed the interviews in the form of a summary. It was a challenge to find another typist that was prepared to type each interview verbatim. This process was very time consuming and costly. For the purpose of this type of research, it is important to have the interviews typed verbatim and to find someone who is competent.

1.9.2   Strengths of the study

The strength of using a phenomenological research design was in the in-depth qualitative information that was attained and this, rather than transferability, was the purpose of the study. "First hand descriptions" and subjective perceptions could be gathered from the parents left behind.

The literature review was conducted initially at the beginning of the study to get an overview of the research topic and field and to help formulate a research question. The intensive literature study was postponed until *after* data collection and data analysis were conducted. This enabled the researcher to enter the research interviews in neutrally and objectively and with as little preconceived ideas as possible. Therefore, she did not formulate any leading questions but entered each interview as an open canvas to be colored in by the researcher as objectively as possible.

Interviewing couples jointly contributed to data reliability. During joint interviews, the parents confirmed each other's statements and sometimes elaborated on various aspects and this led to more in-depth information gathering.

The ATLAS.ti program facilitated efficient search functionality and fast retrieval of relevant quotations, themes and sub-themes. This enabled the researcher to repeatedly read quotations.

For personal reasons, this study was conducted over a period of five years. By repeatedly thinking through, analysing and discussing certain concepts with peers, extensive insights could be established.

The researcher believes that the findings of this study will benefit the social sciences and helping professionals who are involved with parents who have children living abroad. Through developing an understanding of the experiences of the parents left behind, the research could contribute guidelines to empower social workers and other health professionals to understand the experiences of the parents and be better equipped to support them. Such awareness could also contribute to the development of intervention strategies for social workers, aimed at supporting these parents. The researcher believes that through conducting this exploratory and descriptive study on the experiences of South African parents left behind after the emigration of adult-children, valuable insights into and an understanding of this phenomenon have been obtained. This will not only contribute to broadening our knowledge base, but will be valuable to social workers, mental health professionals and other service providers when approaching and assisting people that are

affected by the emigration of their loved ones. Therefore, by undertaking this study, the researcher believes she has:

- contributed to knowledge in the field of emigration and social work in particular,
- enhanced the theoretical concept of the effect of emigration,
- raised social workers' awareness of the significance of this phenomenon, and
- offered useful practice guidelines for the professional regarding the experiences and perceptions of the emigration of a child by the parents left behind.

The researcher anticipates making the South African community aware of the needs of parents left behind after their children have emigrated. She will strive to motivate organisations that deal with the parents, as well as the children abroad to, for instance, invest in communication mediums such as Skype in order to assist the parents in maintaining interpersonal relationships with their children.

1.10 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter 1	General introduction
Chapter 2	Literature review: Emigration and transnational communication
Chapter 3	Literature review: Post-parental intergenerational relationships
Chapter 4	Literature review: Ambiguous loss, attachment and grief
Chapter 5	Research methodology
Chapter 6	Empirical findings
Chapter 7	Guidelines for empowering the professional to assist the parent left behind
Chapter 8	Summary, conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 1: General introduction

This chapter serves as a general introduction and several important aspects are emphasised. Key concepts are highlighted after which a literature review is given and the theoretical framework referring to the attachment theory and ambiguous loss are discussed. The rationale for the research and the formulation of the problem are stated followed by the research question as well as the goals and objectives of the research. The research methodology is explained and the limitations and strengths of the study are addressed. Lastly, the content of the research report is given.

Chapter 2: Literature review: Emigration and transnational communication

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical basis for emigration by looking at definitions of emigration and transnational communication. Emigration statistics in the South African context are highlighted; the reasons for emigration are discussed as well as the concept of "brain drain". The meaning of being an emigrant is explained where after the focus shifts to transnational migrants. Transnational families have embraced computer-mediated communication technologies to maintain and reinforce transnational intergenerational relationships. Virtual connectedness versus mutual co-presence was emphasised where mutual co-presence was seen as the ultimate goal by the parent left behind.

Chapter 3: Literature review: Post-parental intergenerational relationships

This chapter outlines the post-parental intergenerational relationship. In order to contextualise the relationship, attention is given to demographic trends and various generations are focused on, namely Matures, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Millennial Generation, Generation C and Generation Z. The Born Free generation is discussed, since this generation is specifically applicable to the South African context. The family life cycle is outlined; the mid-life phase of human development is considered after which the parent adult-child relationship is discussed followed by intergenerational support and transnational caregiving. By looking at the role of the grandparent and focusing on the predictors of contact between the grandparent and the grandchild, grandparenthood is investigated.

Chapter 4: Literature review: Ambiguous loss, attachment and grief

This chapter outlines the concepts of loss, bonds of attachment, grief, mourning and chronic sorrow. Ambiguous loss and specifically emigration as an ambiguous loss is highlighted. The origin of bonds of attachments between the parent and adult-child is outlined but specifically how these attachment bonds affect the parent's response to loss. Grief and mourning following a significant loss are reviewed. Rituals in dealing with grief as a result of emigration are highlighted and the concept, migratory grief, is explained. Mourning as a psychological process is investigated and how mourning applies to emigration. Chronic sorrow and the triggers of chronic sorrow are addressed.

Chapter 5: Research methodology

Chapter five deals with the research methodology. The research approach, type of research and research design are discussed. Furthermore, the research population, sampling technique, sample size, data collection methods and methods of data analysis are described. Trustworthiness is discussed and attention is given to journal writing, reflectivity, peer debriefing, member checking and an audit trail is described. The pilot study is discussed and last but not least, important ethical considerations are reflected upon.

Chapter 6: Empirical findings

This chapter presents the interpretation and analysis of the empirical research. A profile for each research participant is presented as well as his/her demographical information in table format. A thematic analysis of the themes and sub-themes generated from the study is presented using verbatim quotes from the interviews and substantiating them with literature. Themes are discussed in four sections namely, emigration of the adult-child, emigration loss, intergenerational relationships and transnational communication.

Chapter 7: Guidelines for empowering the professional to assist the parent left behind

Practice guidelines as formulated by researcher from this experience and the findings from this study are presented to assist the professional. The chapter is presented according to the stages, namely pre-emigration, the act of migration, post-emigration and reconstruction of meaning are discussed in detail, together with practice guidelines for each stage. The concept of a collage in which a parent's demographical information can be collected, is introduced. Questions are proposed for each stage of emigration in order to gather information to populate the collage. Additional information is provided in the form of shaded sections to empower the professional in assisting the parent left behind.

Chapter 8: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter, the researcher looked at how the goal of the study was met by discussing each of the research objectives. Subsequently, the key findings of the study were revealed, focusing on four main themes. Theme 1: Emigration of the adult-child; Theme 2: Emigration loss; Theme 3: Intergenerational relationships and

Theme 4: Transnational communication. Conclusions were provided with regards to the research methodology, literature study, empirical study and the doctoral seminar. Recommendations were formulated for practice through the guidelines for professionals, from the delegates of the doctoral seminar and for future research. The chapter ends of with conclusing remarks.

The following chapter will discuss Emigration and transnational communication.

2. CHAPTER 2: EMIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

> Never in the past have there been so many people able to envisage as a given fact that they or their children will no doubt at some time live and work in some place other than where they were born (Diminescu, 2008:567).

In the last decade, transnationalism has become increasingly renowned as an logically nuanced way in which to think about contemporary forms of global mobility, as is evident in the work of writers such as Hannerz (1996), Portes *et al.* (1999), Vertovec (1999a&b) and Carling (2008).

> The human dynamics of transnationalism are about migrants and non-migrants interacting with each other from a distance and imagining each other's lives. This distance is fundamentally geographical, since it is migration that defines the groups in relation to each other (Carling, 2008:1473).

Emigration must be examined from a transnational perspective that considers how persistent ties to homeland countries and social networks impact on emigrants' experiences (Basch, Schiller & Blanc, 1994; Bhatia & Ram, 2009). Because migrating to a new location and maintaining transnational ties are not mutually exclusive, scholars need to consider "simultaneity, or living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally'' (Levitt & Schiller, 2004:1003).

In this chapter, emigration will be investigated from the stance of the parent left behind. Focus will be placed on emigration statistics, especially in the South African context. Various reasons for emigration will be discussed and the concept "brain drain" will be reviewed. The meaning of being an emigrant will be highlighted in order to better understand the concept of emigration, after which the concept of transnational migrants will be the focus. The relationship between transnational families and communication will be described in order to illuminate various means of staying in contact with children living abroad. Conventional transnational exchanges as well as computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies will be revealed. Finally, virtual connectedness and mutual co-presence will be highlighted.

2.2 KEY CONCEPTS

2.2.1 Migration

Parfit (1998:11) views migration as the dynamic undertow of population change and one of the greatest challenges of the coming century. In his words: "Migration helped create humans, drove us to conquer the planet, shaped our societies and promises to shape them again." Migration is described as a geographical, psychological and social transition that can awaken grieving reactions, emotional anguish and psychological pathology due to the loss of homeland and challenges of transplantation (Argyropoulos, 2011:2).

The word migration, originates from the Latin *migrare*, meaning "to change residence." Social scientists have traditionally defined migration as the more or less permanent movement of people across space (Suárez-Orozco, 2005:9). Suárez-Orozco (2005:9) explains that in the language of the social sciences, people "emigrate" from one location and become "immigrants" in a new setting.

Migration is associated with leaving someone and/or something behind. For the purposes of this study, the researcher defines migration as a physical and emotional transition of people from one place to another, which involves various challenges, losses and changes, not only for the ones who are leaving but also for those left behind.

2.2.2 Emigration

Emigration is defined by Van Rooyen (2000:1) as "... the departure of a person from the country of which he or she has citizenship to another with the intention of acquiring permanent residence abroad and usually, but not always, with the intention of relinquishing the rights and duties of the former country's citizenship."

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006:466) defines emigration as "... to leave one's own country in order to settle permanently in another."

For the purposes of this study, the researcher defines emigration as the movement of people from one country, in this case South Africa, to another country to start a new life with the intention of not to return to the country of origin.

2.2.3 Transnationalism

The current understanding of transnationalism was given impulse by the pioneering work of Glick Schiller *et al.* (1992:124). These authors define transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, [thereby] build[ing] social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Basch *et al.*, 1994:7). Transnationalism constitutes an attempt to formulate a theoretical and conceptual framework to better understand the strong social and economic links between migrants' host and origin countries (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1992). The term, transnationalism thus refers to the ways emigrants maintain connections to more than one culture.

Glick Schiller *et al.* (1992:124) further explain transnationalism as "the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement." Transnational activities are implemented by "regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders" (Portes *et al.*, 1999:219). Conradson and Latham (2005:227) elaborates that transnationalism enables us to consider what it means to live in an interconnected, topologically complex world.

2.2.4 Transnational migrant

The term migrant can be understood as "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country" (UNESCO, [sa]). "Migrant transnationalism is built on interpersonal relationships across borders" (Carling, 2008:1452). Diminescu (2008:566) states that research recommends that the international migrant be defined as "any person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence, any person who crosses at least one national border."

"Migrant" does not refer to refugees, displaced or others forced or compelled to leave their homes. Migrants are people who make choices about when to leave and where to go, even though these choices are sometimes extremely constrained (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1992).

2.2.5   Internet

The internet is a world-wide network. It refers to the physical global infrastructure as well as the uses to which the internet as infrastructure is put, including the world wide web, e-mail and online multi-person interactive spaces such as chat rooms (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman & Robinson, 2001:308). Uimonen (2001:456) refers to the infrastructure and uses of the global network of computers, or what is generally defined as the "network of networks", as the internet.

Business Dictionary (2015) defines the internet as follows: "A means of connecting a computer to any other computer anywhere in the world via dedicated routers and servers. When two computers are connected over the internet, they can send and receive all kinds of information such as text, graphics, voice, video, and computer programs."

2.2.6   Information communication technologies (ICT)

Information and communication technologies (ICT) refer to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It is similar to information technology but focuses primarily on communication technologies. This includes the internet, wireless networks, cell phones and other communication mediums such as Skype. Modern information and communication technologies have created a "global village" in which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door. For this reason, ICT is often studied in the context of how modern communication technologies affect society (USA Today, 2010).

2.2.7   Computer-mediated communication (CMC)

Romiszowski and Mason (1996:398) describe computer-mediated communication as "the process by which people create, exchange and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting and decoding messages." Jones (1995) cited in Romiszowski and Mason (1996:398), defines computer-mediated communication as follows: "It is not just a tool; it is at once technology, medium and engine of social relations. It not only structures social relations, it is the space within which the relations occur and the tool that individuals

use to enter that space." Computer-mediated communication therefore covers a broad spectrum of technologies (Liechti & Ichikawa, 2000:7).

2.3   EMIGRATION STATISTICS

Emigration is an ever-increasing phenomenon. The United Nations estimated that in 2002, approximately 175 million people, or 2.9% of the global population, were living outside their country of origin, up from 2.2% in 1965 (United Nations. International Migration Report, 2002). "The number of international migrants was 195 million in 2005 - 2.5 times greater than the 75 million recorded in 1960 - and their number was projected to grow by 9.6% to nearly 214 million by 2010. Moreover, the share of international migrants among the entire world population has ranged from 2.5% in 1960 to a projected 3.1% in 2010" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009).

Stern and Szalontai (2006:123) explained that South Africa, like most other developing countries, has seen extensive emigration over the last few decades, but it has also experienced a large number of emigrants. A survey by Future Fact (The Economist, 2008), a polling organisation, found that the desire to emigrate is fairly even across races. In South Africa in 2005, 42% coloured people, 38% blacks and 30% of Indian descent were thinking of leaving, compared to 41% of whites. "But it is the whites, by and large, who have the money, skills, contacts and sometimes passports they need to start a life outside - and who leave the bigger skills and tax gap behind" (The Economist, 2008). Van Aardt, (2006) stated that more whites are going to leave as a result of high crime figures and continued affirmative action.

"Migration data collected by Statistics South Africa (2001) underestimates the true extent of migration from South Africa" (My dream course, 2010). This website confirms that we do not have reliable data on the actual extent of emigration from South Africa and that there is a significant undercount of skilled emigration. It is estimated that only a third of actual emigration is represented by the data and that the official statistics indicate some worrying trends (My dream course, 2010). As is the case in many other countries, South Africa's system for gathering migration figures is essentially flawed. Completion of departure forms is not always enforced and those intending to emigrate permanently, do not disclose this (Statistics South Africa, 2001).

In 2000, Meyer, Brown and Kaplan published the findings of a study they had undertaken to get a better idea of the extent of the official data undercount of emigration from South Africa. They collected data on South African emigrants in the five major receiving countries, namely the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand for the period 1987 to 1997 and compared these with the official statistics. The main finding of the study was that the receiving country's data reported around three times as many skilled South Africans entering their borders in the decade prior to 1997 than was indicated in Stats SA data (Meyer *et al.*, 2000:12). This study revealed the following statistics:

> For a period of eleven years from 1987 to 1997 included, the country lost 233 609 emigrants as opposed to the 82 811 declared and registered by the South African statistics. This is 2.8 times higher than what official figures show. With regard to professionals, during the nine years from 1989 to 1997, the country lost 41 496 emigrants, which is 3.2 times more than the 12 949 declared by official figures.

National statistics have reported a gross underestimation of figures of between 3 to 4 times the actual number of people leaving for the period 1989 to 2001. The Economist (2005) revealed that:

> While 70 000 South Africans are thought to have left the country between 1989 and 1992, the estimated number expanded to over 166 000 between 1998 and 2001. According to official statistics, over 16 000 highly-skilled South Africans emigrated between 1994 and 2001, but the real numbers are probably three to four times higher.

SouthAfrica.info (2014) states that Statistics South Africa no longer collects information on emigration. Data that was collected from the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) quoted by Politicsweb (2012), show 588 388 South African emigrants aged 15 or over were living in OECD countries in 2010. The countries with the highest numbers of individuals born in South Africa are, in descending order, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, New Zealand and Canada.

The following table represents the emigration statistics of study participants.

Table 2.1:   **Emigration statistics of research participants**

Interview Number	Ethnicity	Number of children emigrated	Highest Educational Qualification: Child	Emigration Destination
Interview 01	White	1	###	Australia
Interview 02	White	1	###	America
Interview 03	White	1	##	England
Interview 04**	White	1	##	England
Interview 05	White	1	###	Australia
Interview 06	White	2	###	Australia
Interview 07	White	1	###	Canada
Interview 08	White	1	###	New Zealand
Interview 09	White	1	###	Ireland
Interview 10**	Indian	1	###	Australia
Interview 11	Black	1	###	America
Interview 12	White	2	###	America & Australia
Interview 13**	White	1	###	Australia
Interview 14	White	1	###	New Zealand
Interview 15**	White	1	###	Australia
Interview 16	Black	3	##	England (2) & Dubai
Interview 17	White	2	###	Dubai
Interview 18	White	2	###	Australia
Interview 19**	White	2	###	China & Brussels

** Parents interviewed together

\# Not matriculated

\#\# Highest Educational Qualification: Matriculated

\#\#\# Highest Educational Qualification: Graduate

In this study the majority of participants were from the white segment of the population and most of the adult-children that had emigrated were graduates. Four black adult-children emigrated of which one was a graduate and one Indian graduate adult-child had emigrated. With regards to the emigration destination, a total of nine adult-children emigrated to Australia followed by four to England and three to America.

In the South African context, it seems that the statistics do not reflect the true extent of emigration from South Africa. Therefore, the researcher believes that the extent of the emigration phenomena in South Africa is underestimated and the amount of people left behind, as well as the emotional effect upon them because of the emigration of their adult-children, is also underestimated.

2.4   REASONS FOR EMIGRATION

Segal, Myadas and Elliot (2006:1) state that the reasons for emigration can be economical, political and religious as well as a yearning for exploration and adventure. Van Ecke (2005:369) states that the reason people emigrate is to escape poverty, famine or oppression, while others leave to seek a better life. The author states that at some level, all emigrants make the choice to leave their homelands either as a means of survival or for a better life. Van Ecke (2005:470) further stresses that those who desire to emigrate have higher achievement and power motivation are more work-oriented and primarily less focused on family than those who do not want to emigrate. For young professionals, the opportunity to gain international work experience is a strong motivation to emigrate, although, as Rogerson and Rogerson (2000:47) observe, this group may not represent a permanent loss of skills.

Segal *et al.* (2006:11) indicate that the configuration of events leading to migration may differ from individual to individual. There seems to be an interaction of two phenomena that form the catalyst for migration - a "push" from the country of origin and a "pull" of emigration to another country. A simple explanation for migration is that one place pulls on the person with positive aspects such as good wages, freedom, land or peace, while the place in which the person lives pushes because of low income, repression, overcrowding or war (Parfit, 1998:16). Segal *et al.* (2006:11) state that the "pull" to another country works in "tandem" with the "push" from the home country. "Moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar may occur because something elsewhere is more attractive than what an individual or group currently possesses, and the prospect of acquiring or achieving that 'something' is impossible or difficult without the move."

For Uribe (2013:267), there are various push factors for migration, from political, socio-cultural, personal freedom and self-realisation, insecurity and violence to economic reasons. Segal *et al.* (2006:14) explicate that a large portion of emigrants leave their homes in search of improved economic opportunities. They further explain that the distribution of these migrants are bi-modal, since one group consists of educated and skilled people with substantial financial resources to leave their country, while the other group consists of those with minimal education, skills or material resources. The first group seeks to enhance their careers and lifestyles while the second group emigrates mainly to improve their economic status. In this study, the researcher found a correlation with the above, as most of the adult-children that emigrated were professional people with the means to emigrate and therefore formed part of the first group. Included in the second group were those who did not have the financial means or educational expertise (Segal *et al.,* 2006:14).

Mattes and Richmond (2000:29-30) observe that the most well-known politically-motivated migration is the flight from oppression and persecution, or political turmoil and instability. Political upheavals were an important motivating push factor behind the emigration of professionals from South Africa before 1994, when the country held its first democratic elections. Jagganath (2008:26) suggests that looking at emigration in South Africa requires an understanding of the pre- and post-apartheid eras as emigration revolved largely around political issues. The author demarcated the following eras: the apartheid era, from 1976-1994; post-apartheid South Africa from 1994-2000; and the dawn of the new democracy between 2000 and 2006. Crush, McDonald and Williams (2000:245) view emigration as follows:

> In the post-apartheid period, emigration appears to have more than trebled – particularly among those in the education/humanities and managerial occupations. Although professional emigrants in the natural sciences and medical professions made up the smallest proportion of all skilled emigration, the official statistics indicate that emigration in these fields almost trebled between 1994 and 2000.

Van Rooyen (2000:11) provides a description of the history of emigration in South Africa by discussing it in terms of waves. The first wave of emigrants was in 1949-1951 when the National Party came to power and began implementing apartheid policies; the second wave was in 1960-1961, during a period of political unrest and

the Sharpeville massacre, the proclamation of a state of emergency and South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth.

The third wave was in 1976-1979 when black unrest reached a crescendo with the Soweto uprising and further harsh measures by the state. This period coincided with the large-scale outflow of angry and frustrated black South Africans: many went into exile, including many members from ANC (African National Congress) leadership and thousands more, mostly people of colour, settled permanently in Australia and Canada (Van Rooyen, 2000:11).

The fourth wave in 1985-1987 when the PW Botha regime clamped down on black resistance, a period which was characterised by states of emergency, the collapse of the rand and Botha's disastrous Rubicon speech. Between 1989 and 1992, there was a lull in emigration, which corresponded with the first three years of FW de Klerk's rule, the unbanning of the ANC and the dismantling of apartheid. However, in 1993, one year before the democratic elections of 1994, emigration doubled and after that it remained close to 10 000 per year, according to official figures for the rest of the 1990s (Van Rooyen, 2000:11).

In the South African context, Jagganath (2008:26) explains that the problem of migration has become more complex than political turbulence alone. The SAMP (South African Migration Project) survey conducted by Mattes and Richmond (2000:27) revealed the following factors for both white and black South African professionals: the cost of living, levels of taxation, safety and security, and the standard of public and commercial services. Relatively low-income levels were a particular area of frustration amongst black respondents, while disappointment with the political system and the perceived threat of affirmative action were mostly concerns held by whites (Mattes & Richmond, 2000:30-31).

Jagganath (2008:26) indicates that over the last two decades, since the country's first democratic elections, the proliferation of violence began to serve as catalyst for emigration in South Africa. Oosthuizen and Ehlers (2007:16) explain that when people experience a deficiency in safety needs, this may trigger a decision to leave their country in search of a safer homeland. In South Africa, 18 545 people were murdered between April 2005 and March 2006 while 54 926 cases of rape were

reported (Raubenheimer, Magnus & De Lange, 2006:1). Oosthuizen and Ehlers (2007:15) used Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as a point of departure to establish what motivates the behaviour of South Africans to emigrate. With Maslow's needs hierarchy, once physiological needs become gratified, the safety or security needs becomes predominant. When conditions in a home country are satisfactory and meet physical, social and emotional needs, the likelihood of leaving is minimal. Human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs, not by those that have been met (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995:78).

For Rogerson and Rogerson (2000:47-48), a major pull factor for skilled South Africans is the highly attractive salary packages offered by enterprises in North America, Europe and Australia. By way of example, Cohen (1996:2) suggests the pull factor is even stronger when recipient countries develop shortages in specific occupational categories, which can be filled by a select group of individuals with those supply characteristics from a country such as South Africa. To emigrate to Australia for instance, there are many requirements of which qualifications is one. Working in Australia ([sa]) stipulates that your nominated occupation must be found on the Skilled Occupations List. The Department of Employment carries out research to identify skill shortages in the Australian labour market and publishes the results of its research as state, territory and national overview reports and lists; occupational cluster reports (grouping similar occupations) and individual occupational reports (Australian Government Department of Employment, 2014). On 1 July 2014, the following occupations were added: bricklayers, tilers and chefs (Working in Australia, [sa]).

The pull factors have recently weakened considerably due to the global financial crisis. However, if the ANC government decides to go ahead with threatened amendments to the Employment Equity Act, which would apply punitive sanctions to companies that continue to promote whites into senior and top management positions, Politicsweb (2012) suggests that we are likely to see another surge of emigration by this group. Segal *et al*. (2006:10) conclude that the emigration experience requires an evaluation of the economic, political, social, cultural, and religious conditions in the home country and states that a subgroup's or individual's

status "must be viewed in the context of experiences in the country of origin to ascertain the reasons which provide the major impetus for emigrating."

Literature provides various reasons for emigration, yet in the South African context, violent crime seems to be one of the major reasons given. The parents of children that have emigrated reported that the ANC lead government's affirmative action policy and the violent crime in the country were major contributing factors to emigration. Although crime can be seen as a major "push factor," the researcher believes that personal attributes play a major role and that certain personalities are more predisposed to emigration than others are.

2.5 BRAIN DRAIN

"Brain drain" implies a reduction of skilled people who are vital to the functional core of a national economy (McDonald & Crush, 2000:5). Segal *et al.* (2006:7) consider professional migrants as the "brain drain" of their homelands. Professional migrants are educated individuals with high levels of professional competence who emigrate to enhance their careers in countries that are able to accommodate their level of expertise. Although they rarely accept unskilled jobs, they usually enter at the bottom of their occupational rankings and progress, based on accomplishment. Segal *et al.* (2006:7) further explain that these individuals, in addition to high academic and professional achievement, usually have the financial, familial and social support for emigration.

The official statistics indicate that the greatest mobility of highly skilled people, both in and out of South Africa over the past decade or so, was amongst those in education and humanities occupations, followed by engineers and architects, and top executive and managerial personnel. Emigration amongst those within the natural sciences and medical professions is also on the increase, while there has been a dramatic decline in the number of skilled emigrants in these occupational fields (My dream course, 2010). While greater opportunities and a wider range of choice across the South African borders may be good news for South Africa's talented tertiary students, it may be bad news for the country as a whole. This is because it is robbing the country of considerable investments in training and education and is depriving the economy of needed skills and upmarket consumers (Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25).

My dream course (2010) views the apartheid era in South Africa with its political upheavals – the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the state of emergency in the late 1980s – as a major driving force behind the exodus of professionals. Virtually all South African analyses of the "brain drain" have focused on the negative aspects of skilled people emigrating (Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25). Research shows that the highly skilled are leaving because of crime, perceptions of high living costs and levels of taxation, and the perceived decline in the standard of public services, notably health and education delivery (SAIRR, 2009).

Research by Waller (2006:10) indicates that the number of black professionals emigrating is escalating:

> At the beginning of 2004, the senior partner of South Africa's largest executive recruitment firm announced that the brain drain had started consuming skilled black professionals. The move was attributed to a feeling of inferiority created by the qualifications and international experience of returned exiles. Black South Africans are presumably leaving to gain a competitive edge. The suggestion is that they will return to South Africa at some point. Both the heads of Business Unity SA and the South African Chamber of Business consider the trend extremely worrying and potentially disastrous for the economy.

Skills migration can also be seen in a positive light. Emigrants not only remit income while abroad, but also tend to return home and pass on advanced skills to their colleagues (Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25). This has led to the increasing use of terms such as skills "transfer," "exchange" and "circulation" (Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25). Some authors argue that skills migration is not only a reality but also necessary for industrial growth and cultural exchange in highly specialised societies (Khadria, 2002). Regardless of whether skilled emigration includes gains as well as losses, Mattes and Mniki (2007:25) state that a brain drain is likely to be particularly damaging to an economy when skilled people leave relatively soon after training and the country fails to receive any appreciable return on its direct investments.

In this study, the researcher found that in accordance with the literature, many professional adult-children had emigrated, thus confirming the term "brain drain." Older adult-children were employed in professional occupations and it is likely that their spouses were also graduates. Although the spouse might not have been employed when the couple emigrated, looking at the underestimation of available

statistics, these spouses could also be regarded as part of the "brain drain." In this study, it was not only graduates that emigrated but also young unemployed adult-children with only a national matric certificate and no work experience.

2.6   MEANING OF BEING AN EMIGRANT

Diminescu (2008:570) asked the following question: "Doesn't this migrant, who belongs to several geographical zones and social milieus rather than to an 'in-between zone' multiply dividing lines rather than bonds?" This thought-provoking question inspired the researcher to look at the life world of the emigrant in order to better understand communication with the parent left behind. From research, it is clear that everything is new to the emigrant and the loss of everything familiar has far reaching repercussions, especially regarding relationships. With reference to the phrase "multiply dividing lines," the researcher wondered how it is possible to maintain a bond between the previous world and the new one, despite vast geographical distances. Is the attachment history between people enough to maintain a bond? To answer these questions, the researcher felt it necessary to briefly look at the life world of the emigrant.

The conflict for the emigrant is evident in the rhetorical question asked by Falicov (2005:401): "One might ask if transnationalism creates 'real' connections or connections based on memory and imagination." Studies have traced a process of using the media for both bridging and bonding. "These two processes are sometimes intertwined as a person could be occupied with bridging and bonding at the same time." The most common pattern among migrants is the use of media for both bridging and bonding and includes global, transnational, national, local and minority media (Borkert, Cingolani & Premazzi, 2009:14).

The "in-between space" or "neither here nor there but here and there at the same time" announces what Diminescu (2008:569) calls "the arrival of the connected migrant." He explains that globalisation, network theories and transnational processes have pointed out certain aspects that can be used to construct the future profile of the emigrant:

> Multi-belonging (to territories and to networks), hyper mobility, flexibility in
> the labour market, the capacity to turn a relational dexterity into a

productive and economically effective skill are all features that we will certainly find in the make-up of our migrant.

In her article, *Emotional transnationalism and family identities,* Falicov (2005b:399) uses the following quotation by Goethe, "Two hearts live, ache, in my breast" and asks the following question: "If home is where the heart is, and one's heart is with one's family, language and country, what happens when your family, language and culture occupy two different worlds?" Falicov (2005b:399) states that this is the plight of emigrants and the outcome is often to live with one's heart divided. Falicov (2007) further explains that now more than ever, emigrants are able to keep up their emotional ties with their families and countries by using new communication technologies. They stay in touch by way of remittances, mail packages, phone cards, e-mails and occasional visits. In Falicov's (2007:157) words:

> Intense family involvements are conducted at long distance, and these involvements differ in important ways from connections in families who live their lives in situ. Links across borders bring about the ambiguities of living with two hearts instead of a broken heart.

Migration has been viewed as a major psycho-social transition and a stressful event that involves various challenges, losses and changes to one's identity and environment (Argyropoulos, 2011:10). Svašek and Skrbiš (2007:373) write about "in transit people." They explain that mobile individuals are tied to their families and friends back home but they also are attached to their new surroundings. Ticho, cited in an article by Garza-Guerrero (1974:409) makes the statement that emigration leads to a "sudden change from an average expectable environment to a strange and unpredictable one." Baldassar (2001:6) describes home as an ever "shifting centre" that has the capacity to transform migrant lives into a perpetual balancing act. Because of the "dialectics of diasporic identification," the relationship of emigrants to their homeland is often "fraught" and "equivocal" (Fortier, 2000:70). Svašek and Skrbiš (2007:373) explain that the migrants "carry along" particular memories and feelings and are to some extent conditioned by practices learned in their place of origin. These authors make the following statement: "This process does not take place in the isolation of their minds and bodies, but it occurs in their active emotional engagement with the past, present and future environments."

The Indian-English controversial award winning writer, Salman Rushdie, author of eleven novels, states that it is impossible for emigrants to recover the homelands they have left behind. In his novel, *Imaginary Homelands,* Rushdie (2012) writes the following, "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures, at other times we fall between two stools." In an interview with French (1998:8), Rushdie made the following statement: "It wasn't conscious. It's more to do with autobiography. I want to write about a thing I find difficult to admit even to myself, which is the fact that I left home." In his novel, *Shame,* Salman Rushdie (1995:86-87) depicts the actual position of migrants:

> What is the best thing about migrant peoples and a seceded nation? I think it is their hopefulness. And what is the worst thing? It is the emptiness of one's luggage. I'm speaking of invisible suitcases, not the physical, perhaps cardboard variety containing a few meaning-drained mementoes: we have come unstuck from more than land. We have floated upwards from history, from memory, from time.

According to Seminck's (1993:17) essay, Rushdie's all-pervasive theme in his controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* is migration:

> Basically, this is a psychological process: inside the Migrant's head, different worlds collide and mix. These 'worlds' are to be conceived in the broadest possible sense: anything which differs from a person's daily reality can be another world. Fiction, dreams, the hereafter, the country, even other persons, are described as 'worlds'. Consequently, migration is a metaphor for the human condition: we all felt the confusion resulting from it.

The researcher believes the author Rushdie best describes the meaning of being an emigrant since he himself was an emigrant. The researcher could particularly relate to his description of the "emptiness of one's luggage." This emptiness also relates to close friends and family since they also lack the opportunity to create memories to fill the figurative suitcases. Emigration is an endeavour that takes tremendous courage and touches all spheres of the emigrant's life. The emigrant leaves behind all that is known and familiar, "up-rooting" their lives and entering the unknown where they need to make a new purposeful beginning.

2.6.1   Transnational migrants

Transmigration is not new, but the scale is growing and increasingly individuals, households, families and whole communities find themselves with stakes in

interconnected worlds, widely separated spatially, which they try to maintain simultaneously (Grillo, 2007:20). Transnationalism, according to some of its more materially grounded proponents, forms a "highly fragmented" area of study that "lacks both a well-defined theoretical framework and analytical rigour" (Portes *et al*., 1999:218). Portes and his colleagues argue that there are features unique to transnationalism and the twentieth century that demand a new analytical matrix. "What constitutes truly original phenomena," postulates Portes *et al.* (1999:219) "are the high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that require cross border travel and contacts on a sustainable basis." The occasional trip home or the sporadic sending of remittances to family and friends is not sufficient to justify the labelling of a new migration phenomenon.

Transnationalism implies both emigration and settlement in the country of destination and the cultivation of strong backward linkages, what Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1995) refer to as "simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society." For Portes *et al.* (1999:227), it is this "thick web of regular and instantaneous communication and travel that we encounter today that differentiates 'transnationalism' from the otherwise, ad-hoc and less frequent back-and-forth movements of migrants in the past." The transnational migration experience includes "those who actually migrate, those who stay behind but receive support from those who migrate and those who do not migrate and have no sources of outside support" (Levitt & Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004:6).

Transnationalism refers to the way in which migrants mould and sustain social relationships which connect the home societies with those of the new country, crossing national boundaries. The frame of reference for migrants' actions and decisions is not only the local one anymore, but expands to social spaces where they don't have a geographic proximity and interconnection. This is considered the revolutionary element of contemporary mobility (Borkert *et al.,* 2009:12). Transnational migrants literally "live their lives across international borders" (Glick Schiller, 1999:94).

When discussing the transnational family, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918-21:1134) noted, "Wherever there is emigration, dissolution of the family is progressing more rapidly than in groups whose members remain territorially united and live in the

same conditions as their forefathers did." To be a transnational migrant must be near alien-like because of the liminal experience, the feeling of "in-betweenness". Transmigration is a balancing act between being comfortable with the familiar and entering the unknown, trying to establish new roots without abandoning established ones. It is a yearning for the might have been, could have been and the should have been (Borkert *et al.*, 2009:12).

2.7   TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES AND COMMUNICATION

Olivier and Wallace (2009:204) define the family as a collection of people, dispersed in time and space, who have multifaceted relationships of varying intimacy – relationships that are unique in character. "The family may be seen as a microcosm of our wider relationships, and even a cursory examination shows it to be laden with changeable connections, dynamics and balances" (Olivier & Wallace, 2009:204).

There has been a gradual advance from structural to transactional based definitions of the family and this shows the vast variance in how families define themselves (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002:71). Rather than viewing the family as composed of individuals connected primarily through legal and biological ties, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002:71), define the family as a group of intimates who generate a sense of home and group identity, and who experience a shared history and a shared future. This transactional definition opens up the boundaries of the family and allows for different family types (not just the traditional family), the most important element being a shared history.

Transnational families are less bound by the common prevalent discourse of the nuclear isolated family unit and are more permeable to the influences of the social environment (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:11). They "live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely "familyhood"" (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002:3). Transnational families are examples of families that violate the usual characteristic of household co-residence, because these families exist across national and cultural borders (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999:13).

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002:70-71) view the family as a unique context for human communication:

> The values, behaviours and social environments that effect family structures have changed a great deal over the past decade and the ability of the family to survive these changes suggests that families are flexible. This flexibility is aided by how family members communicate.

These authors emphasise that the terms family and communication are infamously broad: "Everyone knows what they are, everyone has a different idea of how they are defined."

To define communication is as problematic as the definitions of family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002:72). Most theorists define communication in such a way that it includes the creation of symbols in some medium and fashion that other people can notice and make sense of (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994:193). Olson, Russell and Sprenkle (1983) cited in Smith, Freeman and Zabriskie (2009:79) describe positive communication as sending clear and congruent messages, expressing empathy, providing supportive comments and demonstrating effective problem-solving skills.

Transnational families embrace communication technologies and defy stereotypes of what constitutes family communication. Komito (2011:1076) indicates that face-to-face communication with family, relations and friends is hindered by distance, since the cost (and disruption) of transportation prohibits frequent contact, but new communication technologies can improve their isolation. Many emigrants are keeping up their economic and emotional ties with relatives "back home" by using technology to stay in touch and to familiarise themselves with the latest news about their countries (Falicov, 2005:399).

Ijsselsteijn, Van Baren and Van Lanen (2003:1) explain that since we are social beings, we have a fundamental need to communicate, to form, maintain and enhance social relationships. This fact is illustrated by the massive success of recent communication media such as e-mail, mobile telephony and short message services (SMS). Regular communication – whether through telephone calls, letters, SMS messages, photographs or visits – is part of everyday life in transnational families (Parreñas, 2005:319). The introduction of social technologies into the lives of these families makes emigration "more acceptable than ever before 'giving' distant individuals the means to not only manage and maintain their connections but also to negotiate their roles through time" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004:1009).

The global media paints a picture of an "easily accessible elsewhere" that contributes to standardising, reinforcing and generalising this "culture of mobility" (Diminescu, 2008:567). An important pattern in the history of transnational communications has arisen. As each new information communication technology is developed, it does not necessarily replace the one that was used previously. Rather, families seem to add layers of communication and thus increase their overall frequency of communication as each new technology is introduced (Wilding, 2006:131).

The researcher found that, for parents, one of the most important aspects of living geographically apart was to maintain frequent and meaningful virtual contact with their loved ones. It was the glue keeping them together. Most parents made use of multiple communication mediums and platforms to increase their connectedness to their children and grandchildren in an attempt to make the physical distance between them more bearable. International telephone calls, mobile technology, e-mails, SMS's as well as Skype were used to maintain communication links and enhance interpersonal bonds with family living abroad.

2.8   CONVENTIONAL TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGES

2.8.1   Telephone and letter writing

Prior to the 1990s, the telephone was less widespread and considered less reliable and more expensive than letters. By the mid-1990s, the pattern of communication had changed significantly. All the migrant families in Wilding's (2006:129) study mentioned that the cost of international calls had dropped significantly.

This decreasing cost of telephone calls has made telephone use even more prevalent among family members living far apart (Vertovec, 2004). The global volume of international phone calls went from 12.7 billion minutes in 1982, to 42.7 billion in 1992 and to 154 billion in 2001. This increase was a result of technological innovations, enhanced competition as well as market liberalisation, such as the introduction of optical fibre, the proliferation of satellites and the new call-readdressing techniques that allowed for cheap international phone calls. Some transnational families reported more regular telephone conversations, while for others the time difference of up to eight hours prohibited a more spontaneous

exchange of calls. At the other end of the spectrum, some families continued to exchange communications on a very infrequent basis – once every few months, or even only a couple of times a year, just to acknowledge a special occasion (Wilding, 2006:125).

In Wilding's (2006:129) study, interviewees mentioned using of a wide variety of methods of communication in the past and present, including (but not limited to) telephone calls, telegrams, letters, faxes, e-mail, internet chat rooms, internet websites, mobile text messages, videos, tapes, gifts, cards and postcards. Some media were more commonly used than others. Up until the early or mid-1990s, all the interviewees in her study preferred to rely on letters to communicate on a regular basis. Some of the participants in this study still wrote letters and the telephone was frequently used as means of communication.

2.8.2   Transnational visits

Investing time and effort into a relationship by providing support is a way of building dependable relationships. Baldassar (2007b:400) found that her research participants engaged in routine visits to revive attachments and in the case of grandchildren to form and develop attachments. These attachments ensure that people feel they are maintaining a sense of "closeness" with loved ones and that they still know each other. This mutual co-presence enables each party to understand what the other is really thinking, to observe their body language, to hear "first hand" what they have to say, to sense directly their overall response and to undertake at least some emotional work. Such "co-present interaction" is fundamental to social life (Urry, 2003:163). Baldassar (2007b:405) states that emotions, especially guilt and nostalgia, are key motivating elements in the practice and performance of visits.

The need "to see" the adult-child in order to check on wellbeing was most strongly expressed by parents of recent migrants (Baldassar, 2007b:405). These visits gave insight into their children's lives. Hands-on caring like childcare and nursing the sick as well as providing practical support, for instance, running errands, only occurred during visits (Baldassar, 2007b:390). Grandmothers and mothers visited their adult-children to offer support with newborn babies or to provide care for a sick adult-child

(Baldassar, 2007b:390). She added that the "face-to-face support, and more generally, co-presence, is especially prized during times of crisis."

Migrants' visits to their parents' homes show that children care for their parents (Baldock, 2000:205; King & Vullnetari, 2006:783). Patterns of visits tend to be planned and are reciprocal. The provision of accommodation is part of visiting and normally family members stay with kin. Baldassar (2007b:390) discussed the practical implications of parents losing their residential facility, for example, due to death or divorce as this could have an implication on visiting migrants.

Participants in this study assisted their adult-children during visits by looking after their grandchildren. Adult-children visiting parents frequently, did so when one of the parents were sick or had passed away. Practical caring could only take place during visits. Parents that participated in this study often spoke about their face-to-face visits with their adult-child(ren). During the interviews with the parents, they made a distinction between their very first visit and subsequent visits to their adult-children abroad and the very last visit. They experienced their first visit, and for some their last visit, as milestones in their transnational relationship.

During these visits, the parents' expectations were not always met. Prolonged visits resulted in parents finding it difficult to adapt to their children and/or grandchildren's routine and new lifestyle. Adult-children that came back to visit their "home country" often had other obligations and friends that they wanted to see. Subsequently, they did not spend as much time with the parents left behind as was anticipated. This was difficult for the parent to understand and accept.

2.8.3   Transnational remittances

Remittances, which have an obvious material function, can play an important role in reinforcing interpersonal relations. In her analysis of the cultural meanings of money, Celia Falicov (2001:317-319) asserts that "money is a fundamental 'glue' that holds the Latino family together" and that monetary gifts or loans constitute "powerful re-enforcers of family connectedness." In Carling's (2008:1457-1459) view, remittances to elderly parents can be a transnationalised form of intergenerational transfer that would have taken place regardless of migration.

Obadare and Adebanwi (2009:502) indicate that interest in worker remittances to migrants' countries of origin has intensified because of among others the two following reasons:

- the remarkable increase in the amount of money that migrants are known to be sending to their dependants (families, relatives and friends) in their countries of origin;
- the growing number of households all over the world that now appears to depend entirely on remittances for basic private provisioning. Between 2000 and 2005, remittances to Africa increased by more than 55%.

Several factors influence the volume and frequency of remittances that Ghanaian migrants send home to their relatives in Ghana. In their study among Netherlands-based Ghanaians, Kabki, Mazzucato and Appiah (2004:90) identified three key factors influencing the dynamics of remittances sent to Ghana. They are:

- the quality of the relationship between the migrant and a family member;
- the family relationship between a remittance receiver and the migrant; and
- the migrant's ability to secure a job legally, thereby earning a regular income.

Financial support has long been identified as key source of support exchanged in migrant families. Baldassar (2007b:390) described the practice of the Italian post-war immigrant's, where the regular transfer of money from migrant to homeland was the norm of the day. These authors mentioned that besides money, clothes, food and other goods were also send "home".

2.9 INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

In an article by Borkert *et al. (*2009:ii), Manuel Castells wrote: "The internet is the tissue of contemporary life, a life increasingly marked by virtual and geographic mobility." There has been a rapid dispersal of computers and internet at the global level over the past decade. "World internet use (the number of PCs per 100 people) rose from 13.7% in 2004 to more than 26.8% in 2009. In 2009, more than a quarter of the world's population was using the internet, and a quarter - 1.9 billion people - had access to a computer at home. Over that period, the total number of fixed

broadband subscribers grew more than threefold, from about 150 million in 2004, to almost 500 million by the end of 2009."

Bacigalupe and Lambe (2011:14) state that ICT (information communication technology) hardware includes phone technologies, computers and highly affordable, user-friendly, internet-based tools as well as mainstreamed video chats. ICTs also include social software or popular social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, U-Tube, Whatsapp, BBM and Flickr. Audio-visual communication tools like Skype are also widely used.

The internet has changed almost every aspect of our lives whether privately, socially, culturally, economically or politically. It deals with the very essence of human society – communication between people. However, Manasian (2003:4) predicts the following: "The social changes over the coming decades are likely to be much more extensive. More importantly, they look as if together they will be as pervasive ubiquitous as electricity."

The word "ubiquitous" can be defined as "existing or being everywhere at the same time, constantly encountered or widespread" (Merriam-Webster, 2014). The term ubiquitous implies that technology is everywhere and we use it all the time. Because of the omnipresence of these technologies, we tend to use them without thinking about the tool (Weiser, 1991:96).

Within the digital revolution, information and communication technologies (ICTs) represent new possibilities. The use of ICTs has contributed to a better quality of life of many citizens, including migrants, because ICTs can link loved ones in ways that facilitate closeness. A UN Research Report concluded that "ICTs have become global drivers of migration" (Hamel, 2009:1). Migrants use ICTs to "develop, maintain and recreate personal, social, cultural, linguistic, political and religious networks at transnational levels." The migration experience in all its stages has been transformed by ICTs (Aretxabala & Riezu, 2012:5).

Participants in this study made use of information communication technologies to maintain interpersonal relationships with their loved ones abroad. Although the internet makes it possible to communicate instantaneously over vast geographical

distances, parents reported that no form of technology was able to replace the physical face-to-face contact they so badly desired.

2.10   COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC)

The practical demands of modern life sometimes require closely knitted social group members to spend a substantial amount of time physically separated. Corral (2004:15) believes that for any level of social connectedness to exist, communication needs to be mediated by a channel that transcends physical space. Communications or interactions mediated by computer and internet applications are often referred to as "media", which according to Spitulnik (2001:143) are "best defined by what it is not – face-to-face communication."

Haythornthwaite (2005:126) suggests that shifting exchanges in computer-mediated communication (CMC) from rich face-to-face venues to lean, text-based media would create an impoverished communication environment, troubled with misunderstandings and antisocial behaviour. Yet, as the new media have become familiar and their use adapted through common and group conventions, they have come to function as a vital means of maintaining work and social connections in everyday life, crossing the social worlds of work, home, and geography.

To "stay in touch" is an important way of enriching migrant relationships. Baldassar (2007b:392) states that staying in touch, builds on the history of negotiated commitments that make up family relationships. "As long as family members work hard at staying in touch by making use of all technologies available to them, they can maintain mutually supportive relationships across time and space" (Baldassar, 2007b:406). Network technologies are "always-on" and wireless networks provide anytime, anywhere network access (Kuwabara, Watanabe Ohguro, Itoh & Maeda, 2002). Communication technologies are profoundly affecting the way people meet, keep in touch and interact with each other. Media technologies have extended our reach across space and time considerably. They enable us to interact with individuals and groups beyond our immediate physical surroundings (IJsselsteijn *et al.,* 2003:2). The distinctive purpose of technology-mediated tools is to shorten distance and lessen time limitations that could prevent ongoing family communication (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:3).

New computer and internet technologies "heighten the immediacy and frequency of migrants' contact with their sending communities and allow them to be actively involved in everyday life there in fundamentally different ways than in the past" (Levitt, 2001:22). Lindley, Harper and Sellen (2008:83) point out that there has been a great deal of research in the field of human-computer interaction (HCI) on how to sustain close relationships with others. There has also been a lot of exploration on how feelings of connectedness and intimacy might be maintained through the development of new technologies (Lindley *et al.*, 2008:83).

Liechti and Ichikawa (2000:8) distinguish between interpersonal and mass communication tools. Interpersonal communication tools support the direct exchange of information between two (or a small number) of participants. They are thus electronic surrogates for face-to-face interaction. E-mail and short message services are examples of interpersonal direct exchange of information. Mass communication tools allow dissemination of information from one publisher to possibly large numbers of consumers. Social networking websites like Facebook, a mass communication tool, allow users from all over the world to remain in contact and communicate on a regular basis.

Not all the parents in this study could afford the necessary computer hardware and software to enable them to use the internet and maintain a cyber-relationship with their children. Others did not have the necessary computer and internet skills, for example, on how to use e-mail, Skype and Facebook to communicate with their loved ones living abroad. These parents often felt alienated from their children and the world in which they live. A few older parents were very dedicated to mastering the necessary technology to connect with their children and grandchildren. Older parents who did not have access to communication technologies, made use of traditional landline telephones to stay in touch with their children and grandchildren. In the following sections, the focus will be on computer-mediated communication mediums.

2.10.1   Mobile phones

In an era of increased mobility and greater periods spent apart, studies suggest that people are using mobile and home telephones to create a form of virtual

connectedness that might substitute for physical co-presence (Laurier, 2001; Licoppe, 2004). Licoppe (2004:135-136) argues that:

> Communication technologies, instead of being used (however unsuccessfully) to compensate for the absence of our close ones, are exploited to provide a continuous pattern of mediated interactions that combine into 'connected relationships', in which the boundaries between absence and presence eventually get blurred. The real and virtual, therefore, are not dichotomous in the lives of these families.

A turning point in the history of telecommunications was marked in 2002 when the number of mobile subscribers overtook the number of fixed-line subscribers on a global scale. Mobiles thus became the dominant technology for voice communications (Srivastava, 2005:111). Communication technologies, such as mobile phones are more than just a "means" of communication (Goldring 1998; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). Phone cards, mobile phones and other mundane communication technologies "are increasingly used transnationally to link migrants and homelands in ways that are deeply meaningful to people on both ends of the line" (Horst, 2006:156). Cell phones do not replace face-to-face interactions; instead, they provide new opportunities for constructing a "co-presence" in spite of distance (Horst & Miller, 2006; Panagakos & Horst, 2006).

Mobile cellular has been the most rapidly adopted technology in history. Today it is the most popular and widespread personal technology on the planet, with an estimated 4.6 billion subscriptions globally by the end of 2009. In South Africa, Gary Marsden pointed out that while 12% of South Africans have internet access, 77% have mobile handsets (Williams, Anderson & Dourish, 2004).

Mobile telephones are affecting societies around the world. Intuitively, mobile communication extends users' ability to communicate, especially while accomplishing other tasks like riding in public transit, walking to a classroom or sitting at a café (Green, 2002; Rettie, 2005). The capacity of mobile phones to operate regardless of location gives rise to a new pattern of continuous mediated interactions that has become known as "constant touch," "perpetual contact" or "connected relationships" (Wajcman *et al.*, 2008:636). This blurring of the boundaries between absence and presence is associated with distinctive and more intense forms of connectedness (Wajcman, Bittman & Brown, 2008:636).

Mobile phones facilitate a social presence. Biocca and Harms (2002:14) define social presence as "a sense of being with another in a mediated environment, it is the moment-to-moment awareness of co-presence of a mediated body and the sense of accessibility of the other being's psychological, emotional, and intentional states." The exchange of telephone calls, including the use of mobile phones, between migrants and older parents is the most important channel of communication that maintains close emotional bonds between family members (Baldassar, 2007a, 2007b; King & Vullnetari, 2006). The frequency of calls increases when one or both parents are no longer in good physical or mental health, or one parent has been widowed (Baldassar, 2007b). Patterns of communication among migrants and their parents may show some changes over time remain almost unchanged (Uribe, 2013:272).

2.10.2   Short messages services (SMS)

The phenomenon termed short term message service, or SMS, multimedia message, or MMS, or simply texting, has developed rapidly since its mainstream introduction in 1995 (Kasesniemi & Rautiainen, 2002). Pettigrew's (2009:698) research shows that text messages are primarily used in relationships to commence, advance, maintain or otherwise influence interpersonal relationships.

Messaging via cell phones is a crucial example of how mediated communication may be reshaping distance and presence. Texting can create an ambient virtual co-presence and allows for communication of insignificant or non-urgent updates "predicated on the sense of ambient accessibility, a shared virtual space that is generally available between a few friends or with a loved one" (Ito & Okabe, 2005a:264). Transnational migrants can use social technologies like texting to cultivate this "ambient co-presence" among family members who are in other countries and to share information that would typically be inaccessible across geographic distances (Bacigalupe & Camara, 2012:7). The texts create a space between direct interaction and non-interaction. Some characteristics of e-mail and instant messaging are quite similar since they both rely on textual communication. They each filter out several channels of communication like vocal tone, volume and hand gestures (Pettigrew, 2009:699).

2.10.3 Electronic mail (e-mail)

In the late 1990s, the internet emerged and subsequently e-mail as a mode of communication, influenced how migrant families interacted. Wilding (2006:131) found that the migrant families who did adopt e-mail reported that their frequency of communication increased significantly as a result. Liechti and Ichikawa (2000:8) explain that electronic mail is the most common computer-mediated communication (CMC). In domestic environments, it is essentially used to sustain conversations (with family, friends and people met online) and for interactions with commercial and administrative entities. Factors that explain the wide popularity of e-mail are the following:

- it's relatively easy to use and does not require long learning;
- e-mail is already ubiquitous as almost everybody has an e-mail address;
- e-mail is an interesting alternative to traditional communication tools;
- writing an e-mail requires much less effort than writing a letter and is cheaper than making a long distance call (Liechti & Ichikawa, 2000:8).

Short e-mail messages, about "nothing in particular," are exchanged several times a day (Wilding, 2006:131). Benda, Davis, Francis, Gibbs, Howard, Landale, Kay, Kummerfeld and Vetere (2005:1) state that these phatic exchanges do not inform. They do not express a particular thought or aim to exchange facts about the world. They do however strengthen social bonds and establish and maintain the possibility of communication. Liechti and Ichikawa (2000:8) view these apparently insignificant messages as far from being useless and state the following: "In many cases, what is important is not so much the content of the message, but rather the simple fact that the message has been sent." The message, by its mere transmission, connects the sender to the receiver.

For Liechti and Ichikawa (2000:8), the real function of "e-mail is sometimes not to support the exchange of explicit messages, but rather to convey a general sense of being connected to each other." More significant than what is said in these exchanges is the moment of exchange itself, which reinforces a sense of the relationship between sender and receiver, "filling in absence by a sort of incantation"

(Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005:331). The fact of "communicating" may be seen as just as important as its content (Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005:331).

The participants in the Lindley *et al.* (2008:1698) study found that e-mails are in some respects similar to letters. A value was the ease with which content could breach long distances and time zones in ways that letters and phone calls could not. Regardless of whether people actually knew what their kin were doing at a distance, the exchange of frequent, informal and spontaneous e-mails was important to give them the impression of such knowledge. E-mails aided in creating a strong sense of shared space and time that overlooked the realities of geographic distance and time zones. The instantaneity of e-mail communication aided migrants to feel more closely connected to their kin in the home country.

In their research, Licoppe and Smoreda (2005:331) revealed that the introduction of e-mail as a specific ICT has transformed the transnational family. The primary advantage of e-mail is that it provides a sense of transcending time and space, which contributes to a perception of intimate connectedness. Their study further revealed that families saw this capacity for connection as improving the overall quantity and quality of contact that occurred. Previously, geographic distance had been a significant barrier to taking part in the lives of those who live far away. ICTs enabled shared social fields to be constructed across vast distances. In their descriptions of the impact of e-mail on family life, interviewees often described that it made them feel more closely connected with their kin overseas.

Electronic mail was the most common computer-mediated communication tool used by the parent left behind to stay in touch with their children. The barriers of vast geographical distances and living in different time zones was overcome by using this medium because parents were able to send instantaneous e-mails to their children without their children having to be simultaneously available. However, parents mentioned that their children and/or grandchildren did not always respond to all their questions or concerns, indicating that their responses were selective and not as spontaneous as they would have been during a face-to-face conversation. Some elderly participants did not have the necessary computer hardware and software to communicate via e-mail and in addition, a few elder parents were not computer literate and preferred traditional means of communicating.

2.10.4 Social networking

A social networking service is a platform to build social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections (Wikipedia, 2014). It is a website on the internet that brings people together in a central location to talk, share ideas and interests or make new friends. This type of collaboration and sharing of data are often referred to as social media.

Facebook is a computer-mediated social networking system that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around the world. People use Facebook to keep in touch with friends and family, post photos, share links and exchange other information in order to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them (Webopedia, 2014). According to the Facebook website founded in 2004, "Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected" (Facebook, 2014).

Facebook is a mass communication tool that emigrants use to communicate with their families back home. Facebook enables its users to present themselves in an online profile, hoard ''friends'' who can post comments on each other's pages, and view each other's profiles. Facebook users can see only the profiles of confirmed friends and the people in their networks. "Facebook members can also join virtual groups based on common interests, see what classes they have in common and learn each others' hobbies, interests, musical tastes, and romantic relationship status through the profiles" (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007:1143).

2.10.5 Skype

Skype uses an internet connection that combines voice, video and instant messaging in order for users to communicate (Businessdictionary.com, 2014). Skype.com (2014) explains:

> Skype is for doing things together, whenever you're apart. Skype's text, voice and video make it simple to share experiences with the people that matter to you, wherever they are. You can share a story, celebrate a birthday, learn a language, hold a meeting, work with colleagues - just about anything you need to do together every day.

Technical issues can disrupt long distance communication, such as a Skype call picking up background noise, causing disruptive and unnecessary noise or the

Skype call failing to maintain a sturdy connection with both partners. These sorts of technical errors can cause serious disruptions in maintaining meaningful communication, but can sometimes be remedied if the participant is aware of what is causing the problem. In her study about the easily forgotten, Marchetti-Mercer's (2012a:384) research participants, irrespective of their age, kept in touch via Skype. From her research, conflicting themes emerged. Some participants found Skype useful and comforting while others experienced the use of this technology as frustrating and alienating.

In this study, the researcher found conflicting feelings regarding the use of Skype as a means of communication. Some parents found it very reassuring and others described it as artificial and too unreal. Often parents experienced technical difficulties with the video and sound transmission of images and found it annoying to communicate in this manner. Time zone differences also restricted the parents and their adult-child(ren) from communicating simultaneously and therefore limited meaningful communication.

2.10.6   Intergenerational online activities

Benda *et al.* (2005:2) investigated the possibilities for a diverse range of information communication technologies to support playful engagement between grandparents and grandchildren. Their research approach was inspired by ethnographic fieldwork methods and used the form of "domestic probes" to investigate the possibilities for grandparents and grandchildren to interact, communicate and play across a distance.

In their study, "*Maintaining long distance togetherness,"* Choo, Karamnejad and May, (2013) examined the use of Skype and a game called Minecraft to create feelings of long distance togetherness. The authors noted that adolescents are deeply immersed in electronic media and the use of software like Minecraft relates directly to them. The findings of their study indicated that using Skype together with Minecraft has the potential for generating togetherness through long distance communication, since they generate meaningful experiences and prolonged interpersonal encounters.

Fuchsberger, Murer, Wilfinger and Tscheligi (2011:2) recommend that intergenerational online activities take into account the fact that the relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is different, in many respects, from other types of relationships. The grandparents' life experience can benefit their grandchildren. Fuchsberger *et al.* (2011) recommends the online systems incorporate these special types of knowledge.

It is well documented that ongoing social connection between the young and the elderly increases a sense of wellbeing in both parties. Davis, Vetere, Francis, Gibbs and Howard (2008:191) state that it is difficult to maintain and cultivate intergenerational relationships where physical, temporal or social distances exist between grandparents and their grandchildren.

Grandparents, as research participants in this study, did not use intergenerational play as a means to establish or maintain a bond with their grandchildren or to create feelings of long distance togetherness. The researcher made the deduction that either the grandparents did not have the knowledge or the expertise to enable them to play virtual games with their grandchildren or their grandchildren were too young or simply not interested in playing games over the internet.

2.11 COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO REINFORCE TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS

At the beginning of the 20th century and up until the 80's, those who migrated from Europe to the United States or from any country to another, sent their families overseas mail and packages, which usually took several weeks or months to arrive. Then there was the telephone and expensive collect calls or long distance calls. However, the birth of new information and communication technologies has resulted in a radical shift in the extent, speed and intensity of communication flows. The use of ICTs is important for transnational families to construct a "connected relationship," enabling them to overlook their physical separation by time and space – even if only temporarily (Wilding, 2006:132).

The rise of the internet in the 1990s established an infrastructure for interaction among individuals throughout the world. Erickson (2010:1195) explained how technical developments and online social venues provide richer methods of

presenting ourselves and interacting with one another via images and videos whether at home, work, or on the go. Today's emigrants develop linkages, activities, lifestyles and ideologies that form a connection between their home country and the host country (Diminescu, 2008:567).

Transnational families inhabit post-modern spaces and communication across vast geographical distances occurs instantaneously (Parreñas, 2005:317). Studies of transnationalism have shown that rather than assimilating to their host society, cutting all ties to their homeland, many immigrants maintain close contact with family and friends, as co-nationals in diaspora, maintaining an awareness of events taking place back home (Burrell & Anderson, 2008:219).

Borkert *et al.* (2009:iv) state that migration is not a one way process and that migration connects. Migrants transmit messages, knowledge and remittances to their home countries and other places. They build social, economic and communication bridges and bonds. Migration processes have always entailed the transmission of messages and the development of tools that enable communication over long distances (Borkert *et al.*, 2009:iv).

Current trends on contemporary migration agree that today's migrants are the actors of a culture of bonds which they themselves have founded and which they maintain even as they move about. Typical of all groups on the move, this culture of bonds became visible and highly dynamic once migrants began to use modern information and communication technologies (Diminescu, 2008:567). Diminescu (2008:567) explains that it is increasingly rare to see migration as a movement between two distinct communities, belonging to widely separated places and characterised by independent systems of social relations. This "virtual" bond, via information and communication technologies, makes it easier than before to stay close to one's family and friends.

The social consequences of new information and communication technologies have engendered phrases such as the "annihilation of space" and "death of distance" (Cairncross, 1997). These phrases encapsulate the expectation that distance no longer limits communication between people, and as a result, existing social forms will be transformed and new media will emerge. Contemporary families have

experienced significant changes in the ways they interact as a result of new communication technology.

The manifold connections between ICT and migration flows have often been ignored and under-researched. This has led to the situation where even though the relevance of internet, mobile telephony and social computing has become widely acknowledged as crucial for accessing information and for developing, finding and maintaining social and professional contacts, there is still a critical lack of empirical data and theoretically sound approaches to the existing interactions between ICT and migration processes (Borkert *et al*., 2009:2-7). The most outstanding feature in the development of ICT over the last few years has been the multifunctional interconnection between the different uses and services they can supply, for instance, tools for economic and monetary transactions, socialising media, source for services and information and the means to control the migrants' movements (Borkert *et al*., 2009:9).

2.12   VIRTUAL CONNECTEDNESS VERSUS MUTUAL CO-PRESENCE

When discussing the transnational family, Thomas and Znaniecki cited in Skrbiš, (2008:232) noted, "Wherever there is emigration, dissolution of the family is progressing more rapidly than in groups whose members remain territorially united and live in the same conditions as their forefathers did." Skrbiš (2008:232) states that being a transnational migrant involves a reconfiguration of existing relationships with loved ones. The author explains that emigration does not imply a break-up of relationships but that much emotional investment goes into the maintenance of transnational contact with the left-behind family and significant others and they see the embodied co-presence as a penultimate goal.

Regular communication – whether through telephone calls, remittances, letters, voice recordings, SMS messages, photographs or visits - is part of life in transnational families (Asis, Huang & Yeoh, 2004; Levitt, 2001). Because of the distance that separates them, Baldassar (2007b:389) states that transnational family members are dependent on two types of technologies and two methods of communication to facilitate their transnational exchanges. These are:

- communication technologies, which occur across distance and provide virtual contact and;
- travel technologies, which allow people to visit each other (to be co-present) and have face-to-face contact.

The exchange of financial, practical and emotional support can occur through both (virtual and face-to-face) modes, but for obvious reasons, personal and accommodation support can only occur during visits (Baldassar, 2007b:389).

The concept of imagined and ideal families is an important emotional outcome in the parent-child relationship from a distance (Baldassar, 2007a, 2007b). This concept is used for exploring how adult-children and their older parents construct their ideal of family in a transnational context. Both children and older parents conceal or change the information they share with each other. They scrutinise what they want to share, because they do not want to worry the other unnecessarily (Baldassar, 2007b). For example, older parents may hide the fact that they are physically ill or depressed while adult-children may conceal information about marital or work problems (Baldassar, 2007b).

By projecting an ideal personal or family story, they give others what they want to hear. However, one important challenge faced by children and parents is that when information is manipulated, this may result in a lack of support and solidarity between parents and children (Baldassar, 2007a). Embodied co-presence can assist in eliminating manipulation and hiding of information. Visits provide a means to determine truth.

Technological transformations and advancements have increased our ability to stay in touch transnationally, not only in the manner, but also in the frequency with which we are able to communicate. It has made it possible to retain intergenerational bonds. Despite the tremendous advancement in communication technologies, the researcher found that nothing could substitute for the need of the left-behind to engage in eye-to-eye contact with their loved ones. The embodied physical co-presence was seen as the ultimate goal by the left-behind family. The overwhelming urge to embrace the adult-child(ren) and/or grandchildren cannot and never will be, replaced by any form of communication technology.

2.13   SUMMARY

Emigration is a global phenomenon and South Africa is no exception. Official statistics do not reflect the true extent of emigration from South Africa, which seems to be much higher than available figures reflect. When looking at reasons for emigration, the configuration of events leading to migration differs. Yet, there seems to be an interaction between the push factors from the country of origin and the pull factors of emigration to another country. In South Africa, the political climate and violent crime are seen as the most important reasons for emigration. The brain drain and the emigration of skilled people, is also of great concern.

Being an emigrant means living in "in-between spaces" – still connected to loved ones in the home country yet creating a new and purposeful life in a new country. These interconnected worlds have led to the term transnational migrants. Previously, these transnational emigrants might never have seen their loved ones again and for them to stay connected and maintain frequent contact was challenging. Transnational families have embraced internet communication technologies. Computer-mediated communication has changed the way these migrant's "worlds" connect. It facilitates immediacy and allows role players to be actively involved in each other's daily lives.

Information communication technologies allow geographically detached family members to maintain intergenerational relationships. This "virtual" bond makes it easier than before to stay close to one's family and friends. Technological transformations and advancements have increased our ability to stay in touch transnationally, not only in the manner, but also in the frequency by which we are able to communicate. Computer-mediated communication such as mobile phones, short message services, electronic mail, social networking and Skype are mediums that are used to transcend physical space and maintain and reinforce transnational relationships.

The use of landline telephones, the writing of letters, using postal services as well as transnational visits are the more conventional ways of communicating and remain important means to stay in contact. Although maintaining frequent and simultaneous contact with loved ones is possible with the latest communication

technologies, making new co-presence memories are only possible through transnational visits, when loved ones physically share the same space in time. Mutual co-presence was seen as the ultimate goal by the parent left behind.

In the following chapter, Post-parental intergenerational relationships will be discussed.

3.   CHAPTER 3: POST-PARENTAL INTERGENERATIONAL RELATION-SHIPS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, research on family relations has increasingly taken a multidimensional approach to studying adult intergenerational relationships. The focus is on geographic distance between generations, transnational caring, staying in touch and, more recently, the affection that one generation has for another. Each dimension of family relations is interconnected with others in ways that affect the wellbeing of all generations. Because of this interconnectedness, the social forces that influence one dimension of family relationships will indirectly influence others (Lawton, Silverstein & Bengtson, 1994:57).

Although concerns are frequently expressed about the weakening of intergenerational ties, Pillemer and Suitor (2002:602) state that evidence demonstrates the continued importance and influence of these linkages for both generations. Bengtson (2001:14) confirms this statement and explains that even though families have changed, they have not declined in importance and the increasing prevalence of multigenerational bonds represents a valuable resource for families. Geographic mobility increases physical distance between generations, yet, despite this, research suggests that familial bonds and the quality of relationships between parents and adult-children persist over distance (Climo, 1988:58).

In this chapter, the researcher focused on post-parental intergenerational relationships. The first aspects addressed distinguish between various generations, namely, Matures, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Millennial Generation, Generation C and Generation Z and specifically related to the South African context, the Born Free Generation. Demographic trends and their influence on families were discussed and applied to the South African framework. The family life cycle was outlined, the midlife phase was addressed, and particular attention was paid to the post-parental stage of life. The parent adult-child relationship was highlighted as well as the social dynamics and interconnectedness that exist between them. Intergenerational support and transnational caregiving and support between families were discussed as well as gender differences in transnational

caregiving and support between transnational families. Grandparenthood as part of the post-parental intergenerational relationships was investigated by focusing on various aspects such as the role of the grandparent and the influence of the parent in the development of grandparent-grandchild relationships. The chapter concluded with the predictors of contact between grandparent and grandchild.

3.2 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Elder and Rockwell (1978:1) explicate that the life-course perspective locates individuals in age cohorts and in a historical context. Generations are formed by the way historical events and moods shape their members' lives, and by the fact that these events and moods affect people very differently, depending on the phase of life they occupy at the time (Howe & Strauss, 2007:5). As each new generation or cohort enters the stream of history, the lives of its members are marked by the imprint of social change and, in turn, leave their imprint. "Birth cohort refers to the location of an individual in historical time as indexed by their year of birth" (Kuh, Shlomo, Lynch & Power, 2003:778). Each meaning of age informs a study of pathways through the age-differentiated life course and their developmental implications. "By locating people in historical context and in social order, the sociology of age orients research to the process by which historical change is expressed in life experience" (Elder & Rockwell, 1978:19).

Barber (1989:22) states: "A life course is not fixed but widely flexible. It varies with social change, not only with the changing nature of the family, the school, the workplace, the community, but also with changing ideas, values and beliefs." Matilda White Riley (1978) emphasised that the ways in which individuals experience and cope with life transitions vary from generation to generation.

Any society is the sum of its parts – the generations that coexist at that moment in time (Howe & Strauss, 2007:2). Each generation is different – raised differently, exposed to different external influences, with different values and norms. We are all formed by the generation in which we are born and raised and this affects our responses, expectations and the way we view the world around us (Lerm, 2010). Each generation is associated with an era characterised internally by continuity in social, economic and political trends, but is distinguished by major historical disconnections that sharply distinguish it from surrounding eras. Mattes (2011:3a)

points out that while all South Africans were shaped by the uninterrupted trends within each era, they were also affected in very different ways depending on their racial classification.

3.2.1 Matures

Matures, sometimes called the silent generation, were born between 1925 and 1945 and are characterised as a group that suffered through war and economic depression. Matures are considered conservative, conforming and as embracing traditional family values (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008:508). Howe and Strauss (2007:4) aptly state that the members of this era "came of age too late to be war heroes and too early to be youthful free spirits and instead became part of a lonely crowd of risk-averse technicians in an era in which early marriage, the invisible handshake and climbing the career ladder seemed to guarantee success."

3.2.2 Baby boomers

This generation was named baby boomers because of the great increase in birth rate following World War II (Lerm, 2010). According to Howe & Strauss (2007:3), baby boomers were born between 1943-1960 and are now aged between 55-72 (in 2015). Generations will differ slightly from country to country and from culture to culture. In South Africa, the baby boomer generation was born between 1950 and 1969 (Sustainable Employee Motivation, [sa]).

Along with Bill Gates, Steve Wozniak and the late Steve Jobs, this generation grew up with early technology (Stein, 2013). Lachman (2004:308-9) indicates that it is important to place the baby boomers in a socio-demographic context and to consider the implications for their midlife development. A number of factors stemming from the confluence of demographic, historical, and societal changes have created a unique set of circumstances. The most pronounced distinction is that the baby boomers represent an extremely large cohort (Easterlin, 1980).

While their incomes grew, boomers kept family sizes small, thanks to the availability of birth control and abortion (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006:2). Boomers tend to be individualistic, self-absorbed, cynical and focused on social causes. They experienced a shift away from the traditional family amidst changing work and family

roles, with new social roles for women and men. Boomers were raised in an era of social turmoil and changing sex roles, with women entering the workforce and men experiencing pressure to be more family-oriented. They also represent the first generation to care for children and aging parents at the same time (Kohl & McAllister, 1995 in Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2007:509). Howe and Strauss (2007:4) view baby boomers as indulged in post-war optimism: "Boomers refashioned themselves as yuppie individualists in an era of deregulation, tax cuts and entrepreneurship." As parents, boomers have developed very close individual relationships with their children. "Letting go" is the final frontier for these parents, who have made child rearing a major focus of their adult lives (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006).

Baby boomers appear to be experienced users of modern technologies as they have witnessed technological changes during their lifetime and are more open to new media and technologies than previous generations (Kumar & Lim, 2008:568; Brown, 2012). However, Silver (2014) states that the "greatest generation" (baby boomers) has had a mixed experience when it comes to adapting to new technology, or even keeping up with the almost obsolete. Baby boomers either are or are not adaptable – and as Silver (2014) explains – most of the adaptability has to do with "how much patience we, their affable and technology-savvy children, choose to exhibit." In this regard, Lerm (2010) points out that when baby boomers are exposed to online and digital media, the following categories are taken into consideration, namely, "avoiders, reluctant adopters and eager adopters, with some never being able to convert!" In order to adapt to new technology, you need to have a reason (Silver, 2014). Either you haven't retired yet or you have always worked alongside technology, creating a life-long interest. "Boomers are constantly adapting *if they choose to*. That is the difference: Choice vs. Need" (Silver, 2014).

3.2.3   Generation X

The "X" in Generation X refers to the namelessness of this group (Brown, 2012:3579). Beutell and Wittig-Berman (2008:508) state that the "Xers and boomers represent the largest two cohorts in the US workforce." Generation X, born between 1965 and 1976, now aged 39-50 (in 2015) grew up in an era of failing schools and marriages. This is a time when the collective welfare of children sank to the bottom

of the nation's priorities and dozens of films portrayed children who were literally demons or throwaway survivalists. Xers were the first generation with large numbers of single-parent families because of high divorce rates, where the "traditional family" was not the modal family structure (Howe & Strauss, 2007).

Surveys (and pop culture) point to greater risk-taking among the youth of this generation and crime and teen pregnancy rates soared during this time. After navigating a sexual battleground of AIDS and blighted courtship rituals as young adults, Xers have dated cautiously and married late. Many of them have begun to construct the strong families that they missed in childhood. In jobs, they prefer free agency to corporate loyalty, with three in five saying that someday "I want to be my own boss." They are seen by the baby boomers as "The Rebels." Of all the generations born in the twentieth century, Generation X contains the largest share of emigrants (Howe & Strauss, 2007:4).

In the South African context, Generation X have a strong sense of individualism, possibly affected by the establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961, the same year the ANC took up arms against the South African Government (African National Congress, 2011). Generation X are very diverse in aspects of society such as race, class, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

As with baby boomers, when exposing Generation X to online and digital media, it needs to be taken into consideration that many of them were born before the existence of digital technology and have had to adopt it (Lerm, 2010).

3.2.4   Generation Y and Millennial Generation

Generation Y was born more or less between 1980 and 1994, now aged between 21 and 35 (in 2015). Members of this generation are often early adopters of new technologies and extensive users of the internet and mobile services (Kumar & Lim, 2008:568).

The Millennial Generation (born 1982 to roughly 2005, now aged 33 or younger) arrived after the consciousness revolution. This revolution gave rise to feminist, environmental and black power movements and to a steep rise in violent crime and family breakup. The Millennials are seen as the "Digital Natives." They thrive on

communication via social media, e-mail and SMS's. Millennials are also known as the eco boomers, due to their increased awareness of health and environment responsibilities (Lerm, 2010).

3.2.5 Generation C and Generation Z

Generation C, also known as the content generation, were born between 1988 and 1993, now aged between 22 and 27 (in 2015) (Trendwatching.com [sa]). This generation has the web at their fingertips and heaps of applications on their cell phones to share content (Lerm, 2010). Born completely within technology, with access to the internet, instant messaging, mp3, mobile phones and YouTube, this generation is also called the "Superficial Extraverts." Generation C is a powerful new force in culture and commerce, with sixty-five percent under 35 years of age and empowered by technology to search out authentic content that they consume across all platforms and all screens, whenever and wherever they want (Think Newsletter, 2013).

Generation Z have never known a world without the internet, cell phones or iPods. Experts disagree on when exactly Generation Z began. Some argue that the original members were born as early as 1991 and as late as 2001, while others contend that anyone born after 1995 is part of Generation Z (Looper, 2015). This group ranges from 14 to 24 (in 2015), has lived their entire life with instant access to huge amounts of data on any topic that drifts through their imaginations. Their technological confidence is paramount. They have a sense of social justice, philanthropy and maturity that comes with growing up during one of the most severe economic recessions in history (Looper, 2015).

What comes next? It has been suggested that the next generation, born from 2010 will be called "Generation Alpha." Lerm (2010) speculates that the scales might balance in this generation between excessive use of digital technology and face-to-face social interaction (Lerm, 2010).

In this study, the research participants were from the cohort of the matures and baby boomers, their adult-children were from Generation X and their grandchildren from Generations C and Z.

3.3   DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON FAMILIES

Changes in the demographic structure of families have important implications for family behaviour (Bengtson, 2001:1). Demographic trends involve increased longevity, decreased fertility and a high divorce rate. These trends have prompted gerontologists to predict the emergence of beanpole families in which four or five generations are alive simultaneously, but each generation comprises fewer members than in the past (Adams & Blieszner, 1995:213). Hagestad (2006) refers to this as "too heavy" families, with more grandparents than grandchildren. The spread of the "beanpole family" will result in fewer grandchildren, but on the other hand, rising average life expectancies will increase the average number of years that each person spends, both as a grandchild and as a grandparent (Hoff, 2007:660). The importance of extended family relationships is enhanced simultaneously with the increase in the number of generations alive at the same time as well as with the "longer years of shared lives."

The longevity revolution of the 20th century has enhanced the probability that parents and children co-survive each other into middle age (Uhlenberg, 1980). The number of years of shared lives between generations is greater than at any time in history. The life courses of children and parents can be described as co-biographies, implying high levels of interdependence (Hagestad in Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006:947). Most grandparents and grandchildren will experience at least twenty years, even thirty or forty years or more of intergenerational overlap (Kemp, 2003). Silverstein and Bengtson (1997:43) report that the increase in the length of period of shared lives between adult generations has raised the possibility that later-life intergenerational relationships will be characterised by greater solidarity as the needs of older parents become more acute. Increased life expectancy has expanded the supply of older relatives in kinship networks and resulted in an increase in the prevalence of four- and even five-generation lineages in modern societies (Kemp, 2003; Uhlenberg, 1996).

Knox and Schacht (2013:479) define the "sandwich generation" as adults who provide family caregiving to their elderly parents and their own children simultaneously. Increasingly large numbers of those in midlife have parents who are living longer and entering old age. The demands and rewards of caregiving and

multigenerational living are important aspects of middle-aged adults' lives. While they are raising or launching their own children and negotiating the demands of the workplace, concerns about parents' safety and health permeate many middle-aged lives (Putney & Bengtson, 2003).

The increasing prevalence and importance of multigenerational bonds in the 21st century represents a valuable resource for families (Bengtson, 2001:14). Bengtson (2001:5) predicts that multigenerational bonds will become more important than nuclear ties for wellbeing and for support to individuals and families over the course of their lives. This author proposes that these multigenerational bonds will not only enhance, but in some cases replace, nuclear family functions.

After considering general demographic trends worldwide, the focus will now move to demographic trends in the South African context.

3.3.1   Demographic trends and the South African population

The South African family is influenced by social factors, urban-rural migration and more recently, the AIDS pandemic. According to the National Planning Commission (NPC) (2011:98), South Africa's population growth rate is slowing, the birth rate is declining and life expectancy is increasing, though off a lower base because of HIV and AIDS. In South Africa, unemployment and HIV & AIDS have produced many more dependents than would normally be the case.

The way in which individuals experience and cope with life transitions varies from generation to generation, country to country and from continent to continent, and in South Africa, from culture to culture. Participants in this study were however mostly from the white segment of the population. Of the 24 participants, twenty were white, two were black and two Indian. This was due to the use of the snowballing sampling technique and is not indicative of the proportion of emigrants per race group.

Ethnic distribution in this study

Indian, 2
Black, 2

- White
- Black
- Indian

White, 20
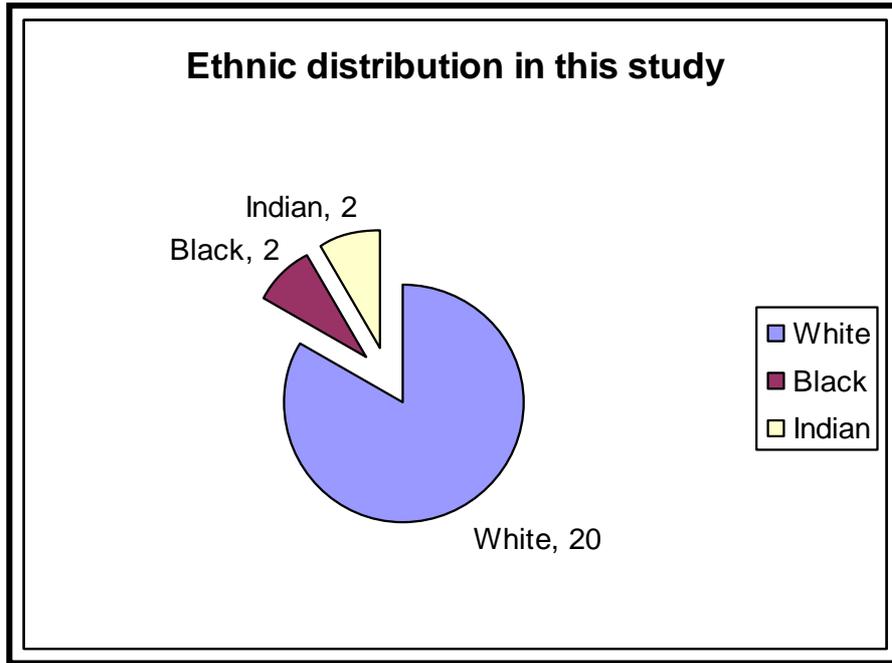
Figure 3.1: **Ethnic distribution of this study**

3.3.1.1   SA born frees

Mattes (2011a:6) explains that white confidence and African dormancy came to an abrupt end in 1976 with the Soweto uprisings and ushered in the Struggle Generation, consisting of people who turned 16 between 1976 and 1996. The principal theme of this period was violent resistance and reaction. Although the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners in 1990 could be seen as the start of a new era, Mattes (2011a) states that the sharp increase in political violence between 1990 and 1994 implies that it was really just a continuation of previous years of resistance, violence and reaction, rather than a significant departure.

The real watershed should be visible in the young people who came of age politically after 1996. In 1997, a group of people began to move through the ages of 16, 17 and 18 to enter the political arena with little, if any, first-hand experience of the trauma of the previous phases. This group is widely referred to in South Africa as the "born frees" (Mattes, 2011a:6).

Following a series of negotiations and years of liberation struggle, the first democratic election was held in South Africa on the 27th April 1994. This election changed the history of South Africa. For the first time, all races in the country went

to the polls to vote for a government of their choice. Nineteen political parties participated and twenty-two million people voted. South Africa's "born frees" – a nickname for those born in the year of the country's first free elections – turn 21 this year (in 2015), coming of age at the same time as a democratic SA (SouthAfrica.info, 2012).

The born frees make up a huge segment of the SA population. In 2008, the born frees constituted the second largest generational cohort. Many critics among older South Africans contend that they are apathetic and apolitical, unaware of the history of the struggle that improved their lives (Statistics South Africa, 2012; SouthAfrica.info, 2012).

The born frees are also known as the Mandela generation – they insist that their determination to look to the future and not the past is the greatest tribute they can pay him. The SouthAfrica.info (2012) website states:

> As a result of the combination of the disproportionate bulge in younger cohorts characteristic of rural Africa and declining family sizes amongst white, coloured and Indian South Africans (as well as urban blacks Africans) and white emigration, the born frees are the most likely of all generations to be black (83 percent) and rural (43 percent).

The born frees are slightly less likely to have at least obtained a high school degree (48 percent) than the preceding Struggle Generation (52 percent). Beyond formal education, the data also indicate that they are not any more "cosmopolitan" than their older counterparts: "they are not any more likely to be multi-lingual than the Struggle cohort nor are they any more likely to report using a cell phone, computer or internet" (Mattes, 2011a:11).
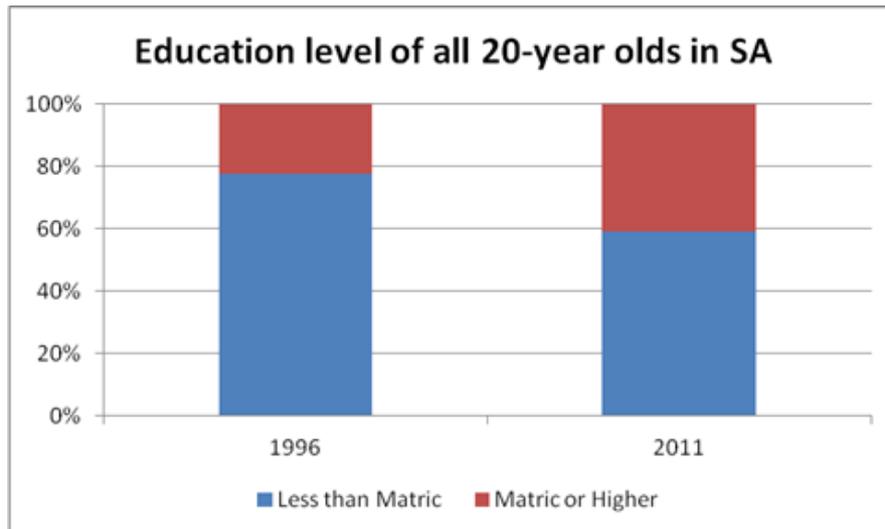
Figure 3.2: **Education level of 20-years olds in South Africa** (**Source: News24voices, 2015**)

In 1996, based on the census completed in that year, only 22.6% of South Africans aged 20 had a matric qualification or higher. By 2011, this proportion had almost doubled to 40.9%. This is a doubling of the proportion of 20-year olds with a tertiary (post matric) education from 6.2% in 1996 to 12.5% in 2011 (News24voices, 2015).

The born free generation – often known as millennials elsewhere – also tend toward optimism. Even young people from impoverished townships display an impressive enthusiasm, though for many life has changed little in material terms since the end of apartheid, and unemployment is worse (SouthAfrica.info, 2012). In many respects, many if not most of the "born frees" face the same levels of enduring unemployment, poverty, inequality and hopelessness as their parents, possibly even worse. The youngest generation confront other limits to their life chances in the form of escalating violent crime and HIV infection. From this perspective, many of the same theories of socialisation might produce very different expectations about the political orientations of the "born frees" or at least for some segments of this generation (Mattes, 2011b).

The born frees accentuate the unique situation we are dealing with in South Africa. The researcher speculates that this group might be more inclined to emigrate than previous generations.

3.4 FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

The family constitutes a basic unit of relationships and can be defined as persons who are related to each other either through blood, adoption or socially approved sexual unions (Makiwane & Chimere-Dan, 2010). When evaluating a family, single mothers, caregivers and guardians, reconstituted families, same-sex partners and polygamous relationships also need to be included (Holborn & Eddy, 2011:1). The family is at the hub of most occurrences that represent cultural continuity, such as social organisation, religion and ritual; it is the storeroom of specific cultural beliefs and practices and a primary source of cultural meaning (Becker, Beyene, Newsom & Mayen, 2003:S152). In her historic study of families, Hareven (1991:115) concluded that the family provided continuity: "it was both a custodian of tradition and an agent of change."

A household is defined as an arrangement made by persons, individually or in groups that are not necessarily related, to provide themselves with food and other essentials for living (Makiwane & Chimere-Dan, 2010:139). Intergenerational household trends can be explained according to the relative access to opportunities and success of children. Those who are able to successfully find opportunities to develop a career will leave their childhood households, while those without career or income prospects are not able to leave and remain the responsibility of their ageing parents (Makiwane, 2010). Intergenerational households are common in South Africa.

The family life cycle approach remains one of the most popular frameworks for studying changes in family life over time (Gardner, 1990:77). Hill (1986:21) views the stages of development as periods of relative equilibrium in which consensus about the allocation of roles and rules of procedure is high. This author states that several categories lead to eight mutually exclusive stages of family development:

- Stage 1: Establishment stage – childless, newly married
- Stage 2: Childbearing first parenthood – family with infant to 3 years
- Stage 3: Family with pre-school child – oldest 3-6 years
- Stage 4: Family with school child – oldest 6-12 years
- Stage 5: Family with adolescents – oldest 13-20 years

- Stage 6: Family as launching centre – leave taking of children
- Stage 7: Family in middle years – post-parental empty nest
- Stage 8: Family in retirement – breadwinners in retirement

Hill's (1986:23) phase structure portrays the increasing complexity in interpersonal relationships over the first 15 years of marriage. This period is followed by a brief 7-year period of stability in numbers, yet this is a period of dramatic changes in competences and assertiveness of children passing through or negotiating adolescence into young adulthood. Hill (1986:23) views the next stage of launching children into homes of their own as a prototype of the transition period of disorganisation and change, ending with spouses in the post-parental phase.

Hill (1986:23) constructed a theoretical schema to depict the stages of family development using the criteria for stage demarcation by Duvall (1957) and Hill (1986) and the transitions by Rapaport (1963). Major family goals are as follows:

- Adjusting to living as married couple/pair.
- Reorganising of unit around needs of infants and pre-school children.
- Reorganising of family to fit into expanding worlds of school-agers.
- Loosening family ties permitting greater freedom, heavier responsibility to members.
- Reorganising of family into equalitarian units and releasing of members, exiting and temporary returning.
- Reorganising of family around remaining married pair. Strategy of selective disengagement and distancing from launched units.
- Disengagement from work and selective engagement into new activities.

The adult-children of the research participants of this study were in phases ranging from the establishment phase to childbearing and pre-school family, families with adolescents and some were in the launching phase. Since all of the participants were in the midlife and post-parental stages, these phases will be discussed in more detail.

3.5 MIDLIFE AND POST-PARENTAL STAGES OF LIFE

As seen in the pie chart below, participants in this study were in the age bracket 50-79 years, therefore participants were in the midlife and post-parental stages of their lives.
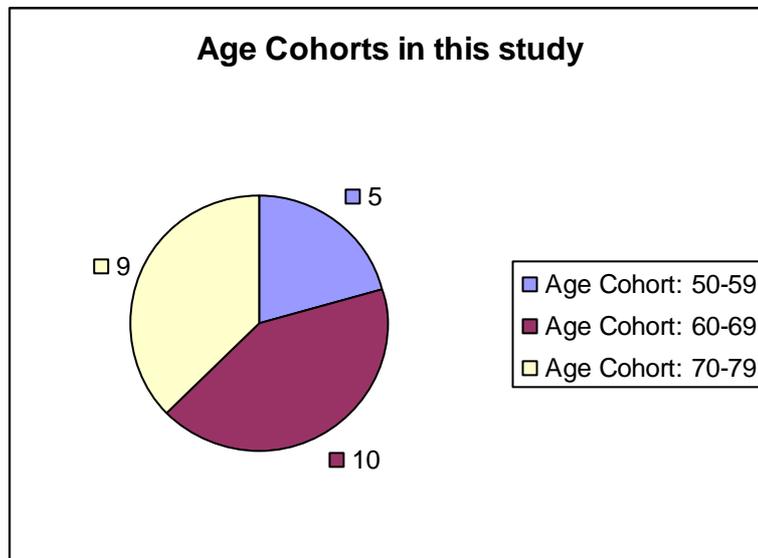
Figure 3.3: **Age cohorts in this study**

Midlife, the afternoon of life, as Jung (1933:108) called it in his essay on "*The Stages of Life,*" has become a period of great interest to scholars of the lifespan:

> Thoroughly unprepared we take the step into the afternoon of life; worse still, we take this step with the false presupposition that our truths and ideals will serve us as hitherto. But, we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life's morning – for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie.

Most surveys report that midlife is a relatively long period, lasting from 20 to 40 years. Forty is seen as the modal entry year and 60 is the modal exit year. Those between ages 40 and 60 are typically considered middle-aged, but there is at least a 10-year range on either end, so it is not uncommon for some to consider middle age to begin at 30 and end at 75 (Lachman, 2004:311). Another way that midlife has been defined is through the developmental process that an individual undergoes during his/her lifespan.

The population explosion of middle-aged adults and the increased knowledge about this age period have led to the identification of midlife as a segment of the lifespan

worthy of study in its own right (Lachman, 2004:307). It is important to study the middle years, not only because of the large numbers of adults currently in this stage, but also because this period covers a large portion of an individual's lifespan. Life events such as teenage children leaving home (the empty nest), becoming a grandparent, reaching career goals, or experiencing menopause are typically associated with becoming middle-aged. Lachman (2004:307) therefore recommends that more studies on this period be undertaken and stresses the importance of determining whether the knowledge we have about midlife is tied to specific cohorts such as the baby boomers.

Lachman (2004:305) views the field of midlife in development as emerging in the context of large demographic shifts in population. She further states that midlife is a period in the lifespan characterised by a complex interplay of multiple roles. Midlife is often seen as a time of reflection but not in the same way as the life review that occurs in later life, when time left is presumably shorter and emotional goals are more salient than informational ones (Erikson, 1963). Lachman (2004:306) explains that the middle-aged adult has much to offer society, regarding the welfare of other's children, parents, co-workers, other family members and friends. This author views midlife as a period of complexity, with the juxtaposition of peaks and valleys across social, psychological and physical domains. This phase also includes positive changes such as wisdom and practical intelligence (Lachman, 2004:307).

Erikson (1982) defines middle adulthood as the ages between 40-65 years. The stage or crisis that an individual works through during this period is called generativity versus stagnation. During this stage, adults are particularly concerned with procreating along with being responsible for future generations of young adults. Thus, their primary role is to provide leadership and mentoring to these individuals. Moreover, it is also a time for being productive and creative (Bahr, 1996:17).

Erikson (1963) points out that the tasks of middle age rest upon successful resolution of earlier tasks. At each stage there is a crisis, in the sense of a transition or turning point. Erikson (1950) described central psycho-social crises at various phases. He called this crisis for older parents as one of integrity versus despair. The middle years is a period when the middle-aged child is challenged by the biological changes of aging, demands of his or her family and financial obligations, while the

older parent is in the process of experiencing changes as a result of retirement, decreasing health or death of a spouse (Krause & Haverkamp, 1996:83).

The emphasis on midlife is what remains to be done: "The predicament of being in the middle of life may be an impetus for change but not necessarily a crisis" (Lachman, 2004:310). In middle adulthood, the central theme is generativity versus stagnation. The associated tasks involved are concerned with producing, nurturing and guiding the next generation. The multifaceted and multidimensional view of generativity in the domains of parenting and societal involvement, reflect the critical role that commitment to others plays in the development of wellbeing in midlife (Lachman, 2004:316). The adult-child's relationship with his or her parents will be influenced by the characteristics of the life stages experienced by each.

Most of the participants in this study were in the midlife phase. Their children were independent and lived their own lives. Reflecting on life was definitely part of this phase. The ambiguity of their situation was accentuated when the participants reflected on their life stage and how they had envisioned it to be.

3.5.1　　Post-parental phase

Research on the post-parental phase was virtually non-existent prior to the mid-1950s. Gavan (in Deutcher, 1964:52) defines the post-parental phase as follows: "The post-parental couple are the husband and wife, usually in their forties or fifties. The most obvious change is the withdrawal of children from the family, leaving husband and wife as the family unit." The reason for this new phase is increasing longevity coupled with a decline in the average number of children when compared with earlier generations (Deutcher, 1964:52). Harkins (1978:549) writes that the term "empty nest" refers to that period in life when children have finally grown up and left home.

Huyck (1995:415) suggests that in the "empty nest" or "post-parental" phase, parenting fades in importance. Barber (1989:22) explicates that researchers investigating parental responses to empty-nest transition have largely ignored the possible influence of cohort membership. In this regard, Barber (1989:22) notes that persons launching a child at one point in history might have evaluated it quite

differently from a group that has experienced the empty-nest transition at another time.

Mitchell and Lovegreen (2009:1653) view the empty-nest transition as a normative event – a developmental phase in midlife whereby parents expect their children to leave and become independent. Mitchell and Lovegreen (2009:1651) define empty nest as the process of "launching" children from the parental home and the response parents have to their children's leaving. The authors further state that empirical findings with regard to empty nest are equivocal. On one end of the empty nest continuum, parents (especially mothers) experience detrimental effects when their children leave home. At the other end of the continuum, the empty nest is seen as a positive time for parents, an opportunity for reconnection and a time to rekindle interests.

In research concerning "transition to empty nest," Clifton Barber (1989:16) looked at the various aspects of this new phenomenon. The author found that there is no one event that signals the transition to the empty nest, but rather a sequence of events – a launching process, "a gradual weaning." He explains that the departure of one's children is a gradual process, not an abrupt change of status resulting from the occurrence of any particular event.

Barber (1989:19) aptly asks the question why the "empty nest syndrome" has been used to describe woman but not men. According to the author, the rhetoric of American society has proclaimed parenting as reserved primarily for woman and has seen childrearing as a major focus and key source of identity in a woman's life. Most of the mothers in Hagestad's study (cited in Barber, 1989), reported that it contributed to their sense of wellbeing. In 1977, Williams (in Barber, 1989:19) reasoned that housewives experience the empty nest period as particularly stressful because:

- They are experiencing loss of the maternal role.
- They have been overprotective and over involved in the lives of their children.
- They believed that if they subordinate all their own needs to that of their children, they would be content.

There is little support for the notion that empty nest pertains solely to women. Barber (1989:22) states that the wellbeing of fathers can also be affected. Hagestad (in Barber, 1989:18) aptly states that a major problem with studying empty nest is the lack of conceptual and theoretical interpretations of the positive effect of children leaving home. These results lend further credibility to prior studies indicating that the empty nest is not a particularly stressful period in most women's lives, and hence, is not a major source of threat to psychological or physical wellbeing. "The only threat to the wellbeing of the mother may be in having a child who does not become successfully independent when expected" (Harkins, 1978:555).

Participants in this research study were in the "empty nest" phase. Their ages ranged from 52 to 79 years. The younger parents left behind were in the empty nest phase with an added dimension – the geographical distance that enhanced the empty nest feeling. The older participants had already experienced an empty nest phase when their young adult-child left their home and/or was married. Those that had grandchildren felt that they had not only "lost" their adult-child but also their grandchildren, to emigration. Gender differences were clearly visible during this phase. Most of the males in this study were still working when their children emigrated for the first time. Some of the women were working and some were full-time mothers. The more involved the mother had been with her adult-children and the grandchildren the more difficult it was for her to adapt to the children not being geographically reachable.

3.6   INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Parent-child relationships are considered to be among the most important relationships adults have. Unlike other relationships (e.g. spouse or friend), the parent-child relationship is one that denotes a high degree of bonding across the entire life cycle (Hagestad, 1984; Krause & Haverkamp, 1996:82). Literature suggests that parents remain heavily invested in their children's lives throughout their life course (Pillemer & Suitor, 1991:586) and that preserving high-quality relationships is primarily a responsibility of families themselves. Awareness may be raised that maintaining high quality relationships with one's children or one's parents requires active commitment (Merz, Schuengel & Schulze, 2009:547).

In a world where many social relationships are temporary, fleeting and bounded by instrumental goals, Climo (1992:1) affirms that the parent-child bond remains distinctive because of its capacity to thrive and endure throughout the lives of both generations. Climo (1992) states that no one can say for sure how they will respond to the newest challenges of civilisation. The distant living arrangements resulting from frequent moves and the aging revolution have dramatically increased the human lifespan, presenting challenges to the adult-child and elderly parent.

John Bowlby (1988:xiii) in his book "*A secure base parent-child attachment and healthy human development*," makes the following statement:

> Engaging in parenthood therefore is playing for high stakes. Furthermore, because successful parenting is a principal key to the mental health of the next generation, we need to know all we can both about its nature and about the manifold social and psychological conditions that influence its development for better or worse.

In their study of family relationship history, Whitbeck, Hoyt and Huck (1993:1034) found that early family relationships have important intergenerational implications. Consistent with the social interaction approach of Patterson (1982, 1986), Whitbeck *et al.* (1993:1034) found that early family interaction processes might set in motion chains of events that affect family members' interaction styles and expectations of one another throughout their lives. Relationship histories not only continue to affect interactions between the participants throughout the life course, they also may have effects across generations (Whitbeck *et al.*, 1993:1034).

Moss and Moss (1992:264) state that in most families, consistency and continuity in relationships have developed over many decades and the basic quality of the tie persists over time. They believe that the affectual bond between parent and child is heavily weighted by memories of the past, resentments and conflicts. The author's further postulate that the positives and negatives are not opposite poles of one dimension and may be interdependent of each other.

3.6.1   Social-structural dynamics between parent and adult-child

In her study on the relationship between adult-children and their parents, with attention given to the psychological consequences for both, Umberson (1992) emphasised the value of a social structure and personality paradigm for

understanding structural determinants of intergenerational relationships. There are several reasons why the parent-child relationship is a particularly strong and unique source of social integration for both. Umberson (1992:665) give the following five reasons:

- The relationship is generally permanent and largely involuntary;
- Children are initially dependent on their parent(s) for survival and both are affected by this dependence. Both parent and child carry this distinctive history with them throughout the life course;
- Societal norms strongly encourage the continued social identity of parents and children with one another throughout the life course;
- Parents and children share many social values and attitudes; and
- The life spans of parents and children overlap more now than at any other time in history.

Results of Umberson's (1992:673) study provide evidence that an individual's structural circumstances influence the quality of the relationship between adult-children and parents and, in turn, the quality of those relationships is associated with psychological functioning of both generations. Umberson (1992:666) states: "the parent-child relationship represents a unique and powerful form of social integration and there are social structural features of the relationship that endow it with great importance for both generations." Umberson (1992:666) further suggests that because of its unique history and social-structural dynamics, the family may provide a rare enduring social tie in the contemporary society fabric that has important consequences for the psychological functioning of parents and adult-children.

Various studies undertaken concerning the parent-child relationship have focused on aspects that might influence this relationship of closeness. Umberson (1992:665) stresses that not all parent-child relationships are of the same quality, nor should all individuals be expected to be equally reactive to the quality of the relationship. The social-structural context in which the family is embedded will influence both the quality and the psychological consequences of involvement in the relationship. At least three dimensions of structural context affect the quality and importance of intergenerational relationships (Umberson, 1992:666).

- **Family structure**

These features include marital and parental status. Umberson, (1992:665) explains that marital and parental status are important features: "Intergenerational relationships may be more important to the psychological functioning of those individuals who are more reliant on the relationship because of the structural need or who lack alternative sources of social integration and support."

- **Socio-economic resources**

Individuals of lower socio-economic status may rely more on the parent-child relationship for support and financial assistance (Rossi & Rossi in Umberson, 1992:666). Children and parents in the higher socio-economic brackets may be less involved in the intergenerational relationship (Umberson, 1992:666).

- **Socio-cultural influences**

There is a strong indication that socio-cultural experiences of woman lead them to be more involved in and more responsive to relationships with others than men. Umberson (1992:666) suggests that intergenerational relationships are more central to mother's and daughter's psychological health than to the psychological health of fathers and sons. This author views age as a social stratification variable that is strongly associated with life experiences. Aging parents face retirement, reductions in income, prospects of grandchildren and impending death.

Umberson (1992:666) suggests that these factors may contribute to the increased interest in and opportunities for contact and involvement with adult-children. In conclusion, this author states that the structural circumstances of parents and adult-children should influence both the general quality of intergenerational relationships and their psychological reactivity to those relationships.

3.6.2 Interconnectedness between parent and adult-child

For Moss and Moss (1992:260), Bowlby's (1998) conceptualisation of family bonds suggests that a major aspect of parent-child relationships is attachment, which tends to persist over a lifetime, often presenting a continuous source of security.

"From early childhood the attachment is strong – each member of the dyad seeing the other as unique and irreplaceable." Moss and Moss (1992:262) explain that the parent and child have a long-term commitment to each other since they have a shared history, which has formed the context of both their lives. Each can validate and affirm the reality of the earlier years of the other.

Parent-child closeness is a critical component of human existence and is among the most enduring. Golish (2000:79) indicates that the parent-child bond, or the absence thereof, tends to remain with us, if not physically then mentally. Golish (2000:81) describes three factors that can fuel or stimulate changes in closeness in parent-child relationships, namely stress or crisis events, age and distance. First, closeness can increase or decrease dramatically during times of crisis. Often, it is the points of crisis in our lives that alter the nature of closeness in our relationships and the way we think about those relationships. The second significant factor is the age of the child and parent. In general, the older the offspring and parents become, the more positively they view their relationships with each other and the closer they become emotionally (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). This finding may partially be attributed both to developmental and social influences. They also found that people reported greater degrees of closeness with their parents as they increased in age, despite negative attitudes towards parents in their teenage years.

The third factor according to Golish (2000:81) is associated with changes in closeness in parent-child relationships is physical distance. While children who feel closer to their parents may live closer to them (Bengtson & Harootyan, 1994), the relationship between physical and affective closeness is not consistently found (Troll & Fingerman, 1996). Cicirelli (in Golish, 2000:82) contended that closeness might be more covert or psychological than overt. He argued that other people become mental representations in one's mind, and these mental representations are used to achieve feelings of psychological closeness, even when there is no direct physical contact. Cicirelli (in Golish, 2000:82) therefore suggests that parents become part of their children's personality and mental schemata, and they can achieve feelings of closeness without physical contact. Thus, closeness is best conceptualised in psychological terms.

Hoff (2007:647) found that older parents consistently report higher levels of closeness and consensus in their relationship with their children than do the children of these parents. The two generations have different "stakes" in the mutual relationship. Hoff (2007:647) explains that parents tend to be more concerned with family continuity and preserving close relationships within the family, whereas children tend to be most concerned with defending their individuality and retaining their autonomy and independence. Consequently, "... parents tend to overstate intergenerational solidarity and to underestimate intergenerational conflict. In contrast, children tend to show less commitment to intergenerational solidarity and overstate conflicts" (Hoff, 2007:648).

Research by Pillemer and Suitor (2002:602) has demonstrated that individuals are more likely to develop and maintain supportive relationships with others who are similar to them on important social dimensions. Three related dimensions of similarity appear to be especially salient to understanding parent and child relations.

- Firstly, evidence points to improved relations when parents and children are more similar in educational attainment.
- Secondly, greater value similarity has been found to promote intergenerational closeness.
- Thirdly, gender similarity is associated with greater closeness, particularly in the case of mothers and daughters.

Silverstein and Bengtson (1997:432) identified six principal dimensions of solidarity between generations. These dimensions are:

- *Structure*: factors such as geographic distance that constrain or enhance interaction between family members;
- *Association*: frequency of social contact and shared activities between family members;
- *Affect*: feelings of emotional closeness, affirmation, and intimacy between family members;
- *Consensus*: actual or perceived agreement concerning opinions, values and lifestyle between family members;

- *Function*: exchanges of instrumental and financial assistance and support between family members; and
- *Norms*: strength of obligation felt toward other family members.

Literature has shown that parents' health affects the quality of parent adult-child relations. Pillemer and Suitor (2002:605) found that decline in a parent's health results in decreased closeness and attachment between the generations. Looking through an intergenerational lens, research on aging parent adult-child relations shows that the quality of the parent-child relationship, as assessed by variables such as affection and communication, is positively related to parental psychological wellbeing (Mancini & Blieszner, 1989:280-281).

Parents left behind in this study tried to stay connected with their adult-children even across geographical distance. The attachment that was formed over the years could not be diminished by the emigration. This was also true in the case of a relationship that was experienced as negative. History could not be reshaped and the relationship remained as it was before the emigration.

3.7   INTERGENERATIONAL SUPPORT

As the population is aging, the number of older people in need of care is expected to increase. In addition to older people's spouses, their adult-children are an important informal source of care. Because life expectancy is increasing, adult-children are likely to provide care to their parents for a longer period of time. Much research has been conducted on filial caregiving and how children organise the help they give to their older parents (Matthews, 2002). The quality of the parent-child relationship is related to the exchange of support and how the reciprocity of this exchange (or the lack of it) affects the quality of the relationship, as reciprocity is considered a universal norm in social relationships. The stability of social relationships is thus based on the expectation that the help and support given to another person will be reciprocated in an adequate period of time and in a contingent way (Gouldner, 1960 in Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Albert & Mayer, 2005:398).

Intergenerational support exchange patterns change across the life course. Merz *et al.* (2009:543) view the balance in the flow of intergenerational help and support as varying according to different developmental phases during the lifespan. The

intergenerational flowchart by Arber (2012:217) illustrates the nature of intergenerational flow. The chart provides a schematic representation of the nature of different types of intergenerational support between family members, which for illustrative purposes, comprises four generations. There are four main types of intergenerational flow, namely,

- financial and material flows;
- co-residence;
- care or support for children; and
- care or support for frail, older people.

The first two flows may occur in either direction as upwards or downwards flows, while the final two are largely unidirectional. The prevalence of each of these inter-generational flows and their directionality are interconnected.
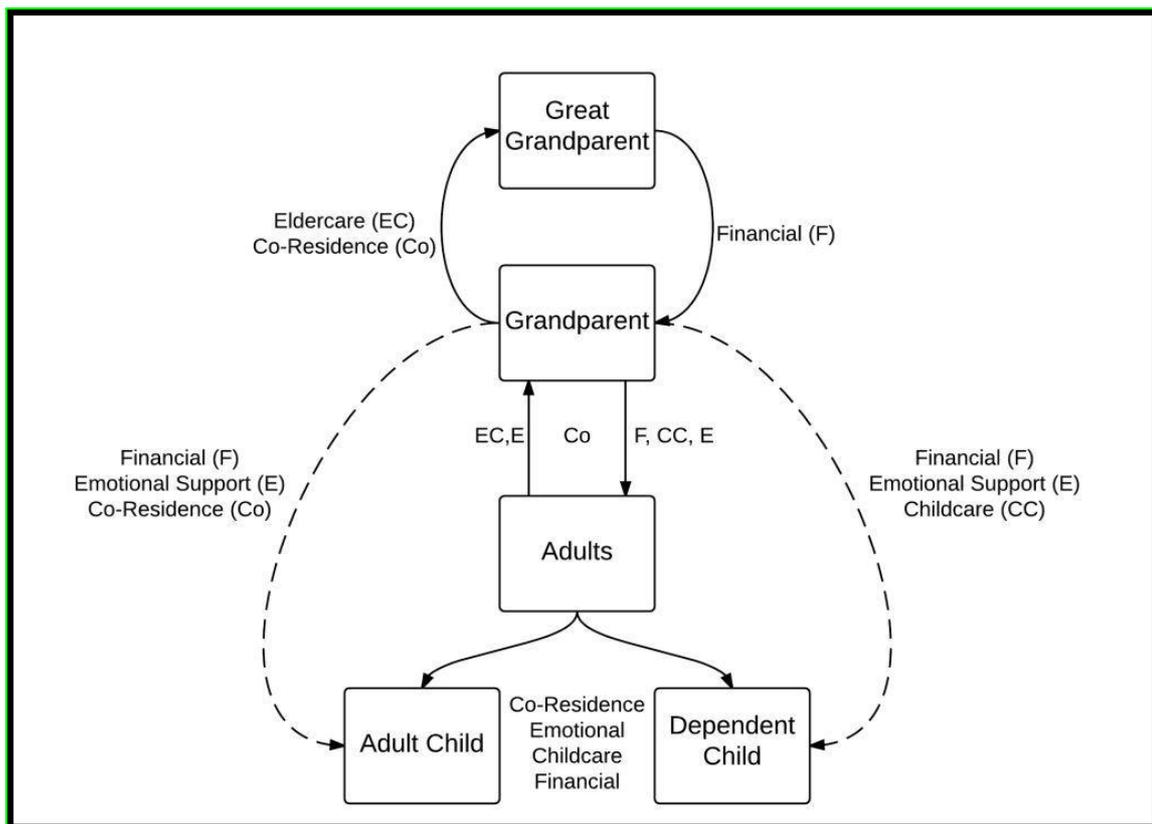
Figure 3.4: **Nature of intergenerational transfer between generations**

Keys: F = Financial and material support; Co = Co-residence, CC = Childcare, EC = Eldercare, E = Emotional support (**Source:** Arber, 2012:217).

Representative studies from several Western countries underline the large amount of financial, instrumental and emotional support that is given by parents to their adult-children (Schwarz *et al.,* 2005:398). For the greater part of life, more support flows from parents to their children than vice versa, even in adulthood. The exchange of support remains important in the parent-child relationship throughout life (Schwarz *et al.,* 2005:398).

3.8 TRANSNATIONAL CAREGIVING

The movement of people across geographical borders has resulted in transnational exchanges of support, for both the emigrant and the family left behind. In addition, the greying of the Western world has increased the incidence of migrants needing to care for their ageing parents from a distance. Thus, transnational caregiving is a growing social phenomenon that is largely unacknowledged and under-researched (Baldassar, 2007b:387).

Maintaining intergenerational relations and continuity is challenging for transnational families, as emigration has the potential to loosen ties and disrupt these relations (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozcao & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In her study, "*Missing kin and longing to be together: Emotions and the construction of co-presence in transnational relationships,*" Baldassar (2008) focused on emotions and their expression in transnational caregiving relationships between migrants and their ageing parents.

3.8.1 Caregiving and gender

Transnational caring is a highly gendered activity. Ideas about children's obligation to care for ageing parents differed according to gender, with woman feeling more responsible for their ageing parents than men. Parental and familial sentiment and responsibility persist into adulthood, with the mother-daughter relationship the most enduring and active of the intergenerational bonds (Thompson & Walker, 1984:313).

The tasks of looking after husbands, children and sick or elderly relatives seem to be passed on to other family members, mostly to other women (Zontini, 2004:1133). In a study by Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara (2009:73), more women than men were actively involved in providing care transnationally. In addition, women were more likely than men to help strengthen kinship relationships, both within and across

lineage lines (Monserud, 2010:3). For women, migration may result in double caring responsibilities; not only looking after family members as they adjust and settle into the new location, but also ongoing transnational caring for relatives back home. Women are increasingly expected to take on this sort of transnational caring role.

However, new technologies are influencing transnational caregiving exchange with men taking a more active role in practices of communication exchange than appears to have been the case in the past. In this regard, Baldassar (2008:248) states the following: "Where once women, particularly mothers and daughters, were primarily responsible for the 'kin-work' of staying in touch, today men, particularly of the younger generations, are just as likely to communicate with overseas kin by e-mail and SMS text messaging as women." Jessie Bernard (1975:133) humorously remarks: "In the name of tidiness, motherhood ought to end when children leave home."

In this study, it was not only the daughters that assisted in transnational caregiving. The adult-children usually cared for their own parents whether it was the daughter or the son. The child who emigrated contacted his parent on a regular basis and did most of the transnational caregiving themselves.

3.8.2   Support between transnational families

Migration means leaving relatives behind and through migration, family networks become divided transnationally. Because of the distance, transnational families rely on communication technologies to communicate with each other. This was discussed in Chapter 2. While telecommunication may facilitate ongoing emotional support, providing practical support, such as hands-on care for a grandchild or an elderly relative, cannot be done over distance and requires co-presence.

Baldassar (2007b:389) supports the notion that most transnational families exchange all the same forms of care and support that are exchanged in proximate families including financial, practical, personal (hands-on) and emotional or moral support.

- *Financial support*: Financial support was identified as a key source of support exchange in migrant families. The regular transfer of money from migrant to

homeland kin is an important feature of transnational families, primarily in the first decade following their migration (Baldassar, 2007b:389).

- *Practical Support*: This type of support commonly includes babysitting, gardening, helping with shopping, running errands and accompanying kin on medical visits. These are things that transnational family members also do for each other, but as Baldassar (2007b:390) points out, this can only occur during visits.

- *Personal support*: Personal support involves the hands-on caring associated with childcare and nursing the sick or incapacitated and can only be delivered face-to-face. This type of caring occurs in transnational families during visits. Parents, particularly grandmothers, commonly visit to offer support to mothers with newborn babies. Migrants, especially women, often visit to provide personal care for a dying parent (Baldassar, 2007b:390).

- *Emotional and moral support*: This form of support is "the foundation of most family relations including transnational ones, partly because it is clear that the other types of support – financial, practical, personal and accommodation – also involve emotional and moral support" (Baldassar, 2007b:391). These forms of support are not mutually exclusive as emotional and moral support can be effectively exchanged across distance.

The broad pattern of transnational caregiving, particularly the exchange of emotional and moral support and "staying in touch," can be described as involving three principal types of care practice.

- *Routine* – day-to-day caring characterised by regular contact.
- *Ritual* – caring that involves marking special events like birthdays and anniversaries.
- *Crisis* – key event caring, which generally involves unexpected or unanticipated events or times of increased need. Crisis care is commonly required during key stages (or crisis events) in the transnational family life cycle – the period immediately following migration, the time leading up to and after the birth of babies, and when parents lose their independence and become frail or ill (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding, 2007).

With regards to this study, the researcher found the continuity in transnational families to be challenging. Most of the participants did not have enough frequent physical contact with their emigrated children to make new memories for the future. Financially, it was not possible for most of the parents to visit their children frequently and it seemed as if they were losing touch with each other's worlds. Participants were, however, emotionally involved with their children and it was clear that the parents tried to stay part of their children's lives by communicating on a regular basis. It seemed that as the parents aged, they relied more on their children for emotional support and advice on decision-making, rather than the other way around. Crisis care was frequently mentioned and parents often thought about dying and the need for having the children with them during that period. There was a strong need to be with their children in times of crisis.

3.8.3   Proximity and transnational caregiving

Climo (1992:15) defines the distant adult-child elderly-parent relationship as a social bond involving at least one elderly parent and one adult child who live too far away to permit regular, frequent, face-to-face contacts. Climo (1992:1) observe that no one can say for sure how the parent-child bond will respond to the newest challenges of civilisation, such as distant living arrangements as a result of frequent moves and the aging revolution that has dramatically increased the human lifespan. Yet, despite all these demographic changes that present challenges to the adult-child elderly-parent relationship, throughout our lives, we remain children to the parents who love us. For many of us, our parents' opinions are almost as important in adulthood and even old age, as they were when we were youngsters. Parents also depend on their children throughout their lives (Climo, 1992:2).

Climo (1992:12) states that *four misleading assumptions* are generally accepted concerning distant relationships and challenge us to identify these limitations and move beyond them if we want to improve these relationships. These are:

- **Near and distant emotional attachments are the same**

    The first assumption is that the nature and quality of relationships between near-living and distant-living adult children and the elderly are fundamentally the same and that both the stable as well as the changing qualities of relationships between

generations occur independent of distance. Moss, Moss and Moss (1985:135) explain that the parent-child bond can maintain cohesion under conditions of limited face-to-face contact and is very resistant to the effects of geographic separations. The overriding conclusion is that although distance diminishes contact, the quality of the affection remains the same regardless of distance, "… early social bonding will continue to provide the necessary social glue to perpetuate our most fundamental human bonds" (Climo, 1992:12).

- **Geographic distance reflects emotional distance**

Climo (1992:13) points out that one must not assume that those who live physically close are also emotionally close and those living far away are emotionally distant. This assumption underestimates the complexity of distant parent-child relationships. In this regard, Climo (1992:13) states: "By suggesting that emotional attachments and assistance cannot survive prolonged geographical separations, it generalises on the motives for separation. There is no good evidence to assume that distant children feel any greater emotional alienation than near-living children."

- **Only near-living children provide face-to-face services and health care**

Certain kinds of care can only be provided by kin living in close proximity, near enough for face-to-face interactions. Distance obviously limits frequency of contact. For Climo (1992:14), friends are often too frail and paid help too hard to supervise from a distance, so it is only the children that have both the long-term commitment and the resources that can care for their frail parents. Although distant living limits assistance, children can still assist parents in various ways (Climo, 1992:14).

- **Little can be done to improve distant relationships**

This last assumption is a passive acceptance that distant relationships remain as they are and cannot be improved. Climo (1992:15) indicates that this is the most damaging assumption for it not only denies and negates the problem but also leaves individuals in despair. Distant living is a social problem shared by millions of people and has the potential to be resolved.

As the population ages, the number of older people in need of care is expected to increase. In addition to older people's spouses, their adult-children are an important informal source of care. Emigration does not negate the need for care and transnational caregiving is seen as important phenomena of the migration process (Baldassar, 2007b:387). Because life expectancy is increasing, adult-children are likely to provide care to their parents for a longer period. Baldassar (2007b:385-409) conducted a study where the broad aim was emotions and globalisation with a focus on transnationalism. In this research, she studied how families develop, maintain and negotiate bonds of attachment across distance, since family members separated by distance are generally able to exchange all the types of care that proximate families do (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding, 2007). In the words of Baldassar (2007a:293), "Distance and the passage of time do not necessarily diminish these care exchanges although they may disrupt, fracture and transform them."

The researcher came to the conclusion that although emigration and transnational borders separated participants in this study from their adult-children, they continue to maintain mutual caregiving relationships. Continuous communication between parent and adult-child kept their lives together and maintained their bonds of attachment.

3.9   GRANDPARENTHOOD

Mann and Leeson (2010:235) explain that in the United States, research into grandparenthood has mushroomed over a number of decades. There is therefore a vast amount of literature on grandparents and their roles within family and society. However, in South Africa, this seems to be an understudied topic. Makiwane and Chimere-Dan (2010) writes that studies of the elderly are quite common in first world countries "because of the perceived strain to social security caused by the increase in the life expectancy and the dramatic decline in fertility levels in these areas." Africa is demographically a young continent and the fact that the elderly were generally thought to be adequately accommodated within the extended family resulted in ageing not being a priority for research. Although Africa remains a young continent, the cohort of older people is growing. The elderly population on the continent is currently estimated to be slightly over 38 million, and is projected to

reach between 203 and 212 million by 2050 (HelpAge International, 2002). By 2050, the population aged 60 and above in South Africa will have increased from the current 3.7 million to 4.6 million, or to 13.7% of the total population (Makiwane & Chimere-Dan, 2010).

Despite popular belief, the widespread experience of grandparenthood is a recent phenomenon. Hoff (2007:643) explains that in the past, intergenerational relations across three generations were very rare and usually of short duration. Today, family networks with four generations have become relatively common, and three generation family networks are the norm. The decline in mortality has caused a profound change in the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents. "For the first time in history, most adults live long enough to get to know most of their grandchildren, and most children have the opportunity to know their grandparents" (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986:25). The lives of grandparents and grandchildren overlap for a longer time than ever before (Hagestad, 1988) and furthermore, there are fewer grandchildren per grandparent. Increased longevity means that it is not uncommon today for grandparents to live long enough to see a grandchild enter adulthood and even middle age (Silverstein & Marenco, 2001:49). Both these factors allow for a more intense relationship between grandparents and grandchildren over a longer period (Geurts, Poortman & Tilburg & Dykstra, 2009:1699).

Research indicates that the grandparent-grandchild relationship can have implications for the lives of both generations. Family relationships can be significant for individuals' overall wellbeing and for access to different kinds of support within the family. Grandparent involvement with grandchildren is positively associated with satisfaction and wellbeing for grandparents (Barnett, Scaramella, Neppl, Ontai & Conger, 2010:28). Exchanges of support between these two generations can be contingent on the dynamic nature of the grandparent-grandchild relationship over the life course (Monserud, 2010:366). Caring for grandchildren offers grandparents, especially grandmothers, a relationship that is charged with powerful, affective components. It is of a very special nature as it implies an extremely direct comparison between two stages in one's lifespan that are very far apart and of

opposite developmental stages – childhood and its progress and old age and its regression (Hoffmann, 1979-1980).

In this research study, all the participants whose adult children were married had grandchildren and thus had the experience of being grandparents. It was clear that being a grandparent was seen as an important part of their lives and defined how they saw and experienced themselves.

3.9.1   The role of the grandparent

Knox and Schacht (2013:574) view grandparenting as a significant role for the elderly. Grandparent roles are socialised through exposure to one's own grandparents as models (Johnson, 1983). In the past, the traditional role of grandparents was one in which patriarchal or matriarchal control was exercised over both the younger generations (Barranti, 1985:344). Societal changes have brought a modification in the status of older persons and thus authority is no longer viewed as the major "axis of the relationship" between older adults and younger generations (Barranti, 1985:344).

Bengtson (2001:1) suggests that grandparents will play an increasingly important role in multigenerational families. The increasing length of life and decreasing fertility in Western societies are assumed to elevate the role of grandparents in family life (Harper, 2005). There is growing evidence that grandparents today are playing an important role in raising the next generation. Highly involved grandparents may provide crucial support to the parent and grandchild generations. This is especially true during early childhood, when parent and grandchild needs are usually greatest as parents are still in the process of learning to successfully negotiate the challenges associated with parenthood (Barnett *et al.*, 2010:29).

Grandparenting in the new millennium may be endorsed in even more diverse ways and in the presence of more competing roles than it has in the past (Silverstein & Marenco, 2001:493). Gattai and Musatti (1999:36) view grandparenting typically as a narrower, less active, ambiguous role relative to active parenting, but they agree that relationships with the grandchildren are always characterised by strong emotional involvement. The grandparent caregiver role can be characterised as ambiguous due to a lack of consensus involving role norms.

Landry-Meyer and Newman (2004:1006) found that the grandparent-grandchild family type is relatively unstructured and lacks the formality of organisation. The role of the grandparent invokes images of traditionally held expectations of visiting and not interfering with parental discipline (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:1006). It has therefore become increasingly difficult to describe a "typical" grandparent (Silverstein & Marenco, 2001:495). These authors propose that the grandparent role has become more diffuse because of the following:

- The longevity "revolution" that has led to longer durations of time spent in the grandparent role and increased years of co-survival with grandchildren;
- Growing diversity in the role itself as a result of changing family structures and alternative lifestyle choices available to parents.

Grandparent roles contain both instrumental and emotional aspects that "may be visualised along a continuum ranging from symbolic at one end to interactive and instrumental at the other" (Kornhaber, 1996:88). This author distinguishes between the following:

- Social and symbolic roles – living ancestor and family historian;
- Instrumental roles – mentor, role model, nurturer;
- Sentimental, emotionally based roles – playmates, cronies, soul mates, hero and spiritual roles.

Bengtson (1985) proposes that grandparents have five separate symbolic functions:

- being there;
- national guard;
- family watchdog;
- arbiters who perform negotiations between members; and
- participants in the social construction of family history.

The cohort of older people in South Africa is growing. This implies that the duration of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren has increased as well as the importance of the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The role of the grandparent is diverse and the researcher found that each individual family, as well

as the type of relationship between the grandparent and adult-child, determines this role and function. The role of a grandparent is an important stage in midlife and can be a positive growth experience for both the grandparent and grandchild.

Silverstein and Marenco (2001:493) indicate that grandparenting styles range from surrogate parenthood to being little more than a stranger to grandchildren, making it a role about which it is difficult to generalise. The grandparent role changes in meaning with the ageing of the family unit, as both grandparents and grandchildren move to different life stages. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1992) used grandparent reports to develop three profiles of the grandparent-grandchild relationship, namely, pleasure, remote and involved. Grandparents may actively take care of their grandchildren fulltime, provide supplemental help in a multigenerational family, help on an occasional part-time basis, or occasionally visit their grandchildren. Scholars have noted that relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren are distinctive in that they follow few social conventions and represent a diverse set of styles (Saxena & Sanders, 2009:322).

The grandparents in this study were not able to fulfil the "typical" traditional roles of a grandparent. Due to the geographical distance, they felt deprived of their role because involvement with their grandchildren was limited and just "being there" for them was not possible. To be able to actually touch the grandchild or have a child sit on the grandparent's lap was only possible during visits.

3.9.2 Influence of the parent in the development of grandparent-grandchild relationships

Several researchers have suggested that interrelationships between family members can influence the grandparent-grandchild relationship in numerous ways. The parent-grandparent relationship, in particular, can play a key role in the grandchild-grandparent relationship, with parents serving as "gatekeepers" of intergenerational exchange (Mueller & Elder, 2003:405). This gatekeeper role can be a literal one in which parents only permit or facilitate interactions between grandchildren and grandparents when they themselves are close to the child's grandparents. It could also be a more figurative role, in which youth observe their own parents' interactions with the grandparents and model their own relationship accordingly (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012:1190).

Monserud (2010:374) conducted research that suggests that the parent generation remains an important link between the grandparent and grandchild generations even when grandchildren experience young adulthood and become more independent from their parents. The middle generation of three generational families has been described as the "lineage bridge" by Barranti (1985:346), thus this generation links the grandparent and the grandchild. Parents act as a bridge in relationships between grandparents and grandchildren by encouraging or hampering interaction between the two (Mueller & Elder, 2003:405).

The middle generation's attitude toward older people, the quality of the adult-child-aging parent relationship and adult-child's expectations of the role of the grandparents, affect the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Robertson in Barranti, 1985:346). Parental feelings towards grandparents are transmitted to children and these feelings and attitudes normally persist throughout children's lives. "Parents need to recognise that the dynamic nature of their relationships with their offspring, their own parents, and their parents-in-law can have implications for the development of the grandparent-grandchild relationship over time" (Monserud, 2010:374).

Copen and Silverstein (2007:499) confirmed that the middle generation serves as the gatekeepers and state that it is not surprising that grandchildren have better access to their mother's parents than to their father's parents. Gattai and Musatti (1999:40) indicate that the possibility of experiencing a significant relationship with a grandchild is closely linked to the grandmother's relationship with the child's parents, especially with the mother, whether she is the grandmother's daughter or daughter-in-law. Changes in parent-child relationships and parents' relationships with their own parents are linked to changes in grandchildren's closeness to grandparents within lineage, whereas changes in parents' ties to their parents-in-law will be predictive of changes in grandchildren's closeness to grandparents across lineage (Monserud, 2010:369).

Whitbeck *et al.* (1993:1026) state that the parents set the conditions and provide the emotional context for the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The quality of the relationship between a grandparent and his/her child affects the quantity of contact between the grandparent and that set of grandchildren. There is abundant evidence

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that the amount of contact and the quality of the relationship between grandchildren and their grandparents are mediated by the quality of the parent-grandparent relationship (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012:1189; Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998:276; Whitbeck *et al.,* 1993:1032).

Lifespan development psychology implies that in spite of the fact that learned patterns of relationships can continue to matter for later interactions, there is also a possibility for change in family relations at any life stage (Baltes, 1987; Monserud, 2010). In the words of Monserud (2010:369): "… the past can influence but it does not determine the development of future intergenerational relationships. Relationships between family members can change in response to different circumstances over the life course." Mann, Kahn and Leeson (2013:382) state that grandparents are in a position to mediate between older grandchildren and their parents, the middle generation. In addition, as grandchildren age and begin to claim their own relational identities, the importance of this connection in family relationships might reduce (Mann *et al.,* 2013:384).

The participants in this study had more "contact" with the grandchildren when it was their daughter's children. The participants felt that they were part of their daughter's pregnancy and of their grandchild's life. Their own daughter allowed them into her "close space" and allowed them a "ticket" in, like "front row seats" to an important event. It was clear that the mother of the daughter had more "privileges" than the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law was not allowed the same degree of closeness during the daughter's pregnancy or when a grandchild was born.

The researcher realised how important the role of the daughter was in the upkeep and sustainability of contact between the generations. If she did not send photographs of the grandchildren or share their lives with the grandmother, it became nearly impossible for the grandmother to stay in contact with the grandchildren and to be part of their lives. The role of "gatekeeper" of the parent, especially by the mother, is thus just as applicable, possibly even more so, in the emigration scenario.

3.9.3 Predictors of contact between grandparent and grandchild

Many variables can influence the frequency of contact between grandparents and their grandchildren (Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998:276). Based on previous empirical studies, Uhlenberg and Hammill (1998:283) expected to find the following as predictors of frequent or infrequent contact with grandchildren:

- Geographical proximity;
- Frequency of contact;
- Number of grandchild sets;
- Gender of the grandparents;
- Maternal or paternal grandparents;
- Marital status; and
- Age of the grandparents.

3.9.3.1 Geographical proximity and frequency of contact

Geographic distance, the strongest of all predictors of contact between grandparents and grandchildren, strongly affects the emotional involvement between these two generations (Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998). Nesteruk and Marks (2009:92) confirm: "Distance can be manifold, geographical distance, linguistic distance and cultural distance are major challenges to the maintenance of intergenerational relationships." The authors further state that these families are "fighting a battle, sometimes winning, sometimes losing, to preserve close ties across generations, across languages, across cultures, and ultimately across an ocean."

For Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986), the three most important factors influencing the frequency of grandparent-grandchild contact are "distance, distance and distance." In addition, the distance grandparents live from their grandchildren has been closely associated with emotional closeness and grandparent involvement. However, Tan, Buchanan, Flouri, Attar-Schwartz and Griggs (2010:101) found that contact was more important than the geographical distance between the grandparents and grandchildren.

With increasing use of modern communication, such as mobile phones and e-mails by young people, grandparents may now only be a phone call away. More crucially,

it is the regular contact between grandparents and grandchildren that promotes active involvement and stronger intergenerational ties in adolescents' lives (Tan *et al.,* 2010:101). Parents' own strong relationships with the child's grandparents can overcome this barrier of physical distance and help establish a strong grandparent-grandchild relationship. Dunifon and Bajracharya (2012:1174) confirm that the newer avenues of communication may facilitate contact between grandparents and grandchildren independent of distance, allowing grandparents the potential to play an influential role in the lives of their grandchildren.

Studies indicate that grandparent-grandchild relationship quality pivots on frequent contact. Living geographically close to a grandparent influences frequent contact, which in turn leads to improved relationship quality. Dunifon and Bajracharaya (2012:1189) state: "… our findings suggest that parents' own strong relationships with the child's grandparents can overcome the barrier of physical distance and help establish a strong grandparent-grandchild relationship." Most grandparents maintain frequent contact with their grandchildren if it is feasible to do so. Physical distance is the most obvious factor influencing opportunity for frequent contact. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1992:108) note, "If you want to predict how often a grandparent will see a particular grandchild, you need to know a little more than how far they live from each other."

Frequency of contact between grandparents and grandchildren vary and gradually tail off as grandchildren progress through childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Tan *et al.,* 2010:101). Although, the frequency of contact might decline in the adolescent years, the emotional closeness that has been established remains (Hodgson, 1998; Taylor, Robila & Lee, 2005). This emotional bond also extends into adulthood. Emotional closeness with grandparents, which might suggest the pre-requirement of a relationship with the young person earlier in their lives, had a stronger impact than other factors in predicting grandparent involvement (Tan *et al.,* 2010:101).

In a study by Whitbeck *et al.* (1993:1032), the significance of geographical proximity for face-to-face contact was corroborated. Proximity was much less important for adolescents' judgements when evaluating their relationships with their grandparents than the quality of their parents' relationship with the grandparents. Whitbeck *et al.*

(1993:1033) affirm, "… of more importance, the data indicate that perceptions about early family relationships provide a blueprint for later family relationships across generations." Dunifon and Bajracharya (2012:1170) postulate that demographic factors, physical distance and family interactions can have an influence on the grandparent-grandchild relationship.

This study found that although it is possible to stay in contact via the latest communication technologies, physical contact is mostly absent, as it is only possible during visits. A grandchild even experienced the grandparents as "living in a computer." For communication to be worthwhile, there must have been a prior relationship or an attachment to build on. Small grandchildren were reliant upon their parents to stay in contact with their grandparents. For example, when grandparents sent a letter, the parents had to read it to the grandchild. Grandparents were reliant upon the parents to keep them informed of the day-to-day happenings in the grandchild's life. The fact that the grandparents only saw the grandchildren at most once a year, made it challenging to establish an attachment. When the grandchild was born abroad, it was even more challenging to bond or form an attachment with the grandchild.

To form an attachment, the first basic requirement is to be close to the attachment figure. This basic requirement was absent when the grandchild was born overseas as the geographical distance hindered such an attachment being established. Just as virtual as the communication is, so artificial will such a relationship be in the physical and emotional absence of an attachment bond.

3.9.3.2   Number of grandchild sets

Hagestad (2006:320) refers to children born from one of the adult-children as constituting a set. The number of grandchild sets makes a difference (Uhlenberg, 2005). Grandchild sets are important from a grandparent perspective since the number of sets determines the potential demands for the grandparent's presence, time and resources. As the number of sets increase, the likelihood of frequent contact with any particular set decreases and the likelihood of infrequent contact increases.

Uhlenberg and Hammill (1998:279) found that the probability of frequent contact with all sets drops from 50%, when there is one set, to only 6% when there are four or more. Uhlenberg (2005) estimated that in the United States between 1950 and 1980, the proportion of family lines with four or more sets of cousins would reduce by half, from 48 to 24%. This author further suggested that by 2010 the figure would have dropped to 10 percent.

With emigration, the physical contact or co-presence is virtually impossible for lengthy periods. The grandparents might have stronger attachments with the grandchildren left behind in South Africa since they have frequent contact. The birth of the first grandchild seems to be a special occasion and keeps that special place with the grandparents. In this study, the number of grandchildren sets was far less important than the geographical distance.

3.9.3.3   Gender of the grandparents

Several studies point to the role gender plays in the grandparent-grandchild relationship. Mann *et al.* (2013:382) explain that within the sociology, the construction of the female is as "kin-keeper." According to this perspective, women are more involved in family relationships than men are, and are attributed with principal responsibility for maintaining kin ties. The authors further explain that grandmothers should have closer ties with their grandchildren than grandfathers and that the grandparent-grandchild relationship will be at its strongest between maternal grandmothers and granddaughters. Even in their roles, there are differences in that the grandmother engages in caring and emotionally supportive roles and grandfathers in instrumental activities. Alice Rossi (1995:275) wrote: "As child-rearers, caregivers and kin-keepers, women provide the glue that holds family and lineages together."

Tan *et al.* (2010:997) view gender as one of the most studied variables in the literature of grandchild-grandparent interaction. Mills, Wakeman and Fea (2001:450) concluded: "Grandchildren feel emotionally closer to maternal grandparents in general, and to maternal grandmothers in particular." For Spitze and Ward (1998:123), "Grandmothers appear to have greater involvement than grandfathers with young grandchildren, a view expressed and supported by both grandmothers and grandfathers." Mann and Leeson (2010) add that grandmothers

are still identified as the "central" grandparent. In addition, Harper and Ruicheva (2010:221) state that grandmothers are more likely to have frequent contact with their grandchildren than grandfathers.

Gattai and Musatti (1999:36) found that many working mothers with children under the age of three make use of grandmothers, either as principal caregivers, or to supplement other forms of extra-family care, such as a day-care centre, family day-care or babysitters. Among older children, the grandparent may serve as a confidant and emotionally supportive mentoring figure (Silverstein & Marenco, 2001).

Mann *et al.* (2013:391) point out that very little research has been done which investigates the relationship between the grandparent and grandchild from the perspective of grandchildren. In their study, the authors explored the variations in grandchildren's perceptions of the grandparents with whom they have most contact and got on best. The findings indicated significant age and gender differences in how grandchildren perceive their grandparents. "We find that the matrifocal tilt toward maternal grandmothers is less apparent amongst older grandchildren. It is even less so amongst older grandsons for whom grandfathers appear as at least equally prevalent." They also found that the grandparents with whom the grandchild has most contact are not necessarily those with whom they got on best.

In this study, before the emigration of their adult-children, the grandmothers fulfilled a caring role with the grandchildren and were more emotionally involved with them. The men were still working and did not have as much time to spend with the grandchildren as the woman had. After the emigration, there was an abrupt end to this close caring and physical connection between grandmothers and grandchildren. The ambiguity of the situation was clearly visible in the sense that the participants still had grandchildren but the relationships had changed very abruptly, leaving a huge void in their lives.

During visits, the grandparents had to reacquaint themselves with their grandchildren, especially when visits were infrequent. In addition, the grandparents had to be careful not to interfere with the authority of their adult-children and had to try to fit in as best possible, so as not to upset the prevailing status quo. The researcher believes that it is somewhat easier for the grandmother to fit in than for

the grandfather, as he is used to being the head of the household. It was also found that grandmothers often visited their children on their own and that they had a greater need to visit their children and stay longer than their husbands did.

3.9.3.4 Maternal or paternal grandparents

Maternal grandparents are more likely to have frequent contact than paternal grandparents. The effect of lineage is expected to be greater for grandmothers than grandfathers, given the saliency of the mother-daughter link (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012). Chan and Elder (2000:179) aptly ask the following question "Are grandchildren closer to the maternal side solely because of mothers' kin-keeping, or is it more a result of differences in how this activity is performed for parents and parents-in-law?" Chan and Elder (2000:180) recommend that any effort to explain matrilineal advantage must begin by considering the role of the middle generation for the grandchild-grandparent connection. The "norm of non-interference," which proscribes grandparents from interfering in the parent-child relationship, provides parents with great control over the actions of grandchildren, including their ability to establish close ties with the grandparent generation.

Chan and Elder (2000:180) argue that matrilineal advantage in grandchild-grandparent relations results from differences in the way mothers and fathers in the middle relate to the members of the grandparent generation. They stress the importance of blood relations over filial ties. These authors propose that parents in the middle generation are likely to have a "parental" bias, having closer ties to their own parents than to their parents-in-law. Consequently, their children are likely to have unequal relations with the grandparent generation.

Increased grandmother involvement, especially by maternal grandmothers, may stem from the greater involvement of women in the socialisation of children and the maintenance of kinship relations (Bates, 2009; Chan & Elder, 2000). The gender configuration of each dyad may be related to both relationship quality and patterns of grandparent involvement (Barnett, Scaramella, Neppl, Ontai & Conger, 2010:30).

The difference between the paternal and maternal grandparents was visible even after the emigration and the researcher believes that it is easier to have a

relationship with your daughter's children than with the son's children. It seems that the maternal grandparents have more privileges than the paternal grandparents do.

3.9.3.5   Marital status of the grandparents

Marital status is consistently of greater importance for grandfathers when predicting contact with grandchildren than it is for grandmothers. Uhlenberg and Hammill (1998:282) found that grandfathers who are divorced, separated or remarried are especially unlikely to maintain frequent visiting patterns with their grandchildren. Widowed grandmothers are not significantly less likely than married ones to have frequent contact. For both grandmothers and grandfathers, the order of contact from most likely to least likely is married, widowed, remarried and then divorced (Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998:282).

In this study, when both grandparents were interviewed jointly, they expressed emigration as "their problem". They felt that they were missing out, although they did not necessarily miss the same aspects. Whether they were the paternal or maternal parents, they experienced the emigration as losing out on their traditional role as grandparents.

3.9.3.6   Age of the grandparents

Silverstein, Giarrusso and Bengtson (1998) found that grandparent age and grandchild age might interact with each other in predicting relationship quality. Relationships between adult grandchildren and their grandparents differ from those between young grandchildren and their grandparents (Hoff, 2007:648).

Knox and Schacht (2013:496) confirm that age is a factor in determining how grandparents relate to their grandchildren and differs between younger and older grandchildren. When grandchildren are young, grandparents provide support (typically child-care), although one can argue that such support is for the parents as well as the grandchild(ren). The age when one becomes a grandparent can greatly influence satisfaction in the role. Among other things, it can affect one's vitality and emotional readiness to be a grandparent (Kornhaber, 1996:44).

Grandparents are less satisfied with the grandparent-grandchild relationship as the grandchild enters the teenage years (Cherlin & Furstenburg, 1992). Dunifon and

Bajracharya (2012:1171), indicate that the relationship may change again as grandchildren age further. Crosnoe and Elder (2002) report an improvement in the grandparent-grandchild relationship quality when the grandchild enters college. The findings demonstrate, however, that there is also an opportunity for change in grandchildren's relationships with grandparents when grandchildren move through young adult years. In general, this study indicates that the grandparent-grandchild bond and parents' ties to the grandparent and grandchild generations are not static – they vary across time.

The researcher believes that there is a certain window of opportunity when the grandparent can influence the grandchild and form a strong bond of attachment with the child. If the grandparent was involved during the mother's pregnancy and during the child's birth, this could assist in creating a strong bond. During this period, the grandparent normally fulfils a caring role by looking after the children and in this way, the child and grandparent get to know each other. When the grandchild was born abroad, the grandparent missed this important attachment phase. This could result in the grandparent not establishing a strong bond of attachment with the grandchild. The researcher is not implying that they can not have a meaningful relationship, but that it will take more effort and meaningful communication from the grandparent's side. The parents, as gatekeepers, play a very important role in determining the success or failure of this relationship.

3.9.4   Value of grandparent relationships

In the absence of a grandparent-grandchild relationship, it has been suggested that children experience a deprivation of nurturance, support and emotional security (Barranti, 1985:347). For Kornhaber and Woodward (1981:163), "The complete emotional wellbeing of children requires that they have a direct, and not merely derived, link with their grandparents." Mead in Barranti (1985:347) proposed that when an individual does not have intergenerational family relationships, there is a resulting lack of cultural and historical sense of self. A sense of continuity can develop from the historical and ancestral significance experienced through intergenerational relationships.

Knox and Schacht (2013:577) state that grandchildren report enormous benefits from having a close relationship with grandparents and the grandparents' overall

wellbeing can be affected by changes in relations with grandchildren. Harper and Ruicheva (2010:227) view grandparenthood as an important part of life and ego-identity, an alternative for the losses grandmothers might have experienced such as the empty nest syndrome, social isolation or the loss of a partner. These authors further state that the increased sense of emotional bond and family belongingness as well as the feeling that someone depends on her and provides her with unconditional love, can add substantial meaning to the life of a grandmother. The reciprocity could also be a reason why relationships between daughters and mothers often improve after the birth of grandchildren (Harper & Ruicheva, 2010:227).

The grandparents help provide a secure and stable environment for grandchildren by supporting the parents (Hagestad, 2006:325). There are several pathways through which grandparent involvement could influence youth. One way could be through their influence on parental behaviour. If grandparents provide advice and emotional support to parents, this could translate into decreased parental stress or improvements in parental emotional health, which ultimately may lead to positive youth outcomes (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012:1174). Kornhaber and Woodward (1981:xiii-xiv) affirm that the love, nurturance and acceptance that grandchildren find in the grandparent-grandchild relationship "confers a natural form of social immunity on children that they cannot get from any other person or institution."

Maintaining intergenerational relationships and a sense of cultural heritage in families residing in different countries and on different continents is difficult (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009:89). These authors found that the efforts of emigrant parents to keep the connections between grandchildren and grandparents might not fully succeed: "Many parents expressed sorrow about the limited interactions their children have with their extended family and grandparents residing in Eastern European countries."

3.10   SUMMARY

The focus in this chapter was on post-parental intergenerational relationships. In order to better understand these relationships, the researcher distinguished between the various generations and placed them in historical context. Most of the participants formed part of the matures and the baby boomer generations.

The researcher focused on demographic trends and the influence on families especially in the South African context. Attention was given to the "born frees" to contextualise the study in the South African framework. The family life cycle with the focus on the midlife and post-parental stage was researched, since most of the participants were in these stages of their lives. Concerning the parent adult-child relationship, it was clear that this relationship is one of the most important relationships and has a lifelong effect on both the child and the parent and both parties will go to great lengths to maintain this bond.

Grandparenthood as a recent phenomenon was discussed as most of the research participants in the study were grandparents. The most important predictors that influenced the contact between grandparent and grandchild were geographical proximity and frequency of contact. Both these factors were hindered due to emigration and this made it difficult for the grandparents to form a new bond or sustain an existing bond with a grandchild. Both the grandchild and grandparent were robbed of a valuable source of emotional support that was important for both.

The next chapter focuses on Ambiguous loss, attachment and grief.

4.   CHAPTER 4: AMBIGUOUS LOSS, ATTACHMENT AND GRIEF

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, death has been the only loss recognised as an authentic grief (Miller & Omarzu, 1998). While death is the ultimate loss, there are many other losses on the "dying trajectory," some that are obvious and others that are less apparent. Viorst (1986:2) captures these losses so clearly, when he writes:

> When we think of loss, we think of the loss through death of people we loved. But loss is a far more encompassing theme in our life. For we lose, not only through death, but also by leaving and being left, by changing and letting go and moving on. And our losses include not only our separations and departures from those we love, but our loss of romantic dreams, impossible expectations, illusions of freedom and power, illusions of safety.

It is these more subtle losses and their associated grief that the researcher wants to emphasise in this chapter.

When an adult-child emigrates, the relationship between the parent and that child is changed forever, especially when they had a very close bond of attachment prior to the emigration. For the parent left behind, dealing with this loss and consequent grief can be extremely difficult. In addition, the attachment to the grandchildren intensifies the grief process for the parent left behind even more.

In this chapter, the focus is on loss and its subsequent effects on the parent left behind. One such loss is ambiguous loss, "a loss that remains unclear" (Boss, 2007:105). The concept of ambiguous loss is introduced and how it relates specifically to the phenomenon of emigration. The origin of bonds of attachments between the parent and child are outlined, followed by how these attachment bonds affect the parents' response to loss. Rituals in dealing with grief are mentioned as well as the lack of such rituals when dealing with migratory grief. Mourning as a psychological process that is part of grieving is investigated as well as how mourning applies to emigration. Finally, chronic sorrow, as a normal grief response and its triggers is discussed.

4.2   LOSS

Loss is an "unavoidable fixture" of human existence (Thompson, 1998:21). From early childhood, loss plays an integral role in the lives of people. While each situation of loss has unique characteristics, there are some commonalities in the manner in which people react and adjust to loss. Identifying and understanding the commonalities could improve the care of those affected by loss (Murray, 2001:234). Generally, the losses people experience is divided into different types, namely physical, symbolic, psycho-social and relational loss. For Casado, Hong and Harrington (2010:612) physical loss refers to losing something that is actual or unmistakable, for example the loss of a loved one, a body part or personal belongings. Symbolic loss refers to loss that is non-concrete or abstract, for example, loss of status. Psycho-social loss is "intangible and symbolic" (Rando, 1993 cited in McNeil, 1995:284), such as unemployment, divorce or retirement.

Parkes (1988) created the term "psycho-social transitions" to explain losses that may present challenges to adjustment. These are losses:

- That necessitate people making major changes to their assumptions about the world;
- Where the consequences are long-lasting, rather than temporary; and
- That occurs over a relatively short period, so there is little time to prepare.

Loss is an emotional, affective and relational denominator that is especially common among diverse families. Diverse families are created from different kinds of relational interruptions (such as migration) that entail various types of losses (D'Amore & Scarciotta, 2011:46). One such loss is relational loss. D'Amore and Scarciotta (2011:46) define relational loss as:

> The psychic (emotional, affective, relational) condition that follows the interruption and/or breaking of a relationship with one or more significant persons, the break-up and/or estrangement from a specific context (physical, geographical, affective, relational, and symbolic), and consequently a factor that impoverishes and sometimes dries up the feeling of belonging (family, community, society, economy, culture, religion, and politics).

D'Amore and Scarciotta (2011:46) view diverse families as being constantly confronted with multiple losses. These losses include the momentary or stable

interruption in intra- and intergenerational bonds, the degree of fulfilment of affective and social roles during the former family, and the splitting-up of intra- and intergenerational boundaries as well as routines, scripts and family representations. Lastly, losses in such families may also concern socio-economic status such as living standard (D'Amore & Scarciotta, 2011:46). In the case of migrant families, D'Amore and Scarciotta (2011:46) explain that the nature of the loss varies according to the aforementioned dimensions as well as according to the specific culture of the country of origin (food, sexual, relational, social, symbolic, political and religious codes).

Loss may be both reversible and transitory or irreversible and permanent (D'Amore & Scarciotta, 2011:47). Loss and grief are a fundamental part of life (Neimeyer, 1999). Elders (1995) argues that life changes are associated with the loss of the way things were before. Throughout life, external and internal adjustments are required to adjust to these transitions. The dynamic process of adjustment is observable as grief, only once a person is confronted with meaningful and appropriate change (Murray, 2001:220).

4.2.1   Effect of loss

In the words of Zwicky (1991:164), "The more precious something is, the greater becomes its power to hurt us by simply being absent." Losing a loved one is a painful experience and often results in strong feelings of anxiety and distress. There is considerable variation in the degree to which people experience these feelings. The response to loss is an emotion, which is "the complex amalgam of painful affect including sadness, anger, helplessness, guilt and despair" (Raphael, 1983:33). Some individuals show signs of extreme distress and heightened anxiety or depression for years. These include feelings of sadness; anxiety, guilt, despair and anger; a longing for the departed one, sleep disorders and lack of appetite (Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002:129). Others, in contrast, appear to be relatively unaffected by the loss (Fraley & Bonanno, 2004:878).

By challenging or even discrediting important assumptions about the world, loss can threaten an individual's sense of security. A diagnosis of a serious illness can dispute assumptions of the future, while the death of a child destroys assumptions regarding the natural order of life and death. Significant loss can erode an

individual's confidence in using previously held assumptions to accurately predict the world. This loss of confidence in one's assumptions can influence a person's decision-making ability and trust in his or her own reactions and those of others in the social network (Murray, 2001:231).

Loss rarely exists alone. Resultant losses usually accompany a primary loss, for example, reduction in ability due to illness or an accident (Kelley, 1998), or aging (Conway, 1988) may affect one's future, change relationships, influence financial security and independence. Mental illness can be accompanied by loss of social status, changes in relationships with friends and can affect one's occupational future and marital prospects (Davidson & Stayner, 1997). The progress of grieving, the primary loss can be influenced by these secondary losses, many which may only become obvious over time (Murray, 2001:232).

4.2.2   Ambiguous loss

"In a world with wars, migration, disastrous events like 9/11 attacks and personal tragedies such as Alzheimer's, ambiguous loss is all around us. Many people experience separation, be it of mind or body, without closure, leaving them with the distinctive problems of managing grief, stress and trauma" (Falicov in Boss, 2006:x). Many losses are not as clearly definable as death or are not accepted as a loss. Families experience numerous losses on a daily or ongoing basis that are not recognised or legitimised by society. It may not even be certain what was lost. Loss may involve a person, an object, an experience or an event.

Pauline Boss's (1999) concept of ambiguous loss has opened a new field of research on the psychic state of grief in cases of loss without resolution. She describes ambiguous loss as "an incomplete and uncertain loss" (Boss, 1999:3). The concept helps us recognise and understand the unique perceptions, emotions and behaviours associated with losses that are, frankly, unresolvable (Boss, 2004b). The concept of ambiguous loss combines insights from her own clinical practice with a broad theoretical foundation that draws on phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and social constructivism. Ambiguous loss refers to a distinctive kind of loss that defies closure, such as the uncertainty and sadness felt by the families of missing persons, by the children of Alzheimer's patients, by emigrants who crave

what they left behind, or the parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren) (Boss, 1999).

Boss (2007) distinguishes two types of ambiguous loss. She describes the first type of loss as "leaving without goodbye" and the second type as "goodbye without leaving" (Boss, 2007:105). The first type perceives loved ones as "present when they are physically gone," examples are missing soldiers, kidnapping or incarceration. Situations that are more common include divorce, adoption and relocation. Family members may not know if the person is still alive or the state of his or her wellbeing. Although the person is not physically present, he or she is still a part of the psychological family and continuously in the family members' thoughts.

The second type perceives loved ones "as gone when they are physically present" (Boss, 1999:7), such as with cases of Alzheimer's disease, addictions, chronic mental illness, homesickness and extreme preoccupation with work (Boss, 2006:9). Psychological absence is confusing because the emotional bond appears to be missing or gradually slipping away. As with Alzheimer's, the sufferer may no longer recognise loved ones or resemble the person he or she used to be. Family members may question whether the person who is psychologically absent is even a part of the family anymore. This may bring up further questions regarding role shifts in the family.

These types of ambiguous loss can make people feel helpless and more prone to depression, anxiety and relationship conflicts (Boss, 1999:7). Because the loss is confusing, people are baffled and immobilised. They are unable to make sense of the situation. When people are unable to gain clarity, decisions are put on hold, roles remain unclear and relationship boundaries are confused (Boss & Couden, 2002:1352).

"In both types of ambiguous loss, those who suffer the loss have to deal with something very different from ordinary, clear-cut loss" (Boss, 1992). Boss (2007:105) proposes that it is useful for a family member "… to think dialectically about thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in a practical way." "My loved one is gone, but s/he is also here; I can learn to tolerate the stress of the ambiguity" (Boss, 1999,

2004, 2006). "Those affected by ambiguous loss can learn that the situation may not change but what they are hoping for can change" (Boss, 1992).

Another result of ambiguous loss is boundary ambiguity. Boss (2006:xvii) claims that ambiguous loss is the "most stressful kind of loss because it defies resolution and creates long-term confusion about who is in or out of a particular couple or family." The level and amount of stress created by the ambiguous loss affects the "path a family follows as it adapts and prospers both in the present and over time" (Hawley & De Haan, 1996:293). The ambiguity prevents cognition, thus blocking coping and decision-making processes. "Without information to clarify their loss, family members have no choice but to live with the paradox of absence and presence" (Boss, 2007:105).

Research has supported the idea that ambiguity creates a powerful block to coping and grieving, predicting symptoms such as depression, anxiety, loss of mastery, hopelessness and conflict, all of which erode couple and family relationships (Boss & Couden, 2002:1352). Ambiguous loss is a relational disorder and not an individual pathology (Boss, 2006:xviii). Problem solving is difficult and the uncertainty prevents people from adjusting to their loss. People are denied the symbolic rituals that ordinarily support a clear loss, such as a funeral after a death in the family, so their experience remains unverified by the community around them. The absurdity of the ambiguous loss reminds people that life is not always rational, just or kind (Boss, 1999). Ambiguous loss is a loss that goes on and on, and people can become emotionally exhausted. It forces the individual to recognise that there are some things that cannot be controlled.

Falicov (in Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Rorosco & Qin, 2005:198) states that the very decision to migrate has at its core two ambiguous poles: "Intense frustration with economic or political conditions compels the emigrant to move, but love of family and surroundings pulls in another direction." The researcher found that in the current study, some of the research participants were angry with the South African government. They felt that if the situation in the country had been different, they might still have had their children with them.

The ambiguity freezes the grief process. Boss (2006:xiii) points out that throughout the never-ending process of metabolising happiness and sorrow, our core identities not only remain recognisable to ourselves and others, but maintain their resilient capacity to adapt, change, grow and evolve unless a gain or loss lays in the grey zone of ambiguity. In those grey zones, time freezes and evolution stops. Boss (2006:xiii) explains that in situations of ambiguity we are "driven in both ways" and cannot find a single course. In the case of personal ambivalence, we simultaneously experience two conflicting and apparently unsynthesisable feelings, thus, closure is impossible (Boss, 2002a:105).

Ambiguous loss is characterised by factors that inherently impede the grieving process (Boss, 1999, 2002a). A never-ending rollercoaster, ambiguous loss takes its toll on family members physically, cognitively, behaviourally and emotionally (Boss, 1999; Weiner, 1999). Physically, they may experience fatigue, sleep disruption, headaches or stomach aches. Cognitively, a preoccupation with the loss, forgetfulness, dreaming about the loss or worrying may be experienced. Behaviourally, they may experience talkativeness, quietness, crying, hyperactivity, inactivity, sighing, support seeking, withdrawal, dependence or avoidance. Emotionally, they may experience loneliness, yearning, anxiety, depression, fear, anger, irritability, apathy or relief (Weiner, 1999).

4.2.3   Emigration as an ambiguous loss

Among all the changes a human being must face throughout his/her life, few are as wide and complex as those which take place during migration. Emigration is a systemic interactional phenomenon that never really ends. In the words of Goldin (2002:4): "Migration is one of the most enduring themes of human history. It is one of the most drastic life changes and transitions an individual can face." The parent left behind also faces a drastic life change as a result of the loss of a relationship as it was known, not only with the adult-child(ren), but most often with the grandchildren. The ambiguity of the situation makes it difficult to come to terms with the loss and there are no prescribed rituals for dealing with it.

Boss (1993:365) tells the story of her grandmother left behind in Switzerland after her father emigrated. She gives much insight into the enormity of an emigrant's decision to leave home and settle in a new country. Boss (1993:38) defines this

phenomenon as ambiguous loss, since the loss remains unclear and reunion is uncertain. She explains that parents left behind may often continue their role in absentia and that these relationships can be strongly supportive of the settlers in the new land, or they can be debilitating if preserving the status quo and resisting assimilation becomes disadvantageous for emigrants.

An essential theme that becomes apparent in the literature concerns the numerous losses that are suffered when an individual is separated from his birthplace. Practically, everything that surrounds the person who emigrates, changes. The singularity of the migratory experience lies in the fact that it is a psycho-social process of loss and change. Through emigration, multiple losses are experienced: values, traditions, local music and songs, even cultural food (Akhtar, 1999) as well as social status, identity, significant relationships and possibly financial security (Yaglom, 1993:136).

The greatest losses from emigration are the loss of people, things and the surroundings that one loves. One loses feelings of safety and connectedness that the mother country provided – the sense of security and direction afforded by one's "home world" (Henry, Stiles & Biran, 2005:110). Migration researchers confirm that the stress and resulting strain of voluntary leaving, results in responses very similar to those of the grieving process (Aroian, 1990; Goldin, 2002).

"Migration loss is smaller than death" and despite the grief and mourning occasioned by physical, cultural and social separation, Falicov (2005:197) describes the loss as not absolutely clear, complete and irretrievable. She states the following: "Everything is still alive but is just not immediately reachable." She further explains that unlike the finality of death, it is always possible to fantasise the eventual return after emigration or a forthcoming reunion. In this regard, Boss (2006:1) explains that the family consists not only of the system left behind, but also includes, in their minds, the émigré who has gone to a new land.

"Loss is not always simply a death or a physical absence" Boss (2006:1). The author explains that human relations are more complex: "For many, the psychological family in our hearts and minds is as important for assessing stress and maintaining resiliency as the physical family we live with. We do not necessarily disconnect from

loved ones just because they are not physically present, nor do we always connect to people just because they are physically present at home or in our daily lives." For the parent left behind, the adult-child that has emigrated represents a "what could have been…, what might have been ..." The relationship as it was known has changed and the parent has to find new ways of communicating and maintaining the attachment bond.

The emigrant's ability (and that of the parent left behind) to cope with separation and loss depends upon earlier experiences of separation. Various important life events such as going to school, adolescence and marriage are seen as steps toward separateness (Levenbach & Lewak, 1995:383). These authors state that a good enough parent facilitates these separations (migrations) by providing a holding environment, "neither denying the child his individuation by meshing him or her in a symbiotic relationship nor dealing with the parent's own separation pain by catapulting the child into a premature, rejecting isolation by "'closing the door'" to the child's dependency needs. Levenbach and Lewak (1995:383) warn that the huge separation, because of emigration, will strike deeply at unresolved separation issues. "Excessive dependence, an inability to develop roots and an illusionary search for an idealised mother (in the form of the new country) are all possible results of early separation difficulties, which may complicate the attempted emigration."

The participants in this study frequently mentioned that it was difficult to let go of their child(ren), but at the same time they understood that their children's decision to emigrate was in their best interest. The parents made peace with the fact that their children might never return to South Africa. By letting go and "approving" this separateness between themselves, and their adult-child(ren) and grandchildren, it created a perception of a "good enough parent" that allowed their child(ren) the freedom to make independent decisions, even though it deprived the parent of their active roles as parents and grandparents.

In Aviram-Freedman's (2005:55) study on the experiences of South African Jewish senior citizens following the emigration of their children, he explains that a "constant lack is felt, a missing of certain qualities in daily relationships that children bring, which is unrelated to having practical needs fulfilled. Writing to family, speaking on

the phone or being around people does not fully satisfy the constant missing." This study also found that, "the most difficult part of being in South Africa without family is commonly experienced as not having the certain close quality in nearby relationships that includes an aspect of ownership and belonging" (Aviram-Freedman, 2005:54).

Many South African families have been deeply affected by the experience of loss as a result of family members emigrating. Marchetti-Mercer (2009:133) emphasises that the impact on those left behind should not be ignored or underestimated. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) found that those emigrating did not acknowledge this loss. Research participants in this study felt that those leaving did not have sufficient emotional energy to focus on the pain of those left behind. This is consistent with Falicov's (1998:59) views that given their "forced passivity", those who stay behind may suffer even more than those who emigrate (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a:386). Marchetti-Mercer (2009:133) indicates that this group may experience serious feelings of abandonment and even anger and resentment towards those who have left.

Loss is an ever-present reality and accompanies most big changes in our lives. It is an "unavoidable fixture of life" (Thompson, 1998:21). In order to assist divergent emigrant families' capacity to rebuild new meanings, they also need to accept that there are no clear-cut losses and that grief is an ongoing process of redefining the "new" family (Boss, 2004a:551).

Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen (2007:158) argue that the migrants are in the limelight, while those left behind remain in partial shadow.

> How exactly the left behind experience and cope with absence, loss and missing household or community members – the very nature of being left behind – has not been sufficiently addressed. Given the focus on migrants and the somewhat narrow ways in which migration processes have been defined, the migration literature can be said to have thus far 'left behind' the 'left behind'.

4.3   BONDS OF ATTACHMENT

To fully comprehend the impact of a loss and the human behaviour associated with it, Worden (1991:7) states that one must have some understanding of the meaning of attachment. Worden (1991:7) acknowledges that Bowlby's (1961) attachment

theory provides a way to conceptualise the inclination in human beings to make strong bonds of affection with others and is a way to understand the strong emotional reaction that occurs when those bonds are threatened or broken.

Bowlby (1979:127), the pioneer of attachment theory, views attachment as "the propensity of human beings to make affection bonds to particular others." Attachment refers to an affectional tie that one person forms with another specific individual. Attachments occur at all ages and the first tie most likely to be formed is to the mother, but this may soon be supplemented by attachments to a handful of other specific persons (Ainsworth, 1969:969).

Starting in infancy and continuing across the life span, humans create and maintain strong emotional bonds with others. Attachment theory considers the desire for closeness to be part of our evolutionary drive, extending to both people and environment. In this regard, Bowlby (1973:147) states: "There is a marked tendency for humans, like other species, to remain in a particular and familiar locale and in the company of particular and familiar people."

The most essential aspect of the attachment theory is recognising the critical importance of attachment relationships and secure base phenomena throughout development (Waters & Cummings, 2000). Through continual transactions with the world of persons and objects, the child constructs increasingly complex internal working models of that world and of significant persons in it, including the self (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). Bowlby (1980) theorised that the most important attachment an infant has is to his or her mother (mother figure or primary caregiver) and the quality of this attachment will affect his or her relationships during the life course (Parkes, 2002; Stroebe, 2002). Therefore, Bowlby (1973) suggests that the special bond between mother and child is the forerunner of other significant attachments throughout life. Once formed, whether to the mother or to some other person, an attachment tends to endure (Ainsworth, 1969:969). Attachment styles are "internal working models" of the self and others that, once formed early in childhood, guide perception and behaviour in adulthood (Bowlby, 1980).

Shear and Shair (2005:256) explicate that an attachment figure can be identified as follows:

- a target of proximity seeking;
- a person from whom separation is resisted;
- someone to whom a partner turns to for a "safe haven" when under stress; and
- a secure base from which the partner freely interacts in the world, seeking novelty, taking risks, and exploring the unknown.

Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991) state that the ability to use an attachment figure as a secure base affords a child a haven of safety and also provides the confidence necessary to explore and master ordinary environments. The behaviour that attaches him/her to the mother ensures his/her protection and if the attachment is broken, through the mother's temporary absence or death, the child responds with anxious outburst and distressed vocalisations. "The infant's response appears in adult life as grief, having the same dynamics and outcomes when loss occurs. It is fundamentally anxious, vocalised behaviour designed to re-establish contact with the lost person" (Dean, 1988:159). Attachment processes are ongoing throughout the life cycle and the loss of these bonds (in this case due to emigration) may result in anxiety, anger and depression (Bowlby, 1980).

Bowlby (1998, 1979) identifies loss as unwilling separation from the attachment figure. The desired closeness and accessibility of attachment figures are primary in the need for protection, and the threat of unwilling separation and loss is potentially traumatic. Neimeyer, Prigerson and Davies (2002:235) explain that core features of our response to loss reflect our evolution as biological and social beings rooted in the disruption of attachment bonds. Maintaining a relationship to an accessible and responsive (m)other is essential for survival. The availability of, or proximity to, the significant other has to be attained and retained throughout one's life and in times of pain, illness and distress, this need for proximity increases. Attachment is a means of reducing anxiety (Bowlby, 1998).

On the basis of infants' responses to separation from and reunion with caretakers in a structured laboratory procedure, Ainsworth (in Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991:226) identified three distinct patterns of infant attachment: *secure*, *anxious-resistant* and *avoidant*. Studies support the idea of attachment style as having trait comparable properties and the prediction that early experiences with caregivers

engender varying degrees of attachment anxiety and avoidance (Shear & Shair, 2005:257).

Children classified as *securely* attached seek proximity and are readily comforted (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991:226). These children are able to explore the environment away from the attachment figure and can seek his/her protection and comfort when facing of threat and uncertainty (Lopez, 2010:6). It seems that secure persons not only deal actively and constructively with negative affect but also take advantage of the enhanced creativity derived from the arousal of positive affect (Mikulincer & Sheffi, 2000:169). Security also enables them to develop more adaptive socio-emotional skills and behaviours such as ego resilience, social competence and persistence (Lopez, 2010:6). Secure or autonomous individuals have positive representations of attachment (Colin, 1996; Goldberg, 2000). They value intimate relationships and acknowledge the importance and influence of these relationships in their own lives and personality development.

Infants that are classified as *anxious-resistant* show ambivalent behaviour toward caregivers and an inability to be comforted on reunion (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991:226). Resistant infants hyper-activate or amplify their attachment behaviours and emotions as a means of eliciting the attention and response of an insensitive and inconsistent caregiver. Resistant patterns of attachment in infancy have been associated with less ego control (impulsivity), lack of self-reliance and less desirable social behaviour in school-age children (Colin, 1996). Dismissing individuals understate the importance of attachment experiences in their lives, and the need for attachment relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991:226).

Infants classified as *avoidant*, avoid proximity or interaction with the caretaker on reunion (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991:226). Avoidant infants develop maladaptive strategies to alleviate their stress needs. Avoidant patterns of attachment have been associated with emotional insulation, lack of empathy, and antisocial behaviour (Colin, 1996; Freeman & Brown, 2001). They use deactivating strategies of either restricting their recall or reporting semantic and episodic memories about their parents that contradict each other (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991:226).

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991:226) concluded that secure patterns of attachment lead to adults being more adaptive and reflect an optimal level of functioning, whereas insecure patterns reflect poor functioning. In a number of studies, secure or autonomous attachment has been associated with self-confidence, social competence and acceptability and willingness to seek support from others (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc & Bell, 1998; Colin, 1996; Goldberg, 2000; Freeman & Brown, 2001; Kaleita, 1990). Non-autonomous or insecure attachment patterns have been associated with less social competence, alienation and higher levels of internalising (depression and anxiety), externalising (anger, hostility) and deviant behaviours (Allen *et al.*, 1998; Kaleita, 1990).

John Bowlby (1988:xiii) in his book, "*A secure base parent-child attachment and healthy human development,*" makes the following statement:

> Engaging in parenthood therefore is playing for high stakes. Furthermore, because successful parenting is a principal key to the mental health of the next generation, we need to know all we can both about its nature and about the manifold social and psychological conditions that influence its development for better or worse.

Reading this quotation, the researcher hypothesised that in a secure attachment relationship, the adult-child is willing to take risks, like emigrating, since he/she feels secure within him/herself. Should there be unresolved attachment related issues; the emigration process could accentuate them.

4.4   GRIEF FOLLOWING A SIGNIFICANT LOSS

Loss is an inevitable part of existence for all beings and grief is a universal experience and normal reaction to loss (Rando, 1984). Castle and Phillips (2003:41) define grief as a type of loss that specifically refers to the intense emotional response associated with the loss of a significant person. This form of grief is often referred to as "bereavement". Rando (1984:612) defines grief as "the process that allows us to let go of that which was and be ready for that which is to come." Grief inevitably produces intense, overwhelming reactions (Parkes, 1996). Bereavement may be distinguished among all major life-event stressors, not only by its near inevitability but also by the high likelihood that we will experience it repeatedly across the course of a normal life span. Stroebe (1993) explicates that bereavement

is the loss of a significant other person in one's life, which typically triggers a reaction we call grief, which is manifested in a set of behaviours we call mourning.

The words ''grief'' and "grieve'' come from a Latin word that means ''burden'', suggesting that when we grieve, we are carrying the burden of sorrow (Castle & Phillips, 2003:42). Dean (1988:157) writes that grief comes from the Latin word "gravis" meaning "heavy" and bereavement from the old English meaning "robbed." Moules (1998:144) defines grief as ''the structural, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual change that occurs as a direct result of the experience of significant loss and that creates a mutable, evolving, but lifelong relationship with the loss." Neimeyer *et al.* (2002:235) state that grief is a human experience that is both a natural and constructed event. Florczak (2008:11) conceptualises the lived experience of grieving "as persistent sorrow arising with weaving familiar-unfamiliar patterns anew." Del Rosario (2004:19) describes grief as follows:

> Grief transforms. Grief changes you, as few other experiences can. Grief paralyses and cripples. Grief slows and dulls the mind. But it never seems to end. Grief comes and goes in waves. Grief stays as a numb deadened feeling in the pit of the stomach. I experience it within as the pounding of rolling waves, dispelling only to creep in and well up again. I watch it from afar as an ocean. I let the waves nip at my toes. I wade in it, I swim in it, and at times, I can drown in it. Grief comes like a suffocating blanket over the head, and I find my hands trying to reach up past it, as if groping for air, for life beyond death.

Freud (1917) described grieving in terms of an exchange process whereby the psychic energy expended in the process of repeatedly examining aspects of the relationship with the lost object is exchanged for a relinquishment of the libidinal bonds that bound the grieving person to that which was lost. Freud (1917) introduced the concept of "grief work," the goal of which is to free the person from:

- attachment to the lost object,
- inhibitions to becoming a person separated from the lost object, and
- conflicts of ambivalence over the lost object.

A failure to deal with ambivalent feelings was considered by Freud (1917) as at the core of pathological reactions to loss. Payne, Horn and Relf (2000:7) point out that

grief is defined in terms of mental pain, distress and deep or violent sorrow, bitter feelings of regret for something lost.

Human beings tend to develop strong bonds of attachment, which result in a tendency to grieve when these bonds are broken by death or long separation (Bowlby, 1980). Bowlby (1961:332) distinguishes grief from mourning, two terms that are often used interchangeably in the literature. He proposed that grief is an emotional experience that involves anxiety, anger and despair that arises from the experience of an irreversible loss. The finality of the loss is what differentiates it from separation anxiety where hope is still present (Bowlby, 1961:332).

Human beings also live in an abundantly symbolic world and so, besides experiencing physical separation, they experience separation at the level of meaning too (Neimeyer, Torres & Smith, 2011:652). Human beings seek meaning in mourning and according to Neimeyer *et al.* (2002:235), we do this by constructing a coherent account of our bereavement by integrating the reality of the changed world with our new identity.

Love (2007:75) writes that grief is dynamic and not static, an active, everchanging process . For this reason, people will experience grief differently at different times. Grief changes our experiences of self, the world and the future. Although it is common, grief is highly varied in both its features and its patterns (Love, 2007:74). Grief is a process involving phases, stages or dimensions that culminate in reorganisation, resolution, or re-entry into everyday living (Lindemann, 1944, Bowlby, 1961, Parkes & Weiss, 1983). Researchers agree that preoccupation with, and a yearning for the departed person is the most significant and distinguishing features of grief (Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002:129).

The significance of the social context of grieving is undeniable. How each individual that has been confronted by a loss handles and understands external influences must be acknowledged, as these differences can be quite considerable (Neimeyer, 1995). Well-documented empirical evidence is available on factors influencing the individual's experience of loss (Murray, 2001:227). These factors can be classified as the internal influences on grieving, the context of the loss and external factors that influence grieving (Murray, 2001:227). How one interprets and reacts to loss is

unique to the individual. To understand a person's reactions to a loss, it is vital to understand the meaning and significance that the person attaches to the lost object or person (Murray, 2001:227).

Gilbert (2001:271) adopts the view that grief is more than a psychological, emotional or somatic response to loss. "At a deeper, more essential level, it is the reconstruction of a sense of a new 'normal' that must be put in place so that the bereaved may have a predictable and orderly world in which to function." Following a loss, meaning must be attributed to it in such a way as to allow the griever to regain a sense of order, control and purpose in life (Gilbert, 2001:271). Castle and Phillips (2003:41) state that the greatest challenge of being a human being is dealing with grief and that it can be a transformative experience that can have a positive impact on one's life.

Since emigration does not only involve a single person but the whole family, it is important to determine how the surviving family members can reclaim their sense of being an intact family. Walsh and McGoldrick (1991) have suggested that there are three essential tasks of grief resolution. In order to carry out these tasks, family members must understand what their family and its members need and redefine "family". There must be recognition of the loss and acknowledgement of the unique grief experience by each member. The loss of a family member disrupts and destabilises the family. In order for families to continue functioning, certain roles must be allocated to family members. This implies that the family structure needs to be reorganised after the loss. Family members must redefine what family means to them as well as reconstruct their sense of identity as a family. Finally, there must be reinvestment of family members in this new family. Contrary to the common thought, this does not mean that the deceased must be "left behind" (Gilbert, 2001:278).

The participants of this study mentioned that they would never have seen other countries if it was not for their children's decision to emigrate. The emigration of their children resulted in wider world-views and experiences.

4.4.1   Grief and attachment

Although, originally designed to provide a better understanding of separation from primary caregivers, attachment theory has become a major influence in

understanding and facilitating grief and loss. Attachment theory is used to aid in the conceptualisation of individuals' varying reactions to bereavement. Field, Orsini, Gavish and Packman (2009:337) state that attachment style has direct bearing on response to separation or loss and is an important predictor of variability in the grief response.

When separated from an attachment figure, secure individuals are likely to engage in the same kind of searching behaviours and affective reactions found in infants removed from their mothers. In fact, secure individuals would, Bowlby (1980) hypothesised, experience an intense period of grief (e.g., searching, pining and attempts to recover the lost object) that would eventually subside as they accepted the reality of the loss (Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002:145).

Loss of a relationship of attachment triggers grief. As discussed, a greater attachment to the deceased is a predictor of more severe bereavement reactions (Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002:132). The intensity of the felt response to the loss can be extreme (Ainsworth, 1985; Bowlby, 1980; Weiss, 1988). Studies show that there are associations between individuals' attachment styles and bereavement responses (Parkes, 2002; Servaty-Seib, 2004; Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002). In the words of Parkes (2002:39):

> Among the bereaved people referred to me for psychiatric treatment, most report clear evidence of negative parental influences, leading to vulnerability in childhood and predicting the type and intensity of the symptoms that they experience following bereavements in adult life.

Various authors have elaborated on the link between types of attachment, namely secure versus insecure types and different types of complications in the grieving process (Parkes, 2002; Shaver & Tancredy, 2001). In their article "*Attachment style and bereavement reactions,*" Wayment and Vierthaler (2002:142) discuss how it was possible through the use of structural equation modelling to examine the relationship between three types of attachment styles, namely secure, anxious-resistant and avoidant; attachment to the deceased; and three bereavement outcomes, namely grief, depression and somatisation. Anxious – resistant individuals are more likely "to interpret loss" in a way that has negative implications for the self, (e.g. interpretation leading to depression), than security attached individuals. They also found that avoidant individuals were more likely to report

somatic symptoms following a loss, but not greater levels of grief or depression. This appears consistent with other research confirming that avoidant individuals are able to avoid experiencing emotional distress. Knowing a person's attachment style following bereavement may aid in the identification of at-risk individuals for early intervention.

Wayment and Vierthaler (2002:145) state that there is no "normal" response to bereavement. In understanding bereavement, "the proposition of a link between the person's attachment style, internal working model and way of letting go has enormous implications. Understanding this connection may help clarify why it is that some persons adjust well to bereavement, while others suffer tremendous difficulties and mental and physical health detriments" (Stroebe, 2002:133).

4.4.2   Rituals in dealing with grief

Rando (1985:236) defines a ritual as a "specific behaviour or activity which gives symbolic expression to certain feelings and thoughts of the actor(s) individually or as a group. It may be a habitually repetitive behaviour or a one-time occurrence." Castle and Phillips (2003:43) define grief rituals as rituals that are related to the death of a loved one, typically to honour the loved one and one's relationship with the loved one. Rituals are cultural procedures that assist the preservation of social order and provide ways to comprehend the complex and contradictory aspects of human existence within a given societal context (Romanoff & Terenzio, 1998:698).

The purpose of rituals is to provide support and encouragement to the survivor to assist him or her to overcome shock and denial, to accept the reality of the death and provide structure during this difficult time. Rituals transform experience by creating a connection between the concrete and the symbolic, the conscious and the unconscious and between the world of the living and the dead (Castle & Phillips, 2003:42).

Boss (2006:xiiii) states:

> … rituals create a social space for unrestrained (but culturally informed) expression of emotions and for active connection with our personal social network that enhances social support and resonates with joys, appeases pains, shares hopes and mourns the truncation of dreams. In grey zones,

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time freezes and evolving stops. With death, there is official certification of loss, and mourning rituals allow us to say goodbye.

With emigration, no rituals are available and the ambiguity makes it even more difficult to come to terms with the situation. Sluzki (1979:379) explains that in most cultures and circumstances, migrants only have their private rituals to help them deal with the painful act of migration, as there are no mourning rituals in our society for losses sustained as a result of emigration (Levenbach & Lewak, 1995:381). The participants in this study felt isolated and described that nobody understood their loss. Since their adult-child(ren) has "only emigrated," friends and family did not acknowledge it as a loss and therefore didn't sympathise with the parent left behind. As with an ambiguous loss, like divorce, there are no prescribed rituals to assist, either the participant or close family members.

Social rules and morals provide us with normative ways of behaviour and even instructions about what to feel and when to have these emotions. Boss (2006:xiiii) explains that these cultural guidelines carry us through times of transition, even those that "drive us both ways". "They help, unless, ambiguities of circumstances are such that all prior norms and guidelines collapse or don't apply" (Boss, 2006:xiiii).

With the parent left behind, these social rules and morals are non-existent, which leaves the parent in an ambiguous situation. In the South African context, parents believed it was better for their children to have emigrated but it left them with a void in terms of the loss of the relationship as it was with their children. This ambiguity made the grieving process and the coming to terms with the situation difficult and some of the parents created their own private rituals to deal with their loss. For example, following a specific process when saying goodbye at the airport. The participants had to learn to live with the ambiguity, since it is an ongoing process that leads to further losses until one of the role players passes away.

4.4.3   Migratory grief

"Migration from one country to another involves profound losses" (Akhtar, 1999:123). Emigration threatens our sense of self and pulls at the core of our identity (Berger & Weiss, 2003:23). "Leaving one's country for a new land is inevitably fraught with major losses and therefore the emigration experience is highly stressful,

potentially traumatic, even under the best of circumstances" (Berger & Weiss, 2003:24).

Migratory grief is a concept that has captured the attention of researchers due to its repercussions on an emigrant's mental health (Sharp, 2010:2). However, the experience of such grief and its associated psychological and emotional distress has not been widely recognised by mental health professionals (Casado & Lueng, 2002:9). The concept of migratory grief is still in infancy and has been explored qualitatively, but only a few researchers have explored it quantitatively (Casado *et al.,* 2010:206).

Arredondo-Dowd (1981) asserts that the life change as a consequence of geographical relocation results in a sense of loss. Reactions to this loss are very similar to manifestations of grief. Casado *et al.,* (2010) found that empirical evidence has shown the universality of the migratory grief experience among emigrants. The authors further postulate that the development of reliable and valid instruments will contribute to the advancement of the theoretical understanding of the emigration experience.

In her study, "*The implications of migration, adaptation and settlement in a new world: A special focus on Greek-American Immigrants*," Argyropoulos (2004:8) found the process of pre-migration and migration to a new country to encompass reactions of migratory grief and loss. She suggests that feelings and reactions of loss and migratory grief are "prevalently similar and relevant in comparison with some of the feelings and reactions of bereavement as described in Parkes' (1996) theoretical work." The experiences of the majority of the Greek-American emigrants when they encountered their new environment are shown to be parallel and comparable to the experiences and reactions of bereaved individuals who have lost a loved one to death (see Table 4.1). The concept of migration appears to be a major psycho-social transition involving various losses, challenges and adjustments, which could cause significant emotional and mental distress (Argyropoulos, 2004:49).

Table 4.1: Comparison of grief and loss experienced as a result of bereavement and migration

BEREAVEMENT GRIEF FEELINGS & REACTIONS LOSS: DEATH OF A LOVED ONE	MIGRATORY GRIEF FEELINGS & REACTIONS LOSS: NATIVE COUNTRY
1. Pangs of grief - Anxiety - Psychological pain	**1. Anxiety** - Stress for the unknown - Psychological pain
2. Denial or disbelief - Numbness/Shock - Alarm/Arousal	**2. Cultural shock** - Comparison of the two countries
3. Searching (Pining) - Tension/Restless activity - Preoccupation with thoughts of lost person	**3. Searching (Pining)** - Missing and yearning for people and familiar things from the native country - Preoccupation and strong desire to move back to homeland
4. Anger, irritability and guilt	**4. Homesickness/nostalgia**

5. Disorganisation/despair
- Depression
- Uncertainty
- Apathy
	5. Disorganisation/despair
	- Depression
	- Sadness
	- Conflicted feelings
	- Challenges
	  • Adjustment
	  • Language

6. Recovery - New experiences - New identity	**6. Recovery** - New experiences - Continuing bonds - Adaptation/settlement - Resilience/resources

Source: Argyropoulos (2004:49)

Falicov (2002:274) writes: "Although the experience of leaving one country and moving to another has been compared to the loss incurred by death and bereavement, the mourning involved is instead incomplete, postponed and ambiguous." While emigration involves the loss of familiar people and places, the mourning of such losses is often deferred, as "everything is still alive but is just not immediately reachable or present."

In the current research, the parents left behind experienced similar feelings to that of the emigrants in Argyropoulos' (2004) study. Anxiety was experienced especially in the initial stages of the children's emigration. The participants were anxious to know if the children would be happy in their new country and were anxious about

being left behind without their adult-child(ren) and grandchildren. The participants missed their children and grandchildren and some even contemplated emigrating in order to be close to their children. Depression and sadness were feelings experienced among almost all the participants.

Adhikari, Jampaklay and Chamaratrithirong (2011:2) investigated the impact of migration on the health and healthcare-seeking behaviour of the elderly left behind in Thailand. The elderly in Thailand have traditionally relied on their children for personal care and financial support. Trends in declining fertility and increasing internal migration have prevailed in Thailand since 1985 and these patterns have resulted in decreasing numbers of children being available to care for their elderly parents. Increasing migration of young adults has created concerns about whether the absence of children in the household or community affects the health of the elderly left behind or their healthcare-seeking behaviour.

Migration can influence the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of migrants themselves, those that remain in the country of origin, and those in the migrant's new country (Adhikari *et al.*, 2011:2).

> Emigration of adult-children was highly associated with poor mental health symptoms among the elderly left behind. It is likely that emigration of adult-children reduces opportunities for face-to-face interaction. This finding is similar to other studies that found that migration of young people increases the loneliness felt by their aging parents.

Aviram-Freedman (2005:88) found that being without one's children in this late stage of life is difficult and appears to be due to a loss of fantasised ideal support. Whether the children would have actually fulfilled this ideal if they were living nearby is irrelevant. "The pain experienced regarding support that feels less than what it could have been is essentially the pain of mourning the loss of fantasised support" (Aviram-Freedman, 2005:88).

Stein (1985) explains that the successful resolution of migratory grief is a key factor for psychological growth and identity. Mourning the past is the only way that an individual can begin to move forward with an emotional investment in the current reality (Stein, 1985). The researcher is sceptical of the idea of successful

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"resolution" because of the ambiguity of the situation and believes that with time, the parent left behind will learn to live with the loss of the child that has emigrated.

4.5   THE PROCESS OF MOURNING

Mourning is best regarded as the whole complex sequence of psychological processes and their overt manifestations, beginning with craving, angry efforts at recovery and appeals for help, proceeding through apathy and disorganisation of behaviour, and ending when some form of more or less stable reorganisation is beginning to develop (Bowlby, 1961:332). Freud (in Frankiel, 1994:70) wrote a letter to Binswanger on the occasion of his son's death:

> Although we know that after such a loss the acute state of mourning will subside, we also know we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains something else. And actually this is how it should be. It is the only way of perpetuating that love, which we do not want to relinquish.

By means of this letter, Freud is telling us that loss is inherently paradoxical, setting in motion psychological effort to resolve that which is inherently unresolvable. This experience creates an emptiness that remains an emptiness despite efforts to fill it. Ainslie (in Suarez-Orozco *et al.,* 2005:200) states that perhaps the most important insight that Freud offers us "is that these irresolvable gaps become, again paradoxically, the very means through which we perpetuate the attachment to those whom we have lost. In its own way, mourning negates loss." Mourning has two aspects, one subjective, rooted in anxiety, pining, remembrance, dying and withering. The other is the public expression of grief and exhibiting conventional or ceremonial signs of grief. It has been suggested that while loss and grief are universal, mourning is culturally determined.

Mourning is a process and not a state. The tasks require effort and following Freud's (1917) example, we often speak of a person as doing "grief work." The essential work of mourning has been defined as the acceptance of the irrevocability of the loss, and the progressive decathexis of the lost object, which frees the mourner to make new relationships and find new satisfactions (Gaines, 1997:549).

Bowlby (1988:32) explains that the feelings associated with the loss and the prospect of life without the lost object, are extraordinarily painful and threatening. At

first there is little in the way of solace, of a "silver lining," or a lesson to be learned, explanations that we often look for to ease a painful situation.

Psychiatrist George Engel, cited in Worden (1991:9), argues that grief represents a departure from the state of health and wellbeing, and just as healing is necessary in the physiological realm in order to bring the body back into homeostatic balance, a period of time is likewise needed to return the mourner to a state of equilibrium. Therefore, the process of mourning is similar to the process of healing. As with healing, full function, or nearly full function, can be restored, but there are also incidents of impaired function and inadequate healing.

George Engel (cited in Worden, 1991:10) sees mourning as a course that takes time until restoration of function can take place. This author explains that it is essential that the grieving person accomplish certain tasks before mourning can be completed, as incomplete grief tasks can impair further growth and development. Worden (1991:10) describes the following four tasks of mourning:

- To come full face and to accept the reality of the loss
- To work through to the pain of grief
- To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing
- To emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life

Bowlby (1980) argued that the response of children upon separation constitutes a variant of mourning that can be seen in similar form and sequence in adults. Bowlby (1961) was the first to describe the process of adjusting to a world without the lost object in terms of phases or stages. During 1961, in his initial paper on the "*Processes of Mourning,*" Bowlby described loss (or sudden separation) as comprising three phases: protest, despair and emotional detachment. However, about eight years later, he acknowledged the mourning process as also including the significant initial phases of numbness and yearning. In a later publication, Bowlby (1980) described the phases of mourning following unexpected loss as follows:

- *Phase of numbness:* This phase may last anything from a few hours to a few weeks. Outbursts of extreme anger and/or intense distress may be experienced.

- *Phase of yearning and searching:* This phase may last for months, even years, and is initially referred to as the "protest phase". The bereaved individual attempts as far as possible to retrieve the lost person through either action, thought or feeling, with features of weeping and anger. There may be reproach for desertion, coupled with feelings of ambivalence.

- *Phase of despair and disorganisation:* Feelings of ambivalence from the previous phase may continue and there is vacillation in action and mood, described as moving "from an immediate expectancy expressed in an angry demand for the person's return, to a despair expressed in subdued pining – or even not expressed at all." Hope and despair alternate and continue for an indefinite period (Bowlby, 1980:49).

- *Phase of reorganisation and emotional detachment* from the lost person: With the awareness of the person's permanent absence or repeated separations, there is an attempt to reorganise behaviour.

Bowlby (1988:31) did a systematic study of the literature on mourning and found the following:

> Not only does mourning in mentally healthy adults last far longer than the six months often suggested in those days, but several component responses widely regarded as pathological were found to be common in healthy mourning. These include anger directed at third parties, the self and sometimes at the person lost, disbelief that the loss has occurred (misleadingly termed denial), and a tendency, often though not always unconscious, to search for the lost person in the hope of reunion.

A major task of mourning – the detachment from the lost object – has been examined critically. Mourning is more accurately described as involving both processes of "letting go" and of "holding on." The creation of continuity comes into play as an encouragement to accept reality, a way of softening the pain of letting go. The individual makes a trade-off in psychic reality, letting go of the actual relationship, but holding on to, perhaps intensifying or making new use of the inner relationship (Gaines, 1997:549-555). Freud (1933) speaks of using identification to compensate oneself after a loss. The individual cannot recover from a loss until he can re-establish some sense of active determination and control in the very area where the loss has deprived him of all control.

Loss of an object threatens inner object ties and identifications, which are the basis of a secure inner world and a sense of security in the world (Gaines, 1997:549-555). Gaines (1997) phrased this task as "creating continuity" in which the mourner is faced with the difficult project of simultaneously making room for new investments while consolidating the old. Creation of continuity is distinguished from the various forms of denial of loss by the fact that by creating continuity, there is always explicit, even if unconscious, recognition that the object has gone. Creation of continuity always has a bittersweet quality, but in tandem with the process of detachment, it helps the mourner move forward with life (Gaines, 1997:549).

By creating continuity, a link is made between the past and present. It is always simultaneously a balm for and a reminder of the pain of the loss. The ongoing connection is used to support new investments or to expand or enrich the self. Adapting a departed spouse's approach to resolving interpersonal conflict, or devoting time to a charity that fights the disease one's child died of, are examples of processes that create continuity. Creation of continuity and detachment are both processes that oppose denial and wishful clinging to the object. In fact, they work together in a dynamic relationship (Gaines, 1997:560). In the article, "*Detachment and Continuity,*" Gaines (1997:549) considers the limitations of viewing mourning only as a process of detachment. The reasons for maintaining continuity with lost objects are discussed, why these should be regarded as tasks of mourning, and the ways in which detachment and maintaining continuity work together in mourning. Creating or maintaining continuity refer to those "internalising actions" that take place after object loss occurs, that repair, modify, expand, or intensify pre-existing internalisations of the lost object, so as to enable the individual to continue to experience a sense of inner connection and meaningful relation to that object, and to maintain this connection over time (Gaines, 1997:549).

"What is the optimal outcome of mourning? Mourning is sometimes referred to as being "finished" or "completed." From the point of view of maintaining continuity (that is, adaptation to the inner loss), however, mourning clearly does not end. One continues the psychic work of maintaining the continuity forever. As one goes along, this may be accomplished with less pain, strain, or conscious effort and with a

differing mixture of accompanying affects. At other times, developmental changes may require reactivation of the process Gaines (1997:569) state the following.

> Mourning is a process that carries on continuously, at times nearly quiescently, and then at times of change or developmental progression, it is re-intensified as one again confronts the sadness of one's loss and experiences in a new way the need for a sense of continuity and connection with one's departed objects.

The conceptualisation of mourning allows for a more flexible, individualistic evaluation of how well or poorly someone is mourning. Not all mourners are expected to fit the linear model of loss, acute grief, detachment and reinvestment. It is expected that periods of grief and feelings of emptiness or abandonment will recur episodically and will need to be worked through. Reinvestment in new objects will occur in varying degrees and continued emotional involvement with the departed will also continue in variable manifestations and degrees of conscious awareness. While the acute phase of grief comes to an end, the challenge of coping with a loss continues throughout the lifespan (Gaines, 1997:569).

4.5.1 Mourning and emigration

The mourning process due to emigration is comparable to the grief experienced at the death of a loved one and may take longer to resolve (Schneller, 1981). For Levenbach and Lewak (1995:383), there is real loss in emigration – loss of significant people, culture, familiarity and often loss of one's mother tongue. Loss results in mourning which needs to be acknowledged and worked through.

A time of mourning is the inevitable result of the numerous losses experienced by emigration. A complication concerning emigrants and the mourning process is that they are often not able to be with the family back home when a family member passes away. Boss (1999:43) describes the scenario where her grandmother passed away and her father, who had emigrated, could not be with his family back home for the funeral: "Cut off from all the mourning rituals he felt isolated and alone." Boss (1999:44) suggests some kind of closure should be found, otherwise the "absent stay present."

Ainslie (in Suarez-Orozco *et al.,* 2005:207) views the emigrant experience as a special kind of mourning in which mourning revolves around the loss of loved people

and places occasioned by geographical dislocation. The emigrant's engagement with the process of mourning plays an important role in the strategies deployed to manage grief, how the emigrant participates in the new social context, and the nature of his relationship with the people and land that has been left behind.

4.6 CHRONIC SORROW

Sorrow is a universally experienced phenomenon defined as persistent sadness that follows loss (Eakes, Burke & Hainsworth, 1998:179). The authors suggest that sorrow is normally resolved as part of the grief process. The term "*chronic sorrow*" was first introduced by Olshansky in 1962 and was defined as pervasive sadness that is permanent, periodic and potentially progressive in nature. In addition to sadness, one might experience sorrow, fear, helplessness, hopelessness, anger or frustration. Chronic sorrow, a permanent and recurring phenomenon, is now thought to be a normal response to the ongoing negative disparity experienced because of loss situations (Eakes *et al.,* 1998). Eakes (1995:83) emphasises that chronic sorrow is viewed as a normal response to never-ending loss, rather than a pathological state. Chronic sorrow could be said to be the normal response of ordinary people to events that emphasise the disparity between their expectations and reality. Participation in the grieving process following a loss is necessary for emotional healing to occur. Wikler, Wasow and Hatfield (1981:69) suggest that chronic sorrow does not seem to be an abnormal response; "rather it is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation." To treat it as such, allows for periodic grieving and perceiving this sorrow as strength in coping.

Table 4.2: Distinguishing components of chronic sorrow and bereavement grief/mourning

DEFINITION	ONSET	AFFECTIVE STATE	RESOLUTION
• **CHRONIC SORROW:** A pervasive psychic pain and sadness, stimulated by certain trigger events, which follow loss (through permanent inaccessibility) of a relationship of attachment.	Is precipitated by the permanent loss (exclusive of death) of a significant relationship.	Variable feelings, which range from happiness and satisfaction with abilities of "disabled" (in this case the "absent") person to intense pain and sadness following triggered recognition of disparity and loss of what was hoped for the relationship.	Ongoing presence of sorrow-inspiring person prohibits resolution of episodic sadness, which continues until the death of either person in the relationship. Because the person has not died, there is usually no social recognition of the loss and, sadly, often little recognition of the person who is the source of the loss. There are no rituals, no customary social supports, and no acceptable ways to grieve the loss (Roos & Neimeyer, 2007).
• **BEREAVEMENT GRIEF/MOURNING**: The multifaceted physical, emotional, and behavioural responses of an individual to the death of a significant other.	It is precipitated by the death of a significant other.	Initial feelings include shock, numbness and denial, which are later replaced with intense pain, anxiety, depressed mood and following the integration of loss, a general return to pre- bereavement functioning though transient, recurrent pangs of grief may recur particularly around days of special significance.	Occurs when the bereaved can reinvest in the world and think of the deceased without overwhelming sadness, when reality of the loss is gradually accepted and the loss is integrated.

Source: Teel 1991:1316

Chronic sorrow was originally identified in parents of children with mental retardation and special needs who experienced the loss of their expected "perfect" child. It referred to understandable, non-pathological, profound, pervasive and resurgent parental grief responses to having a child with permanent and severe developmental disabilities (Roos & Niemeyer, 2007). Teel (1991:1311) states that besides being recurrent, the sadness of chronic sorrow is also permanent, variable in intensity between situations and persons, and interwoven with periods of neutrality, satisfaction and happiness. Gordon (2008:116) defines it as "a normal grief response associated with an ongoing living loss that is permanent, progressive, recurring and cyclic in nature." The experiential core of chronic sorrow is a painful discrepancy between what is perceived as reality and what continues to be dreamed of (Roos, 2001, 2002).

The defining attributes of a concept are the essential criteria that determine whether the concept is present or not. Each attribute must be present in a valid instance of the concept (Reed & Leonard, 1989). The defining attributes of chronic sorrow are episodic pain and sadness that vary in intensity at different times for a particular person and between persons and situations. For Teel, (1991:1317) the antecedents of chronic sorrow are:

- A relationship of attachment that is disrupted through loss other than death.
- A negative disparity between past and present or idealised and actual person/relationship is recognised.
- Disparity in person/relationship is recognised to be permanent.
- Trigger events prompt recognition of disparity between past and present or ideal and actual person/relationship.

Lindgren, Burke, Hainsworth and Eakes (1992:31) identify the following attributes of chronic sorrow:

- A perception of sorrow and sadness over time in a situation that has no predictable end. It is a form of grief that differs from acute grief; it is not time bound and does not end in resolution.
- The sadness or sorrow is cyclic or recurrent.

- The sorrow or sadness is triggered either internally or externally and brings to mind the person's losses, disappointments or fears.
- The sadness or sorrow is progressive and can intensify even years after the initial sense of loss, disappointment or fear.

Chronic sorrow has evolved into a theory of sorrow or sadness that is cyclical, occurs over a period of time, and is believed to have no end. The sadness or sorrow triggers thoughts and feelings of the loss and fears, and can be progressive and severe (Joseph, 2012:539). The term "chronic sorrow" resonates with the current study. Like ambiguous loss, it describes a "condition" that is difficult to define since it is continuous and changes with the life world and life events of both adult-child and parent. It is not a pathological condition, but it is a never-ending situation unless one of the parent's pass away, emigrates to be with the child, or the child returns to his country of origin. It is not a "clear-cut loss" like death, where there is a beginning and an end, the loss is ongoing and is accentuated by incidents such as visits or the usual happenings of life. The research participants frequently reflected on the limited times they would still be able to physically see their children during their remaining lifetime. This thought accentuated and intensified their loss and the irreversibility of their situation, especially in difficult times like sickness or when important decisions had to be made.

4.6.1   Triggers of chronic sorrow

Burke, Eakes and Hainsworth (1995:377) present a discussion of the milestones shown to trigger chronic sorrow in people across a variety of loss situations. The authors found that comparisons with norms are most often the triggers of chronic sorrow in individuals affected by chronic conditions. Burke *et al.* (1995:378) further state that these norms are of three distinct types namely social, developmental and personal.

Social norms are defined as people or situations that evoke the realisation that the affected person is viewed as different, "there is a disparity in how the individual sees him- or herself as compared to others" (Burke *et al.,* 1995:378). Research participants in this study stated that when they saw mothers and their adult-children, especially mothers and daughters sharing a special moment, they felt excluded since they had lost that privilege. Recognition of these differences evoked grief-

related feelings in participants as they realised the disparity between their situation and the societal norm (Burke *et al.,* 1995:378).

The second norm, namely *developmental*, is explained as a milestone of individual or family development that cannot be achieved because of the prevailing situation. Parents, particularly grandparents left behind after their adult-children have emigrated, felt deprived of their inherited role of being grandparents. They felt robbed of the normal, "taken for granted things" grandparents and children do.

The third norm, *personal,* is defined by Burke *et al.* (1995:378) as the disparity between previously held abilities and current level of functioning. In this study, it was clear that those parents/grandparents that had lived in the same city/town as their adult-children before the emigration felt the loss more acutely.

A commonality between the above distinct types of norms was that any event that caused individuals to focus on the chronic condition tended to recall/evoke feelings associated with their initial experience of the loss. In their research, Burke *et al.* (1995:378) found memories, role changes and anniversaries with the bereaved persons to be significant triggers of sorrow, especially memories of pleasant or happy times that were shared with the children and grandchildren. Even though these memories are happy, they evoke feelings of sorrow, because they are reminders of loss. The category of trigger events, labelled role change, addresses the changes in roles and responsibilities necessitated by the loss of a loved one. These changes serve as reminders of the negative disparity between the past and present and may precipitate sorrow in the bereaved (Burke *et al.,* 1995:378).

The periodic nature of the phenomenon and its tendency to lessen in intensity with the passage of time, for many individuals, apparently allows for latent times of satisfaction and happiness, and thus keeps it from becoming incapacitating (Teel, 1991). Although the child that has emigrated is not "lost," the research participants felt that they were missing out on what was, or could have been, if the child was still in the country, for example, celebrating special occasions, sharing a holiday or giving assistance in times of need. Anniversaries, such as birthdays or other important dates, caused the participants of this study a lot of sorrow. They explained that they were missing out. Family gatherings trigger feelings of sorrow, since the

family is not intact anymore. With such a gathering, the absence of the adult-child that has emigrated is accentuated.

The theory of chronic sorrow provides an alternative framework to utilise when investigating the phenomenon of parents left behind. If counsellors and therapists can recognise chronic sorrow as a normal response to loss, they can support the individual by nurturing positive coping skills and providing compassion and comfort (Eakes *et al.,* 1998). Teel (1991:1317) states that the sorrow is not constant, yet it is chronic and recurs periodically. As described in the literature, chronic sorrow has been clearly delineated from pathological grieving and depression (Burke, Hainsworth, Eakes & Lindgren, 1992; Lindgren *et al.,* 1992; Teel, 1991).

4.7   SUMMARY

Loss is an inevitable part of existence and plays an integral role in the lives of people. Many losses are not as clearly definable as death or even recognised or accepted as a loss, for instance, emigration loss. Emigration is a systemic interactional phenomenon that never really ends.

After an extensive literature review, the researcher found the theoretical blending of Olshansky's (1962) concept of chronic sorrow and Boss's (1999) broader concept of ambiguous loss most applicable in understanding the experience of the parent left behind. Ambiguous loss, the brain child of Pauline Boss, refers to a distinctive kind of loss that defies closure. The concept of perceiving one's loved ones as psychologically present when they are physically absent, results in boundary ambiguity. This resonates with the ambiguity of the emigration experience and was found most applicable in understanding the experience of the parent left behind.

To comprehend the impact of loss on human behaviour, it is essential to understand the meaning of attachment. The attachment theory by Bowlby (1969) provides insight into the inclination of human beings to form strong bonds of affection with others from infancy and continue to do so across the life span. Loss of a relationship of attachment triggers grief. The link between a person's attachment style, internal working model and way of letting go, will have an effect on his/her experience of the intensity of grief felt as well as on the grieving process.

Feelings associated with migratory grief show similarity to bereavement reactions and feelings after the death of a loved one. For the parent left behind, the void left after the emigration of their adult-child creates feelings of yearning, sadness and conflicted emotions. The lack of rituals and customary social support in dealing with the ambiguity of emigration freezes the grief process for parents.

Loss results in mourning. The process of mourning after emigration is comparable to the process of grief experienced at the death of a loved one. The theory of chronic sorrow provides an alternative framework when investigating the phenomenon of parents left behind. For these parents, this ongoing presence of sorrow prohibits the resolution of episodic sadness. Chronic sorrow can be viewed as a normal response to the never-ending abnormal situation of emigration.

The next chapter focuses on research methodology.

5. CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a detailed description of the research methodology that was utilised in this study. The following aspects will be outlined: research approach, type of research and research design. With regards to research methods, the following features will be highlighted: the research population, sampling techniques, criteria and sample size. Data collection and data gathering methods will be discussed followed by methods of data analysis, with attention given to bracketing, delineating units of meaning, clustering of units and extracting themes. Trustworthiness will be highlighted by discussing journal writing, reflexivity, peer debriefing, member checking and the audit trail. The pilot study, and lastly but, most importantly, the ethical considerations of the study.

The goal of the study may be formulated as follows: To explore and describe the experiences of parents left behind in South Africa after their adult-children have emigrated.

The objectives of the study are:

- to contextualise experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren);
- to describe emigration and the impact on the family members left behind as a global phenomenon;
- to provide a broad theoretical overview of the phenomenon of emigration from a South African perspective;
- to explore and describe the experiences of South African parents left behind as a result of the emigration of their adult-children;
- to formulate practice guidelines for helping professionals with regard to addressing the impact of emigration on the parents left behind after the emigration of adult-children; and
- to provide conclusions and recommendations as well to heighten the awareness of the helping professions regarding these parents.

Van Manen (1990:5) points out that to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world we live in as human beings. "In doing research we question the world's very secrets and intimacies and that research is a caring act: we want to know that which is essential to being" (Van Manen, 1990:5). The research question can be stated as follows: *What are the experiences faced by parents left behind after their adult-child(ren) emigrates?*

5.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The qualitative research approach was identified as the most appropriate approach to answer the research question and achieve the goal and objectives of this study. A qualitative study aims at understanding and interpreting the meaning that research participants give to their experiences (Fouché, 2005:207). Qualitative research is an approach rather than a particular set of techniques, and its appropriateness is derived from the nature of the social phenomena to be explored (Morgan & Smircich, 1980:491). Qualitative research is broadly defined as "any kind of research that produces findings *not* arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:17). Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) distinguished qualitative research from quantitative research by the following features:

- qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting of the social actors;
- the focus is on process rather than outcome;
- the actor's perspective is emphasised;
- the primary aim is in-depth descriptions;
- the main concern is to understand social action in terms of its specific context; and
- the qualitative researcher is seen as the "main instrument" in the research process.

The nature of this research calls for a qualitative enquiry into the life world of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren). Research participants were regarded as self-knowing subjects and the researcher used their subjective accounts to explore their world as parents left behind.

5.3 TYPE OF RESEARCH

Fouché and De Vos (2005:105) label research as either basic or applied. Basic research seeks empirical observations that can be used to refine theory. "It is not concerned with solving the immediate problems of the discipline, but rather with extending the knowledge base of the discipline." Basic research is typically used to advance our fundamental knowledge of the world and to develop theory rather than solve particular real-life problems (Durrheim, 2006:45). Applied research refers to research that seeks to solve practical, everyday problems and develop innovative technologies, rather than to acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:105). Durrheim (2006:44) states that the distinction between these types of studies can be found in the goal of the research.

The nature of this research is exploratory as the objective is to explain the phenomenon and to gain a broader understanding (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:106). Exploratory research is applicable because there is little known on the subject of the parent left behind, especially in the South African context. Mouton (2001) emphasises that the answer to a "what" question constitutes an exploratory study.

Exploratory research aims to provide causal explanations of phenomena. Fouché and De Vos (2011:96) state that a study seeking to develop an initial understanding of a phenomenon is likely to be exploratory. Babbie and Mouton (2005:80) supply the following six reasons why exploratory research is conducted:

- to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding;
- to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study;
- to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study;
- to explicate the central concepts and constructs of a study;
- to determine priorities for future research; and
- to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomena.

The nature of this study is also descriptive. Durrheim (2006:44) writes that descriptive studies aim to describe phenomena. Fouché and De Vos (2011:96) write that exploratory and descriptive research have similarities, but also differ in many respects. Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of the

situation, social setting or relationship. The authors further state that the researcher commences with a well-defined subject and conducts research to describe it accurately. Durrheim (2006:44) explicates that descriptive studies aim to describe phenomena accurately, either through narrative-type descriptions, classification or measuring relationships.

This applied research was thus of an exploratory and descriptive nature. This research study was an attempt to explore and understand the "what" question with regards to emigration and specifically "what" is the emotional experience of the parent left behind in South Africa after their adult-child(ren) has emigrated.

5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Science is an enterprise dedicated to "finding out" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:72). There are many ways of doing research and the novice researcher is often overwhelmed by the abundance of research methodologies, making the selection of an appropriate research design for a particular study difficult (Groenewald, 2004:2). Grinnell and Stothers (1988:219) define research design as "a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study, from conceptualisation of the problem through to dissemination of the findings." It refers to the options available for the researcher to study phenomena according to certain methods, fitting specific research goals (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:308). Durrheim (2006:34) defines research design as "a strategic framework for action that serves as the bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of research." This author compares research design to building plans to ensure that a study fulfils a particular purpose and that the research is completed with available resources (Durrheim, 2006:34).

Phenomenological research is a qualitative approach but its focal point is on the meaning derived from the experienced phenomenon, rather than on descriptions of observable actions and behaviour (Polkinghorne, 1989:44). The phenomenological research design focuses on human experience and it uses description. It is not a direct report of the experience, but a search for the structural meaning of the experience. "It's always the experienced phenomenon that is being referred to. The aim of the researcher is to discover and describe the structure of the given as experienced" (Giorgi, 1989:41).

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Focusing specifically on psychological phenomenological approaches, Giorgi (1989) states that four core characteristics hold across all variations: the research is rigorously descriptive; uses phenomenological reductions; explores the intentional relationship between persons and situations and discloses the essences, or structures, of meaning immanent in human experiences through the use of imaginative variation.

Phenomenology, as both a philosophy and a methodology, seeks to understand social phenomena from the actor's own perspectives and to describe the world as the participants experience it (Giorgi, 1997). The words of Van den Berg, translated by Van Manen (1997:41), profoundly capture the art of phenomenology:

> [Phenomena] have something to say to us - this is common knowledge among poets and painters. Therefore, poets and painters are born phenomenologists. Or rather, we are all born phenomenologists; the poets and painters among us, however, understand very well their task of sharing, by means of word and image, their insights with others - an artfulness that is also laboriously practised by the professional phenomenologist.

Phenomenologists, in contrast to positivists, believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presuppositions and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise (Hammersley, 2000). In this regard, Mouton and Marais (1990:12) state that individual researchers "hold explicit beliefs." A researcher's epistemology is literally her theory of knowledge, which serves to decide how the social phenomena will be studied (Holloway, 1997; Mason, 1996; Creswell 1994).

The phenomenological research design uses an open-ended research question, allowing the participants to describe their experiences and to speak for themselves, rather than the researcher leading them in a direction considered important or relevant to the study (Woodrow, 2006:99). This study was consistent with the aims of a phenomenological study in that it aimed to provide rich, in-depth descriptions of the experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-children. In searching for a description of their experience, and in order to capture rich descriptions, the researcher posed the following open-ended question at the onset of the interviews: "Please tell me your story with regards to your adult-child(ren)'s emigration. I would appreciate it if you can give me as much detail as possible. You can start anywhere."

Atkinson (1998:8) defines life story, as used in phenomenological studies, as "…the story a person chooses to tell about a life he or she lived, told as completely and honestly as possible." In this regard, Bogdan (1974:6) states:

> By looking carefully at one life history, we can examine the nature of all human life, and by looking at life histories of authors who have had certain very unique experiences, we can observe the dynamics of certain processes that appear only subtly in other lives.

The researcher gave South African parents the opportunity to tell their life stories about their adult-children emigrating and leaving them behind. The aim was not to seek causes, nor to predict or control the phenomenon, but to understand the experience in its immediacy (Fourtounas, 2003:84). With respect to the phenomenon, a comprehensive understanding was sought, where the "primary aim [was] to observe, comprehend and render explicit what was initially perceived" (Kruger, 1988:143). The aim of this study was to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon of emigration as experienced by the parent left behind and the meaning they attached to it.

5.5   RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research entails a process comprising of various decisions and steps with regards to the research setting, which are not linear. Thus, various decisions are taken simultaneously. Key steps taken during the execution of a qualitative study entail selecting participants, applying appropriate methods to collect data, strategies to capture the rich and detailed data obtained, making decisions as to how to analyse the vast amounts of data collected and to link it with relevant literature. Further steps include selecting and presenting the most revealing findings from the sea of data collected and ensuring that the research is trustworthy and meets ethical requirements (Schurink, 2011).

5.5.1   Research population

Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:99) state that a population is the people or objects that are the focal point of the research. Babbie and Mouton (2002:173) define a population as "the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements." The term population refers to "individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics." Seaburg (1988:240) defines a population as "the total set from

which the individuals or units of study are chosen." A population refers to the individuals in the population who all share specific characteristics. The population of this study therefore refers to people residing in Gauteng, who are the parents of adult-children who have emigrated. The boundary or parameter of living in the Gauteng province separates the population from the rest of South Africa.

5.5.2 Sampling technique, criteria and sample size

A subset from the research population that is investigated is the sample (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:99). Arkava and Lane (in Strydom, 2005a:194) define a sample as possessing elements of the population, which are included in the actual research. Two major types of sampling techniques or procedures exist, namely probability sampling, based on randomisation and non-probability sampling, undertaken without randomisation (Strydom, 2005a:198). In non-probability sampling, the odds of selecting a particular individual are not known. The researcher chose purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling.

Silverman in Strydom and Delport (2005:328) explains that in purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest to a particular study. Clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of research participants are important. Strydom and Delport (2005:329) state: "In the case of purposive sampling, researchers purposely seek typical and divergent data." For Durrheim and Painter (2006:139), purposive sampling means that sampling depends not only on availability and on willingness to participate, but that cases typical of the population are selected. For this research, the sampling criteria were set as follows:

- *South African citizen*, living in South Africa.
- *Any race and culture*: As was discovered in the literature, although most of the South African emigrants come from the white population, "… a small, but growing, number of black political activists and exiles [also] emigrate" (Pattundeen, 2007:3; The Economist, 2008). The researcher decided that concerning the specification of race, parents from all races and cultures should be included in the study. However, the majority of the research participants were white South Africans with two black participants and one Indian couple. The researcher was

sensitive to understanding possible family and/or cultural practices and rituals, specifically relevant in the African and Hindu cultures. The researcher was very aware of her lack of knowledge regarding rituals and customs of various other South African cultures.

- *Both genders:* The researcher scheduled appointments with the research participants and in some cases both the husband and the wife participated in the same interview.
- *Living in Gauteng province:* For practical and financial reasons, the participants all lived in the Pretoria/Tshwane region.
- *Is a parent.*
- *Aged between 50 and 80 years:* This age group was identified because it was possible that their adult-children could have emigrated and that members of this age group could be grandparents. Parents in this age group would also be in late adulthood and in their mid-life phase.
- *Whose adult-child(ren) has emigrated and has lived abroad for at least* one *year:* Being abroad for a period of one year or longer provided a substantial period to share the life experiences of being left behind.
- *Who is fluent/proficient in English.*

In order to locate additional participants, the researcher used the snowball sampling technique. Snowballing is a method of expanding the sample by asking one participant to recommend others for interviewing (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). The researcher looked for "information-rich" cases to study in-depth, as recommended by Patton (1990:169).

The collection of the sample from the sampling frame was administered as follows. While working at the Life Wilgers Hospital, the researcher met a mother who shared her story about her children emigrating to London. The researcher knew that this woman was an ideal candidate for her study since she met all the prescribed sampling criteria. After the researcher informed her about her study, she was very eager to participate since she felt that people were not well-informed about parents left behind and that she would like to contribute to the knowledge base of South African parents left behind after the emigration of their children. Through a friend of this participant, the researcher was referred to a second person that became the

first research participant for the main study. It is thus clear that the snowball sampling technique was used.

The researcher was fortunate to be a guest on a radio programme, "Emigration" (Radio Pretoria, 2010), which was broadcasted on the 18th January 2010 by Douline Minnaar. This programme focused on emigration and the impact on those left behind. As a result of this broadcast, two listeners contacted the researcher and were included in this research project since they met the sampling criteria. Social workers, colleagues and friends referred the other participants. It was clear that many South Africans have been touched by emigration and most people knew someone whose children had emigrated. The researcher found that participants were eager to partake in the study and most of them knew someone that they could refer to the researcher.

Patton (in Strydom & Delport, 2011:390) state that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry: "Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources." The Faculty Postgraduate Committee prescribed that 20 participants be selected for the purpose of this doctoral study.

Nineteen research participants were interviewed in the main study, of which five were couples. Data collected from the pilot study was not included during data analysis.

5.5.3   Data collection

Data are the basic materials with which researchers work. Durrheim (2006:51) explains that data come from observation and can be in the form of numbers or language. When doing qualitative research, it is important to take cognisance of the fact that data collection and analysis are on-going processes. A qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis (De Vos, 2005:335).

For Bogdan and Biklen (2007:117), "data" refers to the rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying. Data includes materials they actively

record, such as interview transcripts and participant observation field notes. Data also include diaries, photographs, official documents and newspaper articles. Particularly important here is Bogdan and Biklen's (2007:117) statement:

> Data are both the evidence and the clues. Gathered carefully they serve as the stubborn facts that save the writing you will do from unfounded speculation. Data grounds you to the empirical world and, when systematically and rigorously collected, link qualitative research to other forms of science. Data involve the particulars you need to think soundly and deeply about, the aspects of life you will explore.

5.5.3.1 Data gathering methods

A number of data-gathering methods are used in qualitative inquiry. Main data-gathering methods include individual interviewing, individual in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, general observation, participant observation and personal documents such as autobiographies, diaries and letters (Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2005; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) elaborate to include post-modernist approaches such as art-based inquiry, auto ethnography and online ethnography.

Kvale (1996, 1-2) explains that an individual in-depth interview "is literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest, where the researcher attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to uncover the meaning of people's experiences." Carrying out interviews is a more natural form of interacting with people than asking them to complete a questionnaire, subjecting them to a test or having them perform some experimental task, therefore it fits well with qualitative research using an interpretive approach (Kelly, 2006:297). The interview gathers descriptive data in the subjects' own words, "… so that the researcher can develop insights on how the subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:103). In this study, in-depth interviews were used.

Qualitative interviews have been categorised in a variety of ways, with many contemporary texts loosely identifying these interviews as either unstructured, semi-structured or structured (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:314). DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:314) state that no interview can be considered truly unstructured; however, some interviews are relatively unstructured. In an unstructured or semi-

structured interview, there is an incomplete script. Although researchers play an active role in the unstructured interview, Corbin and Morse (2003:339) explicate that researchers are not the central actors. Rather, the interviewees, who are telling their stories, are the central actors of the process.

In a phenomenological study, the interviewing style is not structured, it does not follow a pre-organised plan, nor is it unstructured, as one does not engage in the interview with any clear sense of why one is there. An openness is encouraged in which the "whole being" of the researcher is dedicated to the conversation (Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson & Spence, 2008:1392). Each conversation is unique in itself and the researcher must attempt to restrain him/herself from unscripted "mm's" encouraging, affirming or leading-on. Every conversation is an event that simply "is". To go to an interview with a mindset of "conducting" is to freeze the phenomenological spirit.

This study aimed to discover parent's individual perception after their adult-children had emigrated and to elicit a rich, detailed account of their experiences. For this purpose, the researcher chose in-depth face-to-face "unstructured" interviews as the principal method of data collection.

Face-to-face interviews enable the researcher to witness some of the nuances of participants' experiences conveyed through, for example, facial expressions, blushing, gestures, tears, sounds, silences and other vocal dynamics (Kleiman, 2004:13). A relevant issue concerning emotional acts in relation to social science research is how feelings are expressed in the context of an interview. The researcher's presence, questioning and participation in the interviews could be a partial catalyst for much of the emotion on display. For example, the researcher's active listening to research participants' "verbal" professions of longing and missing, encouraged them to speak in-depth and at length about their feelings (Baldassar, 2008:251). Therefore, the person who does the interview obtains the richest appreciation of the descriptions rendered in the interview and thus should also do the analysis (Kleiman, 2004:14).

Taylor and De Vocht (2011:1576) explain that when two people are interviewed, the presence of one's partner in a joint interview will influence the experience of

participants, and will also influence the descriptions they provide. The authors state that there are advantages and disadvantages of both joint and one-to-one interviews. Morris (2001:558) states that a particular concern is that one of the pair might dominate the interview. Since the researcher was aware of this, particular care was taken to involve both participants during the five joint interviews.

It is recognised in interpretive hermeneutics that there is not one single truth (Heidegger, 1998). Gadamer (1986:358) writes about "a fusion of horizons." Through the interview process, the researcher's aim was to reach a new understanding of the phenomena in question. Taylor and De Vocht (2011:1576) state: "The conversation that takes place and the data that researchers collect are a fusion of these two horizons." They go on explaining that the researcher is faced with the potential of three different perspectives when interviewing jointly: those of both, the individuals on their own and of the couple as a unit. The researcher made the decision for joint interviews based on prior experiences, her beliefs about accessing the most useful data and the preferences of some of the participants to be interviewed jointly.

Joint interviewing differs from individual interviewing because of the interaction between participants, who usually have a pre-existing relationship (Morris, 2001:559). The researcher agrees with Morris (2001:560) when she writes about the joint interview technique allowing glimpses of "sharedness." This was found in the interviews with couples; they were in it together and it was "their story." Taylor and Vocht (2011:1576) write that in a joint interview, participants can corroborate or supplement each other's stories, probe, correct, challenge, or introduce fresh themes for discussion that can result in further disclosure and richer data.

Morris (2001:561) noted that participants used a combination of styles in joint interviews, "sometimes taking turns to produce semi-monologues for the interviewer, sometimes dialoguing mainly between themselves, and sometimes presenting a united 'we' stance." When interviewing couples together, what is heard is the story they tell each other - "their story." Joint interviews can result in particular insights that are not achievable in individual interviews (Taylor & Vocht, 2011:1584).

In research it is important to select "an approach which is likely to generate data that are rich enough" to meet the objectives of the research study (Seymour, Dix & Eardley, 1995:6). In accordance with Morris (2001:565), the researcher found that the data collected from joint interviews provided rich data and additional avenues of relevant enquiry. The researcher found that having both parents present during the interview, offered the opportunity to observe some of the ways in which people share the same experience, namely the emigration of their adult-children differently and deal with the same experience in different ways. During some of these joint interviews, the researcher experienced the parents as protecting each other's feelings. Although certain emotions might not have been expressed as freely, as when the researcher interviewed only one partner or each individually, the participants would mention how each of them differed in their dealing with the phenomenon.

Interviewing couples was a new experience for the researcher. It was challenging to involve both participants equally, listen to both and be in tune with their non-verbal cues. It was an enriching experience and it is recommended, if possible, to interview the participants separately and then jointly.

Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:404) recommend that the researcher plan for the recording of data in a manner that is appropriate to the setting, to the participants or both, before commencing with data collection. The researcher took into account the words of caution by Easton, McComish and Greenberg (2000:705) where they stated that to avoid equipment failure, researchers should check all equipment ahead of time. The researcher made sure that the audio recorder was in a good working condition and an extra set of batteries was available. A GPS was used to navigate the researcher to the different destinations where the interviews were held.

The research participants were telephonically reminded of the interview. A minimum of three hours was set aside for each interview to allow the researcher enough time to prepare, facilitate the interview and to make field notes. The letter of informed consent was first discussed with each participant and once the participant had signed the letter and given his or her consent, the interview commenced. With the permission of the interviewees, the researcher audio-recorded each interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996). On average, an interview lasted one hour.

The unstructured interview was guided by the following question: "*Tell me your story about your adult-child that has emigrated?*"

The length of the interview did not influence the quality of the data since each interview enriched the knowledge base of the experiences of the parent left behind and revealed new information and insight. Pseudonyms were used and each interview was assigned a number, for example, Participant 1 was the first research participant to partake in the study. The interview audio files were downloaded and backed up immediately after each interview to ensure that the interview data could not be "lost".

Choosing the right place to interview research participants is an important decision to make. This is as important as recruiting appropriate participants (Grafanaki, 1996). Larossa, Bennett and Gelles (1981) remark that in the comfortable atmosphere of the home, where there is trust, information that a participant might not have otherwise revealed might be disclosed, resulting in an openness on the part of the research participant. A home is also a popular location because the researcher is able to negotiate an ample amount of time to engage in the interview. As the researcher's aim was to gain rich "inside information" on the living world of the research participant, most of the interviews were held in their familiar home environments. This gave the researcher the opportunity to learn more about the participants by physically being part of their world for a short time.

Two interviews took place in restaurants (of which one was the pilot study) and although the interviews delivered rich information, the researcher believes these participants would have been more comfortable in a familiar milieu and would possibly have revealed more extensive personal information relating to their experiences. The noise in the restaurant made listening to the participant very challenging and the task of transcribing the interviews extremely difficult.

The researcher can relate to Baldassar (2008:264) when she wrote that not only could she view, but also comment on the signs and symbols of "imagined" transnational family life in the photos and objects on display in the participants' homes. The researcher, like Baldassar (2008:251), created a space in which participants allowed themselves the "physical" expression of emotion.

Additional data like photographs and other memorabilia, such as letters, were shared with the researcher. These would not have been shared if the interview had been held in setting other than their own homes. Participants shared their impressive collections of photos, either in albums (including electronic albums) or framed that were displayed all over the house or on computers. These photos were treated with extra care and shown to the researcher with tremendous pride. The researcher looked at photographs shown to her, but as far as personal documents, such as e-mails or letters were concerned, she felt that they were too personal to expect the participants to share or to include in this thesis. Gifts were clasped with affection and such actions were often accompanied by tearfulness.

The researcher did not simply share in these emotions, but indirectly sought them out through interest and concern. The researcher was aware that it was possible that she was unknowingly influenced by her preconceptions. The fact that the researcher is a mother herself helped her understand and relate to other mothers at a deeper level. It was possible to imagine their experiences and she was able to be more empathetic.

While revealing their stories, people make sense of their experience and communicate meaning. In the words of Josselson (1995:32):

> Meaning is not inherent in an act or experience, but is constructed through social discourse. Meaning is generated by the linkages the participant makes between aspects of her life as lived and by the explicit linkages the researcher makes between this understanding and interpretation, which is meaning constructed at another level of analysis.

The researcher believes that our reality is shaped through the stories we tell and the stories others tell about us.

As with Grafanaki (1996:330), the researcher was aware that her degree of sensitivity and respect for research participants affected the depth and the quality of the information shared. The quality of the data developed in an interview seemed to be dependent on the skill of the researcher, the recollecting and reflective capacities of the participant, and the relationship that developed between them (Grafanaki, 1996:341). As soon as possible after each interview, the researcher listened to the recording and made field notes.

The researcher felt tremendous gratitude towards the participants for their time and for sharing their experiences. Through this sharing, it is clear that they had given the phenomenon a lot of thought. In telling their stories they made themselves vulnerable, as they were sharing their innermost feelings and leaving themselves open for judgment. The researcher tried to ensure that the stories given to her, were recorded appropriately and correctly and that the meaning conveyed by the participants, was reflected. This was done by means of trustworthiness discussed later in this chapter.

5.5.3.2 Field notes

Field notes are a secondary data collection method in qualitative research. Because the human mind tends to forget quickly, making field notes is crucial in qualitative research to retain data gathered (Groenewald, 2004:14). This implies that the researcher must be disciplined to make notes as comprehensively as possible subsequent to each interview, without judgmental evaluation. Furthermore, Lofland and Lofland (1999:5) emphasise that field notes "should be written no later than the morning after." Besides discipline, field notes also involve "luck, feelings, timing, whimsy and art" (Bailey, 1996:xiii).

Four types of field notes identified by Groenewald (2004:115) were used during this study:

- *Observational notes - "what happened notes" deemed important enough to the researcher to make*. Bailey (1996) emphasises the use of all the senses when making observations. During each interview, the researcher made notes of her observations regarding the participant's home environment and what effect it had on her.
- *Theoretical notes - "attempts to derive meaning" as the researcher thinks or reflects on experiences*. The researcher tried not to derive meaning and jump to conclusions since the aim of the research project was to gain insight in the world of the parent left behind. The researcher did, however, make the following personal notes when participants spoke about difficulty with the time differences between South Africa and Australia:

> … only now that I have been in the same situation (emigration) do I realise how difficult it is not being able to spontaneously communicate or reach out to someone at the same time … When you are awake they are sleeping and when you go to be bed yearning for them, they are carrying on with their daily lives … It is so frustrating and such a feeling of incapability and helplessness …

- *Methodological notes - "reminders, instructions or critique" to oneself on the process*. The researcher critically reflected after each interview and made notes regarding, for example, giving more attention to detail, ensuring that nothing was left out or left behind, following up on promises, what can be improved, and consulting the "to do list."

- *Analytical memos - "end-of-a-field-day summary or progress reviews."* A field note that stood out after the pilot study interview:

> Wow, this is amazing … everything and much more than I could ever ask … a child leaving is like a death, like a child dying … she spoke in so much detail ... wow … what a personal journey!

Bogdan and Biklen (2007:119) point out that the audio recorder misses sights, smells, impressions and remarks said before and after the interview. The researcher experienced this when she saw the way Participant 3 dealt with her laptop. It was as if she was holding her heart in her hands. All her photographs and memories of her children were on this device. She carefully took the laptop out of the bag and could not wait to share her photos with the researcher. Afterwards she took just as much care returning it safely into its protective bag. The use of field notes aided the researcher to capture these types of non-verbal gestures.

The researcher recorded relevant contextual field notes on completion of each interview. There was a vast amount of information gathered from the 19 interviews. The data aided understanding of the transcripts of the interviews and supplemented the researcher's memory of the general ambience which was not captured on the audio recordings. The researcher made thorough notes of each interview, to share, not only the actual interview, but also her feelings and perceptions of the interview in order to draw attention to previously unnoticed influences on her as the researcher.

The writing of field notes after each interview was beneficial on many levels. It aided the researcher in analysis and later in writing the report since the time lapse between

the interviews and writing the report was extensive. Studying these notes refreshed the researcher's memory and assisted with the inclusion of information that could easily have been lost.

5.5.4   Methods of data analysis

Analysing material on people's life worlds presents one of the greatest challenges any qualitative researcher has to face (Oosthuizen, 2009:55). Babbie (2007:378) gives the following definition of qualitative analysis: "… non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships."

Various qualitative researchers and methodologists (Silverman, 2005; Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Schurink, 2005b) caution researchers to analyse "soft" or qualitative data from the outset, as far as possible, so as not to overlook gaps in the data. Schurink *et al.* (2011:405) explain that data analysis in qualitative research requires a twofold approach, namely data analysis at the research site during data collection and data analysis away from the site following a period of data collection, known as the "office approach."

Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002:141) point out the following about qualitative studies:

> … there is no definitive point at which information collection ends and interpretation begins. Working with the data are an experience of 'thinking'. We are called by a particular story, just as one 'stops' in front of a particular painting in an art gallery.

Grondin (2001:45) explains:

> The play of art does not lie in the artwork that stands in front of us, but lies in the fact that one is touched by a proposition, an address, an experience, which so captures us that we can only play along.

The researcher read extensively, about phenomenological research and data analysis. The steps of data analysis, as described by Schurink *et al.* (2011:405), represent data analysis in a linear form, but they caution the researcher that the activities in each step can move in circles. These authors use the following steps in data analysis:

- Preparing and organising of data;

- Planning for recording of data;

- Data collection and preliminary analysis;

- Managing the data;

- Reading and writing memos;

- Reducing the data;

- Generating categories and coding the data;

- Testing the emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations;

- Interpreting and developing typologies;

- Visualising, representing and displaying the data; and

- Presenting the data.

5.5.4.1   Steps in explication of data

To better understand and execute the process of explicating the data, the researcher consulted various authors but used Hycner's (1999) simplified version of explication, as described by Groenewald (2004), to guide her thought process. Hycner (1999:161) cautions that the word "analysis" should not be used in conjunction with phenomenology. The term "analysis" means "breaking into parts" and can result in the loss of the whole phenomenon. Explication of data should rather be used as it implies an "investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole" (Hycner, 1999:161). The following steps will be expounded:

- Bracketing and phenomenological reduction;

- Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question;

- Clustering of units of relevant meaning to form themes;

- Summarising each interview, validating it and where necessary, modifying it; and

- Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

- **Bracketing and phenomenological reduction**

Hycner (1985:281) explains that bracketing and reduction are used when listening to the recordings of the interviews and reading the transcripts. Ideal bracketing is characterised by the near-total exclusion of all internal and external suppositions. The researcher brackets out all external suppositions, leaving the

phenomenon bare. The researcher can then investigate the phenomenon in its pure and natural state, free from any external interpretation or suppositions (Gearing, 2004:1436).

Hycner (1985:281) recommends that the researcher repeatedly listen to the audio recordings of each interview as well as read the transcription a number of times in order to become familiar with the words of the interviewee and to develop a holistic sense or "gestalt" before going into the finer detail. Schurink *et al*. (2011:409) emphasise the importance of reading data and becoming familiar with the data in intimate ways. The authors recommend reading the transcripts in their entirety, often several times, to become immersed in the details before breaking them up into parts.

After data collection, the data was studied extensively to enable the researcher to become familiar with the content and to get a holistic view, before categorising, to determine if similarities exist. The researcher also kept memos of the different themes as they were uncovered. Before the literature review, the researcher considered some of the interviews to be lacking in substance, but after the review and constant re-reading of the interviews, the pieces came together. By listening to the interviews as well as re-reading the interview transcripts, the researcher became aware of the volume of rich data that had been gathered and gained better insight into the phenomenon.

Phenomenological reduction, according to Kleiman (2004:7), requires the implementation of *two devices,* namely bracketing or withholding prior knowledge of the phenomenon under study and secondly, to withhold any existential claims. Looking at the first device*,* Kleiman (2004:9) explains that the purpose of bracketing is "… to try to assume an attentive and naive openness to descriptions of phenomena, an uncertainty about what is to come and a willingness to wonder about the experiences being brought to presence in the descriptions of the participants." Hycner (1985:281) recommends the researcher suspend his own meanings and interpretations on entering the unique world of the participant as much as possible.

The notion of phenomenological reduction can be tricky as some of researcher's assumptions are likely to be implicit and, unbeknown to her, may have influenced both the interviews and the analysis of the data. Hycner (1985:281) states that phenomenological reduction teaches us the impossibility of a complete and absolute phenomenological reduction. He recommends the researcher list presuppositions that he or she is consciously aware of. In this regard, Kleiman (2004) states that the process of preparing oneself to enter the experience in wonder, deserves full attention.

The researcher had to identify her biases and presuppositions in order to be open to the existence of many possibilities for experiencing the phenomenon under study. The researcher acknowledged the improbability of suspending internal suppositions, such as her personal knowledge, assumptions, beliefs, values, and viewpoints. She nonetheless, tried to be conscious of them (Gearing, 2004:1443).

In preparation for commencing with the interviews and the subsequent analysis of the data, the researcher conversed with her promoter and other peer colleagues and the consultations brought to the fore the researcher's awareness of her previous knowledge, experience and beliefs. Like Kleiman (2004:7), the researcher was challenged to be open to the possibility of something yet unknown. The researcher reflected on the following:

- Her beliefs regarding emigration.
- Her own expectations of how participants might react.
- Her own opinions regarding the effect of emigration on a mother or father left behind.
- Her beliefs regarding what constitutes a family as well as family relationships.

Our foreknowledge can minimise the ability to research the topic thoroughly. Hamill and Sinclair (2010:16) further recommend that the researcher write down what he/she knows about the project before commencing with the study and what they think the issues are, thereby bringing it into consciousness. The authors further recommend revisiting these ideas throughout the study to ensure that their ideas, values and culture have not overridden those of the research participants'. Delaying the literature review until after data collection and analysis is to ensure

that the researcher is not phrasing questions or analysing data for themes that he/she knows exist in the literature.

In an attempt not to be influenced and to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher chose not to read literature before carrying out the interviews. She found this beneficial and highly recommends this approach. It puts the researcher in a position where there are no pre-conceived ideas and each interview leads to new information. The researcher had no set questions that needed answers; she was led by the participant and the participant decided what information he/she was prepared to share. It was similar to starting with an open canvas, allowing each participant to paint his/her own picture and not one that the researcher wanted or envisioned.

The second device is to withhold any existential claims, which means to consider what is given precisely as it is given, as presence or phenomenon (Kleiman, 2004:7). The researcher had in mind the piece of art by Magritte called *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* ("*This is not a pipe*") (Hart, 2013).

Figure 5.1: **Magritte: This is not a pipe. Source: Hart, 2013**

The image of the pipe and the sentence ("*This is not a pipe*") share a dialectical relationship, meaning that each comments on the other. This seems to be a case when it really does matter what the meaning of "*is*" is. Magritte highlights for our

consideration the idea that an image of a pipe is not the same thing as the pipe itself (or the letters *p-i-p-e*). It is a representation of a pipe, once removed from its referent, the object to which it refers. He also forces us to consider our own reaction to the painting by suggesting that our compulsion to call the image a pipe *reveals our predisposition* to confuse the image with the thing it represents (Blakesley & Brooke, 2001).

Kleiman (2004:7) used the example of looking at a table and wrote the following:

> If I observe a table, a real table, within the attitude of the phenomenological reduction I would say: 'The table presents itself to me as a really existing table.' That is more rigorous than saying 'it is a real table.'

Bracketing and withholding existential claims strengthens the analysis (Kleiman, 2004:7). Yet the researcher found that it was easier said than done, as not having preconceptions was almost impossible. This research study confronted the researcher on many levels, especially on the effect of preconceived ideas on our experience of phenomena as well as the advantage of bracketing. To attempt the interviews without prior reading of scientific literature created a space where the researcher was free from judgment and open to new information. Studying the literature after conducting and extensively studying all the interviews, created many enlightened moments where the researcher came to a thorough understanding of the data that was gathered.

- **Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question**

Hycner (1999) states that this is a critical phase in explicating the data. The research data should be approached with openness to whatever meanings emerge and phrases considered to illuminate the researched phenomenon should be extracted. In Hycner's (1985:282) view, the researcher is now ready to: "… begin the very rigorous process of going over every word, phrase, sentence and paragraph and to note significant non-verbal communication in the transcript in order to elicit the participant's meanings." This is a process of getting at the essence of meaning expressed in verbal and non-verbal communication. It is the crystallisation and condensation of what the participant has said, using the literal words of the participants as much as possible.

In describing the concept of transcription, Hycner (1985:280) says that an obvious step in phenomenological analysing of interview data is to have the "tapes" transcribed. He suggests that the transcribing include the literal statements, significant non-verbal and paralinguistic communications.

The researcher had each interview's audio recording typed verbatim. As discussed in the limitations section in Chapter one, the first few interviews were not typed verbatim. The typist made short summaries of what the participants said which meant that the data included her interpretations. It was crucial to use the exact wording of the participants, therefore the researcher found a typist that was able to type each interview verbatim. The researcher instructed the typist how "silence" should be revealed and how emotions, such as being tearful, should be transcribed. Apart from the literal statements, the typist also reflected the significant non-verbal responses.

To delineate units of meaning, the reading and re-reading of the interviews was of great value. The researcher became one with the information and memorised a significant number of quotations. This took a considerable amount of time. The benefit of having the interviews typed verbatim cannot be stressed enough. A further reading of the written texts occurred to re-affirm the categorisation of topics of significance within each of the major contextual issues. The units of meaning relating to the phenomenon within each of these topics of significance were then identified for intense examination. Hycner (1985) views delineating units of meaning as the beginning of a very critical phase in the explication of data. "Once the units of general meaning have been noted, the researcher is ready to address the research question to them" (Hycner, 1985:284). The researcher is required to make a substantial amount of judgement calls in order to avoid inappropriate subjective judgements (Groenewald, 2004:190). Focusing on the research question, helped the researcher to make the judgment call regarding determining the relevance of data to be analysed.

- **Eliminating redundancies**

The researcher had to carefully scrutinise the lists of units of relevant meaning extracted from each interview to eliminate the clearly redundant units (Moustakas, 1994). To do this, the researcher had to consider the literal content,

the number of times a meaning was mentioned and how it was stated. When looking at the data, the researcher realised that some of the data recorded, referred to the adult-child's experience of emigration. The goal of the study was to describe the parent's experiences and data referring to the adult-child was set aside.

- **Clustering units of relevant meaning to form themes**

Clusters or themes are typically formed by grouping units of meaning together (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher identified significant topics, also called units of significance (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). Once the process outlined in the previous section had been completed for all the interviews, the researcher looked "for the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations" (Hycner, 1999:154). Common ideas or themes surrounding the topics of significance were then re-assessed, subsequently identified and clustered by coding them together as the major contextual issues.

When clustering the units in the beginning of the process, it was found that some quotations fitted with more than one cluster and as the study progressed, the clustering of units were changed when they better suited other clusters. Analysis is an ongoing process and even while writing the report, the researcher was still analysing the data received. It is a mental challenge, and because each participant's situation is unique, various meanings can be derived from the information gathered.

- **Summarising each interview, validating and where necessary modifying it**

The composite summary incorporates and reflects all the themes derived from the data to give a holistic context (Groenewald, 2004). However, unique themes are as important as commonalties regarding the phenomenon in question (Hycner, 1999).

For Groenewald (2004) the aim of the researcher is to reconstruct the inner world of each participant as well as to understand each participant's world in relation to another participant's inner world and in turn, the *total* inner "world."

- **Extracting general and unique themes for all interviews and making a composite summary**

Groenewald (2004:21) asserts: "The researcher concludes the explication by writing a composite summary which must reflect the context from which the themes emerged." Sadala and Adorno (2001:289) explain that the researcher, at this point, "transforms participants' everyday expressions into expressions appropriate to the scientific discourse supporting the research." Hycner (1999:154) points out that after all the previous steps have been completed, the researcher looks "for the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations." Common themes must not be clustered if significant differences exist. It is important to highlight minority voices as they serve as important counterpoints to the phenomenon being researched Groenewald (2004:21).

The final aim of phenomenological analysis is to explain how the things people say, fall within a structure, as well as how they vary within this structure (Giorgi, 1997; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). For example, while it was felt that all the participants experienced loss as a result of their adult-child(ren)'s emigration, each participant had his or her own unique reasons/explanations.

Van Manen (1990:79) states:

> Grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning. What we call 'themes' are not necessarily 'the same thing' said again and again, but rather an understanding we have seen something that matters significantly, something that we wish to point the reader towards.

Harman (2007) cautions that to thematise is to objectify and remove the object or experience from its specific context. Ultimately, "the task is to language the phenomenal from the standpoint of the guiding principles of one's discipline" (Churchill, 1990:55).

5.5.4.2   Using computer software for data analysis

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and King (1994) remark that qualitative analyses can be supported by a number of different personal computer software packages that have been developed since the 1980s. However, "there is no one software package

that will do the analysis in itself" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996:169) and the understanding of the meaning of phenomena "cannot be computerised because it is not an algorithmic process" (Kelle, 1995:3). In qualitative research, software packages, such as ATLAS.ti or The Ethnograph, can be used to ease the laborious task of analysing text-based data through rapid and sophisticated searches, line-by-line coding, and so on (Kelle, 1995), but cannot interpret text in any way.

The researcher made use of the ATLAS.ti as her computer aided qualitative data analysis program. All the interviews were typed verbatim and this vast amount of unstructured information would have been near impossible to handle without this program. It is, however, still the task of the researcher to determine all the codes/themes as the program cannot interpret text in any way. ATLAS.ti facilitates the use of direct quotations to enrich the data representation and helps to identify patterns within the data. It was a costly and time consuming endeavour but a necessity to use the program. The ATLAS.ti program facilitated the following:

- Coding the text document
- Retrieving coded data
- Writing comments
- Grouping documents, codes, memos, themes and sub-themes
- Administering simple queries, creating families and filtering
- Exploring and querying data

No software package is able to do data analysis automatically. It can only facilitate data analysis. It is only by reading and re-reading the interviews that analysis can be done. With nineteen interviews (twenty-four participants), there was a vast amount of data and the program helped the researcher to organise the data and structure the detail. It was still up to the researcher to group the quotations and select the themes. The program was especially useful in retrieving coded data. When the researcher remembered a specific code, it was easy to trace it with the program.

5.5.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness means the ways we work to meet the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability of our research - as assessed by the academy, our communities,

and our participants. Positivists often question the trustworthiness of qualitative research, perhaps because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work (Shenton, 2004:63). Scholars across the practice and social science disciplines have sought to define what a good, valid, and/or trustworthy qualitative study is, to chart the history of and to categorise efforts to accomplish such a definition, and to describe and codify techniques for ensuring and recognising good studies. However, they concluded that "after all this effort, we seem to be no closer to establishing a consensus on quality criteria, or even on whether it is appropriate to try to establish such a consensus" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002:2).

Sandelowski (1993:2) points out that one of the most important threats to the phenomenological validity of qualitative projects is the assumption that validity rests on reliability. "What is forgotten is that in the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm, reality is assumed to be multiple and constructed rather than singular and tangible." The author further states that qualitative research is an art, or at least as much art as science, and that the nature of narrative data are the mainstay of qualitative work and is inherently revisionist. "To put it in phenomenological terms, repeatability is not an essential (or necessary or sufficient) property of the things themselves (whether the thing is qualitative research or the qualitative interview)" (Sandelowski, 1993:2). Sandelowski (1993:3) goes on to say that even when confronted with the same qualitative task, no two researchers will produce the same result; there will be differences in their philosophical and theoretical commitments and styles.

In seminal work in the 1980s, Guba and Lincoln (1985:290) substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of "trustworthiness." "We are concerned that in the time since Guba and Lincoln (1985) developed their criteria for trustworthiness, there has been a tendency for qualitative researchers to focus on the tangible outcomes of the research rather than demonstrating how verification strategies were used to shape and direct the research during its development. While strategies of trustworthiness may be useful in attempting to *evaluate* rigor, they do not in themselves *ensure* rigor. While standards are useful for *evaluating* relevance and utility, they do not in themselves *ensure* that the research will be relevant and useful" (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002:9).

De Vos (2005:345) writes about soundness (validity) of qualitative research and refers to the classic contribution of Lincoln and Guba (1985) when they propose criteria in pursuit of a trustworthy study namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Shenton (2004:63) states that Guba's constructs correspond to the criteria employed by the positive investigator namely:

- Credibility (in preference to internal validity)
- Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability)
- Dependability (in preference to reliability)
- Confirmability (in preference to objectivity)

- **Credibility**

  Credibility is established through activities that increase the possibility that credible findings will be produced. Credibility is enhanced when researchers describe and interpret their experience as researchers. Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to credibility instead of truth values and internal validity. Self-awareness of the researcher is essential. One way of increasing self-awareness is to keep a journal in which the content and the process of interactions are noted, including reactions to various events. This is precisely the aim of a field journal. A journal becomes the record of these relationships and provides material for reflection. Rodwell and Byers (1997:117) state that information gathered from noting, watching, and taking into account the physical and psychosocial dynamics present in the environment is validated through triangulation.

- **Transferability**

  Guba and Lincoln (1989) use the term transferability instead of applicability. Rodwell and Byers (1997:117) state that transferability differs from generalizability since it gauges how well the working hypothesis of one inquiry might hold in another context by looking at the quality of the report. In order to be transferable, Rodwell and Byers (1997:117) state:

  > The case study must contain careful and extensive description of time, the place, the context, and the culture in which the hypothesis were found to be salient to allow the reader to determine if transfer of the findings to another known context is possible.

- **Dependability**

Guba and Lincoln's (1985) recommendation is that auditability be the criterion for rigour when dealing with the consistency of data. Sandelowski (1986) states that a study and its findings are "auditable when another researcher can clearly follow the decision trail used by the investigator in the study. In addition, another researcher could arrive at the same or comparable but not contradictory conclusions given the researcher's data, perspective and situation." De Vos (2005:346) sums up dependability as the alternative to reliability in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study, as well as changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting.

- **Confirmability**

Confirmability is established when the case study results can be linked to the data themselves. Rodwell and Byers (1997:117) suggest that confirmability be documented through an audit trail that traces findings through raw data, documentary evidence, interview summaries, data analysis, and methodological and reflexive journals. An audit trail is an important part of establishing rigor in qualitative work as it describes the research procedures (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; Padgett, 1998). An audit trail allows the researcher the freedom to make research decisions not previously prescribed, while still requiring that each decision and the justification for that decision be recorded along the way (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006:450).

Tuckett (2005:29) discusses a researcher's strategies to attain rigour in qualitative research. Relying on Guba and Lincoln's (1989) trustworthiness criterion, the author outlined the research strategies and operational techniques to meet this criterion. Research strategies included the use of field notes and research participants' personal journal, audio recording and transcript auditing, and keeping a thematic log during interviews. Additionally, operational techniques included using the atypical case, member checking, triangulation strategies, thick description, and peer review. Member checks, triangulation, journal writing and focus groups are often used with peer debriefing to enhance credibility, *trustworthiness* and overall quality of the research (Tuckett, 2005:29). To ensure

trustworthiness and credibility of this study, the researcher made use of journal writing, personal reflexivity, peer debriefing, member checking and compiled an audit trail.

5.5.5.1   Journal writing

Self-awareness of the researcher is essential. One way of increasing self-awareness is to keep a journal in which the content and the process of interactions are noted, including reactions to various events. This is precisely the aim of a field journal. A journal becomes the record of these relationships and provides material for reflection (Koch, 2006:91).

Ortlipp (2008:695) comments that keeping and using reflexive research journals can make the messiness of the research process visible to the researcher who can then make it visible for those who read the research and thus avoid producing, reproducing, and circulating the discourse of research as a neat and linear process.

Rew, Bechtel and Sapp (1993:301) suggest: "The qualitative researcher engaged in descriptive inquiry should record biases, feelings, thoughts, and historical circumstances in a journal or diary." The process of recording one's thoughts and feelings in writing has been acknowledged as an excellent reflective tool (Rager 2005:25).

The researcher maintained a research journal as an ongoing record of the ideas and impressions which emerged while conducting the research interviews. Journal entries were used to record personal reflections regarding the research process. They chronicled her experience and documented her physical and emotional reactions. During the beginning stages of interviewing, journal writing aided the researcher in remembering initial impressions and feelings that could not be captured in the audio recordings. The researcher described the setting, the participant, any non-verbal behaviour, thoughts, feelings, or reactions that were experienced. Journal writing and reflecting was a great source of information when she commenced with the data analysis. Reflections in the journal included areas where she could have improved, for instance, her planning and interview skills. The effect of the interview on the participant, on herself and on the study was noted. The researcher's feelings about the research project in general, insights gained and any

"aha" moments were reflected upon. Personal challenges were recorded in the journal, such as struggling with the typist and moments of doubt.

5.5.5.2   Personal reflexivity

A reflexive approach to the research process is widely accepted in qualitative research. Researchers are urged to talk about themselves, "their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process" (Mruck, Roth & Breuer, 2003:3). Reflexive practice aims to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of research outcomes, a construction that "originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertake during the process of researching" (Mruck et al., 2003:3).

Reflection is an essential part of qualitative research. Porter (1993) in Long and Johnson (2000:31), sees reflexivity as researchers reflecting on their own beliefs in the same manner as examining those of their research participants. Rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher, reflexive researchers try to understand them (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:18). The intensive interviews and the reading and re-reading of the interviews encouraged reflexivity and self-exploration and made the researcher aware of any assumptions.

For Kelly (2006:374), a "backward arc," which involves looking back on our progress and retracing our steps in a critical way, is of the utmost importance. This author refers to this process as the "critical moment" in the process of interpretation. The researcher reflected on the research process itself by discussing her findings with colleagues and her promoter as well as other experts. The researcher continuously engaged in further theoretical reading as new ideas can develop a distanciated perspective, which is like the eyes of others (Kelly, 2006:374).

- **Reflection on the duration of the study**

For the contextual meaning to emerge, prolonged engagement from the side of the researcher is viewed as a necessary condition (Cho & Trent, 2006:329). The researcher was involved in this research study for a period of about five years and the time spent on the project gave her time to view the phenomenon from various angles, led to more information being gained and definitely deepened her understanding of the life world of the parent left behind. Kirk and Miller (1986:30-31)

argue that prolonged involvement in a community under research enhances sensitivity to "discrepancies between the meanings presumed by the investigator and those understood by the target population." Persistent observation enhances the effect of this involvement by enabling the researcher "to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and to focus on them in more detail" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:237). Concerning the issue of credibility, the researcher encouraged the participants to elaborate on their responses during the interviews in order to generate rich descriptions of their experiences.

Listening to the "stories" the research participants told, allowed the researcher to learn about their lives from their subjective point of view and on their own terms. Her intense engagement with participants throughout the interviews deepened her understanding of the life world of the parents and she became more sensitive towards their needs and their unique experiences. Stiles (1993:604) points out that a researcher's interpretations transform, evolve and change as the researcher becomes "infused" with the observations.

- **Reflection on the topic of the thesis**

If we undertake research on topics that resonate with issues in our own lives, it is possible that undertaking the research will have some type of emotional impact on us (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2007:327). Stiles (1993:604) agrees with this statement and mentions that qualitative researchers often study concepts or topics that are personally significant and thereby involve themselves in self-examination, significant personal learning and change. As qualitative researchers, our goal is to see the world through someone else's eyes, using ourselves as a research instrument; it thus follows that we must experience our research "both intellectually and emotionally" (Gilbert, 2001:9).

- **Reflection on the emotional impact of the study on the researcher**

"I stumbled upon (and over) the angular contours of my own strong feelings" (Peshkin, 1991:17). How amazed and thankful was the researcher to read that a common element that accompanies qualitative researchers on their research journeys is strong feelings. The researcher experienced "strong feelings" from the

very first interview and reading and re-reading the quotations kept these emotions alive. As a mother, she found it impossible not to be touched by the research participants' descriptions of their longing for their children. The face-to-face interactions and being in such close proximity with another person's pain, was humbling. In the researcher's notes, gratitude is frequently expressed to the research participants for allowing the researcher into their world and trusting her with "their stories." The researcher was constantly reminded how each of us has a special story to share that reminds us of our interconnectedness as human beings.

The researcher related on a deeper level to some of the participants. There was one interview that provided such rich data that an entire study could be built upon it. The participant used pure Afrikaans, her native tongue, with such rich descriptions that the researcher felt as if she was being transformed to the exact place where the story was unfolding and becoming part of the scene that was being described. The researcher could not help being emotional in some parts of the interview and realised how passionate she was about the topic of research and how well she related to the participant's life world. The researcher came to the conclusion that the participant had been analysing her situation for such a long time that although she was subjectively involved, she had the ability to look at her own situation objectively and from that stance told her "special story."

- **Reflection on the researcher's experience of the research journey**

The researcher experienced first-hand that, as she was part of the research process, she could not be objective one hundred per cent of the time. She also wondered what information a researcher that was not a mother, and had never had to say good-bye to a child, would gain. This reminded the researcher of the statement made by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:25), calling on the qualitative researcher to "assume a posture of in-dwelling," which they describe as "being at one with the person under investigation, walking a mile in the other person's shoes, or understanding the person's point of view from an empathic rather than a sympathetic position."

Reflecting on her experience of conducting this qualitative study, the researcher can affirm that the nature of the research changed her personally. Her passionate

interest in the phenomenon ensured that she persevered. The research interviews encouraged reflexivity and self-exploration and increased her awareness of her assumptions and biases. Listening to people's stories and their accounts in their own words made it easier for her to connect and relate to them. Grafanaki (1996:331) states that having access to their overt and covert internal experiences helped her to become more sensitive to their feelings. Knowing people on a more personal level and reading or listening to their accounts, made her more aware of their needs. The researcher can relate to Grafanaki (1996:331) when he said the whole process was a powerful educational experience in both personal and professional terms.

5.5.5.3   Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing involves the process of engaging in dialogue with colleagues outside of a research project who have experience with the topic, population or methods being utilised (Lietz, Langer and Furman, 2006:451). The researcher engaged in peer debriefing "for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:308).

Peer debriefing may be pursued in numerous forms. One of these is to discuss the emerging findings at intervals with knowledgeable colleagues; a second is to present and defend method and findings at national research conferences. A third is to present the findings and implications to interested groups, such as the doctoral research seminar presented at the end of this study as part of the requirements for the degree (Long & Johnson, 2000:34). Review with colleagues is intended to stimulate consideration and exploration of additional perspectives and explanations at various stages of the process of data collection and analysis. In particular, it is aimed at preventing premature closure of the search for meaning and patterns in the data (Long & Johnson, 2000:34).

Peer debriefing was an important part of this project. The researcher was fortunate to have a friend, Yvonne Naudé, who studied with her during a prior qualification, BSocSci Psychology (Honours). Yvonne is a methodical, logical and analytical thinker and her qualities and skills together with our daily discussions served as a sounding board. Her honest critical feedback was invaluable and our regular

meetings kept the research on schedule. The researcher discussed the research methodology with Professor Schurink, a specialist in qualitative research. His comments were essential and helped guide the methodological process. In addition, the researcher had conversations with Utha Coetzee, a psychologist, regarding the development of an intervention strategy. Utah's input, based on years of experience in psychotherapeutic work, aided the researcher to develop a practice guideline.

Wincup (2001:29) recommends that peer discussion be used because it "can provide reassurance and helps to overcome feelings of isolation by recognising that your own emotional experiences are not unique." The value of peer debriefing in the current study cannot be emphasised enough. Right from the onset of the research, the researcher experienced the phenomenon as a traumatic loss for the parents. Although the emigration of an adult-child is a loss, and experienced by some participants as traumatic as losing a child to death, it is an inevitable situation and the parent has to deal with it as best they can. As with so many other losses people suffer in life, each individual's situation is different and coping with loss, results in unique coping mechanisms.

The researcher consulted the advice and input of an independent person that was an outsider to the research project. This person is a retired physician from Pretoria whose son had emigrated and who was not a participant in this study. He is a well-educated and widely read person who is very interested in the emotional wellbeing of various groups in the community. He provided additional perspectives and explanations during the process of data analysis. The researcher's consultations with him compared with the concept of peer debriefing. The researcher scheduled a meeting to explain the nature of the study with him. He was given a document containing the research participants' quotations, which were divided under various sub-headings. The researcher did not explain or elaborate on the study until after he had read all the quotations and made comments where appropriate. These comments were very valuable and led to new ways of analysing the data. Subsequently, through the physician's influence at a retirement village, she was invited to lead a group discussion about the parent left behind after their adult-child(ren) had emigrated to retired parents from the retirement village.

5.5.5.4 Member checking

Many critical questions and doubts have been raised about the theoretical and practical value and capacity of member checking to improve validity (Bluchbinder, 2010:106). Kleiman (2004:16) made the statement that introducing the subjects into the analysis is inconsistent with the descriptive Husserlian method (Husserl, 1982). McConnell-Henry, Chapman and Francis (2009:29) explain that since Heideggerian phenomenology aims to understand shared meanings, there is no intent to generalise, theorise or predict outcomes. In their study, the authors gave numerous reasons for their belief that member checking is incongruent with phenomenology. Kleiman (2004:16) explains that descriptions of experiences that were given during the first visit are no longer pre-reflective. They are instead meta-reflective, that is, focused on what was said about the experiences, rather than describing the experiences as they came to presence (Kleiman, 2004:16).

For member checking, the researcher made contact with a number of research participants for a follow-up interview to present a summary of the themes generated from the data. The researcher explained that the second interview was an attempt to understand the information/description that was collected during the first interview and whether the interpretation and themes generated were an accurate reflection of their story. She soon realised that participants felt they had already reflected their experiences, did not see the value of a second interview and gave researcher the impression that this was unnecessary. One research participant asked the researcher: "Why are we doing this again?" Another research participant shared that she had become a grandmother since the first interview. She was proud to talk about this new experience, but data saturation had already been reached with regard to the themes.

The fact that the second interview did not reveal valuable new information undoubtedly validated the first interview and confirmed that data saturation had been reached. Scheduling second interviews with the remainder of the participants was halted. Thus, two second interviews conducted for member checking and clarification of meaning did not bring any new meaning or information to the fore, but validated and confirmed the researcher's accurate interpretation of the data and generation of themes.

Regarding rigor in qualitative research, Sandelowski (1993:8) provides a detailed discussion of the difficulties concerning member checking, ultimately making the following statement: "Research is both a creative and a destructive process; we make things up and out of our data, but we often inadvertently kill the thing we want to understand in the process."

5.5.5.5   Audit trail

Miles and Huberman (in Kelly, 2006:376) recommend that a researcher provide an "audit trail," describing the total research process in detail. Kelly (2006:377) feels that the reader should be in a position to replicate the research method by reading the audit trail and should have a sense of the interpretive lenses that have been applied to the analysis. Sandelowski (1986:2) states that a study and its findings are: "Auditable when another researcher can clearly follow the decision trail used by the investigator in the study. Therefore another researcher could arrive at the same or comparable but not contradictory conclusions given the researcher's data, perspective and situation."

An audit trail is an important part of establishing rigor in qualitative work as it describes the research procedures (Lietz *et al.*, 2006:450). An audit trail allows the researcher the freedom to make research decisions not previously prescribed, while still requiring that each decision and the justification for that decision be recorded along the way (Lietz *et al.*, 2006:450).

Leaving a decision trail entails discussing explicitly decisions taken about the theoretical, methodological and analytical choices made throughout the study (Koch, 2006:92). The researcher tried to leave as complete a track record of the research process as possible. All interview transcripts will remain available from the supervisor of this research, providing a dependability audit trail. All transcripts, audio recordings and the saved data in ATLAS.ti will be stored on a CD for 15 years in the Department of Social work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria.

5.6   PILOT STUDY

Conducting research involves costs and it is therefore a good idea to conduct a pilot study before implementing the final research design (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006:94). Pilot studies are preliminary studies on small samples that help to identify

potential problems with the design. For Macleod (in Kanjee, 2006:491), the rationale of a pilot study is to save time and money in the main study; "… it allows space for revision, reworking, complete overhaul, or potentially, abandonment of the project."

Fouché and Delport (2005:82) describe a pilot study as "… a small scale implementation of the planned investigation in an attempt to bring possible deficiencies to the fore timeously." One of the aims of the pilot study is to establish the feasibility of the research study. Before the research project commenced, a pilot study was undertaken to test the feasibility of the study and to pre-test the data collection methods. The reasons for undertaking the pilot study were:

- to determine if an unstructured interview was the best method to gain rich data and if the primary and secondary question yielded enough information;
- to discover possible practical or other problems and solve them before commencing with the study.

5.6.1   Feasibility of study

After conducting interviews with various experts, the researcher was of the opinion that participants would be available. Hofmeyer (2009) and Kruger (2009) indicated that there were numerous candidates in the various homes for older persons that qualified as participants, and these people were willing to talk about their children, especially to someone who was interested in their situation.

Van der Riet and Durrheim (2006:86) believe that a well-planned research study will anticipate the resources that will be needed for the project. These resources include time, human resources and money.

The researcher planned for the study, had available time to conduct the interviews with the participants, had the interviews transcribed, she analysed the information and wrote the research report. The researcher was aware of cost implications, such as travelling costs, transcribing the interviews, editing costs, photocopying and binding of the report. The researcher had a University of Pretoria postgraduate bursary for one year which covered some of the costs, while the rest were covered by the researcher.

5.6.2   Pilot test

The pilot test provided the researcher with the opportunity to test the research procedures and the general interview question on a small scale before embarking on the full research study.

The researcher was eager to start with the fieldwork and to meet the research participant in order to gain scientific information. The pilot study participant was selected purposively according to the sampling criteria, namely that he/she had to be a parent between 50 and 80, have an adult-child(ren) that had emigrated and was willing to discuss his/her experience with the researcher.

The experience of entering the research setting as a "stranger" has its own advantages. The novelty of a new environment lends the researcher an openness to new information. The researcher agrees with the comment by Sampson (2004:389): "I was certainly more of a mirror in undertaking my first voyage than in my fifth, since innocence is replaced by experience."

The data gathered from the pilot interview did not form part of the main study. This interview confirmed that the relevant data could be obtained using the primary and secondary questions, that an unstructured interview was suitable for gaining rich information and that the researcher could find research participants.

5.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining, and describing people and their natural environments (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000:93). Any research that includes people requires an awareness of the ethical issues that may be derived from such interactions. The protection of all participants in any research study is crucial. Gajjar (2013:7) asks the following question regarding ethical considerations in research.

> Ethical norms are so ubiquitous that one might be tempted to regard them as simple common-sense. On the other hand, if morality were nothing more than common-sense, then why are there so many ethical disputes and issues in our civilization?

Gajjar (2013:8) explains that there are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in society and the first one is that norms promote the aims of

research, such as knowledge and avoidance of error. The second reason given is that ethical standards promote values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, thus protecting intellectual property interests. Thirdly, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. Ethical norms in research also help to build public support for research. Finally, many of the norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights and animal welfare, compliance with the law, and health and safety.

The ethical aspects will subsequently be discussed in more detail.

5.7.1   Avoidance of harm

Emotional harm, according to Strydom (2011:115), is more difficult to predict and determine than physical discomfort, but often has more far-reaching consequences for the research participants. Avoidance of harm is imperative. It means that the research participants should not be harmed in an emotional or physical manner. The meaning of "harm" should be treated in the broadest possible way, to include anything from physical discomfort to emotional stress, humiliation or embarrassment (Du Plooy, 2000:109).

The researcher has an ethical responsibility to protect the research participants from physical or emotional harm. While the study did not intend to cause harm, the researcher recognised that research participants could feel vulnerable or experience distress in divulging personal information. The researcher facilitated a safe and supportive interview atmosphere in order to minimise discomfort. She clarified her role as researcher to each participant and made it clear that she was not in a position to offer social work intervention. As suggested by Strydom (2005a:66), participants were also given the opportunity to be debriefed by the researcher after each interview in order to minimise the potential for possible harm to them.

During debriefing, researchers must screen participants for potentially negative psychological consequences and be prepared to take specific steps to minimize these (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2007:345). In this study, research participants who required referral for counselling or other specialised

services were referred by the researcher to Mrs Nel, a clinical psychologist, with whom arrangements had been made before commencement of the study. Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe (2001:173) point out that should it be necessary to recommend a participant for further services, it should be done with care, as it could be perceived negatively. The researcher should have interpersonal competence to address such an issue in an effective manner.

5.7.2   Informed consent

Wassenaar (2006:76) indicates that qualitative interviews carry far more potential to cause subjective distress in participants than most quantitative methods do. The author stresses the fact that qualitative interviews should be conducted only with informed consent, explicit confidentiality agreements and the application of a rigorous analytical process to ensure that valid and supportable conclusions are drawn.

In order to ensure ethical research, the letter of informed consent was explained to each research participant before the interview commenced (Holloway, 1997; Kvale, 1996). The informed consent letter explained the nature of the study, together with the goals and procedures of the study. This provided participants with clear, detailed and factual information about the study.

Groenewald (2004:10) developed a consent "agreement" in order to gain informed consent from participants by adapting Bailey's (1996) recommend items:

- That they are participating in research
- The purpose of the research
- The procedures of the research
- The risk and benefits of the research
- The voluntary nature of research participation
- The subject's (informant's) right to stop the research at any time
- The procedures used to protect confidentiality

Research participants were requested to give their permission for voice recording of the interviews. They were informed that the data would be stored for archival or research purposes for a period of 15 years at the University of Pretoria after

completion of the study. The researcher informed the participants that they may withdraw from the study at any stage of the process if they so choose, after which their data would be destroyed. Each research participant was given a copy of the letter of informed consent. Each participant signed a copy of the letter of informed consent.

5.7.3 Deception of subjects

Corey (in Strydom, 2011:118) explains that deception involves the withholding of information or offering of incorrect information in order to ensure participation of research participants when they would otherwise possibly have refused. Strydom (2011:119) has the following opinion concerning deception: "It is our firm opinion that no form of deception should ever be inflicted on research participants. If this happens inadvertently, it must be rectified immediately after or during the debriefing interview." The researcher was aware of the consequences of deliberately misrepresenting facts by not revealing all the information or providing incorrect information and avoided any form of deception whatsoever.

5.7.4 Confidentiality

Qualitative research often raises concerns about the protection of the confidentiality of the participants and of third parties mentioned in transcribed narratives (Hadjistavropoulos & Smythe, 2001:163). For Strydom (2011:119), privacy implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner. Each research participants was assured of confidentiality regarding personal information obtained during the interview. In the study, each participant was given a number and the actual name of the research participant was not used. The first letter of specific people and places mentioned by participants was used so no real names where disclosed (Hadjistavropoulos & Smythe, 2001:163). Participants were referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. in the study as well as in the transcripts and research report. An additional safeguard that the researcher used to minimise the risks related to revelation of personal information was to review these issues with each participant at the end of the interview. This was to make sure that they still felt comfortable to be included in the study (Woodrow, 2006:111).

In order to protect the participants from any possible harm and to protect their confidentiality, the researcher asked them to read the profiles that she had written about them. A letter was sent, see Annexure E in which the participants were requested to verify their profile information, and if necessary, make corrections or changes before giving their permission for it to be used in the thesis. Taking this extra precaution enabled the researcher to re-assess what she had written about each participant and to verify that it was a true reflection of them. In addition, this letter also gave the researcher the opportunity to formally thank the participants for their contribution to the study and it served as a form of closure for them.

5.7.5 Actions and competence of the researcher

Strydom (2011:123) reflects that the researcher should ensure that he or she is competent enough to undertake the study. The researcher is a qualified social worker with very good interviewing skills and has already completed her MA (Social Work) degree using the qualitative research approach. To further her knowledge, the researcher completed the BSocSci Psychology (Honours) degree at Unisa in 2008. One of the modules in these studies was Research Methodologies. In addition, as part of the requirements for the DPhil study, the researcher completed her oral exam in Research Methodology successfully.

5.7.6 Release of publications or findings

Strydom (2011:126) highlights the importance of making the publication or findings public in written form. In addition, information should be clearly formulated and expressed with no ambiguity. Babbie and Mouton (2002:527) state that ethical research should make its findings available and easily accessible. The researcher has endeavoured to present her findings from the study in an objective and unbiased manner. In order to ensure this, the researcher was supervised by a promoter, appointed by the Department of Social Work and Criminology. A copy of the thesis will be held at the University of Pretoria's Library in hard copy and electronic CD format. The researcher will submit two scientific articles, with her promoter as co-author, to an accredited journal for possible publication.

5.7.7 Debriefing of subjects or respondents

For Strydom (2011:122), this process involves debriefing sessions after the study, where the researcher can minimise possible harm that was done to research participants. It also involves rectifying misperceptions that may have arisen in the minds of the research participants. "Debriefing, like consent, needs to be a process that is revisited throughout the course of the research because issues relating to participant vulnerabilities could be prevented or minimized through such a process" (Hadjistavropoulos & Smythe, 2001:173).

The researcher conducted debriefing sessions with each participant after the interview, this was to ensure that the interview had not caused any emotional harm. The researcher also checked with each participant that the information conveyed during the interview was correctly understood by reflecting the picture the researcher had formed from the story told. If a need for any further counselling was noticed, the participant was referred to Mrs Nel, a clinical psychologist, who specialises in dealing with loss. There was, however, no need to refer any participants for further counselling.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter included a detailed description of the research methodology that was utilised in the study. A qualitative research approach was identified as the most appropriate approach to answer the research question since it aims at understanding and interpreting the meaning that research participants give to their experiences. The nature of the research was exploratory and descriptive since little is known about the experiences of the parent left behind in South Africa.

A phenomenological research design focusing on human experience and searching for structural meaning of the experience was chosen. Since phenomenology is both a philosophy and a methodology seeking to understand the social phenomena from the actor's perspective, the researcher found it to be the best design for this research. Clear and specific sampling criteria were set and purposive sampling was utilised to identify the first participants. The snowball technique was then used to locate additional participants. Data gathering took place through face-to-face, in-depth unstructured interviews. Every interview was audio recorded and typed

verbatim. Field notes were taken that assisted the researcher in the analysis phase. In accordance with the phenomenological design, the researcher used bracketing and phenomenological reduction as part of the circular analysis process. Due to the vast amount of data, the researcher made use of the ATLAS.ti data analysis program to assist in the analysis of the data.

Since the trustworthiness of the study was of the utmost importance to the researcher, special attention was given to journal writing, personal reflexivity, peer debriefing, member checking as well as compiling an audit trail. A pilot study was conducted to determine the feasibility of the study and to test the research procedures and the general interview question. Finally and most importantly, ethical considerations were discussed to ensure avoidance of harm of the participants and to ensure their confidentiality.

The next chapter will outline the empirical research findings.

6. CHAPTER 6: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative researchers have a range of choices when it comes to capturing and sharing their findings. Qualitative research methods allow for diversity and when presenting the data, no one specific mould is prescribed. The researcher identifies with the following statement by Ryan, Scapens and Theobald (2002:15), "The construction of a convincing research text from a 'mountain' of data, field notes, diary entries, meeting minutes, interviews and reports, is a mammoth task."

In the last decade, there has been a growing interest in stretching the boundaries of narrative reporting to include visual modes of representation (collage, drawings, photographs, film and video). Butler-Kisber (2002:230) states that there is no binding theory of narrative, but instead, great conceptual diversity. In presenting the research findings, the researcher embraced the principle of diversity.

This chapter presents the findings from participant interviews as they relate to the interview question posed to them in the unstructured interview as method of data collection: "*Tell me your story about your adult-child that has emigrated?*"

The goal and objectives of the research project will be stated in order to contextualise the study. The detailed research methodology can be found in Chapter 5. This chapter consists of several sections. First, a profile of each participant is provided to introduce the participants who shared their experiences and aided this research study. This is followed by biographical information of the participants. The second section presents the results from the empirical research and the interpretation thereof.

The qualitative research findings are presented in themes and sub-themes. The thematic analysis identifies the relevant experiences, attitudes and insights that participants reported. Verbatim quotes and relevant literature are used to support these themes and to substantiate the findings. Four main themes are presented, namely emigration, loss, interpersonal relationships and communication.

6.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 Goal of this study

The goal of the study is formulated as follows: *To explore and describe the experiences of parents left behind in South Africa after their adult-child(ren) has emigrated.*

6.2.2 Objectives of this study

The objectives of the study are:

- to contextualise experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult child(ren);
- to describe emigration and the impact on the family members left behind as a global phenomenon;
- to provide a broad theoretical overview of the phenomenon of emigration from a South African perspective;
- to explore and describe the experiences of South African parents left behind as a result of the emigration of their adult children;
- to formulate practice guidelines for helping professionals with regard to addressing the impact of emigration on the parents left behind after the emigration of adult children; and
- to provide conclusions and recommendations as well to heighten the awareness of the helping professions regarding these parents.

The empirical investigation was guided by the following research question: "*What are the experiences of South African parents left behind once their adult-child(ren) has emigrated?*"

6.3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Delport and Fouché (2005:354) note that there is no agreement among authors regarding the elements or structure when reporting on qualitative research and claim that there are many acceptable forms for a qualitative report. The authors state that qualitative data in the form of words, pictures and quotes are information rich and that it is difficult to condense the report.

The researcher is directly involved in the setting, interacts with the participants and is the "instrument" (Delport & Fouché, 2005:353). Rossman and Rallis (2003:337) explicate that the researcher has spent time in the field and has "interpreted events, activities, conversations and objects and constructed [her] own meaning and understanding of them."

In presenting the empirical findings, the researcher commenced by describing the research participants. An article by Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999:221) points out that researchers must "situate their sample," meaning that they should "describe the research participants and their life circumstances to aid the reader in judging the range of people and situations to which the findings might be relevant." The findings of the study are presented according to the following outline:

- A biographical profile of each research participant.
- A thematic analysis of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis. Each theme and sub-theme is discussed and responses of participants that verify the findings are quoted. The findings are substantiated with literature.

6.3.1   Profile of research participants

During each interview, the researcher felt gratitude for the information that the participants were prepared to share with her. This was especially true for the interview with Participant 1 as she was willing to share the painful ordeal experienced by her daughter. The researcher remembers thinking that we all have a story to tell and to be in such a fortunate position to share in each individual's "story" was a privilege.

Each interview was told as a "story" with its own unique feel and theme. Like all "stories," it had its main characters, supporting actors and each research participant wrote his or her script. The participants decided what the main storyline would be, which events were more important, and how much information they were prepared to share. Even though some of the interviews were of short duration, every interview was meaningful.

To introduce the participants the researcher sketched the interview circumstances, as this provides a backdrop for each "story" as it unfolds. Each participant was

assigned a number for confidentiality purposes, which also serves as the interview number. Couples interviewed jointly, were indicated as 1a (male) and 1b (female). Permission was obtained from participants to include this information in their profile, by e-mailing the profile to them and allowing them to change or remove any information they did not want to reveal. The participant profiles are presented below:

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 01	Female	65	White	Married	1S 1D
Participant - P1					

Participant P1 is the wife of participant 5. The interview took place in the participant's home and it was evident that this was a home filled with memories. There were photos of the family and many ornaments and paintings that created a warm and homely feel. P1's daughter had only been in Australia for a year. This was the shortest period of time after a child had emigrated amongst all the participants.

Her son-in-law is a lawyer and her daughter had her own business. It was clear that they had been very successful business people in South Africa. The participant remembers her daughter saying, "I have the perfect life." Her son-in-law started experiencing difficulties in performing his job due to the new government. Their car was stolen and on top of that, they then experienced the terrible ordeal of an armed robbery and rape. As she spoke about the night her daughter was raped, her pain was so intense that the researcher could touch it.

According to the participant, it was a huge shock when she was told about the emigration. It was 18 months from the time her daughter and their family decided to emigrate until they left. When asked to talk about her daughter's emigration, she gave a vivid description of the relationship she'd had with her daughter and her grandchildren. P1 had taken care of her grandchildren since they were born and they felt like her own children. P1 was heartbroken and could not stop crying while talking about her daughter.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 02	Female	79	White	Married	2S 1D
Participant - P2					

The interview took place at the townhouse of the participant, which she shares with her second husband. Her story began with her son who studied and specialised in medicine in America. She was very sad when he left especially because he went so far compared

to people whose children "only" emigrate to Europe. She felt that America was far worse because of the travelling time and the effect (jetlag) on especially an elderly person.

She and her husband have visited her son and his family quite a few times in America, but the last time she went alone as her husband could not get medical insurance. She explained that during their visits they went to various places with their timeshare so that the children could also enjoy the visit.

She doesn't have a good relationship with her daughter-in-law and mostly communicates with her son. "So unfortunately, the connection could be closer … let me put it this way … if, uhm, there was a little more response from her side."

Long distance communication definitely does not aid the already strenuous relationship with her daughter-in-law. The participant also explained that they have an autistic child that takes up a lot of their time. The fact that they are in America is very beneficial for this child. She explained at great length how well the American school system assists children with special needs. It was also clear that she felt she was missing out on her role as grandparent.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 03	Female	52	White	Married	1S

Interview - P3

This participant is a 52 year old mother with only one son. She commenced her story by telling the researcher that her son "gave his heart to God" at the age of nine. She further explained that God spoke to her in a dream, telling her that her son was an export product and that is how she knew that he would emigrate someday.

The participant got divorced when her son was only one year old. She described her marriage as a "flop" (*disaster*). She had to escape from her abusive husband and unhappy marriage and look after her son on her own. As a result of her difficult circumstances, she and her son were very close and she was devastated when he emigrated. She explained that it felt as if she had lost her son to death: "… *dit is amper soos dood behalwe ek kan hom bel, maar dis amper soos dood.*" Certain songs remind her of her child and she can't help crying when she listens to them. He is married to a Polish girl he met in London. The participant has frequent contact with her son and is saving money to visit the family in London.

The way she handled her laptop was noteworthy. She took it out of the bag, took the plastic off the screen and dusted it carefully. It was obviously very precious to her! She explained that all her photographs of her children and grandchildren are stored on the computer and these are of the utmost importance to her.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 04	Male (a) Female (b)	59 57	White White	Married	2S 1D

Participants - P4a and P4b

When the researcher phoned to make the appointment, the wife confirmed and when the researcher arrived, both the husband and the wife were waiting for her. After the research question, the wife's very first comment was: "*Ek sal maar beginne en dan kan jy maar inlas as daar iets is.*" (I might as well begin and you can add if there is anything else). That set the tone for the rest of the interview where the wife would say something and the husband would confirm it and sometimes elaborate on what his wife had said. They experienced the emigration as "their" problem.

She explained that their middle child could not find a decent work in South Africa. He had learning difficulties and his highest qualification is N3 in food hygiene. Since he was a slow worker, employers mistreated him by either poor payment or exceptionally long working hours. They (the parents) wanted to "kick" him out to stand on his own feet. Through an agency they'd found work for him at a hotel in London.

While in London, he met a girl from Poland, moved in with her and after she fell pregnant, they were married. It was impossible for the participants to attend the wedding ceremony. The wife's mother then moved in with them, which complicated matters, since she is not affluent in English. It is difficult for the participants to communicate with their son's new wife telephonically and it was clear from the first visit that there are many cultural differences. Even the church denomination is different.

They both feel that their son is better off living in England than in South Africa. Concerning gender differences of parents dealing with the emigration of their child, both participants agreed that there is a difference, with the wife being much more emotional.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 05	Male	66	White	Married	1S 1D

Participant - P5

This participant is the husband of Participant P1. After I had the interview with his wife, he said that he would like to partake in the research project. At the onset of the interview, he immediately told me what a shock it was when they heard about their daughter's ordeal the night of the armed robbery and rape. "*Dit was vir my 'n verskriklike skok op daai oomblik dat so iets met my dogter moet gebeur en uhm, dit was swaar, selfs nou nog om daarvan te praat, want geen mens wens sy kind dit toe nie.*" (It was a terrible shock for me at that moment to think that such a thing could happen to my daughter and uhm, it was difficult and still is to I talk about it, because no person wishes that on their child). He believes that rape is the worst thing that can happen to your child. He can't think of anything worse except, perhaps, death. The decision to emigrate in this situation was not the worst part, since the rape ordeal overshadowed everything.

The participant explained that he was not grieving because his daughter and her family had left, but because his children *had* to leave due to the level of crime in their own country. He explained how much he loves the country but he is unsure about the future. He is willing to take the "gamble," but doesn't feel his children should "gamble" with their future.

He said that there is a gender difference between his and his wife's handling of the emigration of their daughter. According to the participant, his wife will do anything to be with their daughter, but for him it is not as important. He said that it is the maternal instinct that causes mothers to be more involved with the children. He sees his role as taking financial care of the family and his wife's as focussing more on the emotional needs.

It was clear that he has a very close relationship with his daughter and that her emigration has left a huge void.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 06	Female	64	White	Married	2D

Participant - P6

The interview took place at the research participant's townhouse, which she shares with her husband. It is situated in a retirement village. She began her story by telling the researcher that her children, both daughters, had emigrated to Australia in the same year. The youngest daughter is not married and the eldest daughter is married with three children. Her son-in-law had coincidentally received a job offer on the same evening they were robbed. "*Ek het gebid dat die Here vir hulle moet wys wat moet hulle doen. Toe sê*

iemand vir my maar die Here het mos nou hard gepraat." (I prayed that the Lord would show them what to do. Then someone said to me but the Lord has spoken out loudly).

Whilst in South Africa, she had seen her three grandchildren regularly (at least once a week) since they'd live in a town close by. The absence of the grandchildren made the loss more intense, especially since they were born in South Africa and had a good relationship with their grandparents. The participant compared her current role as grandparent to that of a childless mother. When other parents talk about their children and grandchildren, she experiences what a childless mother feels like, since her children are not available. Speaking about her grandchildren made the participant very emotional and it was clear that she experienced their leaving as a huge loss.

She described her relationship with her eldest daughter as "challenging" and sees her daughter as a very opinionated person, a "*in jou spoortrap mens*" (person that expects you to toe the line). The participant has a more open and warm relationship with her younger daughter and they have also had more contact after the emigration.

After the children left, the participant sought the professional help of a psychologist, but thought that he didn't really understand her loss. She used anti-depressants to assist her in dealing with the loss of her children and grandchildren but has since stopped using the medication.

In connection with visits to her children she feels, "*Jy moet in jou spoor trap.*" (You have to toe the line). She believes that relationships with children stay the same after the emigration. If it was a strained relationship before, it will not improve, "It is what it is."

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 07	Female	78	White	Married	3S 1D
Participant - P7					

This interview took place at the home of the respondent, a townhouse beautifully decorated with many artworks. There was one piece of artwork that dominated the room and I later discovered that it was a painting of the participant's granddaughter.

From the very first sentence, it was clear that the respondent has thought thoroughly about her situation and has analysed every detail of her daughter's emigration to Canada. Her first sentence was: "*My evaring was aanvanklik ongelooflik traumaties, want dit was*

in 'n sekere sin onverwags." (My experience was initially extremely traumatic, because in a certain way, it was unexpected).

The outstanding aspect of this interview was the research participant's use of her native language. Her Afrikaans was pure and richly descriptive. For instance: "*Dit was vir my soos 'n doodsklok wat gelui het …*" (For me it was like a death bell …). What an illuminating description! She told her "story" in such a way that it actually felt as if the story was being dramatised for a handpicked audience. Her way with words was incredible.

Within the very first minutes of the interview, she gave an extremely eloquent description of her relationship with her daughter that was full of emotion. It was clear that she had a very special relationship with her daughter and grandchildren. "*En snaaks genoeg my dogter was elke keer verflenterd as sy moet weggaan. Dit is so, dit is so 'n … komplekse, tragiese situasie …*" (And strangely enough, my daughter was devastated every time she had to leave. It is … it is complex, tragic situation). The participant viewed the emigration as a loss for both herself and her daughter, a missing out on a relationship that could have been.

In the beginning of her daughter's emigration, the participant saw their move as temporary and that had made the emigration ordeal a little less traumatic. Even now after so many years, the longing for her daughter is still intense and still dominates a large part of the participant's life. She and her husband have visited their daughter on various occasions but due to her husband's age and deteriorating health, they have made their last visit to their daughter since it will not be possible to travel so far again.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 08	Female	57	White	Divorced	2S 1D

Participant - P8

This participant is a divorced mother with three children. She is currently living with her mother. Like most of the other participants, she started the interview with the reason her child's emigration.

She said her son and his whole family were involved in an armed robbery and were so traumatised that they decided to emigrate. Because of his work experience and qualifications, he was offered a job opportunity in New Zealand. They were able to

emigrate shortly after their ordeal and her daughter-in-law's parents emigrated with them and live in close proximity to her son.

She experienced her son's emigration as "very surreal" because she had emigrated with her family to South Africa when she was only fourteen years old. That was the first time in the interview that she mentioned death, saying about her family, "it's not that they died, but they are not here." Because of the emigration, she describes herself as a "fringe" person: "I don't think I belong or have ever belonged. Even now, I don't belong to a particular group."

Her son phones her every Sunday and they talk for about an hour. She loves to hear his voice. She feels that she is missing out on time with her grandchildren. Financially it is very difficult to have frequent contact with her son and it will take her at least five years to save enough money to visit her son and his family.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 09	Female	62	White	Divorced	2S 1D
Participant - P9					

The participant is a divorced mother living on her own in a townhouse. Her story began when her daughter was just a little girl. It was apparent how important her daughter is to her and that she is extremely proud of her.

About nine years ago, her daughter received an excellent job offer in England and left South Africa. At that stage, the "emigration" was seen as temporary and the daughter had said she would return to South Africa. She described the emigration as "losing a child." Her daughter was appointed to a better position, met a South African man in England and was married. With regards to returning to South Africa, the participant explained that her daughter always said she is only going temporarily but has now admitted that they are never coming back." They are now pregnant with their first child and it is difficult for the participant because she is unable to share the pregnancy with her daughter.

The participant describes her relationship with her daughter as very close and enjoys visiting her. She is planning to be with her daughter when her grandchild is born in order to assist her daughter with the new-born baby. The arrival of the new grandchild is a phase that she is very sad to miss out on. The fact that she has two sons living in SA

does not replace the loss of her daughter with whom she has such a close relationship. Religion plays a huge role in her and her daughter's handling of this situation.

Interview Number	Gender f Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 10	Male (a) Female (b)	72 76	Indian Indian	Married	4D

Participant - P10a and P10b

This interview took place with both parents present. The researcher made the appointment with the father, but when she arrived, the mother wanted to be part of the interview too. The father told the researcher that his daughter had been a very bright pupil and that he knew that she had a good future and was "university material." He had envisioned that she would stay with them after studying, as most Indian children do.

The daughter studied medicine and met her fiancé whose parents had emigrated and were living in Australia. She knew that her husband wanted to go to Australia to be with his parents. After completing her studies, their daughter was married in court before her fiancé left for Australia. Only after she was married she told her parents that she was going to Australia to look at prospects. She mentioned that she still wanted to provide a service as a doctor in South Africa.

Initially she was only going to Australia for five years and then planned to return, since her husband wanted to be with his family for at least five years. After this time, she returned and worked at a local hospital, but was miserably disappointed with what she experienced. She couldn't believe that in a few years things could have changed so remarkably to the detriment of the patients and therefore decided to go back to Australia.

The participants seriously thought about emigrating to be with their daughter, but because they have a mentally handicapped daughter, they are not allowed to emigrate to Australia. It was clear that they had not envisaged a future without their daughter close by.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 11	Male	65	Black	Married	3S

Participant - P11

This participant was the only black male that the researcher interviewed. The language barrier was very prominent and the researcher felt that she didn't always understand what the participant was trying to tell her. For various reasons, the interview did not take place at the participant's home but rather in a quiet restaurant.

After his son graduated, he went to Germany and according to the participant; he can't even begin to describe how happy he was that his son had received a job offer abroad. According to him, the whole family, including the extended family were very pleased, since it is difficult to find work in South Africa.

After working in Germany, he was sent to America by the same company, where he met his wife to be. His son was married in America, although according to Black culture, he would have preferred his son to be married in South Africa. This was not possible and his family accepted that the wedding took place in America, because that is where the son was making a new living. The following year his son came to visit the participant and his wife and they met their son's wife for the first time.

The researcher was made aware of different cultural practices when the participant explained the importance of the ancestors in the burial process: "According to African tradition uhm … he can die there, but he must be buried here in South Africa." He went on explaining that it would be very expensive to bring the corpse to South Africa and it would be confusing for his son's family in America who would rather want him to be buried there.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 12	Female	74	White	Widow	1S 2D

Participant - P12

This research participant is wheelchair bound and has recently lost her husband to cancer. She said their emigration "event" began about 10 years ago with her youngest daughter emigrating to America. Two years later her son emigrated to Australia and they "lost five grandchildren to overseas."

She said that her children who are not in South Africa do not have an idea of her life world and especially the limitations of being in a wheelchair. She has frequent contact with her daughter overseas, but not with her son. It was clear that she enjoyed the visits with her daughter but not with her son and daughter-in-law. There was a clear distinction in her experiences, between her son and her daughter especially regarding visits. The participant described feeling like an outsider when visiting her son and his family.

When her husband fell ill, the frequency of communication increased to a phone call or even two calls per day and both children came to South Africa to visit. While her husband was in hospital, they used Skype to communicate with the children abroad. Both children

came to South African when her husband was terminally ill, but they went back to their homes since he was sick for quite some time. They returned to SA, but were too late to be with him when he passed away. They were, however, in time to help with the funeral arrangements.

The participant has one other child, a divorced daughter, living in Pretoria who has a daughter of her own. Although she has the support of her daughter in Pretoria, she misses being part of a traditional family. With two of her children overseas and losing her husband, the participant feels very isolated.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 13	Male (a) Female (b)	66 68	White White	Married	1S 1D

Participants - P13a and P13b

The husband and the wife were interviewed jointly. The participants explained that their daughter first lived in Botswana before emigrating to Australia, which had softened the blow of the emigration a little bit. It was an enormous shock when her daughter told them the family was going to Australia. The main reasons for their leaving were the crime situation in South Africa, the education of the children and the fact that her husband had received a good job offer. It was very difficult to accept the fact that they would be losing their only daughter and the grandchildren.

The participants feel that their relationship with their daughter changed after the emigration. They felt as if the children had outgrown them and their priorities concerning the relationship were not the same anymore. The participants have visited their daughter where they both fulfil various roles. The wife helps with the cooking and the husband fixes things around the house.

It was clear that the participants differed in their dealing with the emigration experience. The wife was much more emotional than her husband, but the fact that they were in it together gave them the emotional strength to deal with the situation. "*Ek dink dan sal dit baie anders wees, maar nou het ons nog mekaar en ja, ons is uh ... content.*" (I think it will be different then, but now we have each other and yes, we are uh … content).

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 14	Male	69	White	Married	3D

Participant - P14

The participant has three daughters. Two of his daughters live in a nearby town and he has frequent contact with them. His youngest daughter and her family have emigrated.

The participant believes that his daughter and her family emigrated because of the political situation in the country. He says that he doesn't blame his children for going, especially since the main reason for emigrating was the future of their child. It was very traumatic when they left, since the participant and his wife had been living with their daughter in their home and had had to move when the children left. They were very involved with their only grandchild and had taken her to her extra mural activities. This was also taken away from them by the emigration.

The participant's wife has been diagnosed with a degenerative sickness and is bedridden due to the illness. They chose to move to a retirement village since he needs support to care for his sick wife.

He is considering the option of moving to New Zealand permanently to live with his daughter once his wife passes away.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 15	Male (a) Female (b)	76 79	White White	Married	1S 2D

Participants - P15a and P15b

When the researcher made the appointment with P15b, she requested that both her and her husband be part of the research interview. Participant P15a (husband) told the researcher that, as pensioners, they had decided to relocate closer to their oldest daughter and their grandchildren. After three years of living close to them, their daughter decided to emigrate, first to New Zealand and then to Australia.

It was traumatic for the couple to learn about this decision and because they now had no family in the area, they decided to relocate again, this time from Cape Town to Pretoria to be closer to their other daughter. "*Jy weet dit was soos asof, uhm, ons het vantevore 'n kind verloor, maar ons kon hom nooit weer bereik nie, maar met hulle is dit ook soos, asof die dood ingetree het behalwe jy kan hulle gaan besoek*." (You know, it was as if, uhm, we had lost a child all over again and could not find him, but with them, it feels like they have died, except that you can visit them). It was stressful and very difficult for the children to emigrate, but it has been traumatic for the parents too, as they have had to build a new life from scratch.

They have visited their children on a couple of occasions in New Zealand and Australia. They have frequent contact with their daughter and her family, but special days like birthdays and holidays accentuate the loss.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 16	Female	56	Black	Married	3S 2D

Participant - P16

This research participant was the first black mother that the researcher interviewed. Since English is not her home language, it was sometimes difficult to understand the participant and the emotional clues were especially difficult to read.

The participant has five children of whom three have emigrated because of the situation at home. While growing up, their father (her husband) was absent and it was difficult to make ends meet as a single mother. She had many financial problems to cope with. Her eldest child had suicidal tendencies as an adolescent. Both her sons were assisted by the school and in particular, the school psychologist, to find work abroad.

She is not sure what kind of work her sons are doing, but thinks it is in the hotel industry. The participant told me that she has seen her eldest son once in the last thirteen years. It was at the airport when he was deported, because his visa had expired. Both children in England do not have proper visas and that prevents them from leaving the country to visit their family in South Africa.

According to the respondent, both her sons would like to return to South Africa, but the participant feels that they will have difficulty finding work in this country. She said that it is hard not having her children around: "Always when we go to Boksburg, when we pass the airport, if I see the … the aeroplane I started to cry."

Her daughter is working in Dubai as a beautician. Because of their favourable financial situation, all three children support the family in South Africa. In retrospect, she feels that it was the right thing for them to emigrate since they have helped the family financially. She would love to see them at least once a year.

Interview Number	Gender o Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 17	Female	63	White	Widow	2S

Participant - P17

This research participant has been a widow for 26 years and lives on her own in a townhouse. Photographs of the children are displayed in her home and she loved sharing them with me. She is a teacher by profession and currently is still working. She has two sons and both have emigrated.

The participant described her oldest son as a "go-getter," a qualified paramedic. He was extremely unhappy at work due to structural changes because of the new government. After he resigned, he found two other positions but was still very unhappy at work. He then accepted a position in Dubai. Answering the question on how she felt about him working in Dubai: "*Man, ek dink dit is 'n kopskuif wat 'n ou moet maak en dan moet jy nou maar besluit as ouer, jy weet, of jy aanvaar dit.*" (I think it is a change of mindset that a person has to make and then you must decide as a parent, you know, if you accept it).

Her youngest son is currently working in Dubai too, and she feels that her religion has given her the peace of mind to accept his decision to go. She has visited him and they communicate telephonically once a week.

Since she raised the boys on her own, she describes their relationship as very close. Whenever she needs to make an important decision, she contacts her children. The longing for the children is difficult: "*Ja, kyk die hartseer is maar 'n storie. As jou kind daar wegstap met sy blou t–hempie en die kitaar oor die skouer dan weet jy nie. Jy huil maar jou oë uit.*" (Yes, the heartache is an issue. When you see your child walk away in his blue t-shirt with a guitar over the shoulder, then you don't know. You just cry your eyes out).

Religion plays an enormous role in her dealing with the fact that her children are not in South Africa. She stressed how important it is to let your children go to be their own person since they are on loan from God.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 18	Female	65	White	Widow/Remarry	2S
Participant - P18					

The interview took place in the apartment of the research participant. She is a widow who has remarried. The participant described her relationship with both sons as very close - "it was always just the three of them." Both children lived in Pretoria and always had a good relationship with their mother. Both her sons have emigrated to Australia.

Her youngest son was involved in a high jacking incident that was very stressful and traumatic. The participant then prayed for God's help and believed it was God's will that they emigrated. Her eldest son worked in a forensic department and was headhunted to work in Australia. Her eldest son's leaving was a great loss, as he was the one that phoned her every day. She has five grandchildren whom she looked after from birth, therefore it was a great loss when both sons emigrated to Australia.

The participant has visited her sons for 6 weeks and had found it strenuous living with them. She would, however, move to Australia, to live close to them anytime.

Interview Number	Gender of Parent	Age of Parent	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Number of Children
Interview 19	Male (a) Female (b)	79 76	White White	Married	2S

Participants - P19a and P19b

This interview took place with both parents present. They have two sons and both have emigrated. The male participant told the researcher how their eldest son was initially headhunted to work in Dubai. He and his family are currently living in Brussels. Their other child is in China. It was clear that their children had been making a living in various countries all over the world.

The husband believes that your work is of the utmost importance and wherever your job sends you, you have to go. Success is measured by your work/position and a good education is crucial. It was a very factual discussion and the importance of adaptability was stressed, especially by the father. They have a good relationship with their children and grandchildren and have regular contact. The visits are great: *"Dis wat jy daarvan maak."* (It's what you make of it).

They have a support system in the retirement home and among friends of their children. It seemed as if both participants had dealt with the emigration on a factual basis and had accepted their children's emigration. They were very careful not to see the situation in a negative light and kept stressing all the positive aspects of the emigration.

Religion and the practice thereof in the form of "*huisgodsdiens*" (home prayers and bible study) are of utmost importance to them. It was clear that they wanted their children and grandchildren to practise their religion, especially living in a foreign country.

Nineteen interviews were conducted. Five of these were with both parents so the total number of participants was 24. Participants that formed part of this study were between 52 and 79 years of age and from both genders. Of the 24 participants, there was one black female, one black male and one Indian couple. The rest of the participants were white South Africans. Three of the participants were divorced; three were widowed of which one had re-married. The remainder of the research participants were married. Concerning their place of residence, four participants resided in a retirement home, three lived in townhouses, one participant lived with her mother and the remainder resided in their own homes. Thirteen of the participants had one adult-child that had emigrated, five participants had two adult-children that emigrated and one participant had three adult-children that emigrated.

The researcher conducted all but two of the interviews at the participants' homes, which allowed her to gain insight in their life worlds. During this period, the participants shared photographs and other information regarding their children with the researcher. Unfortunately, due to the protection of anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, these photos and other information could not be included in this chapter.

6.3.1.1 Demographic information

The demographic information of the research participants is split into two tables:

Table 6.1: **Demographical information of the research participants (Page 1)**

DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS(*Page 1*)						
Interview Number	**Gender of the parent**	**Age of the parent**	**Ethnicity**	**Marital status of the parent**	**Highest educational qualification: Parent**	**Number of children**
Interview 01 (wife of P5)	Female	65	White	Married	###	1S 1D
Interview 02	Female	79	White	Married	###	2S 1D
Interview 03	Female	52	White	Divorced	##	1S
Interview 04**	Male	59	White	Married	##	2S 1D
	Female	57	White		##	
Interview 05 (husband of P1)	Male	66	White	Married	###	1S 1D
Interview 06	Female	64	White	Married	###	2D
Interview 07	Female	78	White	Married	###	3S 1D

DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS(*Page 1*)						
Interview Number	Gender of the parent	Age of the parent	Ethnicity	Marital status of the parent	Highest educational qualification: Parent	Number of children
Interview 08	Female	57	White	Divorced	###	2S 1D
Interview 09	Female	62	White	Divorced	###	2S 1D
Interview 10**	Male (a)	72	Indian	Married	###	4D
	Female (b)	76	Indian		##	
Interview 11	Male	65	Black	Married	##	3S
Interview 12	Female	74	White	Widow	##	1S 2D
Interview 13**	Male (a)	66	White	Married	###	1S 1D
	Female (b)	68	White		###	
Interview 14	Male	69	White	Married	###	3D
Interview 15**	Male (a)	76	White	Married	###	1S 2D
	Female (b)	79	White		###	
Interview 16	Female	56	Black	Married	#	3S 2D
Interview 17	Female	63	White	Widow	###	2S
Interview 18	Female	65	White	Widow/ Remarry	##	2S
Interview 19**	Male (a)	79	White	Married	###	2S
	Female (b)	76	White		##	

** Parents interviewed together
# Not matriculated
Highest Educational Qualification: Matriculated
Highest Educational Qualification: Graduate
S = Son; D = Daughter

Table 6.2: Demographical information of the research participants (Page 2)

DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (*Page 2*)						
Interview Number	No. of children emigrated	Age of children	Highest Educational Qualification: Child	Emigration destination	Less than 5 years abroad	More than 5 years abroad
Interview 01 (wife of P5)	1	38, 41	###	Australia	x	
Interview 02	1	55, 52, 49	###	America		x
Interview 03	1	24	#	England		x
Interview 04**	1	27, 25, 22	##	England		x
Interview 05 (husband of P1)	(as P1)	(as P1)	(as P1)	(as P1)	(as P1)	
Interview 06	2	34, 37	###	Australia (2)		x
Interview 07	1	57,54,52,49	###	Canada		x
Interview 08	1	37, 35, 30	###	New Zealand		x
Interview 09	1	41, 39,37	###	England		x
Interview 10**	1	52, 48,44,42	###	Australia		x
Interview 11	1	38,35,33	###	America		x

			DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (*Page 2*)			
Interview Number	No. of children emigrated	Age of children	Highest Educational Qualification: Child	Emigration destination	Less than 5 years abroad	More than 5 years abroad
Interview 12	2	54, 52,49	###	America & Australia		x
Interview 13**	1	44,42	###	Australia	x	x
Interview 14	1	46, 44,44	###	New Zealand	x	
Interview 15**	1	50, 52, 54	###	Australia		x
Interview 16	3	33,29,27, 21, 18	##	England (2) & Dubai		x
Interview 17	2	34, 32	###	Dubai (2)		x
Interview 18	2	44, 41	###	Australia (2)		x
Interview 19**	2	50, 45	###	China & Brussels		x

** Parents interviewed together
 # Not matriculated
Highest Educational Qualification: Matriculated
Highest Educational Qualification: Graduate

Three aspects of the research participants' demographical information:

- **Ethnicity**

With reference to the "ethnicity" column on page 1 of the research participants' demographical information, it must be stressed that this is a qualitative design and therefore the sample is not representative but descriptive. Snowball sampling technique was used and this may be the reason why most of the respondents are white of ethnicity. This coincides with the following statement: "Large white South African Diasporas, both English- and Afrikaans-speaking, have sprouted in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and many cities of North America" (The Economist, 2014).

To speak about "white flight" is not well received. Officials are quick to claim that there is nothing white about it. A recent survey by FutureFact, a polling organisation, found that the desire to emigrate is fairly even across races. In 2013, 42% coloured South Africans, 38% blacks and 30% Indians were thinking of leaving, compared with 41% whites. This is a huge leap from 2000, where the numbers were 12% coloured, 18% black, 26% Indian and 22% white. However, it is mostly the whites who have the money, skills, contacts and sometimes the

passports they need to start a life outside South Africa – and who leave the bigger skills and tax gap behind (The Economist, 2014).

- **Qualifications**

Many emigrants have highly specialised skills resulting in what has been called the "brain drain." This phenomenon is often perceived as a white exodus, but black South Africans also emigrate (South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR), 2009). McDonald and Crush (2000:5) explain that the "brain drain" implies a depletion of skilled people who are vital to the functional core of a national economy.

Definitions of skilled people vary and tend to focus on people who have received some kind of specialised training that resulted in superior technical competence. It is maintained that without these people, the operation and development of the economy would be severely hindered (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007:15). Brown, Kaplan and Meyer (2000:42) emphasise that the brain drain, by definition, is not simply a question of absolute numbers, but that the skills profile of emigrants is also an important determinant of the impact on a country and its economy.

In this study, it was found that the majority of the participants' children were highly qualified and in the event of a family emigrating, both spouses were graduates.

- **Emigration destination**

From as early as 1970, almost half (45 per cent) of all emigrating South African professionals have opted to emigrate to Europe. Of these, 69 per cent (or 15 045) moved to the United Kingdom. Another quarter of the skilled emigrants headed for Australasia, with almost 78 per cent (or 8 932) moving to Australia. The third largest group of professionals (14 per cent) emigrated to North America and are fairly evenly spread between the United States and Canada (Bailey, 2003:243). Emigration destinations in this study were as follows:
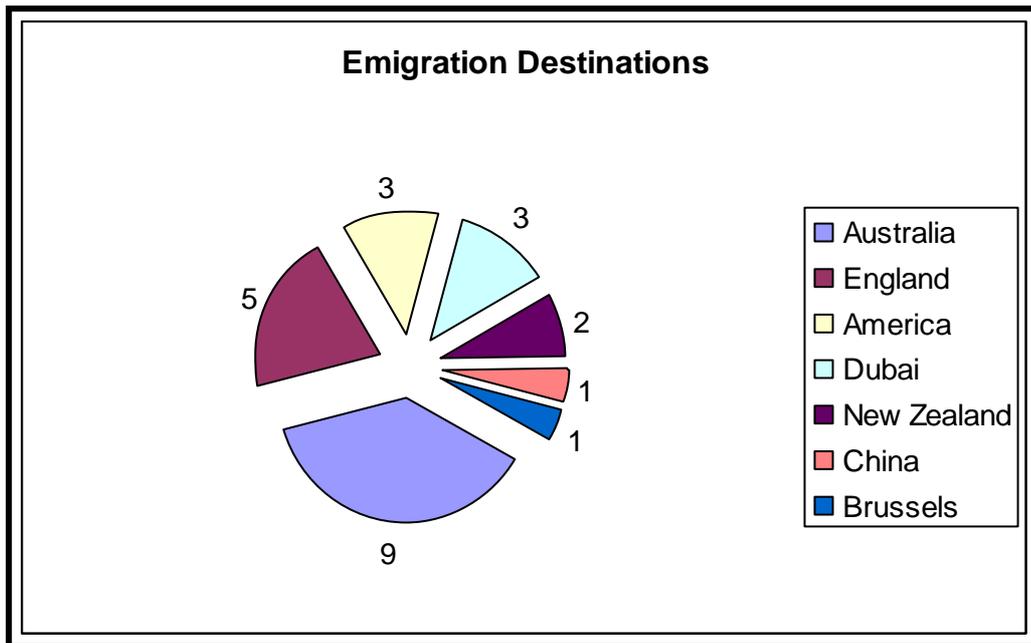
Figure 6.1:   **Emigration destinations of research participant's adult-child(ren)**

Figure 6.1 shows the emigration destination of the participants' children. The majority of children emigrated to Australia. The second biggest receiving country is England. These figures coincide with the literature about destination countries.

6.3.2   Thematic analysis of the themes and sub-themes

Braun and Clarke (2006:79) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns/themes within data. It minimally organises and describes data sets in detail." The first step is to collect the data, and audiotapes can be used to study each interview (Aronson, 1994:1). From the transcribed conversations, patterns of experiences can be listed. These can come from direct quotes or through the paraphrasing of common ideas (Aronson, 1994:1). A comprehensive picture is then formed from the themes that emerge from the collective experiences as told by the participants. The "coherence of ideas rests with the analyst who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked together" (Leininger, 1985:60).

Aronson (1994:10) explicates that the next step in thematic analysis is to build a valid argument for choosing the themes. Aronson (1994:1) states the following in this regard:

Referring back to the literature, the researcher gains information that allows him or herself to make inferences from the interview. Once the themes have been collected and the literature has been studied, the researcher is ready to formulate theme statements to develop a storyline. When the literature is interwoven with the findings, the story that the researcher constructs is one that stands with merit.

The following four themes and their related sub-themes were identified during data analysis.

Table 6.3: **Themes and sub-themes**

THEME 1: EMIGRATION OF THE ADULT CHILD	
Sub-theme 1.1	Defining emigration
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The thematic analysis identifies the relevant experiences, attitudes, feelings and insights that participants reported. It has been argued that the use of quotations is necessary to indicate the trustworthiness of results (Polit & Beck, 2012; Sandelowski, 1995) and that "[a] detailed description of a few events is better than a more generalised description of many events" (Ellis, 2004:365). For this reason,

verbatim quotes are used to support the different themes and sub-themes identified, and literature, to substantiate these findings. Quotations from as many participants as possible help confirm the connection between the results and data as well as the richness of data. However, the systematic use of quotations needs careful attention. Ideally, quotations selected should at least be connected to all main concepts and widely representative of the sample (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen & Kyngäs, 2014:7).

6.3.2.1   THEME 1: EMIGRATION OF THE ADULT-CHILD

In this section, the researcher focuses on defining emigration after which the reasons for emigration are described. Various aspects of the decision-making process leading to emigration are discussed, followed by saying goodbye at an airport.

Sub-theme 1.1: Defining emigration

Participant P7: … *It would then have been completely different. The thing, it is like a live organism, it shrinks and grows, and it…I would like to say almost like an amoeba, and then it pushes out a thing here and then that thing comes back … and it is … It is, it is a living thing that changes constantly.*
Participant P7: … Dan sou dit heeltemal anders gewees het. Die ding, dit is, dis soos 'n lewende organisme, hy krimp en hy groei, en hy ... ek wil amper sê, amper soos 'n amoeba, en dan stoot hy hier 'n ding uit en dan kom daai ding weer terug ... en hy ... Dit is, dit is 'n lewende ding wat aan mekaar verander.

There are many definitions and descriptions of emigration in the relevant literature. Goldin (2002:4) stated the following:

> Migration is one of the most enduring themes of human history. It is one of the most drastic life changes and transitions an individual can face. Each person's reaction to migration is unique; migrants may either experience stability and opportunity or a sense of emotional uprootedness, or in fact, all.

For Levenbach and Lewak (1995), emigration "… is a process which brings stress to bear on individuals and families and appears on the list of major stressful events. It is different from stressors like marriage and divorce because it lasts longer."

Sub-theme 1.2: Reasons for emigration

While the structure of events leading to migration may differ among individuals, an interplay of two phenomena appears to be the facilitator for migration: A push from the country of origin and a pull to the country of emigration, identified by emigration scholars as the "push" and "pull" of emigration. The "push" out of the country of origin often emerges from its internal conditions and intensifies with the personal circumstances of individuals. The "pull" to another country works in tandem with the "push" from the home country (Segal *et al.*, 2006:7). Rogerson and Rogerson (2000:47-48) view the highly attractive salary packages offered by enterprises in North America, Europe and Australia as a major pull factor for skilled South Africans.

The researcher would like to point out that the reasons given by the parents for the emigration of their adult-child(ren) are from the parents' subjective perspective and are not necessarily the reasons the emigrants themselves might have given. The quotations reflect the feelings of loss after the emigration of their adult-children and possible factors that lead to the emigration of their adult-children, as perceived by the parents. When discussing the reasons for their children leaving, the participants' own emotions could not be separated.

- **Multiple reasons for emigration**

Participant P13b: … *I think they never had an idea, and at that stage permanent and because it is close enough to come back and so they decided later to rather not come back, you know it's better if they go, to not come to South Africa and then they started looking around all over the world. Also in England, and oh well, but in any case they eventually received a good offer from Australia and that is why he accepted it. I think, well, that must have been the big reason, crime and the children's education. Because I think, the job opportunity and experience, it is ... but not necessarily. I think the work as such, was third, it was not really about that. And they could not really, there was no more, you know you … you need to move on, you cannot live your whole life in Botswana. Uh ... yes It ... I will summarise it for you. My daughter was never very ha ... she is actually fairly quiet, wherever her husband goes, she follows, she is easy. But he told her, you can choose, either you will have to leave your parents, or your children will one day leave you. You can choose, you know, and then they decided then they will go. That's that, these are the reasons, I would say.*
Participant P13b: … Ek dink hulle het nooit 'n idee gehad, en op daai stadium permanent en omdat dit naby genoeg is om terug te kom en toe het hulle nou later besluit hulle wil liewer nie terug, jy weet hulle moet maar gaan, nie Suid Afrika toe kom nie en toe het hulle begin rondkyk oor die wêreld. Ook in Engeland en ag wat, maar in elk geval en uiteindelik het hulle toe 'n goeie aanbod uit Australia gekry en dit is hoekom hy dit aanvaar het. Ek dink wel, dit was maar die groot rede is maar misdaad en die kinders se opvoeding. Want ek dink, en die werksgeleentheid en ondervinding, dit is ... maar nie noodwendig. Ek dink die werk as sodanig, was derde, dit was nie daaroor eintlik nie. En hulle kon nie eintlik daar was nie meer, jy weet, jy ... jy moet maar aan beweeg, jy kan nie jou hele lewe in Botswana bly nie. Uh ... ja, dit ... ek gaan dit nou vir jou so opsom. My dogter was nooit baie ge ... sy is maar stillerig, maar waar haar man gaan daar gaan sy, sy is maklik. Maar hy het vir haar gesê, jy kan kies, of jy gaan jou ouers verlaat, of jou kinders gaan jou eendag verlaat. Jy kan kies, jy weet, en toe het hulle besluit dan gaan hulle. Dit is dit, dit was die 3 redes sou ek sê.

The varied responses of the participants in Marchetti-Mercer's (2012b:251) study suggest that there is no single reason driving people to emigrate, but rather a complex interaction of factors.

It was found that most of the participants gave more than one reason for their children's emigration. In the above quote, the participant gave three reasons for the child's emigration. The researcher found the participants would give a reason for emigration and later during the interview, they would give a different tone.

The researcher is aware that more than one reason is necessary to justify such an important and life-changing decision as to emigrate. In order to structure the discussion, the reasons given will be deliberated under the following headings: Politically motivated reasons, the brain drain, personal reasons, unemployment, personality predisposition and financial reasons.

- **Politically motivated reasons**

Participant 14: *… And then also, by that time certain things, other things also became obvious, the quality of education, quality of tertiary education, then already there was preference for, say for example you apply for medicine, preference for students who possibly did not have the means or the results of white students. There was the, the transformation was on course and these were all things which they took into consideration. And looking back, I cannot blame them and to a certain degree it is a comfort to me that they are there.*
Participant 14: *… En dan ook die, teen daai tyd het sekere dinge, ander dinge ook begin kop uitsteek, die kwaliteit van onderwys, kwaliteit van tersiere onderwys, toe al reeds is daar bevoorregting vir, sê nou maar as jy vir medies aansoek doen, bevoorregting vir studente wat moontlik nie die vermoë of die uitslae van die blanke student gehad het nie. Daar was die, die transformasie was op dreef en dit was alles dinge wat hulle in ag geneem het. En terugskouend kan ek hulle nie kwalik neem nie en in 'n sekere sin is dit vir my 'n gerusstelling dat hulle daar is.*
Participant 10a: *... and he started working there (laughter). And both of them really felt, you know man, you know, they couldn't understand that both of them had experienced before the new dispensation, before the new Government and he also said he could not believe that things had actually retrograde, retrograde, deteriorated and that regrets so terribly that it was unbelievable. And that is when both of them decided that their future would be in Australia. And the two of them spoke to us and they tried and they told us look this is the position here and we can't see ourselves working you know under*
Participant 07: *… It was very hard for him too, but you know, for him it was on a personal level, very tough. But it was actually very tough for him on a, in terms of what had happened in our country, the take-over as he calls it. It was incredibly difficult for him to accept that these wonderful, useful people, the loss of them and he was embittered. Not really so much against their leaving, but against the circumstances that drove them away. And in a certain way he is actually still embittered. So to a certain degree his loss was also different to my loss. My loss was much more on a personal level, I would not say I did not take notice of what I, it did indeed affect me what happened here in this country, but I was not so, I was, I was never very involved politically.*
Participant 07: *… Dit was vir hom ook baie swaar, maar weet jy, dit was vir hom op 'n persoonlike vlak, swaar. Maar dit was vir hom eintlik swaar op 'n, in terme van wat in ons land gebeur het, die "oorname" soos hy dit noem. Dit was vir hom verskriklik moeilik om te aanvaar dat hierdie wonderlike bruikbare mense, die verlies van hulle en hy was verbitterd. Nie teen hulle weggaan nie, maar teen die landsomstandighede wat hulle weggedryf het. En hy is eintlik nou nog in 'n*

sekere sin, verbitterd. So sy verlies was in 'n sekere sin ook anders as my verlies. My verlies was baie meer op 'n persoonlike vlak, ek sal nie sê ek het my nie gesteur aan wat ek, dit het my wel geraak wat hier in die land gebeur het, maar ek was nie so, ek was, ek was nooit polities baie betrokke nie

Participant 05: … *And for me it was a terribly difficult prospect to imagine that they would be there so far away from us. I know that Australia is very far away, and it is very expensive to go there etc. but in the end I just summarised it and said it is a ... I do not mourn because my children are gone, I mourn because my children have to leave. It is terrible for me that we are in a country today where it is better for your children to go away … Yes, it is really like that for me, it is for me the old cliché-story repeated again, which I repeat all the time, but I do not cry because of my children being gone, I cry because they had to go away. I cry because they had to go away. For me it is almost as much of a catastrophe as the personality, the thing with my children I experience personally, the disaster that things are going the way they are in our country that ... Remember, I was in Perth, and those crowds of people enjoying a barbeque [braai] in the parks in the afternoons, they are all Afrikaans and you would think you are somewhere in Menlo Park in a ... and I sit alone and I think this is the cream of our country, these are graduated, qualified people, incredible parents and very smart children who perform exceptionally well in the schools, they perform in the schools and in sport and it is such a pity that these people have left this country and that this country has lost them and for me it is such a pity and a terrible disaster for the people in control, even for Mandela, whom we all admired, I think he is an absolutely wonderfull icon, he once said in a weak moment "good riddance", you know.*

Participant 05: … En dit was natuurlik vir my 'n vreeslike baie swaar vooruitsig om te dink dat hulle daar gaan wees so ver van ons af. Ek weet Australië is baie ver en dis baie duur om daar te kom ensovoorts, maar op die einde het ek dit maar opgesom en gesê dit is 'n ... ek treur nie omdat my kinders weg is nie, ek treur omdat my kinders moet weg gaan. Dit is vir my verskriklik dat ons in 'n land is vandag waar dit beter is vir jou kinders om weg te gaan. … Ja dit is regtig vir my so, dit is weer vir my ou cliché storie herhaal wat ek die hele tyd herhaal, maar ek huil nie oor my kinders weg is nie, ek huil omdat hulle moes weg gaan. Ek huil oorlaat hulle moet weg gaan. Dit is ampervir my net so 'n ramp as die persoonlikheid, my kinders se ding beleef ek persoonlik, die ramp dat dit in die land so gaan dat ... Ek was mos in Perth en daai skare mense wat braai in die parke in die middag, hulle is almal Afrikaans en jy dink jy is erens in Menlopark in 'n ... en ek sit by myself en dink dit is van die room van ons land dit is gegradueerde, gekwalifiseerde mense, ongelooflike ouers en baie slim kinders wat uitstekend doen in die skole hulle presteer in die skole en in sport en dit is so jammer dat hierdie mense uit hierdie land is en die land het hulle verloor en dit is vir my 'n jammerte en verskriklike ramp vir die mense in beheer, self vir Mandela wat ons almal bewonder ek dink hy is 'n absolute wonderlike icon, het eenkeer in sy swak oomblik gesê "good riddance," jy weet.

Major political events are often catalysts for skills migration. As Mattes and Richmond (2000:29-30) observe, "The most well-known politically-motivated migration is the flight from oppression and persecution, or political turmoil and instability." As previously mentioned, political upheavals were an important motivating factor behind the emigration of professionals from South Africa before 1994 (Bailey, 2003:247).

Political upheavals can be instrumental in increasing dissatisfaction. When nations change in political power, when power structures alter, or individuals disagree with political ideologies, the climate is ripe for emigration (Segal *et al.,* 2006:4). This was found to be one of the reasons most frequently given in this research project. Marchetti-Mercer (2012a:377) aptly states that the South African emigration experience remains worth examining, because it has some unique characteristics.

"Historically, the country has been characterised by migration trends. During the apartheid years, emigration from South Africa was often linked to specific political events – the Sharpeville massacre in the 1960s, the Soweto uprising in 1976, the state of emergency in the early 1980s and uncertainty before the first democratic election in 1994" (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a:377).

- **Brain Drain: Professional or highly skilled people leaving South Africa**

> **Participant 02**: *… no, no, no, no he actually went over, he was invited to read a paper at a congress by his professor that he qualified under. And when he was there the professor offered him this job uhm, in a group of doctors doing transplants, but he is the Intensive care doctor. So it was just a group. Then he came back, spoke to us and told us that he had been offered this job.*

In the current study, it was evident that many professional people emigrated. In some instances, both the child and the spouse were highly qualified. One of the spouses usually followed their previous career path, while the other spouse had to change careers in order to obtain a job to help support the family. It is frequently mentioned that the majority of emigrants are highly qualified white citizens. In this study, both the black and Indian children were also highly qualified.

The emigration of skilled people is known as the "brain drain." McDonald and Crush (2000:5) explain that the "brain drain" implies a reduction of skilled people who are vital to the functional core of a national economy. Although definitions of skilled people vary, they all tend to focus on people who have received some kind of specialised training that results in superior technical competence (Mattes & Richmond, 2000:12).

It is maintained that without these people, the operation and development of the economy would be severely hindered. Brown, Kaplan and Meyer (2000:42) emphasise that "brain drain," by definition, is not simply a question of absolute numbers, but that the skills profile of emigrants is also an important determinant of the impact emigration has on a country and its economy (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007:15).

Various groups or segments of professions have emigrated from South Africa. In the South African social work milieu, it is a well-known fact that a significant number of social workers migrated to the UK during the first decade after democracy. This

can be classified as a distinct brain drain of social workers, which has had a vital impact on social service delivery and social development (Engelbrecht, 2006:127).

- **Personal reasons**

> **Participant 16**: ... a*nd then the school advices him to go to England to go and work there. Ja. Because he wanted to kill himself. Ja. It was very difficult. Ja. I think the school's Psychologist, they are the one who had blesses him because they were trying to counsel him because he wanted to kill himself at school. Uhm. They, they, they helped me by giving him advices and then I asked some donation from other people. To get a ticket and a visa.*

> **Participant 8**: … *did your experience made it, not easier, but that you could see his side more clearly than other parents. Definitely. I am very glad that he went. I can understand the reasons for going. I am still glad that they are there. They have got a wonderful life there, for the children it is fantastic, they get all the help they need with their Autistic son, the schooling is fantastic. I mean visiting there for three weeks, it is an idillic country, it really is, they are safe, they will be catered for, for all their opportunities and for that respect I am happy, but I would not be able to go and stay there because it is extremely boring.*

In this research study, three of the particpants' grandchildren had been diagnosed as "autistic." Although this was not the main personal reason for them emigrating, the participants described that the assistance the parents received "with this type of children" was far better than that available in South Africa.

Oosthuizen and Ehlers (2007:20) use the theory of Maslow to explain the reasons why professional people and specifically nurses, emigrate from South Africa:

> Factors that might influence registered professional nurses to emigrate from South Africa will be related to financial and general well-being (physiological, social and esteem needs); workload and working conditions (physiological and safety needs); personal growth, career advancement and achievement in nursing (esteem and self-actualisation needs) as well as safety and security needs.

- **Unemployment as a reason to emigrate**

> **Participant P4a&b:** … [man] *and then he paid him off, and that is why I decided I was going to force him to go. And he was also very scared of flying and when I said goodbye I walked a small distance with him and then he said to me could he not rather take the boat ... [wife]: Yes, the fact that he now had to go out on his own, because I mean he has remained in the house all the time and has never been on his own. He was not, he was not terribly, at that stage, i would say excited about the whole idea, but we actually half felt like kicking him out a little bit so that he could just learn to also stand on his own two feet. [wife]: And uhm ... yes and he then also ... [man] ... Totally on his own feet. I forced him to go because he could not get work here and regularly he would just lie around at home because he had no job. Then I forced him to go overseas.*

> **Participant P4a&b:** … [man] *en toe het hy hom afbetaal. En dit is hoekom ek toe besluit het ek gaan hom dwing om te gaan. En hy was baie bang om te vlieg ook en toe ek nou koebaai sê toe stap ek so ent saam met hom en toe sê hy vir my kan hy nie eerder die skip vat nie. [vrou] ... Ja, die feit dat hy nou moes uitgaan op sy eie, want ek meen hy bly die heeltyd nog in die huis en nog nooit op sy eie gewees. Hy was, hy was nie vreeslik, op daai stadium, sal ek sê vreeslik opgewonde oor die idee nie, maar ons het eintlik half gevoel om hom net so bietjie uit te skop dat hy net leer om op sy eie voete te staan ook [vrou]: En uhm ... ja en hy's toe ook ... [man] Heeltemal*

> op sy eie voete. Ek het hom gedwing om te gaan omdat hy nie hier werk kry nie en by die huis baie keer rond gelê het wat hy nie werk het nie. Toe het ek hom gedwing om oorsee te gaan.

Much mention was made of children struggling to find work or that due to the new government, it was difficult to obtain new projects since the system had changed. Some participants felt that people in decision-making positions had made it difficult for employees to perform jobs in the way they had done in the past. It was impossible for their children to earn a living. Therefore, they had decided to look for greener pastures.

The socio-economic backgrounds of those who emigrate vary widely. It is not only the poorest or the most oppressed who leave their countries. Voluntary emigrants must have the resources – physical, economic, educational, social and emotional – to make the transition (Segal *et al.,* 2006:7). Portes and Rumbaut (1990) identify three types of voluntary emigrants: labourers, entrepreneurs and professionals. In the current study, the researcher found examples of both, labourers and professionals, who had struggled to achieve success in South Africa.

- **Personality/predisposition to migrate**

The idea that migration is the result, not only of circumstances favouring migration, but that certain people are predisposed to migratory behaviour emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s (Boneva & Frieze, 2001:480). More recent research empirically supports the idea that some individuals are "predisposed" to migrate. For example, individuals who have migrated once have been found to be more willing to migrate again, when compared to those who have never migrated. This would suggest that emigrants are not just responding to a particular set of economic conditions and that there is something specific about the personality of those who desire to move (Boneva & Frieze, 2001:480).

Silventoinen, Hammar, Hedlund, Koskenvuo, Rönnemaa and Kaprio (2007:153) analysed differences in psycho-social and health behavioural factors between international migrants and non-migrants prior to migration in a large cohort of Finnish twins. The authors found that migrants and non-migrants differ in personality. Migrant men, and to a lesser extent migrant women, ranked higher in extraversion compared to non-migrants. The authors postulate that better social skills associated with extraversion possibly help a person to adjust to a new

environment and thus increase the likelihood of that person making the decision to remain in a new country. Extravert persons are also more likely to seek out new experiences such as migration (Silventoinen *et al.,* 2007:153).

Participant 09: *... She has an enormous amount of self confidence, uhm ... and she's not an extrovert person. She's actually very introvert. But, she has a lot of confidence and a PASSION. So, "A", after a year in "L" she got a senior position, then a senior position at "B" in London, and that then , I only realised this after she got the position, how privileged my child is. And how able my child is [laughs]. She truly is a specialist. And that caused them to, when they [noise], when they her, they grabbed her.*
Participant 09: … So het geweldig baie selfvertroue, uhm ... en sy's nie 'n ekstrovert mens nie. Sy's eintlike baie introvert. Maar, sy het baie selfvertroue en 'n PASSIE. So, "A", het na 'n jaar in "L" het sy senior pos toe 'n senior pos by "B" in London gekry en dit het toe, ek het eers nadat sy die pos gekry het besef, maar hoe bevoorreg my kind is. En hoe goed my kind is [lag]. Sy's werklikwaar spesialis. En dit het gemaak dat hulle, toe hulle haar [geluid] haar ge, hulle het haar gegryp.

As mentioned earlier, various studies have shown that the desire to migrate is often prompted by psychological attributes of the decision-makers and is strongly influenced by non-rational considerations, for example, a tendency to seek thrills and challenges; to depend on one's own skills; and to favour new frontiers and wide interpersonal spaces. While the decision to leave the homeland may have a rational backdrop, the individual's personality must also be taken into consideration (Goldin, 2002:6).

This research study found that the child that emigrated could be described as very successful, highly driven and extremely motivated. The researcher firmly believes that there are certain personality traits recognisable in all emigrants that aid them to be successful in their new "worlds."

- **Financial reasons**

Participant 15a: … *It was difficult for them. Oh yes, it was. Financially they are now much better off and for me it is wonderful that I now know that financially it is going well. They are now much better. Even "P" has a factory now and yes, well, it is going very well. "W" stays, she teaches only three days a week because they really need her services.*
Participant 15a: … Dit het moeilik vir hulle gegaan. O ja, dit het. Nou gaan dit finansieel baie goed met hulle en vir my is dit wonderlik dat ek nou weet dit gaan goed finansieel is hulle is nou baie beter. Oor "P" het 'n fabriek nou en nou ja dit gaan baie goed. "W" bly, sy hou maar drie dae 'n week skool omdat hulle is verleë is oor haar.

For Rogerson and Rogerson (2000:47-48), a major pull factor for skilled South Africans "is the highly attractive salary packages offered by enterprises in North America, Europe and Australia." Myburgh (2004:125) writes that economic studies

on the causes of international migration suggest that migrants are sensitive to real wage differentials and concludes that wage differentials are one of the three main reasons people emigrate from South Africa.

A large majority of respondents in Oosthuizen and Ehlers (2007), study: *Factors that may influence South African nurses to emigrate,* indicated that they had considered leaving for financial reasons. The inability to maintain the desired standard of living on nurses' salaries in South Africa motivated the majority (95.5%) of the respondents, to consider emigration.

Sub-theme 1.3: Violent crime as reason for emigration

Richman (2010) considers the "should I stay or should I go?" debate to be a defining question facing many South Africans. Van Rooyen (2000:2) postulates that violent crime is the main cause of South African emigration. He compares South African emigrants to exiles, describing their migration as a "victim diaspora" resulting from "traumatic experiences that force people out of their traditional homelands." Griffiths (in Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a:378) claims that the difference between South Africans and first-world emigrants is that South Africans emigrate because of crime and violence, whereas most first-world emigrants do so to gain better opportunities and life experiences.

The following facts provide an overview of key crime trends for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 as recorded by the South African Police Service (SAPS). Incidents of murder increased from 16,259 murders in 2012/13 to 17,068 in 2013/14. This means that there were 809 more people murdered than in the previous year. The 2013/14 crime statistics show that South Africa experienced two of the worst years in the last decade from a crime reduction point of view (Africa Check, 2014).

> **Participant 5**: *... No, it is the worst that can happen. Remember, it is my daughter, my only daughter, she and I are so terribly close, incredibly so, she always demonstrated with her finger, saying my dad and I are like this. And that is how it is. It has been like this from a young age, she was able to twist me around her little finger, that's how it is. And that is quite simply the worst thing that can happen to your child, I can not imagine something worse, except she could be dead... that is probably worse. Just the other day a friend of mine's daughter, she is almost my daughter's age. No, it is so awful for me, I mean, what will we say. What is the expression "thanks for mercy for small things" or something like that, I have forgotten the expression now, but in this country we have become grateful for little things, which is really absurd that we need to be grateful for them. I am grateful my daughter is not dead ... she has just been raped. Is it not awful that I am just too*

glad that she has just been raped and not murdered? This is terribly awful! The same thing this poor man whose child was murdered, the opposite has now again happened to her, she was murdered, she was not raped but murdered. So he said, oh shame, the poor man, just like me, so he said he is really ever so thankful his child was not raped. She is now just dead. You know, is it not awful that in the end you are glad about something because the alternative is so bad that you are glad about something terrible also, which is at least not like the other thing. Now it is tragic that this is happening to our country.

Participant 5: … Nee, dit is die ergste wat kan gebeur. Onthou dit is my dogter, my enigste dogter, ek en sy is verskriklik naby aan mekaar, ongelooflik so sy het altyd so gewys met haar vinger en gesê ek en my pa is so. En dit is so. Dit was so van kleins af, sy het my om haar vinger gedraai, dis maar so. En dit is net die ergste ding wat met jou kind kan gebeur, ek kan nie aan iets erger, behalwe sy kan dood wees, dit is sekerlik erger. Nou die dag het 'n vriend van my se dogter, sy is omtrent so oud soos my dogter. Nee dit is vir my so aaklig ek meen wat sal ons sê. Wat is die uitdrukking, "thanks for mercy for small things" of so iets, ek het die uitdrukking, dit het my nou ontgaan, maar ons het in hierdie land dankbaar geword oor goedjies wat eintlik absurd is dat ons daaroor moet dankbaar wees. Ek is dankbaar my dogter is nie dood nie … sy is maar net verkrag. Is dit nie aaklig nie dat ek maar te bly is sy is net verkrag en nie dood nie? Dit is verskriklik erg! Dieselfde ding hierdie arme man wie se kind vermoor is, die omgekeerde het nou weer gebeur met haar, sy's vermoor, sy is nie verkrag nie maar vermoor. Toe sê hy, ag siestog die arme man, net soos ek, toe se hy net soos ek, hy is darem so bly sy kind is nie verkrag nie. Sy is nou maar net dood. Jy weet is dit nie aaklig dat mens naderhand bly is oor iets want die alternatief is so erg dat jy bly is oor iets verskrikliks erg ook, wat darem nou nie so is nie. Nou, dis tragies dat dit met ons land so gaan.

Participant 18: *... But this was our big, big, void for us. "C" was 7 and "C" was uhm 11 and uh ... it was before "W" pulled in at their gate ... uhm ... they wanted to uh ... pull in they were out that early that evening they went to church and uh ... "R" had to force open the gate. And uh ... when he got out of the car to press it there was a gun. They then let him lie on the ground. He said, mom I heard that gun click. Yes, and he screamed at them all also, jump out of the car and uh … they got out, but "C" was obviously the last to get out she is just 7. She is a delicate little thing, lovely child and ... uh ... she ... is still like this, so considerate and polite and everything, but when he climbed into the car then she ... she still wanted to close the door behind him. And the car ... she ended up under the car.*

Participant 18: … Maar dit was ons groot, groot leemte vir ons. "C" was 7 en "C" was uhm 11 en uh ... dit was voor in "W" by hulle hek uhm ... hulle wou uh ... in trek hulle was uit die aand vroeg in die aand hulle het gaan kerk besoek doen en uh ... "R" moes op daardie stadium die hek oopdruk. En uh ... toe hy uit die kar uit klim om dit te druk toe is daar 'n geweer. Hulle het hom toe op die grond laat lê. Hy sê, ma ek het daardie geweer hoor kliek. Ja, en hy het vir hulle almal geskree ook, spring uit die kar uit en uh ... hulle het uitgeklim, maar "C" was natuurlik die laaste om uit te klim sy is mos net 7. Sy's 'n fyn ou dingetjie ook altyd, lieflike kind en uh ... sy ... dis nou nog so, so bedagsaam en en polite en alles maar toe hy in die kar geklim het toe maak … wil sy nog die deur agter hom toe maak. En die kar ... sy het onder die kar in beland.

Participant 08: *… It was a butchery and one of those little shops where you can buy everything and it was a little caravan park and about fifteen guys walked in and she was there with her two little ones, with her father and mother, with her aunts and her cousin who had a baby a week before, so a week old baby and these guys came in with AK 47's everything and they beat up the men tremendously. So her father was beaten to the ground, black and blue, and they held the pistol against the baby's head and they pulled the trigger but the gun did not want to go off. But … Thank God! I mean, they tried it several times and it did not want to go off. And the kids were screaming and they were and you know it was really a enormous traumatic experience and then they told all the women to go to the house at the back and they thought, ok that's it, now they are going to do whatever. And then one of the woman had hidden in the house and they saw when they came in she switched the lights on and off and they thought it was ghosts so they got all scared again and they all went back to the shop again, thank heavens. And because the one father had a walky talky and he had given the walky talky to one of his sons and that walky talky started saying that this is whatever they said, coming in, and these guys thought it was the police and they ran. So after that experience they were absolutely traumatised and my daughter in law said she does not want to stay in this country so my son who is in IT decided to look for work in New Zealand, which he promptly got and they left about five years ago.*

Participant 05: *… Well it is obvious that it was a terrible shock for us, well for me, to hear that evening what happened there and that they had the armed robbery and that they were terrorised*

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> *there for four hours by four hooligans, armed villains and really the biggest shock was when my daughter said she was coming to us, someone would bring her to us and she was coming here and she told us she was leaving the children with us because she had to go to hospital. And she works at the hospital, because she had a clinic there and I was thinking to myself can the woman still be planning to actually go to work now? She often goes at night because she does deliveries of babies. Then she said no, they did certain things to me ... And I knew immediately what she meant, she meant she had been raped and she didn't want to say it out loud in front of the children. This was a terrible shock for me at that moment that something like this had to happen to my daughter and uhm, it was tough, even now to talk about it, because no person wishes this upon their child [very sad].*

> **Participant 05**: … Wel dit was vir ons uit die aard van die saak 'n verskriklike skok, wel vir my, om te hoor die aand wat daar gebeur het en dat hulle die gewapende roof gehad het en dat hulle daar geterroriseer is vir vierure deur vier boewe, gewapende boewe en eintlik die grootste skok was nog toe my dogter sê sy kom na ons toe, iemand bring haar hierna toe en sy kom hierna toe en sy sê vir ons sy los die kinders by ons want sy moet hospitaal toe gaan. En sy werk by die hospitaal, want sy het 'n kliniek daar gehad en ek dog by myself kan die vrou nou nog wil werk toe gaan? Sy gaan baie keer in die nag want sy doen bevallings. Toe sê sy nee, hulle het goedjies aan my gedoen ... En ek het dadelik geweet wat bedoel sy, sy bedoel, sy was verkrag en sy wou nou nie hard op sê voor die kinders nie. Dit was vir my 'n verskriklike skok op daai oomblik dat so iets met my dogter moet gebeur en uhm, dit was swaar, selfs nou nog om daarvan te praat, want geen mens wens sy kind dit toe nie [baiehartseer].

> **Participant 01**: … *So at about two thirty in the morning her neighbour brought her here with the two children. Then she said "but we are all right," I'm just bringing the children to you. And when she arrived, the neighbour brought her in. And there she stood with a small bundle of clothes with her. You know, she gave me no detail, she just told me we are "all right." Then she told me she needed to go to hospital, then I asked her, but why, do you have a patient? I then still thought she had a patient, then she said no, they did something to me.*

> **Participant 01**: … Toe so half drie die oggend toe het haar buurvrou haar hierna toe gebring met die twee kinders. Toe sê sy "maar ons is "all right" ek bring net die kinders na julle toe. En toe sy hierkom, toe het die buurvrou haar in gebring. En toe staan sy so met 'n bondeltjie klere by haar. Jy weet, sy het vir my geen detail gegee nie, sy het net vir my gesê ons is "all right.". Toe sê sy vir my sy moet hospitaal toe gaan, toe vrae ek vir haar maar hoekom, het jy 'n pasient? Toe dog ek nog sy het 'n pasient, toe sê sy nee, hulle het iets aan my gedoen

"Violent crime is undoubtedly the biggest single driver of emigration, the one factor cited by all races and across all professions when people are asked why they want to leave. Police figures put the murder rate in 2007-2008 at more than 38 per 100,000 and rape at more than 75 per 100,000" (The Economist, 2014). "It has reached the point where most people say they either have been victims of violent crime themselves or know friends or relatives who have. Typically, it is a break-in, carjacking, robbery or murder close to home that clinches a family's long mulled-over decision to leave" (The Economist, 2014).

> **Participant 8:** … *No! He will never come back again. Never! He said it to me before he left, Mom I will never come back. He said never come back to South Africa, never!*

In the current study, the researcher found that crime, especially violent crime, rape, high jacking and armed robbery, was the reason given by participants for their children's emigration. The researcher believes that this reason has an effect on how the parents left behind deal with their child's emigration, because they blame the

leaving on factors that are beyond their or their child's control. The belief is that if it wasn't for crime, the child might still have been in South Africa. The "country" made it is impossible for the child to stay. A further repercussion is that some of the children stated that they would never return, not even to visit. This made the emigration harder for the parent to deal with, as the frequency of contact was even less, since it only occurred if the parent visited the child.

Sub-theme 1.4: Parent's involvement in the decision-making process

Participant 11: … *Ja, and then uh, ok there's a company in Germany which I think has four or five branches throughout out the world. The mother board is in Germany and then there is one here in South Africa, there's one in England, one in America where he is right now and then one I think in China or Australia I'm not quite sure. So he communicated with uhm, ... thank you sir … so he communicated with South Africa branch which is "S" Electronics and uh … everything went well with him and uh, uhm .one day he told me that, father I want to go for an interview tomorrow and I said ok, go and when he come back he said that after three months I'll be going to Germany. So I said ok I am happy. Oh? So I don't know how to explain my happiness, how happy I was, ok, so after three months then he went to Germany for about six months. No, I was happy because uh ... number one he got job and uh ... he is going overseas and uh … something, something very, not very common [inaudible 2:23 – 2:26] many people didn't go overseas, so somebody going overseas is something very, very, very, very important, uhm something, uhm that you have to be, have to be happy about.*

Participant 7: *... And we then went to eat and we barely had the food in front of us when she said to me we are leaving for Canada in six weeks' time. "F" got a job. For me it was like a death bell ringing.*

Participant 7: … *En ons het toe gaan eet ons en het ons het skaars die kos voor ons gehad toe sê sy vir my ons vertrek oor ses weke Kanada toe. "F" het 'n pos gekry. Dit was vir my soos 'n doodsklok wat gelui het.*

Participant 5: *... So that was now that and of course I actually knew they were on their way to Australia, because they had paved the way for this and I never blamed them. It is a very difficult thing for us the fact that our daughter is there and our grandchildren who grew up in our house.*

Participant 5: … *So dit was nou dit en natuurlik ek het eintlik geweet hulle was oppad Australië toe, want hulle het al begin voorbrand maak daarvoor en ek het hulle nooit verkwalik nie. Dis 'n baie swaar ding vir ons dat ons dogter daar is en ons kleinkinders wat in ons huis grootgeword het.*

Participant 10: … *Then "N" discussed it with us and we said well, you know we had chased hopes for you that you will be with us and that you will spend you know you will start working here and uhm you live with us and you can start your surgery with us and we bought another house in "E" quite a big house … Well after, yeah, after they were married you know than she discussed it with us and said well … she will have to go to Australia but she will have to, uhm, she will have to go and see what are the prospects over there and that is the time we've realised that well she was going to go because now that they were married and her husband was there and she was here with us in Pretoria in "E." So she said she would go, go and see because she still wants to be in South Africa because she feels that she can actually, you know, provide valuable service here in South Africa. So she said OK, we gave her a farewell and she went over to Australia and when she landed in Australia of course they have to write an exam.*

The quality of the parent-child relationship may be a reflection of the quality of parent-child attachment. Children's responses or reactions to parent-child separations reflect attachment behaviours (adaptive versus maladaptive) that they have adopted in response to their previous caregiving experiences (Lopez,

2010:12). The quality of the parent-child relationship before, during and after the separation has been identified as an important predictor of adaptive coping with separations. Parental practices that minimise the negative effects of separation serve as protective factors that ease children's adjustment (Lopez, 2010:17). The researcher believes that the attachment bond between parent and child plays an important role during all the phases of emigration, starting with the decision-making stage.

The notion of "license to leave" argues that the manner in which the migrant, the family members and the community in the home-country view the migrant's decision to move, greatly impacts the migrant's transnational family relations and their tendency to provide care (Baldassar, 2007a). Baldassar (2007a:280) defines it as "legitimacy of purpose" and makes the following statement:

> Those individuals whose migrations are supported as appropriate life-courses by themselves and their families, communities and even nations, are likely to enjoy less fractious transnational family relationships than those individuals whose migration meets with disapproval.

Baldassar writes that distance can be difficult and heartbreaking for family relations especially if there is a lack of "license to leave." A participant in Baldock's (2000:209) study confirmed the above and stated: "There was sadness at my departure … indeed I was given "licence to leave."

There are many examples of parents who clearly felt an obligation to support their children even though they opposed (at least initially) their children's decision to migrate. The researcher found that when the children were involved in violent crime, the parents believed that it was better for the children to emigrate than to stay in South Africa. They felt that the children had a better future abroad regarding crime-free living and educational opportunities for their grandchildren. In most instances, the parents told the researcher how difficult it was to be without the children, but that the children were better off. Therefore, they believed their children had made the right decision. The researcher believes that this mature attitude of the parent creates a safe environment for the children to explore and make a meaningful life in a new country.

Sub-theme 1.5: Airport goodbyes

> **Participant 6**: ... *My daughter, oh, the worst, worst, worst was for me when my eldest daughter said to me mom I don't want you to come along to the airport. And, you know I cried the entire day at work but afterwards I realised that it was for the best. There is a woman who works with me now and her children are now going overseas, her daughter and her husband, and she now feels just as offended by the fact that the children said you may not go with us to the airport. Then I said to her you know it is not really about you it is about them, they are protecting themselves. And we had been there, I must say then I had already started taking pills, totally fine, and then we, they then stayed with friends of theirs and we then, I think, went to eat lunch at the friends. And my husband went back to work so he had to say goodbye to them. I don't know whether or not he shed a tear on his way. I then still stayed because they had borrowed my car, because as both their cars had also still been stolen we at that time they borrowed my car.*

> **Participant 6**: ... *My dogter, o, die ergste, ergste, ergste was vir my toe my oudste dogter vir my sê ma ek wil nie hê julle moet saamgaan lughawe toe nie. En weet jy ek het gehuil die hele dag by die werk maar agterna het ek besef dis die beste. Daar is 'n vrou wat nou saam met my werk en haar kinders gaan nou oorsee, haar dogter en dié se man en sy voel nou net so gebelg daaroor dat die kinders gesê het jy mag nie saamgaan lughawe toe nie. Toe sê ek vir haar jy weet dit gaan nie eintlik oor jou nie dit gaan oor hulle, hulle beskerm hulle self. En ons was daar gewees, ek moet sê toe het ek al pille gedrink, heeltemal fine en toe het ons hulle het toe by vriende van hulle gebly en ons was toe by die vriende gaan middagete eet dink ek. En my man het toe teruggegaan werk toe so hy het hulle toe gegroet. Ek weet nie of hy daar langs die pad 'n traan weggepik het of nie ek het toe nog gebly want hulle het my kar geleen, want omdat hulle altwee se karre ook nog gesteel was het ons daai tyd het hulle my kar geleen.*

> **Participant 14**: ... *Yes. The thing is it becomes, you, it is said to you and you think you programme yourself but very suddenly they have left for the airport and the next day when you look they are not there and, you know, it is, that is just how it is ...*

> **Participant 14**: ... *Ja. Die ding is dit word, jy, dit word vir jou gesê en jy dink jy programmeer jouself maar ewe skielik is hulle lughawe toe en die volgende dag as jy kyk is hulle nie daar nie en, en, jy weet, dit is, dit is maar soos dit is ...*

> **Participant 16**: ... *You know, it's bad. Always when we go to Boksburg when we pass airport. If my husband is around, he can tell you that every day if we pass there, if I see the, the, the aeroplane I started to cry. I mean I'm thinking of my children.*

> **Participant 10b**: ... *Its something very sad and when she left on the airport we were crying she was crying even the friends and all, even the friends and all they were crying and even at uhm, this thing when it was uhm, uhm, we gave her a farewell and a friend, they had been at school together for years from primary school. Its something very sad and when she left on the airport we were crying she was crying even the friends and all, even the friends and all they were crying and even at uhm, this thing when it was uhm, uhm, we gave her a farewell and a friend, they had been at school together for years from primary school, that they also moved to "L" they were just in the street below us and they would always come and visit the two sisters, the one with, I think she was two years younger or older than "N" and the other sister they were the same age and they used to get on very well , she also used to study and in "L" she had, you know, some girls in A-class they used to study and they had competition and surely it was very, very sad and when she gave a speech how she is going to miss "N" and this and that, even our neighbour in "L" they were just a house in between us and our neighbours he even said, Mr "S," if I have friends like that of "N" I won't leave. So you feel very sadly because how her friends felt.*

Airports are story-making machines, says Anna Stothard (2013). The departure gate's waiting room can be filled with sorrow, fear, loneliness, heartbreak and tender moments. People are only waiting to watch their loved ones walk further and further away from them until they can no longer be seen (Divinecaroline, 2014).

> **Participant 6**: ... *And it is awful when those little bodies go through customs. But in any case I am fine, I have managed to wean myself from sedatives, but they definitely helped me in those*

> *times. Because you know I uhm ... may be wrong, but that is stuff that I don't share with my husband, I keep it to myself.*
>
> **Participant 6**: … En dis dan aaklig as daai lyfies daar by daai doeane deurgaan. Maar in elk geval ek is fine, ek het myself af gekry van die kalmeerpille af maar dit het my definitief gehelp in daai tyd, want weet jy ek uhm ... is dalk verkeerd, maar daar is baie goed wat ek nie met my man deel nie wat ek vir myself hou.

Airports can be sad places when loved ones depart and joyous places when they arrive. In the current study, airports were associated with saying goodbye and with sorrow. Not once were they associated with a positive emotion, only with sadness and the finality of loss.

> **Participant 8**: … *It was extremely ... difficult saying goodbye after that, because it was as if I had taught myself not to feel deeply about the fact that they are not there, and coming back from that visit made it worse. Uhm then I realised that they were far away.*
>
> **Participant 1**: … *But no it doesn't get easier. It's still that something of you part of you that has been cut off which uh ... only comes back to you comes back to you when he's back. No it doesn't become easier. Yes, there is a little hole and the little hole does not heal, I can't claim that the hole gets bigger, uhm ... but the little hole does not grow over. The little hole remains there.*
>
> **Participant 1**: … Maar nee dit word nie makliker nie. Dis nog daai iets van jou deel van jou wat afgesny is wat uh ... net terugkom na jou terugkom as hy terug is. Nee dit word nie makliker nie.Ja, daar is 'n gaatjie en die gaatjie word nie heel nie ek kan nie sê die gaatjie word groter nie, uhm ... maar die gaatjie groei nie toe nie. Die gaatjie bly daar.
>
> **Participant 15b**: … *It feels, as I told you earlier, it feels as if death has set in because you know you are now going to say farewell to her but you can at least reach her again ... to me it feels like persistent losses and many farewells.*
>
> **Participant 15b**: … Dit voel, soos ek jou vroër gesê, dit voel asof die dood ingetree het oor jy weet jy gaan nou afskeid neem van haar maar jy kan haar darem weer bereik ... dit voel vir my dis aanhoudende verliese en 'n klomp afskeide.

When thinking about airports, the association with loss was frequently found among the participants. They explained that saying goodbye had become a part of their "emigration story" – repeated "endings." Hilliard (2014) in his article: "*I've watched men cry about their children emigrating,*" describes a man taking his children to the airport:

> Tonight, he told me, he was bringing the second of his emigrant progeny to the airport. Although adults, these two people were still his 'children'. They came home for a family wedding. There was great intensity in their homecoming but there was even greater intensity in their departure.

This sums up what participants in the current study experienced when saying goodbye to their adult-children.

Key Findings: Theme 1 – Emigration of the adult-child

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Emigration equals change. Using an isomorphism to compare emigration to an amoeba shows how dynamic emigration can be for all involved. Reasons given for emigration by the participants were diverse; however, violent crime was the main one. The onset of the emigration experience for the parent left behind commenced when they were informed by their adult-child that they were either contemplating emigration or had already made the decision.

When parents are involved in the decision-making process, it could have a positive effect on the way they accept the emigration of their adult-child. It could give the adult-child a "license to leave," which in turn could enhance transnational relations.

The airport becomes a personification of loss for the parent left behind. The emigration process is flawed with the constant saying of goodbyes.

6.3.2.2   THEME 2: EMIGRATION LOSS

Loss is a fundamental aspect of the lives of all people from earliest childhood. While each specific situation of loss has unique characteristics, there are common aspects in the different situations of loss and in the manner in which people react and adjust to loss (Murray, 2001:234). Loss can be divided into two types – physical and symbolic. Physical loss refers to tangible loss, such as the loss of a loved one and tangible personal possessions. Symbolic loss refers to abstract or intangible loss such as loss of status, loss of one's hopes or ideals related to what a person believes should have been, could have been, or might have been.

Sub-theme 2.1: Was a loss experienced?

In discussing this theme, the researcher focuses on whether loss was experienced by the parents whose children have emigrated. Death is discussed with the focus on comparing emigration to the loss of a child to death. Longing as an emotion experienced by the parent is referred to, and lastly, the researcher focuses on the parents' way of dealing with the emigration of their adult-child by addressing gender differences and the role of religion in their journey to acceptance (Bonanno & Kaltman, 2001:730).

Participant 12: … *And another thing is you know that you always, you always realise that uhm, uhm you see other people and you see them with their children and you long for that relationship. When you see the children coming here and greeting and hugging and everything seeing their parents and bringing them a flower or just a petal or something like that, you know and knowing that next week you can see them again and you think ... there's nothing like that for you, nothing.*
Participant 8: … *It is the death of the possibility of the relationship. Definitely between me and my grandchildren, definitely. It is a part of you that gets cut off. Perhaps it is because I do have a strong bond with my kids and "P" as my oldest, was always throughout, even my marriage which was not so fantastic, he was really a confidant and losing him was like losing your confidant, somebody that I knew I could rely on. Which is unfair towards your child, because that shouldn't be the role that he is playing.*
Participant 14: ... *And for us it was naturally very traumatic and still is traumatic ... and they have now been there for about a year and a half although they have been away a bit longer because they first went to visit friends in Canada and then he started there at the end of January. Because, and for me of course, also because we lived with them in a house.*
Participant 14: … *En vir ons was dit natuurlik baie traumaties en nog steeds traumatise … en hulle is nou al omtrent 'n jaar en 'n half daar alhoewel hulle bietjie langer weg was want hulle het eers by vriende in Kanada gaan kuier en toe het hy daar einde Januarie verlede jaar begin. Want, en vir my ook natuurlik want ons het saam met hulle in 'n huis gebly.*

Loss is an emotional, affective and relational denominator that is particularly common among diverse families. Thompson (1998:21) describes loss as an "unavoidable fixture" of our human existence. D'Amore and Scarciotta (2011:46) see diverse families as created from different kinds of relational interruptions (break-up, divorce, adoption, migration) that entail various types of loss. These losses are concerned with the interruption in intra- and intergenerational bonds, the degree of fulfilment of affective and social roles during the former family belonging and the splitting up of intra- and intergenerational boundaries as well as routines, scripts and family representations (D'Amore & Scarciotta, 2011:47).

Whenever people experience change, they are touched by loss in one form or another and its ensuing grief. Every participant in this study lost someone, something or some dream of how it was supposed to be. The loss experienced by emigration was true for each participant. The researcher relates to the following statement by Skrbiš (2008): "Migrant stories are linked with the experiences of adjustment, settlement, nostalgia, a shattered sense of belonging, renewal, loss, discrimination, abrupt endings, new beginnings and new opportunities – all potent sources of emotions." The researcher was constantly reminded of the numerous emotions experienced by the parents left behind, with the theme of loss overshadowing most of them. The statement captures the parents' ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, they are happy that their children have a new and better beginning, but on the other hand they experience loss due to the abrupt ending of the relationship that was.

> **Participant 11**: … *No, not at all, not at all. I don't feel like that … I will feel that if he goes for keeps, doesn't remember me, doesn't come back, he doesn't, he doesn't phone, doesn't do anything then I will start feeling that I've lost a son now. My son is gone and gone and gone forever. Than, that's when I will be worrying about it, but right now we are still communicating, I don't think that I've lost anything.*

The quote above was the only response where a parent admitted to not being sad after his child left. The researcher found that cultural differences might have had an influence. Participant 11 explained that a black person does not easily get a job abroad and so when it happens, everyone in the family is proud and happy about the opportunity that the child had received. The researcher needs to stress that she experienced a general attitude of acceptance from this participant that may have also contributed to his approval of his child's emigration. It was evident in the interview that loss was experienced but that it was dealt with in a way of general adaptability and acceptance.

Sub-theme 2.2: Ambiguous loss

In the process of "doing life" we often encounter loss. Loss has been an inevitable part of man's existence from the beginning of time and is a fundamental aspect of the lives of all people. Every transition in life is a loss of some kind as endings and beginnings are entangled, and endings carry the potential of loss (Scott, 2013:249). Families experience numerous losses on a daily or ongoing basis that are not recognised or legitimised by society, because many losses are not as clearly definable as death. It may not even be certain what was lost. Loss may involve a person, an object, an experience or an event. Boss (1999) describes ambiguous loss as "an incomplete and uncertain loss."

Pauline Boss's (1999) concept of ambiguous loss has opened a new field of research on the psychic state of grief in cases of loss without resolution. Here, grieving is somehow frozen and cannot be resolved due to the ambiguous dimension of this kind of loss. Although the family member is physically missing because of migration, he or she is still psychologically present.

Migration loss is a specific type of loss. Boss (1999) refers to it as a "crossover" loss in that it has features of both types of ambiguous loss. In the researcher's personal correspondence with Pauline Boss, dated 16 November 2009, she asked Professor

Boss's advice regarding guidelines to assist the parent left behind. Boss responded as follows:

> Each person's circumstances and relationships differ. Yes, the party left behind does indeed have to deal with multiple losses but so does the immigrant. Ambiguous loss is inherent for all the parties involved when there is immigration and migration. It is just part of it and often the part that hurts the most.

Participant 12: … *You lose it, you lose it and uhm even if you had a very good relationship with your child or a not so good relationship with him, you uhm, still don't have that closeness, because they uhm, a foreigner is a foreigner.*
Participant 10a: *… you know there is, you, you long for your daughter and you feel that, you know, you miss that social contact and the physical contact and that the proximity of a daughter that you had so much, you know, promise and so much ambition, and you miss that and then that phase are actually takes a time to go away because you always go back in your mind and say well if she was here she should have done this and that and the other but eventually then that, that phase goes away when you realise that she, she's in an environment that's most probably better than the one that she had here.*

Relationships of attachment can be disrupted through death or through loss in which the significant person becomes permanently inaccessible. There are daily reminders of the relationship that has been lost and the loss is ongoing. Response to ongoing loss is distinguished from bereavement following death in that the relationship deprivation is not because of a physical death, but is due to the symbolic death of a loved one (Teel, 1991:1313). People are expected to move on with their lives after a loss, but with ambiguous loss, the family simply cannot just move on. Their immovability or incapability to deal effectively with the situation is not the result of the family's failure; it is the impossibility of the situation that may leave them helpless (Boss, 1999).

Participant 2: … *Uhm, uhm, the saddest thing, apart from the fact that … your son that has his special place, they've allas I say got 'a special place', but his special place is a door that is closed, it's an emptiness. Uhm, an emptiness that can't be filled by anybody else, because this is him especially.*
Participant 7: ... *She was such a part of my life and the irony is that the day that she got married I made her a wedding album, that's what I'll call it and my mother's name was also "M" and I started the wedding album with a letter, in the form of a letter, actually the whole album was in the form of letters and I told her for me the most wonderful thing that happened in my life, I said at the beginning of my life I had a "M" who held my hand and led me. I said and the most wonderful thing which has happened to me now is that I have a "M" who is going to hold my hand at the end of my life [Laughs] but this was quite simply not meant for me. And the realisation. [interruption] the knowing that I would have to, to a certain extent make do without her was for me an unbelievable trauma. Not only for me, but the whole, the whole being together, the experience of my grandchildren, the total integration that was between us, was cut off just like that.*
Participant 7: … *Sy was so 'n deel van my lewe en die ironie is toe sy die dag gaan trou toe maak ek vir haar 'n trouboek, noem ek dit nou maar en my moeder se naam was ook "M" en ek begin toe die trouboek met 'n brief, in die vorm van 'n brief, eintlik was die hele boek in die vorm van briewe en ek sê vir haar vir my die wonderlikste ding wat in my lewe gebeur het, ek sê aan die*

> begin van my lewe het ek 'n "M" gehad wat my hand gehou het en vir my gelei het. Ek sê en die wonderlikste wat nou met my gebeur het is dat ek 'n "M" het wat aan die end van my lewe ook my hand gaan hou. [Lag] maar dit was net eenvouding nie vir my beskore nie. En die wete … [onderbreking] die wete dat ek haar in die mate moes ontbeur was vir my 'n ongeloofike trauma. Nie net vir my eie, maar die hele, die hele saam wees, die belewenis van my kleinkinders, die totale intergrasie wat daar tussen ons was, is net so afgekap.

Suarez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie (2002:625) state that very little has been written about family partings as a result of emigration, an occurrence that is transforming families. These authors view ambiguous loss as particularly relevant to parent-child separations during the migratory process and because there is no clear-cut finality in the relationship, responses may take the form of low-grade chronic symptomatology rather than intense, acute responses. Many of the non-death losses experienced by individuals are very difficult to explain or validate.

The parent left behind envisioned active participation and playing a direct role in the lives of their children and their grandchildren. With the adult-child geographically so far apart from them, they now face the reality, depending on their physical health and financial situation, of only seeing the adult-child and grandchildren when finances allow it. Therefore, they feel a sense of chronic despair and ongoing apprehension.

> **Participant 8**: … *You speak with them over the telephone or you see photographs. Uhm, it's different, they are not part of your life anymore. So uhm, and the funny thing is it seems that I am the only one in the family that misses them. My mom ... it doesn't matter to her and the siblings seem to have cut off as well … no, that doesn't matter, I don't think that … when you are dead I don't think there is any distance between you and the loved one's in any case it doesn't matter. I just … I grief for the years that I have lost and am losing in connecting with him. If you think of the olden days when people moved away if you married someone and went away to another country you never saw your family again. If you would get a letter three times in your lifetime then you would be lucky. So it has been human experience for us. … this thing, but it doesn't make it easier. I think everyone's hurt is everyone's hurt, whether it is a big or a small hurt it is a hurt ... doesn't matter.*

> **Participant 11**: … *In 2008, he called me, I don't know, I still remember it was on the 10th of June. [laughs] He called me and said, Pa, I'm getting married. Ja, I wasn't very much happy about that [laughs]. I said: Are you getting married, where? He said here in America. So I said … agg, oh! ok, it's all right, but uh … that was not my wish, I thought you would marry in South Africa and uhm, that was my wish that must marry here in South Africa but uhm … anyway it's all right. And in turn there was nothing I could do. Ja, because he was telling me that he was getting married, he was not asking for permission. Ja, ja and so I was not very much happy about that, yes I was not happy, but I said that there's nothing I can, even if I can say no, he will continue with … and the family will end up staying in America will not coming home and he said my father doesn't uhm, want whatever I want to do, you get what I mean, ja. Okay, that very same Saturday I went to my brother my elder brother I told him about the story, okay that is the African Culture you must, you must tell the brothers the, the immediate family. Ja, So I went to my brothers and say hey! and told them the story my son is getting married in America, and ok so she was marrying a Black American, [inaudible] nobody in my family, nobody, uhm, was worried like me, like I did, I was the only one that was worried, and uhm, I thought no man that's wrong, so why should I worry? Everybody is happy about it so why should I worry then. Uhm, the one thing that made me to be*

> *all right to be calm was my brother's wife who told me: "Look, we cannot say he must get married here in South Africa because most of his time he is abroad. [inaudible 8:15 – 8:19]. Who is he going to marry in South Africa? Most of his friends are in America. So, let him marry where he lives. Ja, ja I came to understand now that it is true, that he can not marry here in South Africa. When he comes to South Africa he is here for 2 weeks but he is there for a whole year [inaudible 8:33]. And then most of his friends goes that side [inaudible 8:39]. So that made me to be, uhm, ok, uhm, to feel now feel comfortable, right, ok? He went again and then he married on the 2nd of August. I couldn't attend the wedding celebration because he gave me very short notice and uhm when I got to apply I found out that, now they said the cheapest flight that you can get is R24 000 and uh … ok that was too much for me [inaudible 9:12-9:20]. So, then it wasn't going straight, it was going from Johannesburg to Dubai and from Dubai to New York, from New York to Bellingham, which take a long time. So I said, aag, I'll see next time.*

Loss is a reminder that life is not always kind or fair (Boss, 1999). Tragic circumstances can strike the happiest and healthiest of families. The family is put into a no-win situation and their questions may never be resolved. Ambiguous loss leaves people feeling powerless in their lives and insecure in their future.

Others may not understand or recognise the depth of the loss – the death of a child, the ending of a dream and future, and the unfilled expectation of being a mother (Werner-Lin & Moro, 2004). Comments such as "it was meant to be," "your other children are still here" or "you can always visit them" invalidate the experience as an important loss. Loss forces the individual to recognise that there are some things that cannot be controlled (Betz & Thorngren, 2006:360).

> **Participant 12**: *… No, it's always uh, uh it's 85% of your life gone. Not you're … of your years that you, you have nurtured them and everything, you know, because now you don't enjoy the fruits of that. When we went over to my son, our grandchildren, I think might have had difficulty in calling us granny, because they had other special names for their, you know for their like Neno and Poppy, and we were granny and grandpa. And they … they could never really come to us. They would first of all go to their mom and then to the other granny and then they will reach to us, that's how the circle would be.*

Boss (1999:3) describes ambiguous loss as "an incomplete and uncertain loss" that occurs in two different ways: The family member can be physically present but psychologically absent, or physically absent and psychologically present. Boss claims that ambiguous loss is the "most stressful kind of loss because it defies resolution and creates long-term confusion about who is in or out of a particular couple or family" (Boss, 2006:xvii). The level and amount of stress created by the ambiguous loss affects the "path a family follows as it adapts and prospers ... both in the present and over time" (Hawley & De Haan, 1996:293).

Boss (1999:7) states that perceiving loved ones as present when they are physically gone or perceiving them as gone when they are physically present, can make

people feel helpless and more prone to depression, anxiety and relationship conflicts. Because the loss is confusing, people are baffled and powerless. They are unable to make sense of the situation. When people are unable to gain clarity, they are immobilised, decisions are put on hold, roles remain unclear, relationship boundaries are confusing and celebrations and rituals are cancelled (Boss & Couden, 2002:1352).

> **Participant 10a**: … *It was just we were moving around to see where we can settle after we've gone out of "L" we've been a few places but then we were next to, the time when she left we were in "E" and we had a very big house there too, and then even the plot was very big, in front and at the back, we thought she will put up a, a surgery there, as a doctor, and then that her house will be there and there is place for the surgery too like most of the Indian people had it.*

Death and loss were themes that ran like a connecting thread throughout the interviews with the research participants whose child(ren) had emigrated. The ambiguity of the emigration was visible in each interview. In each phase, the lack of "rules" to deal with the situation was evident. There were no rituals, especially not for saying goodbye. The ambiguity continued and with each life phase, new losses were created due to various aspects such as a parents' ill-health. The researcher found that the loss of the "what could have been" was overpowering and ever-present, although not always directly or verbally expressed by the participants.

Sub-Theme 2.3: Comparing emigration loss to death in general

> **Participant 8**: … *It reminds me of the loss of death. It is a death of uhmm, a way of life; it is the death of the possibility of the relationship. Definitely between me and my grandchildren, definitely. It is a part of you that gets cut off.*
>
> **Participant 7**: … *For me it was like a death-bell ringing because I have four children, three boys and "M" is my daughter, she is my third child and she and I had an incredibly close bond/relationship … you know [silence] … I will now state it in a different way. Out of my corner … out of my perspective … in old people it increases the wish to die, you wish you could rather go … [long silence] because what is important to you, is in any case no longer there [very sad]. But you have now, to a small degree, in a certain sense, made me say something very negative and I am not a negative person, but yes, your life urge/your zest for life, your life's ... your looking forward to things has actually, in a small way ... been given a blow because what is it actually, only your own decrepitude remains … well, it remains, "It's an ongoing thing, it's a living thing," I think you will only speak the final word when you close your little eyes, and uhm, that's why I say sometimes, I'm not a negative person, but sometimes "I have a bit of a death wish." And then, I remain, there is still this other adjustment that you need to make, I remain prepared to go to Canada. I am seven years younger than my husband, but I am just looking after him.*
>
> **Participant 7**: … *Dit was vir my soos 'n doodsklok wat gely het want ek het vier kinders, drie seuns en "M" is my dogter, sy is my derde kind en ek en sy het 'n ongelooflike nou band gehad … weet jy [stilte] … ek gaan dit nou anders stel [stilte]. Uit my hoek ... dit verskerp by die oumens die doodsbegeerte, jy wens jy wil maar liewer gaan … [lang stilte] want dit wat vir jou belangrik is, is in elke geval nie meer daar nie [baie hartseer]. Maar jy het nou vir my bietjie, in 'n sekere sin laat 'n ding laat sê wat baie negatief is en ek is nie 'n negatiewe mens nie, maar ja, jou lewensdrif, jou lewens … jou uitsien na dinge is eintlik 'n bietjie … 'n knou gekry want wat is dit nou eintlik, net*

> jou eie verval bly oor … nou ja … dit bly maar, "It's an ongoing thing, it's a living thing," ek dink jy sal eers regtig die finale woord spreek as jy jou ogies toemaak, en uhm dis die wat ek sê partykeer, ek is nie 'n negatiewe mens nie, maar partykeer "I have a bit of a death wish."

In her article, "*Those easily forgotten: The impact of emigration on those left behind,*" Marchetti-Mercer (2012a) explains that an overwhelming number of people experience emigration as a loss, even comparing it to death. Marchetti-Mercer (2012a:376) makes the following statement in this regard: "Emigration is mostly experienced as a vast loss, almost akin to a death, bringing about significant changes in social networks and relationships." The author further states that this ambivalent sense of loss, often comparable to death-in-life, is consistent with the concept of ambiguous loss described by Boss (1999, 2006) and Falicov (2002).

Falicov (2005:199) explains that to one degree or another, emigrants experience loss, grief and mourning and these experiences have been compared with the processes of grief and mourning precipitated by the death of loved one. This author makes the following statement:

> Yet, migration loss is also smaller than death, because despite the grief and mourning of physical, cultural and social separation, the losses are not absolutely clear, complete and irretrievable. Everything is still alive but just not immediately reachable or present. Unlike the finality of death, after migration it is always possible to fantasise the eventual return or a forthcoming reunion.

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989:67) found that those left behind inevitably experience loss and abandonment, something that "is experienced as a death." In the current study, participants often compared emigration to death and it was striking how often the theme of death was discussed, either in comparison to emigration or regarding facing their own death without their children.

Sub-theme 2.4: Comparing emigration loss to death of a child

When thinking about loss, the following statement by Scott (2013:247) is appropriate: "The more precious a thing is, the greater becomes its power to hurt us by simply being absent." In describing the severity of their personal experience and in an attempt to make sense of their circumstances, many of the research participants compared their experience of their child emigrating to that of losing a child to death.

Participant 5: … *I think it is quite a lot like that [like death], because that person is gone. It is like a good friend or family that is gone, I mean who has died, it really is like that. The only consolation that you have is that they are not really dead they are in a certain way still there, I can at least still "Skype" them [laughing]. "They are gone!" [very sad, silence].*
Participant 5: … Ek dink dit is nogal baie so [soos die dood] want daai mens is weg. Dis soos 'n goeie vriend of familie wat weg is, ek bedoel wat dood is, dit is regtig so. Die enigste troos wat jy darem het is hulle is darem nie dood nie hulle is darem nog daar, ek kan hulle darem nog "skype" [lag]. "They are gone!" [baie hartseer, stilte].
Participant 15a: … *But I need to tell you for me it felt like death, uhm, uhm. It is just that that thing does not have the same finality that death has. You realise that you can make contact. It does not have, but that feeling of that final farewell ... is very traumatic, very traumatic.*
Participant 15a: … Maar ek sal vir jou sê vir my het dit omtrent soos dood gevoel, uhm, uhm. Dit, dit is net dat daai ding het nie daai finaliteit wat dood het nie. Jy besef jy kan kontak maak. Dit het nie die, maar daai gevoel van daai afskeid … is baie traumaties, baie traumaties.
Participant 8: … *So that adds another dimension of, you feel like you, okay, your child isn't dead but you are losing them, because the next time I see them I will be ten years older and they will be ten years older.*
Participant 3: … *It is almost like death, except I can phone him, I can talk to him, and I can Skype him but it feels like death. Because, uhm … I have with me boxes and boxes of his clothes to which I attach sentimental value but there is no reason to keep them. I do not have the courage to give them away because, and these are very good quality clothes, you yourself know these young children wear a pair of trousers three times and then they are simply no longer good enough and uhm … yes, it's very difficult. That one time in 2007, for the duration of the whole week before he left, he listened to Bon Jovi's Bed of Roses, probably sixty times a day and even to today when I hear that song, then I cry, I can't listen to that entire song, it's just too difficult … Uhm ... when he went away ... I never really realised that I was, I was privileged in the sense that my parents died at a very late age. I was 48 and ... they were both in their eighties, so I was privileged to have them for a very long time. So I didn't know at the point of time when "M" went what death meant … Really, "close" death near you, but after he had left, I thought but is this not what death feels like? because he is just "gone"? His stuff remains with me, the family of the guys who die are left behind with their stuff, you proceed through the same "sequence," you go through the same stuff. Uhm, you experience the same rejection and "why me?" and what and what you must go through. You sit here with all the sentiment, you must do something with this sentiment every time you enter the room or open the door, because my child is not there. And then I experienced it, as if, it's almost like death, except I can phone him. I can't phone my mom, I can't phone my dad but I can phone him. Then my mom died, then I realised ... this is "more or less the same" it's just a little bit better, I can still talk to him, we live on the same earth, uh ... he is still alive, but he is not here I can't, uhm ... I can't phone him quickly and say "Oh! Guess what happened today?" because I can't it's too expensive, and I don't have "roaming" on a phone and I don't have a landline so I don't have that type of contact with him, I must wait until I can send a sms or make another plan to contact him.*
Participant 3: … Dis amper soos dood behalwe ek kan hom bel, ek kan met hom praat, en ek kan hom skype maar dit voel soos dood. Want, uhm ... ek sit met bokse en bokse klere van hom waaraan ek sentimentele waarde het maar daar is geen rede om dit te hou nie. En ek het nie die moed om dit weg te gee nie want, en dis baie goeie klere en jy weet self hierdie jong kinders dra 'n broek drie keer en dan is die nie meer goed genoeg nie en uhm ... ja dis moeilik. Daai eenkeer in 2007 het hy daai hele week voordat hy gegaan het Bon Jovi se Bed of Roses geluister seker sestig keer 'n dag en nou nog as ek daai song hoor dan huil ek, ek kan nie daai song deur luister nie dis net te erg … Uhm ... toe hy weggaan ... ek het nooit regtig besef ek was, ek was bevoorreg in die sin dat my ouers baie laat dood is. Ek was 48 en hulle was altwee in hulle tagtigs, so ek was bevoorreg om hulle baie lank te hê. So ek het nie op daai stadium toe "M" gaan het en nie geweet wat dood beteken nie. Regtig, "close" dood naby jou, maar toe hy weg is toe dag ek maar is dit nie hoe dood voel nie? want hy's net "gone?" Sy goed bly agter, die ouens wat dood is se mense bly agter met die goed, jy gaan deur dieselfde "sequence," jy gaan deur dieselfde goed. Uhm, jy't daai selfde verwerping en "why me?" en wat dit wat jy moet deurgaan. Hier sit jy met die sentiment, jy moet iets met hierdie sentiment doen elke keer wat jy in die kamer ingaan of die deur oopmaak nie want my kind is nie daar nie. En toe ervaar ek dit, asof, dis amper soos dood behalwe ek kan hom bel. Ek kan nie my ma bel nie, ek kan nie my pa bel nie, maar ek kan hom bel. Toe is my ma dood, toe besef ek ... dis "more or less the same" dis net 'n klein bietjie beter, ek kan nog met hom praat, hy, ons is nog op dieselfde aarde, uh ... hy lewe nog, maar hy's nie hier nie ek kan nie, uhm

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> ... ek kan hom nie gou bel en vir hom sê:” Oe!, weet jy wat het vandag gebeur nie? “want ek kan nie dis te duur, en ek het nie “roaming” op 'n foon nie en ek het nie 'n landlyn nie so ek het nie daai kontak met hom nie, ek moet wag tot ek 'n sms kan stuur of 'n ander plan kan maak om hom te kontak.

In his ten-year-long study of parents who had lost children to death, Dennis Klass (1993) found that many parents used the metaphor of amputation in describing the loss of their child. As with amputation, the hopes, dreams and expectations personified in the child are now gone and like amputation, parental bereavement is a permanent condition. A part of them is missing and their world is forever diminished (Klass, 1993).

The researcher is in no way implying that emigration of a child is comparable to the death of a child. However, the parents often mentioned that the emigration felt like death and that the world they knew had changed after the emigration. Boss (1993:366) explains how in days gone by it was highly probable that parents and emigrating children would never see each other again: "… even with modern air transportation, there are many emigrants today who will never see their loved ones again because of economic constraints or political dangers." The participants in this study had frequent contact with their children and the frequency of this contact assisted the parent in adjusting to their children being geographically and physically far from them.

Sub-theme 2.5: *Not* comparing emigration loss to the death of a child

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> **Participant 12**: … *I haven't compared it with death because I know that I can see them on Skype, I can see their … and I know if I go onto Skype I will see them. I don't have to watch the postman everyday to see if a letter is coming. I've got that contact.*

> **Participant 13b**: … *No, no … no, we don't experience it like that at all. No…we …it is not as if the children or grandchildren, we do not feel as if we have been written off, no we don't feel that at all. We don't feel as if we have been written off, no, we have never had that experience, we know that we are still important in their lives, but, that dependence on us…of our daughter, on us, that has faded away.*

> **Participant 13b**: … nee, nee ... nee, ons ervaar dit glad nie so nie, nee glad nie. Nee ons ... dit is glad nie asof ons uh ... of die kinders of die kleinkinders, ons voel nie ons is afgeskryf nie, nee ons voel dit glad nie. Ons voel glad nie ons is afgeskryf nie, nee, ons het nog nooit daai ervaring gehad nie, ons weet dat ons is nog belangrik in hulle lewe maar, daai afhanklikheid van ons ... van ons dogter, aan ons, dit het getaan.

> **Participant 17**: … *There was not, look when my husband died there was not a, a telephone call or a coming back, or another question or something. It was final. The line had been cut. And with them it is different. Uhm, perhaps because I have experienced death, it made it easier for me to let them go and to know that we have contact. … so, you know, it is, it is a, I actually think it is because death is so final, isn't it, this is not a final, this is not a final blow. You know, it is, it is merely shifting of boundaries.*

> **Participant 17**: … daar was nie, kyk toe my man dood is was daar nie 'n, 'n telefoon oproep of 'n terug kom of 'n, of 'n weer 'n vraag of iets nie. Dit was finaal. Die lyn was geknip. En met hulle is dit anders. Uhm, miskien omdat ek die dood ervaar het, het dit vir my makliker gemaak om hulle te laat gaan en te weet ons het kontak. … So, jy weet, dit is, dit is 'n, ek dink eintlik dit is omdat die dood so finaal is, is dit nie, dis nie 'n finale, hierdie is nie 'n finale slag nie. Jy weet, dit is, dis net 'n verskuiwing van grense.

In their descriptions of losing a child to emigration, the researcher found that while some parents compared it to the death of a child, others felt that as they still had contact with the child, it was not as final as death.

Sub-theme 2.6: Parental ill-health and dying

> **Participant 19a**: ... *I would prefer, I would prefer to feel him before I go, to hear his voice and know he is here with me. That, that would be good. Yes, he can he will be at the funeral but I hope he is in time ... so that I can talk to him. Can say, jis my child you are here.*

> **Participant 19a**: … Ek sal verkies, ek sal verkies laat ek hom kan voel voor ek gaan, sy stem kan hoor en kan weet hy is hier by my. Dit, dit sal gaaf wees. Ja, hy kan, hy sal by die begrafnis wil wees maar ek hoop hy is betyds … dat ek met hom kan praat. Kan se, jis my kind jy is hier.

> **Participant 12**: … *They didn't see him. Yes … they just had to come out to make arrangements for the funeral. They came out as quickly as possible, but you know its Australia and Canada, you've got to sleep over here and all that kind of thing. First get your kids organised and ….*

> *Participant 19a&b … [wife]: no, let me take now for example in 1999, he underwent a kidney removal in Bloemfontein. And he said I must tell the children, I did tell them and they knew. And "D" phoned five times that afternoon, while he was in theatre and so on. But, then "V" and them wanted to come for the weekend, and then he said but don't let them come. And when I on Friday afternoon, they were already on their way. Then I said, boy Pa will be unhappy because he said, why would they want to. Then he said, Ma I can work for money again but I can't my father I must come and see, if not I won't be satisfied. [man]: But if you now sit in Moskow. [wife]: yes, like "D" now in Dubai. Our daughter-in-law "E", phoned him while I and "V" were with him in hospital and that same evening, he contacted them the airways and the work and so on and he got a seat immediately and the next day he was here the next day at twelve thirty and he just said, he's coming, he's not listening to what Pa says, he's coming, he wants to see for himself. [man]: Of course. What will you now think. Now ... will that ... bridge if you get there aeroplane just get on, we'll cross that bridge when we get there [inaudible 51:55] it's not relevant, yes. But no, you must just see the relationship in its totality, whether it is ill health or whatever, heart ache or joy or whatever, that relationship must just be comfortable and right and it is with us [inaudible 52:28] you ... you must just [inaudible 52:36] feel free to do whatever you must. Like I am saying, what they don't know is what they don't deserve, we will perhaps not [inaudible 52:45] about that. [Laughs]*

> **Participant 19a&b**: … [vrou]: nee, ek vat nou byvoorbeeld in 1999, het hy 'n nierverwydering in Bloemfontein gehad. En hy sê ek moet vir die kinders sê, ek het vir hulle gesê en hulle het geweet. En "D" het 5 keer daardie middag gebel, terwyl hy in teater was en so aan. Maar, toe wil "V" hulle kom die naweek, toe sê hy maar moenie laat hulle kom nie. En toe ek die Vrydag middag, toe is hulle al op pad.Toe sê ek, jong Pa gaan ongelukkig wees want hy het gesê, waarvoor wil hulle.Toe sê hy, Ma ek kan weer vir geld werk maar ek kan nie my pa moet ek kom kyk, anders sal ek nie tevrede wees nie. [man]: Maar as jy nou in Moskou sit. [vrou]: Ja, soos "D" nou uit Dubai uit.Ons skoondogter "E,"het vir hom gebel terwyl ek en "V"r met hom by die hosptiaal was en hy het daai selde aand, hulle gekontak met die lugrederye en die werk en so aan het hy onmiddelik plek gekry en hy was die volgende dag half een hier en hy het net gesê, hy kom, hy luister nie na wat die Pa sê nie, hy kom, hy wil self kom kyk [man] Natuurlik. Wat sal jy nou dink. Nou ... sal daai ... brug as jy daar kom vliegtuig klim maar, ons gaan maar daai brug oor as ons daar kom. [inaudible 51:55] dis nie tersake nie, ja.Maar nee wat, jy moet net die verhouding in sy totaliteit, of dit siekte is, of dit wat ookal is, hartseer is of vreugde is of wat ookal, moet daardie verhouding net gemaklik en reg wees en dit is by ons [inaudible 52:28] jy ... jy moet maar net [inaudible 52:36] vrymoedigheid

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hê. Soos ek sê, wat hulle nie weet nie is wat hullle nie verdien nie, ons sal dalk daaroor nie [inaudible 52:45]. [Lag]
Participant 18: … I have ... I actually have symptoms, direct symptoms of ovarian cancer. But now with all the tests and everything they can't find anything wrong. And then I said to them both uh ... to each by turn, that if, if something goes wrong, if I really get sick, they must not come. You know, I don't want, if I die, they must not come, for what, you know? My husband and his daughter can sort everything out. I spoke to her too and said and asked you know can you sort it out so that the boys don't have to come and uhm ... yes so uhm ... I don't want them to see me sick and weak and bad ... and her dad was also quite sick. And uh ... then they came, they were here for a month. Yes, and they were ... they went a few days, I think it was something like ten days, down to her mother to her parents and ag they were scarcely back, when her dad died suddenly. yes, yes, he had liver cirrhosis. And uh ... he died and then she came back. But this time she came alone. But I did not she did not come and stay with us, I only saw her at the airport, uh ... she then came and waited uh ... for Durban and when she came back again and waited for Sydney again those few hours sitting there at the airport with her. But, so uhm ... it was quite a big disaster for them, you know, but luckily I had the small one and "C" and "K" for that time, while "D" was in hospital it was very pleasant support, and everything.
Participant 18: …Ek het ... ek het eintlik simptome, direkte simptome vir ovario-kanker.Maar nou met al die toetse en alles kry hulle niks verkeerd nie. En toe sê ek vir hulle altwee uh ... om die beurt, dat as, as iets verkeerd gaan, as ek regtig siek word, moet hulle nie kom nie. Jy weet, ek wil nie, as ek dood gaan, moet hulle nie kom nie, vir wat, jy weet? My man en sy dogter kan alles uitsorteer. Ek het met haar ook gepraat en gesê en gevra jy weet kan julle dit uitsorteer dat die seuns nie hoef te kom nie en uhm ... ja so, uhm ... ek wil nie hê dat hulle my moet siek en swak en sleg sien nie… en haar pa was ook nogal siekerig.En uh ... toe kom hulle, hulle was 'n maand hier. Ja, en hulle was ... hulle was 'n paar dae, ek dink dit was iets soos 10 dae af na haar ma na haar ouers toe en ag hulle is skaars terug, en toe is haar pa skielik dood. Ja, ja, hy het lewersirose gehad. En uh ... hy is toe dood toe kom sy weer terug. Maar toe kom sy alleen.Maar ek het haar nie sy het nie by ons kom bly nie, ek het haar net by die lughawe gesien, uh ... toe sy kom en wag uh ... vir Durban en toe sy weer terugkom en wag vir Sydney weer daardie paar ure by haar by die lughawe gaan sit. Maar ja, so, uhm ... dit was nogal 'n groot ramp vir hulle, jy weet, maar gelukkig het ek, kleintjie en "C" en "K" gehad vir daardie tyd, terwyl "D" in die hospitaal was dit was baie lekker ondersteuning, en alles.

When non-ambiguous, irretrievable losses occur in the life cycle of an emigrant family, for example the death of a relative back home, the uncertain, provisional and ambiguous quality of the old goodbyes accentuate the loss and create confusion about where one belongs or what constitutes the definition of one's family (Falicov, 2005:285).

Studies have shown the migrant's heightened sense of responsibility to care for their parents largely occurs when a parent is diagnosed with an illness or after they have been widowed (Baldassar, 2007a:279). It was commonly found in this study that the adult-child makes a special effort to support a sick parent emotionally by making frequent contact. In times of serious ill-health of a parent, the adult-child made "crisis visits." Parents shared with their children when their health was deteriorating and they needed medical intervention. They also communicated with the adult-child(ren) regarding decisions to be made concerning medical care.

Participants mentioned that it was difficult to decide if the adult-child should visit if they became terminally ill. In addition, parents expressed a fear of not being able to see their adult-child and grandchildren again due to their old age or ill-health. During time of hospitalisation, the contact between the parents and their child(ren) increased.

Some theorists identify a particular dread among emigrants that their parents will die in their absence (Paris in Melville, 2010) and this fear may lead to feelings of guilt (Melville, 2010). During times of ill-health, children would visit the sick parent but also be supportive of the other parent. When participant 12's husband was hospitalised, both her children returned to South Africa. After some time, they had to go back to their different lives only to return after a short period to attend the funeral. The researcher believes that research regarding the final goodbye is necessary and could be of aid to both the adult-child and parent during this traumatic time.

Sub-theme 2.7: Longing

The psychological responses following a loss include feelings of sadness and despair; anxiety, guilt and anger; a longing for the deceased; sleep disturbances and lack of appetite (Wayment & Vierthaler, 2002:129).

Participant 13b: … *sometimes wake up at night, you know, that I experience such intense longing for the children, it is unbelievable. But do you know, funny, I say ... I never tell them this, but I say I miss them, you naturally say you miss them. But I don't think they know about our real hurt. But, well, yes. ... the romantic side thereof, that is the word I have been searching for, is now over and uh ... that was my that was my first loss. And then, everytime when you experience it as really bad, when one of the children celebrates a birthday, or if things happen there, which are important to their lives. and uh ... you know, you must hear about it over the Skype, you don't experience it, as it were here. That's just it.*
Participant 13b: … *word partykeer in die nag wakker, weet jy, dat ek so 'n intense verlange het na die kinders, dit is ongelooflik. Maar weet jy wat, snaaks, ek sê ... ek vertel dit nooit vir hulle nie, maar ek sê ek verlang, jy sê mos maar jy verlang. Maar ek dink nie hulle weet van ons regtige seer nie. Maar nou ja … die romantiek daarvan, dis die word wat ek na gesoek het, is nou verby en uh ... dit was my dit was die eerste verlies. En dan, elke keer wanneer 'n mens dit vreeslik erg ervaar, is wanneer een van die kinders verjaar, of as daar dinge gebeur, wat belangrik is in hulle lewe en uh ... jy weet, jy moet maar oor die Skype daarvan hoor, jy ervaar dit nie, soos wat dit hier was nie. Dis maar dit.*
Participant 3: ... *When a parent dies you see sentiment in everything. This was this and this was that and this was like this. So when a child goes away it is the same. You first see this is where his chair stood and you cannot make his bed because he no longer sleeps here, here are his clothes, what do I do with his clothes. Do you know what I did, I'll show you at some stage, I started a scrap book. There is healing in that book. So it works. Because you ... every little photo means something. Ok, in the end I will have no photos left of my child, but I am left with the memory.*

Participant 3: … As 'n ouer dood gaan sien jy sentiment in alles. Hierdie was dit en hierdie was dat en hierdie was so. So as 'n kind weggaan is dit dieselfde. Jy sien eers hier het sy stoel gestaan en jy kan nie sy bed opmaak nie want hy slaap nie meer hier nie hier is sy klere, wat maak ek met sy klere. Weet jy wat het ek gedoen, ek sal jou wys op 'n stadium, ek het 'n scrapbook begin. Dis genesing is daai boek. So dit werk. Want jy ... Elke fototjie beteken iets. Ok, op die ou end gaan ek niks fotos oor hê van my kind nie, maar ek sit met die herinnering.
Participant 15b: … *you get used to the idea that they are no longer here. It, it, it is, it, but then there are the times when you miss them terribly. It is simply on a certain day that I will get up and I miss "W" so incredibly much. And then, when they have birthdays and you know, it is everyone's birthday ... so memorial days ... and ... yes, you know you phone each other and they also never miss 'n thing when we have our birthdays or our wedding anniversary ... They never miss a thing and then they phone, the whole lot of them phone and talk. And Christmas and especially so when you see families together. When I now see, say my sister with her children with her, then I am filled with longing and I think where is my child?*
Participant 15b: ... jy raak gewoond hulle is nie hier nie. Dit, dit, dit is, dit, maar dan is daartye wat jy verskriklik verlang. Dis sommer op 'n dag dan sal ek opstaan en dan verlang ek my dood na "W". En dan, as hulle verjaar en sy weet, dit is elkeen se verjaarsdae …So gedenkdae, en … Ja, jy weet mens skakel mekaar en hulle mis ook nooit 'n ding as ons verjaar of ons troudag … Hulle mis niks nie en dan bel hulle, die hele lotjie bel en praat. En Kersfees en veral as jy families bymekaar sien. As ek nou sien sê my suster met al haar kinders by haar, dan verlang ek dan dink ek waar is my kind?

Merriam-Webster (2014) defines longing as "a strong desire especially for something unattainable." The *Free Dictionary* (2014) describes longing as a strong persistent yearning or desire, especially one that cannot be fulfilled. As a consequence of their absence and separation, migrants and their parents long to be with each other. The feeling is often referred to as a type of heartache, a longing and missing that is commonly expressed as a desire to be with kin or to be back home. The expressions of longing and missing or absence and loss appear to be manifestations of the emotional need for reunion and return or co-presence (Baldassar, 2008:248).

Special days such as birthdays or holidays can also trigger feelings of longing and heartache (Baldassar, 2008:248). It could also be argued that these special days come to embody the presence of absent people and places that "come to mind" on these days, often generating more intense feelings of longing (Baldassar, 2008:248). Similar to the participants in Baldassar's study, the research participants in this study found certain triggers, like birthdays, inspired the exchange of phone calls.

Baldassar (2008:248) writes that the emotions of "longing for" and "missing" people and places manifest in at least four key ways, namely discursively (through words), physically (through the body), as well as through actions (practice) and imagination (ideas). In the current study, the researcher found correlations with all four of the

above manifestations. Most of the participants verbalised their longing in very expressive ways. They described a chronic missing and longing for the child and grandchildren abroad.

One of the most memorable moments concerning longing through actions was experienced when the researcher interviewed Participant 3. The way she handled her laptop with utmost care and respect was touching. She explained that all her photographs of her children and grandchildren were stored on it. The gentleness with which she held it against her body illustrated what an important link it was with her children.

These "transnational objects" embody the internalised presence of the absent and the longing for people and places (Baldassar, 2008:257). They represent, or more specifically, "stand for" the absence. The researcher experienced how important photographs of children and grandchildren were to the parents. Photographs were always displayed in the participants' houses and they loved to tell the story behind each picture.

| Sub-theme 2.8: Effect of participants on the researcher's emotions |

> Data collection can be an intense experience, especially if the topic that one has chosen, has to do with the experience of illness experience or other stressful human experiences. The stories that the qualitative researcher obtains in interviews will be stories of intense suffering, social injustices, or other things that will shock the researcher (Morse & Field, 1995:78).

In almost every interview, the participants became emotional and found it difficult to contain their heartache. This was especially true when talking about their children and grandchildren or when they remembered a special moment they'd shared with one of these family members. As researchers, we should see research not only as an intellectual exercise, but also "as a process of exploration and discovery that is felt deeply" (Gilbert, 2001:9). While being empathetic, it is often difficult not to be drawn into the emotion, especially when face-to-face with another person who is experiencing intense feelings. Baldassar (2008:259) writes: "I could not be detached from the emotion of my informants."

The researcher was deeply affected by the participants' displays of emotion and open expression of their feelings. The interviews with Participant 1 and 5 (husband and wife) were especially emotionally draining. Being a mother herself, it was easy for her to empathise and to realise how difficult it must be for a mother to experience the rape of her daughter and then to "lose" her to emigration. It was of utmost importance to the researcher to portray the "stories" of each participant in a way that did justice to each of them, in a way that the participant would have wanted his/her story to be told.

Often research interviews take place in people's homes, effectively allowing researchers into a private part of their lives (Dickson-Swift, James, Klippen & Liamputtong, 2007:331). By interviewing the participants in their homes, the researcher gained more insight into the life world of the participants in this study. Dickson-Swift, James, Klippen and Liamputtong (2007:331) state that many of the researchers used the term "privilege" when describing their experiences. "They often felt that they had been afforded a privilege by being allowed to listen to stories that were often private and intimate." The researcher relates to this and while reading the research journal, she took note of one specific entry mentioning how privileged she'd felt being allowed into the world of the participants. Liamputtong and Ezzy (1999:41), state that researchers reported coming away from research interviews with feelings of "gratitude and debt to the person who has just shared many intimate details of their life."

Sub-Theme 2.9: Dealing with a child's emigration

Many of the non-death losses experienced by individuals are very difficult to describe or validate, as many people are unclear as to what exactly has been lost. However, Goldin (2002:6) aptly states that the traumas must be adjusted to, adopted and encompassed. Healing from the hurt of loss is not easily accomplished, but when the mourning process is completed as far as it can be, what is gained can be invaluable – life goes on and can have new rewards and new fulfilment.

> **Participant 14**: ... *Yes ... I think for them too. I don't think, I don't think one of us others, none of us realised what was going to happen. You talk about it and you say "allright" I will just have to adapt but when it happens, I think it catches you, and it certainly caught us and it caught the little one, and all those kind of things. So it is, it is a very difficult thing to fathom beforehand what your emotions will be like once they are gone.*

Participant 14: … Ja. Ek dink vir hulle ook.Ek dink nie, ek dink nie een van ons ander, nie een van ons almal het besef wat gaan gebeur nie. Jy praat daaroor en jy sê "allright" ek sal maar aanpas maar as dit gebeur, ek dink dit het hulle gevang en dit het ons gevang en dit het die kleintjie gevang en, en al daardie tipe van dinge. So dis, dit is 'n baie moeilike ding om voor die tyd te bepaal hoe jou emosies gaan wees as hulle weg is.

Participant 6: ... *Sometimes one can feel a false security has been created. There is also crime there, when we are there we always read the newspapers, but they steal things out of cars. The schooling system is just better. Uhm ... my, one of the twins suffers from epileptic seizures, this was diagnosed last year, it's apparently one of those that you out-grow. But she must now, she must now receive occupational therapy. Now my daughter tells me this week she was at the school, so the school said, no it's fine, they handle it in the classroom, she tells me in the eldest child's class there is a child who has autism, and they handle that child in mainstream.*

Participant 6: … Soms kan 'n mens voel 'n valse sekuriteit wat geskep word.Daar is ook misdaad, as ons daar is lees ons altyd die koerante, maar hulle steel goed uit karre uit. Die skoolstelsel is net beter. Uhm ... my, die een van die tweeling kry epileptiese aanvalle, wat hulle verlede jaar gediagnoseer het dis bleikbaar van daai wat hulle ontgroei. Maar nou het sy, sy moet nou arbeidsterapie kry. Nou vertel my dogter vir my hierdie week sy was by die skool, toe sê die skool nee dis fine, sy het nou soort van ADD ook, toe sê die skool nee dis fine hulle hanteer dit in die klas, sy sê vir my in die oudste kind se klas is daar 'n kind wat autisme het en hulle hanteer daai kind in die hoofstroom.

Participant 8: … *And when my son said he's going to move to New Zealand, it was very surreal and very, uh uh it didn't make an impact at all at first. And ... then he left …and I didn't know how to handle it all, not at all. I didn't know how to grieve or how to say to myself it's ok you are going to see him again, because it felt as if I never could. So I actually said to myself it is as if he died. I actually cut myself off, trying not to feel because then I would cry everyday. So I totally cut myself off and I emotionally did as if he had died … So … if I allow myself to wallow in loss it would take away from all of our lives. Definitely, and that is not why we are here. We are supposed to live our own lives. Part of life is letting your children go. Mine just went a bit further [laughter] … So if I give in to this absolute feeling of drowning, it is really drowning in sorrow, I can't do that.*

Participant 19b: … *sometimes wake up at night, you know, that I experience such intense longing for the children, it is unbelievable. But do you know, funny, I say ... I never tell them this, but I say I miss them, you naturally say you miss them. But I don't think they know about our real pain. But, well, yes. Ag no, I don't want to burden them with it, they know we miss them, I don't want them to know the intensity of it, it is not necessary, because this too will pass, I am sure of it, it will, yes.*

Participant 19b: … word partykeer in die nag wakker, weet jy, dat ek so 'n intense verlange het na die kinders, dit is ongelooflik. Maar weet jy wat, snaaks, ek sê ... ek vertel dit nooit vir hulle nie, maar ek sê ek verlang, jy sê mos maar jy verlang. Maar ek dink nie hulle weet van ons regtige seer nie. Maar nou ja. Ag, nee wat ek wil hulle nie daarmee opsaal nie, hulle weet ons verlang, ek wil nie hê hulle moet die intensiteit daarvan weet nie, dis nie nodig nie, want dit sal ook verby gaan, ek is seker daarvan, dit sal, ja.

Participant 17: ... *And I had to do what is right for me and what is right for them and I just made the mind shift and said to them they must do what is right for them.*

Participant 17: … En ek moes doen wat vir my reg is en wat vir hulle reg was en ek het net die, die "mind shift" gemaak en gesê hulle moet doen wat vir hulle reg is.

Participant 13a&b: … *[wife]: Ag, you know what, we still have each other. And I think, I think it will change when we no longer have each other. I think then it will be very … but now we still have each other and yes, we are uh ... content. [man]: Look, let me put it to you like this, it is.. it is difficult when you are standing on the outside, before it happens to you then you think you know, how can you, if you [inaudible 30:53] I don't talk a lot to people sometimes they say, I don't know how he can exist, when your grandchildren are not here, how can you live. It is and you can, you can live, you just adapt. [man]: It is not, a person has to, what can you do, you can't sit and mope from the morning to the evening. So it is bad, but it is bearable, that is all I can say. Because you would not have thought it is possible.*

Participant 13a&b: [vrou]: …Ag, weet jy wat, ons het nog mekaar. En ek dink, ek dink dit sal verander as ons nie meer mekaar het nie. Ek dink dan sal dit baie, maar nou het ons nog mekaar en ja, ons is uh ... content. [man]: Kyk laat ek dit vir jou so stel, dit is ... dit is moeilik as jy buite kant staan, voordit met jou gebeur dan dink jy weet jy, hoe kan jy, as jy [inaudible 30:53] ek praat baie met mense partykeer dan sê hulle, ek weet nie hoe hy kan bestaan nie, as jul kleinkinders nie hier is nie, hoe kan jy lewe. Dit is en jy kan, jy kan leef, jy pas maar aan. [man]: Dis nie, 'n

mens moet, wat kan jy maak, jy kan niej ou sit en verknies van die môre tot die aand nie. So dit is sleg, maar dit is houdbaar, dis al wat ek kan sê. Want jy sou nie gedink het dis moontlik nie.
Participant 7: ... *Yes. Now a factor is added, this is one of age, with which you did not reckon initially. As I say, its, is now 13 years since my child left I 65. And then I reckoned I was going to live forever and not get any diseases and not a painful arm and I will be able to look after myself. And now gradually you see what is happening all around you. You lose friends, your contemporaries die, they move to retirement villages and care centres and there are decisions that you need to make, do I stay in my house or do I go to a retirement village? And you do not have children to whom you can turn back to ... and this is then again a new adaptation that you must make, to make peace with this.*
Participant 7: … Ja. Nou kom daar 'n faktor by van die ouderdom, waarmee jy aanvanklik nie rekening gehou het nie. Soos ek sê dis nou 13 jaar toe my kind weg is ek 65. En toe het ek gedink ek gaan nog vir ewig lewe en nie siektes kry nie en nie'n seer arm nie en ek gaan vir my self kan sorg. En nou geleidelik sien jy wat om jou gebeur. Jy verloor vriendinne, jou tydgenote sterf, hulle gaan na aftree oorde toe en versorgingseenhede en daar is beslissings wat jy moet maak, bly ek in my huis of gaan ek na 'n aftreeoord toe? En jy het nie kinders op wie jy kan terug val nie ... en dit is dan weer 'n nuwe aanpassing wat jy moet maak, om vrede daarmee te maak.
Participant 6: ... *You know, I think it is very important because one feels one wants to be close to them especially the grandchildren it is for me emotional for me [cries], my grandchildren whom I don't see grow up. Now, okay, when my children had left, my husband doesn't know this, but I, I saw a Psychologist, and you know it is also really just a waste of money because I know exactly what goes for what. You know you go and write a letter and blah blah blah, I know it all. So I decided, no, I will fix myself. But then I got tranquilisers from the doctor because I felt. My daughter, oh, the worst, worst, worst was for me when my eldest daughter said to me Ma, I don't want you to go with us to the airport. And I know I cried the entire day at work, but later on I realised it was for the best. There is a woman who works with me now and her children are now going overseas, her daughter and her husband and she feel just as offended about the fact that the children said you may not come along to the airport. Then I said to her you know, it is not really about you, it is about them, they are protecting themselves.*
Participant 6: … Jy weet, en ek dink dis baie belangrik want 'n mens voel jy wil naby hulle wees veral die kleinkinders dis vir my ek emosioneel raak [huil], is my kleinkinders wat ek nie sien groot word nie. Nou okay toe my kinders weg is, my man weet dit nie, maar ek het, was by 'n sielkundige gewees, en jy weet dis ook eintlik maar geldmors want ek weet presies wat gaan vir wat. Jy weet jy gaan en skryf 'n brief en blah blah blah, ek weet dit alles. So ek het besluit nee wat ek sal myself reg kry. Maar toe het ek kalmeer pille by die dokter gekry want ek het gevoel. My dogter, o, die ergste, ergste, ergste was vir my toe my oudste dogter vir my sê ma ek wil nie hê julle moet saam gaan lughawe toe nie. En weet jy ek het gehuil die hele dag by die werk maar agterna het ek besef dis die beste. Daar is 'n vrou wat nou saam met my werk en haar kinders gaan nou oorsee, haar dogter en dié se man en sy voel nou net so gebelg daaroor dat die kinders gesê het jy mag nie saam gaan lughawe toe nie. Toe sê ek vir haar jy weet dit gaan nie eintlik oor jou nie dit gaan oor hulle, hulle beskerm hulle self.

For the parent left behind, the journey of loss originated the very first time the adult-child(ren) shared their thoughts on their decision to emigrate. The participants in this study dealt with the emigration in their own unique way. Falicov (2007:162) found that parents in distress over separation from their children believed that the mechanisms of "not thinking," "enduring in silence" and "overcoming" helped them cope better than expressing their sadness. Falicov (2007) further explained that controlling or resigning oneself by blocking emotions may be a universal reaction to traumatic experiences and in many ethnic groups may be reinforced by culture, religion or social class.

The researcher found that participants in this study showed the same tendency. Some of the parents dealt with their child's emigration by rationalising that their children were safer abroad and their grandchildren were receiving a superior education. When the main reason for the child's leaving was crime, the parents justified their decision by saying that the children had no other choice and that they were better off in a country other than South Africa. The participants explained that grandchildren with disabilities and/or learning challenges had a better chance of reaching their full potential in another country. The researcher found that a few of the participants in the study had grandchildren with disabilities such as autism, stuttering or epilepsy. In all of these situations, the grandparents went to great lengths to explain to the researcher that the schools abroad accommodate these types of children in such a positive way that it is beneficial for the child to rather be abroad than in a South African school.

Some parents experienced a sense of pride that their children were able to compete internationally. In the current study, some of the participants told the researcher that their children were highly successful in South Africa and were now also successful in Australia. The participants' pain in dealing with the loss was softened by knowing that their children were functioning well and were happy in their new surroundings. It was also mentioned that by visiting the children and seeing for themselves what their new environment and place of residence looked like, made it easier for them to deal with their loss and gave them peace of mind that their children were doing well.

> **Sub-theme 2.10: Gender differences in dealing with emigration loss**

Participant 5: ... *There is a difference between a man's approach I think, and a woman's. "W" will go at the drop of a hat. She will go even if she has to battle there just to be with her children this is terribly important to her. You probably know because you talked to her. I think she will leave me for nothing and she will probably leave me for that [laughs]. It is important to her but I am not as mad about and attached to it that I have to be with my children. ... I think she much more, you saw it now, I can also be quite emotional about it, but she is much more emotional about it than me. I am able to sort of forget it and think, ag it's wonderful, my children, ag they are well and they will surely come and visit at some stage or I will go there again, I don't have to go every year. I will surely see the grandchildren, even if I now look at them on Skype, but I can live with this, I feel I can live with this. I think "W" finds it very difficult to live with this to tell you the truth, I think she is beginning to now more or less live with this, and she had to receive counselling and had to drink anti-depressants and that type of thing. I don't need it. I think it is the maternal instinct, I think it is the maternal instinct and it also because she was much more intensely involved with the little ones than I. She took them to school and made them clothes for the school concerts and she fetched and took back again everywhere and went to watch their sport and so on. I went whenever I could,*

and I liked going whenever I could, but I definitely didn't have that sort of involvement that she had. And I think that that is possibly a reason, the other one like I told you, I think the maternal instinct, an instinctive "animal-like" thing which is stronger than a father's. A father looks after his family, but he is not necessarily as attached, I think, to the grandchildren as attached to the same degree as the mother is.

Participant 5: … Dis is 'n verskil tussen 'n man se benadering dink ek, en 'n vrou s'n. "W" sal enige tyd gaan. Sy sal gaan al moet sy daar gaan sukkel net om by haar kinders te wees is vir haar verskriklik belangrik. Jy weet seker want jy het met haar gepraat. Ek dink sy sal my los vir niks nie en sy sal my seker los daaroor [lag]. Dis vir haar belangrik maar ek is nie so mal en verknog daaraan dat ek moet by my kinders wees nie. Ek dink sy is baie meer, jy het nou gesien, ek kan ook maar emosioneel wees daaroor, maar sy is baie meer emosioneel daaroor as ek. Ek kan dit nog al vergeet en dink ag dis wonderlik, my kinders, ag dit gaan goed met hulle en hulle sal wel kom kuier een of ander tyd of ek sal ook daar weer uitkom, ek hoef nie elke jaar te gaan nie. Ek sal wel die kleinkinders sien, al kyk ek nou vir hulle op Skype, maar ek kan daarmee leef, ek voel ek kan daarmee leef. Ek dink "W" leef baie swaar daarmee om die waarheid te sê ek dink sy begin nou min of meer daarmee saamlewe en sy moes berading kry en anti-depressante drink en al sulke tipe goed. Ek het nie dit nodig nie. Ek dink dit is die moeder instink, ek dink dis die moeder instink en dit is ook omdat sy baie meer intens betrokke was met die kleintjies as ek.Sy het hulle skool toe gevat en vir hulle kleertjies gemaak vir die skoolkonserte en sy het gaan haal en weg gery en oralste heen en gaan na hulle sport kyk en so. Ek het gegaan wanneer ek kon en ek het graag gegaan wanneer ek kon, maar ek het nie definitief nie daai soort van betrokkenheid gehad as wat sy het nie. En ek dink dit is miskien'n rede, die ander een soos wat ek vir jou sê, ek dink die moeder instink is 'n instinktiewe "dierlike ding" wat sterker is as die van 'n pa. 'n Pa sorg vir sy gesin, maar hy is nie noodwendig verknog dink ek, aan sy kleinkinders of verknog aan die kinders in dieselfde mate as die ma nie.

Participant 7: … *It was very hard for him too, but you know, for him it was on a personal level, very tough. But it was actually very tough for him on a, in terms of what had happened in our country, the take-over as he calls it. It was incredibly difficult for him to accept that these wonderful, useful people, the loss of them and he was embittered. Not really so much against their leaving, but against the circumstances that drove them away. And in a certain way he is actually still embittered. So to a certain degree his loss was also different to my loss. My loss was much more on a personal level, I would not say I did not take notice of what I, it did indeed affect me what happened here in this country, but I was not so, I was, I was never very involved politically.*

Participant 7: … Dit was vir hom ook baie swaar, maar weet jy, dit was vir hom op 'n persoonlike vlak, swaar. Maar dit was vir hom eintlik swaar op 'n, in terme van wat in ons land gebeur het, die "oorname" soos hy dit noem. Dit was vir hom verskriklik moeilik om te aanvaar dat hierdie wonderlike bruikbare mense, die verlies van hulle en hy was verbitterd. Nie teen hulle weg gaan nie, maar teen die landsomstandighede wat hulle weg gedryf het. En hy is eintlik nou nog in 'n sekere sin, verbitterd. So sy verlies was in 'n sekere sin ook anders as my verlies. My verlies was baie meer op 'n persoonlike vlak, ek sal nie sê ek het my nie gesteur aan wat ek, dit het my wel geraak wat hier in die land gebeur het, maar ek was nie so, ek was, ek was nooit polities baie betrokke nie.

Participant 13a: … [man]: *I don't believe, I think, I am just more, what is the word, I teach myself to take the edge off [inaudible 10:44] more difficult to take the edge off. I must also carry on with my life. I feel ... you cannot constantly long for the kids, you must just go on. And I think you find it more difficult. [wife]: The day-to day I find more difficult. What I have now found what you find more difficult than me, is when we go there to say goodbye. For him it is very, very difficult. For me it is less difficult than for him, it is very difficult for him when we come back, then it is very difficult for him. And then he goes, you know, then it goes easier, and for me it is naturally very difficult. I miss them terribly, I miss them sometimes to the point where it hurts, you know.*

Participant 13a: … [man] Ek glo nie, ek dink, ek is net meer, wat is die woord, ek stomp my af, [inaudible 10:44] moeiliker om af te stomp. Ek moet ook aan gaan met my lewe. Ek voel ... jy kan nie so die heletyd terug hunker na die kinders nie, jy moet aangaan. En ek dink jy vind dit moeiliker. [vrou]: Die dag-tot-dag vind ek moeiliker. Wat ek nou weer gevind het wat jy moeiliker vind as ek, is wanner ons soontoe gaan om afskeid te neem. Dit is vir hom baie, baie moeilik. Dit is vir my minder moeilik as vir hom, dit is baie swaar vir hom as ons terug kom, dan is dit vir hom baie swaar. En dan gaan hy nou, jy weet, dan gaan dit makliker, en vir my is dit maar moeilik. Ek verlang maar baie, ek verlang party keer dat dit seer is, jy weet.

Participant 8: … *It is important to look at it in that context, because if you start thinking, I know people whose children have gone overseas and they cannot function, the mother especially, the*

> *father still goes to work, etc. etc. I think men are confronted with loss situations the whole time so I think they cut off and carry on; ek is 'n man! Women because they are so emotionally attached to their children, that is why women take a long time to cut ties, emotional ties with their children, I mean my poor son in the Cape was 30, I say to him I realise you are a man and I will not be mommy to you and he turned around and said those are words that I wanted to hear. To know that you know that I know that I am big enough to live my own life. Hey? What a thing. That was a rap over the fingers for me.*

Women, in particular, may be more vulnerable to stresses associated with family member migration because family may play a more central role in their lives due to the structural organisation of the labour market (Silver, 2014:197).

Hochschild and Machung (1989:4) made the following statement: "Most women work one shift at the office or factory and a 'second shift' at home." It has been found that women are expected to do and are still doing more child rearing than men. Karp, Holmstrom and Gray (2004:363) identified that the disproportionate involvement in child rearing by mothers compared to fathers often leads to the bittersweet outcome of the mother having a stronger emotional involvement with the child. Karp *et al.* (2004:364) side with researchers that found that gender differences in the expression of emotion have to do with historical legacies and structural arrangements that have become hardened over time and are taken for granted.

Participant 5a explained gender differences in dealing with loss by stating that women have "mother instinct," which he compared to animal instinct. He saw his wife's intense involvement with the children as the reason for her dealing with the situation in a different way to him. The researcher found that especially in the interviews where both parents were present, they explained that it was more difficult for the mother to cope with the loss, especially in situations where the husband was still working and the wife was a "*tuisteskepper*" (homemaker).

The researcher found that although there was a difference in the way parents displayed their emotions and coped with the loss, both parents experienced some form of loss during their life stages. Participant 7 said, "His loss [her husband's] was on a different level," but that did not diminish the loss that fathers experience. Like the mothers in this research, the fathers were also emotional during the interviews and their loss was just as tangible as that of the mothers.

Sub-theme 2.11:	Religion and dealing with emigration loss

Religion may provide a belief system or perspective that enables individuals to deal differently with crises (McIntosh, Silver & Wortman, 1993:812).

Participant 7: … *So not all little plans are always possible but if I can make a plan then I'm up to a lot. In now, this situation in which I now find myself, my age, my husband's age, it is not that I don't think about it, but I will make a plan when the time comes and I must tell you I have received incredible religious comfort. I can make plans until I'm blue in the face, but it is not really in my hands, my life is not in my hands, it was not in my hands that "M" went to Canada these are things that the Lord brought into my life. And uhm, yes I uhm, from day to day I handle it.*
Participant 7: … So alle plannetjies is nie altyd moontlik nie maar as ek 'n plan kan maak dan sien ek kans vir baie. In nou hierdie situasie waarin ek my nou ook bevind, my ouderdom, my man se ouderdom dis nie dat ek nie daaraan dink nie, maar ek sal 'n plan maak as die tyd daar is en ek moet vir jou sê ek het geweldige geloofsrustigheid gekry. Ek kan planne maak tot ek blou in my gesig is, maar dit is eintlik nie in my hande nie, my lewe is nie in my hande nie, dit was nie in my hande dat "M" Kanada toe gegaan het nie dit is dinge wat die Heer oor my pad gebring het. En uhm, ja ek uhm, van dag tot dag hanteer ek dit.
Participant 9: ... *You have built your whole life long, your life, built around the children, our children. Now that you are divorced and the boys have their own lives, you build your life around me, and mamma, you must stop this. You must get onto your own feet. You must lead your own life. And this was long before, and I was incredibly hurt by their words of hers. It felt to me as if she was rejecting me. And now, when she went to work overseas, I realised, but I also think it was the Holy Spirit who led my child. Because she realised that her mother was suffocating her and this was also my salvation.*
Participant 9: … Jy't jou lewe lank, jou lewe, om die kinder, ons kinders gebou. Noudat jy geskei is en die seuns hulle eie lewe het, bou jy jou lewe rondom my, en mamma, jy moet ophou. Jy moet op jou eie voete kom. Jy moet jou eie lei ... en dit was lank voor, en ek was ongelooflik seer gemaak met daai woorde van haar. Dit het vir my gevoel sy verwerp my. En nou, toe sy buiteland gaan werk het, het ek besef, maar ek dink dit was ook die Heilige Gees wat vir my kind leiding gegee het. Want sy't besef haar ma verstringel haar en dit was ook my redding.
Participant 18: ... *You know I, I asked the Lord that they should go. You know I really, before they even started talking about uh ... they would go, uhm ... I started saying, I want them there. I want, you know with the little girls especially, uhm ... I don't want something to happen to them here, and at that stage they had already been hijacked. So yes, uh ... uhm ... my prayers were answered ... I will tell you ... the first time probably two three months ... after they had left I could not touch a child or even look without crying ... [very emotional] yes, but life goes on. I prayed for it. And uh ... later on I said to people I prayed that they should go, now I can't suddenly say to the Lord, I made a mistake.*
Participant 18: … Jy weet ek, ek het die Here gevra hulle moet gaan. Jy weet ek het regtig, voordat hulle nog begin eers praat het dat uh ... hulle sal gaan, uhm ... het ek begin sê, ek wil hulle daar hê. Ek wil, jy weet met die dogtertjies veral, uhm ... ek wil nie iets laat hier gebeur met hulle nie, en hulle was toe al gehijack. So ja, uh ... uhm ... my gebede is verhoor ... Ek sal vir jou sê … die eerste seker twee drie maande ... nadat hulle weg was kon ek nie aan 'n kind vat of selfs na een kyk sonder om te tjank ... [very emotional] Ja, maar die lewe gaan aan. Ek het daarvoor gebid. En uh ... ek het toe naderhand vir mense gesê ek het gebid dat hulle moet gaan, nou kan ek nie skielik vir die Here sê, ek het 'n fout gemaak nie.

Religion can act as an anchor for identity in times of constant change. Boss (1993:369) states that there is ample evidence that spirituality gives great strength. She explains the following about one of the participants in her study: "When she couldn't solve a problem, she turned to God." Women worldwide use spirituality as a major strength to cope with adversity, but it is seldom documented by researchers, because it is difficult to put numerical value on spirituality (Boss, 1993:369).

In an article by Dumont (2003) titled "*Immigrant religiosity in a pluri-ethnic and pluri-religious metropolis: an initial impetus for a typology,*" he focuses on the role of religion in emigration. While reading this article, the researcher saw similarities in the role of religion in the life of the parent left behind. Dumont (2003:370) aptly states: "Religion can help emigrants to find something to hold onto in an overwhelming flow of changing processes. In a world characterised by homogenisation, fragmentation and migration, people can experience a feeling of loss and a memory crisis." The world of the parent has also changed and therefore religion is something to hold onto for the parents left behind. Dumont (2003:370) explicates that a religious community – sharing together, celebrating together – joins people together, creating a feeling of belonging that can benefit not only the adult child in their new country, but also the parent left behind.

Dumont (2003:381) makes the observation that religion has an ambiguous character:

> On the one hand, religion has the possibility to go beyond local and national boundaries as well as ethnic and racial boundaries. On the other hand, religion can act as a marker for a certain culture and as a symbol of a particular ethnic group.

With traumatic loss, spiritual values and practices can provide meaning and purpose (Walsh, 2007:213). Many find comfort in the belief that heart-breaking events may be beyond human comprehension, a test of faith or part of God's larger plan. Prayer and faith communities can provide strength and support (Walsh, 2007:213).

In this study, the participants frequently mentioned how they prayed for an answer when faced with difficulties. Participant 18 told the researcher how she prayed to God to help her children after the hijacking ordeal and when they had the opportunity to emigrate, she saw it as God's answer to her prayers to protect her children. It was not only the women who relied on their faith. Participant 19a (male) specifically mentioned the importance of religion and described the practice of "*huisgodsdiens*" (home bible study) at home and also when the grandchildren visited. Participant 7 explained that it is one of the functions of a grandparent to teach the grandchildren about the importance of religion and that it was her husband's contribution to the upbringing of their grandchildren.

Key Findings: Theme 2 – Emigration loss

The theme of loss shows that each participant experienced a loss of some kind. Although Participant 11 said that he did not experience loss, his descriptions about his son's marriage and the fact that he was unable to attend, shows a loss and highlights the ambiguity of his experience. This theme demonstrates the connection between loss and death in the parents' experience of their child's emigration. Not only did some participants compare emigration to death in general, but also to the death of a child.

Aging of the participants, their ill-health and the possibility of facing death without their children were highlighted. It was at this stage that the frequency of contact between the parent and the children increased. All the parents experienced intense feelings of longing and yearning. Ultimately, the parents had to find a way to deal with the ambiguity of their loss. Each parent had his own way of dealing with the situation, but knowing that their children were better off in the new country and were successful, eased their pain.

Gender differences in experiencing and dealing with the emigration of their children were identified and religion was highlighted as a way of coping with the emigration.

6.3.2.3 THEME 3: INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The parent-child bond is the most fundamental of all human relationships and this bond can be understood by referring to the attachment theory (Climo, 1992:1). Attachment theory stems from the influential work of John Bowlby. Bowlby (1979:127) views attachment as "the propensity of human beings to make affection bonds to particular others." The concept of mental representations of attachment relationships was proposed by Bowlby in order to explain why older children and adults do not require physical proximity in order to feel securely attached. He extended our understanding of the bonds that tie people to each other and of the consequences when separations and losses occur. Fraley (2002:135) emphasises that the way we think, feel and behave in our adult relationships is a reflection of our attachment history.

Sub-theme 3.1: Relationship with adult-child prior to emigration

Participant 18: … *Yes, yes, yes you know we ... we three are very, very attached to each other , you know, since a very young age, when anything happened, they came to me, you know they came to ask me questions, they came to me uh ... everything, you know we were very very attached to each other, us three.*

Participant 18: … Ja, ja, ja jy weet ons ... ons 3 is baie, baie geheg aan mekaar, jy weet hulle het van kleins af, enige iets wat gebeur het, het hulle na my toe gekom, jy weet hulle het my kom vrae vra, hulle het my kom uh ... alles, jy weet ons was baie, baie geheg aan mekaar ons drie.

Participant 1b: … *Well I think it arises out of the fact whether you had a relationship before they left. If you had a relationship before they left, the relationship does not disappear it changes. But I don't think your relationship disappears when your children are gone, if you had a bond with your children, you will always have a bond with your children. You will not lose the bond with your children. It is not the distance, it will not destroy your relationship, no it just changes it. It becomes a very much more essential relationship in terms of little things which ... You know, it is actually difficult to describe it, the subtle elements of a relationship, if for example in your family you have jokes, things that happen in your family of which other people are not aware. And that sort of "in-house" feeling, of sharing, you no longer have, you know?*

Participant 1b: … Wel ek dink dit spruit maar uit die feit of jy 'n verhouding gehad voor hulle weg is. As jy 'n verhouding gehad het voor hulle weg is, die verhouding verdwyn nie dit verander. Maar ek dink nie jou verhouding verdwyn as jou kinders weg is nie, as jy 'n band met jou kinders gehad het, het jy altyd 'n band met jou kinders. Jy gaan nie die band met jou kinders verloor nie. Dit is nie die afstand nie, dit gaan nie jou verhouding vernietig nie, nee dit verander net. Dit raak 'n baie meer essensiële verhouding in terme van goedjies wat ... Jy weet dit is eintlik vir my moeilik om dit eintlik te beskryf, die subtiliteite wat in 'n verhouding is, as jy byvoorbeeld in jou gesin het julle grappies, wat in julle gesin gebeur wat ander mense nie bewus is van nie. En daardie soort van "in-house" gevoel, van mede deelsaamheid, het julle nie meer nie, jy weet?

Participant 6: … *She uhm ... is a difficult person, really. You know, she is not a morning person, she is a … a difficult person to put it mildly [laughs]. And, no ag, in spite of this you know, I do not have an open relationship with her, I can not tell her listen you are now wrong, because then I become the one at fault.*

Participant 6: … Sy uhm ... is 'n moeilike mens hoor rêrig waar. Jy weet sy is glad nie 'n oggendmens nie, sy is 'n bedonderde mens om dit so te sê [lag]. En nee, ag, weet jy ten spyte daarvan, ek het nie 'n oop verhouding met haar nie, ek kan nie vir haar sê luister hier jy is nou verkeerd nie, want dan word ek die verkeerde een.

Participant 17: … *Look, I am, I have now been a widow for twenty six years. So I brought up my children alone. And we have a very good relationship. We are, we are very, we laugh a lot. And we are very cheerful and we share many jokes ... And humour. Unbelievable humour. They watch me, I take a situation and it runs from here to the Cape, you know. And just like that, on its own trail. And, um, we have a very close relationship. When I walk, they will always be walking next to me. You know, they will always be walking right next to me. And we have a very, both my sons and I have a very good relationship, you know, and I would, I would almost say a relationship of trust. Because they, whatever is in their hearts and whatever bothers them, they will share with me and tell me about it, you know, then we will talk about it and we will pray about it and sort it out..*

Participant 17: Kyk, ek is, ek is nou al, dit is nou al ses en twintig jaar wat ek weduwee is. So ek het my kinders alleen groot gemaak. En ons het 'n baie goeie verhouding. Ons is, ons is baie, ons lag baie. En ons is baie vrolik en ons het baie grappies … En humor. Ongelooflike humor. Hulle kyk, ek vat 'n ding en dan hardloop hy van hier tot in die Kaap, jy weet. En sommer so op sy eie spoor. En 'n, ons het 'n baie "close" verhouding. As ek stap, dan stap hulle altyd langs my. Jy weet, hulle sal altyd so langs my stap. En ons het 'n baie, ek het met al twee my seuns 'n baie goeie verhouding, jy weet, en 'n, ek wil amper sê 'n vertrouensverhouding. Want hulle, dit wat in hulle harte is en wat hulle bekommer sal hulle vir my deel en vir my sê en, jy weet, dan sal ons daaroor praat en ons sal daaroor bid en sal ons dit uitsorteer.

Two types of parenting styles affect the quality of child-parent attachment during infancy and childhood. Secure attachment is associated with parenting that

emphasises emotional warmth, responsiveness, communication and parent-child trust. Insecure attachment, in contrast, is associated with less responsive, more intrusive and controlling parenting (Belsky, Jaffee, Sligo, Woodward & Silva, 2005:392).

In this study, it was clear that once the relationship between the parent and child was formed, it was sustained by an in-house feeling where only they shared certain special moments. With both the widowed mothers, the relationship with their children was very close and they described it as "just the three of us." This bond continued even after the children left home or emigrated.

Sub-theme 3.2: Relationship with adult-child post-emigration

Participant 13a&b: ... *But now these are no longer their first priorities. They will, for example, next, you know at the beginning of the new year, go on holiday to Europe in May. [wife]: you know, and we thought, they are no longer as fanatical to come here. [man]: And ... it then never became a reality and then they… and then they, a very good, out of nowhere, I do not know where they got this incredibly good offer, to very cheap, but as in very very cheap, something like $5000 for the whole family to Europe from Australia ... and they then ... and I can understand it, in the light. And I also told my wife, one has to understand they ... they have been wanting to do it for a long time, let them do it now, and now they are doing it all together. And it is actually ... I just don't want to uh ... only one thing, I think we may be coming across a little negatively about their attitude, I don't think ... I don't think they have cooled down regarding us, I just, you know, but one has to understand it all. They have a different world, né, they have to move into a different world, they have to establish themselves there, they can't be homesick all the time. Of course not, and I don't expect it .But I don't think that in any way uh ...*

Participant 13a&b: … Maar nou is dit nie meer hulle eerste prioriteit nie. Hulle gaan, byvoorbeeld, volgende, jy weet nou die begin van die nuwe jaar, gaan hulle met vakansie Europa toe in Mei maand. [vrou]: jy weet, en ons het gedink, hulle is nie meer so fanaties om hierna toe te kom nie. [man]: En ... en dit het toe nooit gerealiseer nie en hulle het toe nou ... en toe het hulle nou, 'n baie goeie,uit die lug uit, ek weet nie waar nie het hulle verskriklike aanbod gekry, om baie goedkoop, maar baie, baie goedkoop iets soos $5000 vir die hele gesin Europa toe van Australia af dit is ... en hulle het dit toe ... en ek kan dit verstaan, in die lig. Ek het ook vir my vrou gesê, mens moet dit verstaan hulle ... hulle wil dit lankal doen, laat hulle dit nou doen en nou doen hulle dit sommer almal gelyk. En dit is eintlik ... ek wil net nie uh ... net een ding, ek dink ons kom miskien 'n bietjie negatief uit oor hulle gesindheid, ek dink nie ... ek dink nie hulle het afgekoel teenoor ons nie, ek het net, jy weet, maar 'n mens moet dit alles verstaan. Hulle het 'n ander wêreld, né, hulle moet in 'n ander wêreld inbeweeg, hulle moet hulleself daar vestig, hulle kan nie die hele tyd terugverlang huistoe nie. Natuurlik nie, en ek verwag dit ook nie. Maar ek dink nie dat enigsins uh ...

Participant 17: ... *And he said we are just a phone call away. Should Ma really have a problem then we will come immediately. Don't worry, you know, so I mean it is not the relationship one has with them, ag I just realised if I want to hold on to them all the time they will not be able to live, you know, I will suffocate them. And perhaps I was a free thinker and from a young age we said our children may have a say and may be heard. And they may speak their mind on everything and we listened, you know.*

Participant 17: … En hy het gesê ons is net 'n oproep vêr. As Ma regtig 'n probleem het dan kom ons dadelik. Moenie bekommer nie, jy weet, so, ek bedoel dit is die verhouding wat mens met hulle het en ag, ek het net besef as ek hulle die heeltyd so wil vashou gaan hulle nie kan lewe nie, jy weet, ek sal hulle toesmoor. En miskien was ek maar 'n vrydenker en van kleins af het ons gesê ons kinders mag 'n, 'n sê hê en hulle mag gehoor word. En hulle mag hulle opinie lig oor alles en ons het geluister, jy weet.

Participant 8: …*Yes it goes both ways, but I am lucky in that respect because we talk. I must say that we talk more now and more in depth now because we know that we have only got that hour once a week than what we would ever have done if he stayed here. So that is the plus. I have got a far deeper emotional bond with him now than what I ever had before.*

Participant 5b: ... *So it is gone. Even if we are there now, she and I are not going to do it there, but we did do it sometimes, like a father and daughter meal and then we chat. And now, you can't, if you have that precious time to be with all of them and with your grandchildren, I am not going to say to my daughter, tomorrow you and I are going to have a father and daughter meal and we are going to sit and visit the whole day long, you know, it will never happen again ... parts of these things that change inevitably ... and what also changes obviously is, what I was used to, it was never for her any trouble, whatever she needed, or whatever she wanted to know, to pick up the phone and to say pappa this and pappa that, does pappa have this or that? and what must I do. and so on and so on. And this does not happen lately, because why? How can she now ask me to help her, I cannot help her with anything? So it is a difficult thing. It is not easy. Yes look now, one complicates matters or you console yourself, like this man who says luckily his daughter was not raped, but she is however dead. I also say the same thing, I tell myself, although I no longer see her all the time, we can at least phone each other, I can pick up my phone now and I press a button and then I phone her. So there is at least, there are many little things. There is at least this and there is at least that, there is at least this and there is at least that, but all these things are there because the real things are no longer there.*

Participant 5b: … So dis weg. Selfs as ons nou daar is ek en sy gaan nie daar dit doen nie, maar ons het dit partykeer gedoen, so pa en dogter ete en dan klets ons eers. En nou dit kan jy nie, as jy daai kosbare tyd het om by almal te wees en by die kleinkinders te wees, gaan ek nou nie vir my dogter sê more gaan ek en jy 'n pa en dogter ete hou en dan gaan ons die hele dag sit en kuier nie, jy weet "it will never happen again"… dele daarvan wat onvermydelik verander … en wat ook natuurlik uit die aard van die saak verander is, wat ek gewoond was, dit was nie vir haar die minste moeite gewees om wat ook al sy nodig het, of wou weet, gou die foon op te tel en gou te sê pappa dit en pappa dat, het pappa so ding of so ding? en wat moet ek maak en so aan en so aan. En dit gebeur nou net "lately" nie, want hoekom? Hoe kan sy my nou vra om haar te help, ek kan haar nie help met enige iets nie? So dit is maar 'n moeilike ding. Dit is nie maklik nie.Ja kyk nou, 'n mens kompliseer mos eintlik of troos jouself, soos hierdie man wat sê soos gelukkig is sy dogter nie verkrag nie maar sy is nou wel dood. Ek sê ook dieselfde ding, ek sê vir myself, alhoewel ek haar nou nie heeldag meer sien nie, dan kan ons darem vir mekaar bel, ek kan my foon nou optel en ek druk 'n knoppie en dan bel ek haar. So daar is darem, daar is baie van die darem goedjies. Daar is darem dit en daar is darem dat en daar is darem dit en darem dat, maar al daai darems is daar omdat die regte goed nie meer daar is nie.

Participant 6: *… Has the relationship changed since they moved to Australia? I think it is very much the same but still you know when she was here she did not even phone me regularly or every week I would have phoned. The same happens now there too I make a point of phoning say Mondays and Fridays. She will now more often get the children to phone and then I talk to the children for example. I doubt it. I don't think it would have changed. She is still as she was when she was here. You know opinionated and does her thing. When she was here she simply used me much more to look after the children and there she has no opportunity for that. You know, uh ... you must toe the line with that oldest child of mine. I think one must in any case toe the line with all your children, you know. She is a toe the line person.*

Participant 6: … Het die verhouding verander vandat hulle in Australia is? Ek dink dis baie dieselfde maar nog jy weet toe sy hier was het sy my nie eers gereeld gebel nie of elke week nie ek sou gebel het. Dieselfde is dit nou maar daar ook ek maar 'n punt daarvan om sê Maandae en Vrydae te bel. Sy sal nou meer laat die kinders bel en dan praat ek met die kinders byvoorbeeld. Ek twyfel. Ek dink nie dit sou verander het nie. Sy is nogsteeds soos sy was toe sy hier was. Jy weet opinionated en doen haar ding. Toe sy hier was het sy my net baie meer gebruik om na die kinders te kyk en daar het sy nie die kans daarvoor nie. Weet jy uh ... 'n mens moet in jou spoor trap met daai oudste kind van my. Ek dink jy moet in elk geval met al jou kinders in jou spoor trap, jy weet. Sy is 'n spoor trap mens.

Participant 13a&b: … *[wife]: yes, she is definitely much less dependent. [man]: Perhaps it is good. [wife]: No, of course it is a good thing ... she has a very ... [man]: You know, you know a person can do a funny [inaudible 17:14] ... She ... it is not as though she was tied , you know, to her mother's apron strings, she is an independent person, no doubt about that, but she did sometimes ask for advice. [man]: Which they don't really do any longer, because we can no longer really give advice. How can we, you know, what do we know about their life, you know. What do*

> *we know, if they decide they must buy another house, and they say it costs $6 million. What … how do I know, how do I. You can not give advice about these things, you don't know what their income is, you don't know what their living conditions are. [wife]: But now it is no longer their first priority. They are, for example going, next, you know now at the beginning of the new year, they are going on holiday to Europe in May. [wife]: you know, and we thought, they are no longer as fanatical to come here. They have a different world, né, they have to move into a different world, they have to settle there, they can not be homesick all the time. Of course not, and I also do not expect it.*

Participant 13a&b: … [vrou]: …ja, sy is definitief baie minder afhanklik. [man]: Dit is miskien goed.[wife]: Nee, natuurlik is dit 'n goeie ding, sy het 'n baie ... [man]: Jy weet, jy weet 'n mens kan 'n ding snaaks [inaudible 17:14] Sy ... dis nie asof sy aan haar ma jy weet se rokspante vasgehou het nie, sy is 'n onafhanklike mens gun twyfel daaraan nie, maar sy het maar raad gevra. [man]: Wat hulle eintlik nie nou meer doen nie, want ons kan nie eintlik raad gee nie. Hoe kan ons, jy weet, wat weet ons van hulle lewe af, jy weet. Wat weet ons, as hulle besluit hulle moet 'n ander huis koop, en hulle sê die huis kos $6 miljoen. Wat ... hoe weet ek, hoe weet. Jy kan nie raad gee oor sulke goed nie, jy weet nie wat is hulle inkomste nie, jy weet nie wat is hulle lewensomstandighede nie. [vrou]: Maar nou is dit nie meer hulle eerste prioriteit nie. Hulle gaan, byvoorbeeld, volgende, jy weet nou die begin van die nuwe jaar, gaan hulle met vakansie Europa toe in Mei maand. [vrou]: ... jy weet, en ons het gedink, hulle is nie meer so fanaties om hierna toe te kom nie. Hulle het 'n ander wêreld, né, hulle moet in 'n ander wêreld inbeweeg, hulle moet hulleself daar vestig, hulle kan nie die hele tyd terug verlang huistoe nie. Natuurlik nie, en ek verwag dit ook nie

Stroebe (2002:133) indicates that there is a possible link between a person's attachment style, internal working model and way of letting go following a loss. When the attachment bond does not shift, the young adult may cut off from parents or, at the other extreme, may cling to them in continued dependence. The separation of emigration strikes deeply at unresolved separation issues.

Research evidence is abundant and clear that the quality of elderly-parent-adult-child bonds persists over distance, and that the long-distance parent-child relationship is identical to the close-living parent-child relationship in terms of affection, sentiment and endurance over time (Climo, 1988:58). Climo (1988:58) came to the following conclusion regarding the effect of distance on adult-parent relationships:

> The quality of relationships between adult-children and elderly parents is unrelated to the amount of contact. The parent-child bond can maintain cohesion under conditions of limited face-to-face contact and relationships between adult-children and elderly parents are very resistant to geographical separations socio-economic mobility, and even developmental changes.

In a world where many social relationships are short-lived and bounded by instrumental goals, Climo (1992:1) emphasises that the parent-child bond remains distinctive, because of its capacity to thrive and endure throughout the life of both generations. No one can predict how the parent-child bond will respond to the latest

challenges of civilization, distant living arrangements as a result of frequent moves and the aging revolution that has dramatically increased the human life span.

It was clear from the current research that the attachment bond formed between the parent and child does not change once the child has emigrated. The researcher was reminded of the following statement by Scott (2013:247):

> It is not in the singular moment at the end of a love affair or the breaking of a family that loss is felt, but in ordinary places in moments of daily living, where events repeat, where return produces contradictions while the past and present become entangled.

This quote rang true in this study, since the parents missed elements of the relationship but the relationship itself did not change after the child emigrated. It must also be noted that if the relationship was not defined as good before the child left, it would not be enhanced once the child has left.

Sub-theme 3.3: Seeking advice over long distances

Participant 17: ... *This he could do but ironing and washing he couldn't but then I said press the buttons, look at the washing machine. Then the ironing, then he said… oo, then he simply phones and says, Ma, I'm battling with the shirt. I don't know what to iron now and what to do now. Every Sunday he phones and then he says I don't know what's happening now. You must tell me now what I must do here now ... and so we over the telephone, you know, we phoned a lot.*
Participant 17: … Die kon hy doen maar stryk en was kon hy nie maar toe sê ek druk die knoppies, kyk maar die wasmasjien. Toe die stryk, dan sê hy oo, dan bel hy maar en sê Ma ek sukkel met die hemp. Ek weet nie wat moet ek nou stryk en wat moet ek nou doen nie. Elke Sondag dan bel hy dan sê hy ek weet nie wat nou nie. Jy moet nou sê wat moet ek nou hier doen en … en so het ons nou maar oor die telefoon, jy weet ons het baie gebel
Participant 4b: ... *So you now need to do long distance counselling all the way from South Africa. Yes, yes it was in fact now on Tuesday evening that he phoned, and he said it was now 4 years since he last was in South Africa. So he is extremely homesick and the weather really gets to him, and at times he gets depressed, uhm, although with the birth of the second little one, the little baby is now two weeks old, it is a little boy and uhm ... he took some leave and I could hear that he is a little more relaxed and rested because he works long hours, and everything, so he is a little rested and I could hear that he talked a bit more and chatted and he is more relaxed. But then Tuesday evening, I think, he sent a sms and said we needed to phone him immediately. He, he wanted to talk to us and then you usually get such a big fright and think something is wrong. And the first thing that I, my greatest fear is that she, because she has done this before, will take the children and leave, but okay, she now has the little baby so I don't think she will do it now. But uhm ... well we then phoned him but then he said no, an incident had just happened which now, which triggered him a little …*
Participant 4b: … So julle moet nou 'n langafstand berading ook nog doen hier uit Suid-Afrika. Ja, ja dit is nou juis Dinsdagaand toe bel hy, toe sê hy want hy was 4 jaar laas nou in Suid-Afrika. So hy verlang verskriklik en die weer vang hom vreeslik, en met tye raak hy depressief, uhm, alhoewel hy nou met die tweede outjie se geboorte, die babatjie is nou so twee weke oud, dis nou 'n seuntjie en uhm ... het hy nou bietjie verlof gevat so ek kan hoor hy is bietjie uitgerus want hy werk lang ure, en alles, so hy is bietjie uitgerus en ek het gehoor hy praat ook bietjie meer en gesels en hy is meer ontspanne. Maar toe Dinsdagaand dink ek toe stuur hy 'n sms en sê ons moet hom dadelik bel. Hy, hy wil met ons praat so en dan skrik 'n mens gewoonlik so en dink daar is iets fout. En eerste wat ek, my grootste vrees is dat sy, want sy het dit al gedoen, die kinders vat en gaan loop,

> maar okay sy het nou die ou babatjie so ek glo nie sy sal dit nou doen nie. Maar uhm ... goed ons het hom toe gebel maar hy sê toe nee daar het toe net 'n insident gebeur wat hy nou wat hom maar net so bietjie "getrigger" het …

The study by Boccagni (2012) focused on long distance parenting of mothers that migrated and left their young children behind. Boccagni (2012:267) states that nearly all of the transnational mothers he met made systematic attempts to preserve strong ties with their children. Phoning can be a unique opportunity to recover some feeling of deeper connectedness with the children through voice contact. It provides an uncharacteristic, personal space in which migrants can enter into the everyday lives of those who stayed behind.

In the current study, the parents still played an important role, not directly "mothering," but giving advice to their older children. This was despite the fact that vast physical distance often results in burdened intergenerational relationships, which face challenges that are difficult to address through long-distance communication only (Boccagni, 2012:274). The researcher found that the participants in the current study, especially the young adults that had emigrated, frequently requested the parents' input on personal issues. Transnational caregiving may be possible and most of the time it does endure. However, the consequences of long-term distanciation cannot be neglected (Boccagni, 2012:274).

> **Participant 18**: ... *O, it is, it is definitely, definitely. I am sad about it, and as I told you just now, when little things start going wrong, then I wish "R" was here, you know. He would have, he always helped wherever he could, you know.*
>
> **Participant 18**: …O, dit is, dit is definitief, definitief. Ek is hartseer daaroor, en soos ek netnou vir jou gesê het, as, as dingetjies begin verkeerd gaan, dan wens ek "R" was hier jy weet. Hy sou my, hy het altyd gehelp waar hy kon jy weet.

The researcher agrees with the comments by Boccagni (2012:274) and found that although the parents gave advice, it became complicated when they were not familiar with the adult-child's new world. It was not only the child that required advice from the parents but parents, more specifically older parents, also discussed important issues with their adult-child(ren) living abroad. The researcher found that especially for single parents left behind, the input of their children was of utmost importance to them.

Sub-theme 3.4: Feeling of "childlessness"

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Participant 8: *… And it was difficult for me too, because every Sunday she and all her four, she and her husband and all four her children and all her grandchildren got together either at the one's house ... all four her children live in Pretoria. Now I have to make peace with that too, and what also for me, then they would now and then try to include us, but I did, this sounds funny ... then I sit there, they only talk to one another and I sit there like the odd one out.*
Participant 8: *… En dit was ook vir my swaar, want elke Sondag was sy en al haar vier, sy en haar man en al vier haar kinders kinders en al haar kleinkinders bymekaar of by die een se huis ... al vier haar kinders bly in Pretoria. Nou moet ek daarmee ook vrede maak en wat ook vir my, dan sou hulle ons af en toe probeer insluit, maar ek het, dit nou snaaks ... dan sit ek daar, hulle praat net met mekaar en ek sit daar soos kiepie die kuiken.*
Participant 7: *... And either some of the children come and stay with her or she goes and fetches them from school and so on. Then I often think, ag, just feel a little sorry for me [laughs]. But uh ... sometimes I think ag, just be a little sympathetic you know and don't, and sometimes they tell ... ag then I think it's a stupid story about the grandchild saying this or that, og, I laughed so much about this or that name, because the child said this or that, then I think ag, it's not even that bad it's not even that funny but I join in the laughter I think it's jealousy. Yes, definitely, because you can't join the discussion, it's literally like people who are childless.*
Participant 7: *… En of van die kinders kom bly by haar of sy gaan haal hulle by die skool en daai. Dan dink ek baie keer ag, kry my net 'n bietjie jammer. [lag] Maar ek sal dit nooit sê nie. Maar uh ... soms dink ek ag, wees net bietjie meer simpatiek jy weet en moenie vir my en weet jy partykeer vertel hulle ... ag, dan dink ek dis 'n stupid storie oor die kleinkind dit en dat gesê het, og ek het nou so gelag vir die en daai naam, want die kind het nou dit of dat gesê, dan dink ek ag dis nie eers so erg nie dis nie eers so snaaks nie maar ek lag maar saam ek dink dis jaloesie. Ja, defInitief want jy kan nie saam praat nie, dis letterlik soos mense wat kinderloos is.*
Participant 18: *... I'll tell you this ... the first probably two three months ... after they left I could not touch a child or even look at one without crying ... [very emotional].*
Participant 18: *… Ek sal vir jou sê ... die eerste seker twee drie maande ... nadat hulle weg was kon ek nie aan 'n kind vat of selfs eens kyk sonder om te tjank ... [baie emotioneel].*

Folk wisdom maintains that parenthood is central to a meaningful and fulfilling life. More specifically, it is believed that parenthood entails substantial social, developmental and existential advantages (Hansen, Slagsvold & Moum, 2009:344).

Childlessness represents a disruption in the expected and projected life course for the childless person in midlife and old age (Hagestad & Call, 2007). Not having had children may thus lead to a sense of loss or failure, particularly when comparing oneself to the majority who are parents or even grandparents. The childless person may perceive that they have not met social expectations or they may feel that they have "not done the right thing." Parenthood provides opportunities for belonging, contributing, receiving favourable feedback and opportunities for helping and taking care of others (Hansen *et al.*, 2009:344).

Participants 6 and 8 felt as if they were childless. Participant 6 specifically, explained that this must be what it feels like when you do not have children. When they saw mothers with their children, it was very hard. During weekends, a time families usually spend together, parents felt especially lonely and isolated when they could not be with their children.

Sub-theme 3.5: Relationships with daughter/son in-law

Participant 12: … *I think maybe it's because uhm, to be honest I think it's because you have a daughter-in-law and you have a son. Now my daughter in America was totally different. And uhm she is a very soft person, but my daughter-in-law was an only child and she had, she got her parents there after two years and they were living there. So her only child, she is a single child sibling she has chosen to carry right through her life. Everything is me first and then you, and you, and you and that kind of thing. So ... and then when she's over there it's so much work because than it's her and then her children and then her husband and then her mother and her father and then you come in the end here you see and then your lot come over.*
Participant 18*: … Uhm ... a little with "R" because ... because me and my daughters-in-law uhm ... are, now ... uhm ... do not get on very well. In the beginning, everything was right the first time. And the second time … something went wrong.*
Participant 18: … *Uhm ... bietjie by "R" want ... want ek en die skoondogters uhm ... is, nou ... uhm, ... kom nou nie so vreeslik goed klaar nie. In die begin, alles was reg die eerste keer. En die tweede keer ... het iets verkeerd gegaan.*
Participant 2: … *Yes, she's been like that not since they moved there, she has been like that all the time right from the word go. One has had to watch your words very carefully because otherwise there is an incident and you know it is not sometimes the smallest little thing. So unfortunately, uhm, uhm, the connection could be closer, let me put it that way, if, uhm, there was a little more response from her side. But everything from our side of the family generally speaking has to go through "D" and that makes it a little more difficult you know, if you have, uhm, your daughter-in-law, uhm, responding to both sides, uhm, I think it would a little easier than it is because he is also busy all day working, we phone him once a week, and get the info, you know everything is okay. A little bit here and there. Occasionally when I do speak to her, like we have e-mail and they have e-mail, "D" and the little girl have just had a birthday and I'll e-mail and say 'look I am going to put money in your combined cheque account won't you buy a little present?'. And then I have e-mails back, but, uhm, otherwise very little communication, unfortunately, you know? And I as I say I think it possibly would be a lot easier if we had a little more response from her as well, you know? And then he will phone, very seldom, like with my husband and I it is a little bit better than that and I don't want to put "D" in a situation either because I don't want him in the middle, you know? But like on my husband's birthday "D" managed to phone a day or two late, and not his fault because, you know he was busy. But, I just said "D," so lovely to hear from you, it would have been so lovely, would have loved hearing from the children as well. You know what I mean? And he said 'yes I know mom, I know" but we try to get through sort of thing, but he covers up, you see. And then, he must have said something to her and in the e-mail, I just got uhm, uhm, we tried to phone on your husband's birthday but, but what I am saying is that the situation could be a lot closer and warmer and connecting to the children if there was a response from both sides*
Participant 13b: … *I think, it is not going to get easier for us because we are getting old. I think so. We have a need for our children because we are getting old. And, uh ... yes, well, that's simply how it works. If I now think my mother, you know how my mother could rely on me when she got old and sick. I have no one to rely on. I have my son and my daughter-in-law, you know, we are very close, but it is just not, boys are not the same, it is a little different. Yes, I don't think it will get easier for us. I don't think so.*
Participant 13b: …*ek dink, dit gaan nie vir ons makliker word nie omdat ons oud word. Ek dink so. Ons het, ons het behoefte aan ons kinders omdat ons oud word. En, uh ... ja, wel, dit werk maar so. As ek nou dink my ma, jy weet hoe kon my ma op my staat maak toe sy oud en siek geword het. Ek het niemand om op staat te maak nie. Ek het my seun en my skoondogter, jy weet, ons is baie na aan hulle, maar dis net nie, seuns is nie dieselfde nie, dit is 'n bietjie anders. Ja, ja ek dink dit gaan nie makliker vir ons word nie. Ek dink nie so nie.*
Participant 19b: … *and our daughters-in-law, we also have a beautiful relationship with them. We do not have daughters-in-law, we have daughters.*
Participant 19b: … *en ons skoondogters het ons ook 'n baie pragtige verhouding mee. Ons het nie skoondogters nie, ons het dogters.*

Although there is widespread subjective evidence that relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law involve closeness and animosity, there is a

scarcity of empirical literature on these relationships (Willson, Shuye & Elder, 2003:1068). Fischer (1983:187) writes that the kinship tie between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is initiated by the daughter-in-law's marriage. The role players, whose relationships originate from the fact that they both have intimate bonds with the son/husband, are basically "strangers" to each other. The mother/daughter and mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships are strikingly similar in a number of ways, says Fischer (1983:187). They both are female-female bonds; they both are intergenerational and asymmetrical relationships; and they both are bound and defined by kinship networks. There are also vast differences and Fischer (1983:192) states that the ties caused due to marriage are structurally ambiguous and create a competitive triangle around son or daughter with spouse and parent.

It is often the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship that maintains the bridge between mother and son and determines the mother-in-law's access to her grandchildren (Turner, Young & Black, 2006:588). The asymmetry of the relationships between a mother and daughter and a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, can lead to increased stress for both generations regarding the in-law relationships as each seeks to maintain a close connection with their own family members (Turner *et al.,* 2006:588). Both women and men reported higher affective closeness to their own parents than to their in-laws, with the difference being greater for women than for men (Rossi & Rossi, 1990).

The researcher agrees with the following statement: "Perhaps, the most significant finding is that there is no such thing as a 'typical' mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship. Each individual and each relationship is different and each has its own style and message" (Turner *et al.,* 2006:598). It was clear from the current study that the daughter-in-law was the gatekeeper to the rest of the family and if this relationship was stressed, it was difficult for the mother to maintain communication. Communication was then re-routed through the son, which further complicated the relationship. Similar to the relationship with their own children, the parents' relationship with their in-law children will continue the same way as it was prior to emigration.

Sub-theme 3.6: Gender and relationships with adult-child(ren)

Participant 13a: ... *When I now think, my mother, you know how my mother could rely on me when she got old and sick. I have no one to rely on. I have my son and my daughter-in-law, you know, we are very close, but it is just not, boys are not the same, it is a little different. Yes, I don't think it will get easier for us. I don't think so.*
Participant 13a: ... *As ek nou dink my ma, jy weet hoe kon my ma op my staat maak toe sy oud en siek geword het. Ek het niemand om op staat te maak nie. Ek het my seun en my skoondogter, jy weet, ons is baie na aan hulle, maar dis net nie, seuns is nie dieselfde nie, dit is 'n bietjie anders. Ja, ja ek dink dit gaan nie makliker vir ons word nie. Ek dink nie so nie.*
Participant 2: *... But ag you know he is ... obviously he is, I think a man is more, distant from his parents. He is not like a daughter, and he does not have children. But he is very affectionate, but he will never phone me to find out how I am.*
Participant 2: … *Maar ag jy weet hy is ... uit die aard van die saak is hy, ek dink 'n man is meer, afgetrokke teenoor sy ouers. Hy is nie soos 'n dogter nie, en hy het nie kinders nie. Maar hy is baie liefdevol, maar hy sal my nooit bel om te hoor hoe gaan dit met my nie.*
Participant 9: ... *Is for me different and a person's girl child uhm, is different. But I myself had that same hole when old "H" [son] left, mind you. But boys carry on with their families. Boys carry on with their families. Boys, uh boys will not make a bubble bath for mom. Boys will not, uh, see that mom is a little down. Boys, uh, don't do those small things for, yes, won't giggle with mom [humour] they don't go and drink tea with mom. Because boys have their wives and they have their families.*
Participant 9: … *Is vir my anderster en 'n mens se meisiekind uhm, is anderster. Maar ek het maar self daai gat gehad toe ou "H" [seun] weg was hoor, maar seuns gaan aan met hulle gesinne. Seuns gaan aan met hulle gesinne. Se, uh, seuns sal nie vir 'n ma bubble bath maak nie. Seuns sal nie, uh, sien as ma bietjie af is nie. Seuns, uh, doen nie daai klein goedjies vir ja, hulle giggel nie saam met ma nie (humor) hulle gaan nie saam met ma tee drink nie. Want seuns het hulle vrouens en hulle het hulle gesinne.*
Participant 8: … *like I said she took over the role of confidant and uhm ... she and her husband have become my surrogate family, so losing them, if they would move to New Zealand I would probably move with. Which is a bad thing to say and it is not that I love her more, but I also think between a mother and a daughter, uhm besides the bond that you have as mother and daughter, you become friends, I mean she is now 29, so she is like an adult. Although she is my daughter she has become a very important friend as well, for which I am lucky.*

Jessie Bernard (in Thompson & Walker, 1984:313) jokes, "In the name of tidiness … motherhood ought to end when children leave home. Yet, parental and filial sentiment and responsibility persist into adulthood, with the mother-daughter relationship the most enduring and active of intergenerational bonds." Relative to other family ties, mothers and daughters experience greater tension and greater intimacy in their relationships (Fingerman, 1996; Troll, 1987). Pillemer and Suitor (2002) found that mothers reported both closer relationships and a higher degree of conflict with daughters than with sons.

In the current study, the gender of the child influenced how parents experienced the emigration. Participant 8 admitted that she would consider emigrating with her daughter if she decided to leave the country. Participant 9 had a son that had previously lived abroad for some time and according to her, it is different when a daughter emigrates. The bond between a mother and daughter is distinct, but the researcher would like to emphasise that in families where there were only boys, it was found that the mothers had special relationships with their sons.

Sub-theme 3.7: Grandparenthood

Co-longevity has greatly extended the duration of family ties. The parent-child relationship may last six to seven decades and the grandparent-grandchild bond, three to four decades (Hagestad, 2006:317). Recent research indicates that grandparents play an increasingly important role in the lives of their grandchildren (Bengtson, 2001). With the increase in life expectancy, grandchildren now spend more time with grandparents than ever before, increasing opportunities for shared activities and mutual benefit (Uhlenberg, 2005). Ties with grandchildren are likely to be filtered through the child's mother.

The birth of a grandchild increases the importance of both the mother-daughter and the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law bonds, while accentuating the asymmetry between these relationships (Fischer, 1983:192).

Sub-theme 3.8: Role of a grandparent

Participant 8: *… and then the biggest plus of all, you get a grandchild which I can tell you is the biggest plus of all. You don't love your grandchild more than your children you love your grandchild in an indescribable way to know that this is the child of your child and all you want to give is love. That is why grandparents are supposed to be there because they give the lollypop when mommy says it is bad for your teeth. That is the role, the lollypop. So life is made up of little deaths and it is not that death, death for me is not a bad thing, death for me is going home, honestly death for me is going home, so I don't see death as this absolute cutting of everything but I do see it as the end of a season of the circle of eternal life, that is how I see death, so it is not all bad. If I talk about death, it is not depressive or darkness or ... but the loss is there the loss of knowing you cannot ever go back there and you cannot retrieve. I think each of us is totally different. If I talk to my friends each of them do it differently. We have got similarities and all of us keep our emotions on a certain level not to give in on the loss feeling, so it is you personal loss so it would be selfish to give into that.*

Participant 7: *... I would say… as far as I am concerned, the role of a grannie is not that of an educator, it is not her duty or the duty of the grandpa to educate. Their duty is to be ... and by being you are educating. But there the educational process is covert, not deliberate. I for example myself, when they were here in Pretoria I never did, I don't know how to explain it to you, specifically say " No "M", you must not eat with an open mouth but you must not do this or that". That was not my duty. I was there for the enjoyment. Ouma and Oupa are there for the enjoyment. But through that enjoyment that you emphasise, you have a certain influence on your grandchildren. I will never forget, not this time, the previous time that we visited, we left from Calgary and we then had already requested a wheelchair for my husband for the long distances that you need to walk to the gates. And then, "J" was already at university, he is the oldest, he asked on his own, he asked there where we were checking in, there he asked the counter official: " May I push my Grandpa to the gate, may I go through the security zones with him?" And he then gave him a note and "J" pushed Oupa all the way to the gates. And uhm ... it was incredible for my husband uhm ... precious when he bade him farewell [very sad, long silence] ... he embraced him and said Oupa you will never know what you meant to me and how much I have learnt from you. So that satisfaction we do have, our influence, but not in a, as I said, just by being. To live your life vision without being dogmatic about it or to try and force it on others. To just be yourself and be available for those kids when you are close to them. And that, I think, in all honesty, we*

> *achieved, but no we are not, I don't see the task that you must teach them, that is their parents' duty.*

> **Participant 7:** … Ek sal sê, wat my betref, die rol van 'n ouma is nie die van opvoeder nie, dit is nie haar taak of die oupa se taak om op te voed nie. Hulle taak is om te wees ... en deur te wees voed jy op. Maar daar is die opvoed proses kovert, nie doelbewus nie. Ek het byvoorbeeld selfs hier toe hulle hier in Pretoria was het ek nooit ek weet nie hoe om dit vir jou te sê, spesifiek gesê nee "M" jy moenie met 'n oopmond eet maar jy moet nie dit of dat doen nie. Dit was nie my taak nie. Ek was daar vir die lekker. Ouma en oupa is daarvir die lekker. Maar deur daardie lekker wat jy beklemtoon het jy 'n invloed op jou kleinkinders. Ek sal nooit vergeet, nie nou hierdie keer nie, die vorige keer wat ons gekuier het het ons van Calgary afvertrek en toe het ons reeds vir my man 'n rolstoel altyd aangevra vir die lang ente wat jy moet gaan na die hek toe. En toe, "J" was toe al op universiteit, hy is die oudste, en hy vra toe uit sy eie, vra hy, daar waar ons nou inboek, vra hy vir die toonbankbeampte: "Kan ek my oupa deurstoot tot by die hek, kan ek saam met hom deur die sekuriteitssones gaan?" En hy gee hom toe 'n briefie en "J" stoot toe vir oupa deur tot by die hek. En uhm ... dit was vir my man ongelooflik uhm … kosbaar en toe hy hom groet, [baie hartseer, lang stilte] ... toe omhels hy hom en hy sê oupa jy sal nooit weet wat jy vir my beteken het en wat ek alles by jou geleer het nie. So daai bevrediging het ons, ons het ons invloed, maar nie op 'n, soos ek sê, net deur net te wees. Jou lewenssiening uit te leef sonder om dogmaties te wees daaroor of dit te probeer afdwing. Om net jouself te wees en beskikbaar te wees vir daai kinders as jy naby hulle is. En dit dink ek daarin dink ek eerlikwaar het ons geslaag, maar nee ons is nie, ek sien nie die taak dat jy hulle onderrrig nie, dit is hulle ouers se taak.

Davies, Roper and Williams (2002:9) view the following as roles of the grandparent: Spoiling children; teaching family history; giving children treats or special gifts; taking children to cultural events; entertaining or having fun with children; listening to children's problems; teaching religion and spirituality; talking to children about their day; teaching values and helping with schoolwork. In many Western societies, grandparents have long played the role of occasional or short-term care providers of their grandchildren.

The researcher found that the experience of caring for a grandchild had considerable significance for the grandparents, especially for the grandmother. The participants took much pride in their role as carer of their grandchildren. Gattai and Musatti (1999:42) state: "The grandchild's care provides the context within which each grandmother can construct an exclusive relationship with her grandchild and give her own definition of grandmotherhood more consciously."

> **Participant 7**: ... *he also gave particular attention to the religious aspect of the children's development whenever we were there. He visited museums with them or if they wanted to play chess or wanted to play a little game on the carpet with the little boy, he was always willing to fully participate while we were there.*

> **Participant 7**: … hy het veral wat ook die religuese aspek van die kinders se ontwikkeling het hy geweldig aandag aan gegee as ons daar is. Hy het saam met hulle museums toe gegaan of as hulle wou skaak speel of 'n speletjie op die mat wou speel met die klein seuntjie, hy was altyd bereid om volledig deel te neem terwyl ons daar is.

Grandparents commonly share stories and experiences with their grandchildren, providing a "cultural window" into family history and traditions (King & Elder, 1999).

Sub-theme 3.9: Grandparenthood prior to emigration

Participant 7: ... *The circumstances are completely different and I realised that the children were still very much disrupted and I had an unbelievably close relationship with that little girl there in the painting, she was three and a half when she left. We were literally, this now sounds terribly dramatic, literally torn apart ... But well we made up our minds, our little savings, I put all my savings aside for that, we would go on a regular basis. And it worked out that in the thirteen years that they were away, this she told me the other day, now there is another grandma and grandpa in the picture too, not a year passed that her children did not experience a grandma or grandpa. And to a certain degree this was also our mission, with the willingness to make such a financial sacrifice because we wanted an input in the development of our grandchildren.*

Participant 7: … Dis heeltemal ander omstandighede en ek het besef dat die kinders ook nog baie ontwrig is en ek het 'n ongelooflik nou band gehad met daai meisietjie wat daar op die skildery is, sy was drie en 'n half toe sy weg is. Ons is letterlik, dit klink nou vreeslik dramaties, letterlik van mekaar weggeskeur … Maar nou ja ons het vir onsself voorgeneem, ons spaargeldtjies, ek het al my spaargeld daarvoor opsy gesit ons sou op 'n gereelde basis gaan. En dit het so uitgewerk dat in die dertien jaar wat hulle weg was, dit het sy nou die dag vir my gesê, nou daar is 'n ander ouma en oupa ook in die prentjie, daar het nie 'n jaar verby gegaan wat haar kinders nie 'n ouma en 'n oupa ervaar het nie. En dit was ook in 'n seker sin ook ons missie, met die bereidheid om finansieel vir ons so vas te tender dat ons 'n inset wou hê in die ontwikkeling van ons kleinkinders.

Participant 18: ... *But it was our big, big void for us ... but the little one "C" uhm ... since the time that she was about 2 months old she came to stay with us every day and uhm ... I just sat here with her in my arms, the whole day. If I went to the toilet, she came with me in my arms.*

Participant 18: … Maar dit was ons groot, groot leemte vir ons … maar die kleintjie "C" uhm ... vandat sy so 2 maande oud was het sy by ons kom bly elke dag en, uhm ... ek het net hier gesit met haar in my arms, die hele dag. As ek toilet toe gegaan het, kom sy saam met my in my arms.

Participant 1: ... *Ag it was lovely for me, I was involved with the school on a very personal level for two and a half months, and every class ... it was for the children, for "A" it was incredibly nice because then they would come to me, then they say "Oh are you A's granny, you're making our costumes?". With the concert we were given VIP tickets, then he said "Oh my granny is a VIP". So he was terribly proud of us. He thoroughly enjoyed it that I was there the whole day. And also for "J", it was most enjoyable for her. And I know all the other parents and I know all the other grannies that hang out at the school. So I was incredibly involved with them. It was not just that they had come here. I took them everywhere and sometimes I took the children to parties when "M" had to work. Many many times we took them to sport things when my children could not take them and helped there. And then we read let's say about birds. Then I read to them there that the wingspan of the albatross is three and a half meters. Then I said to them let's make albatross wings, and we went and cut, I have little pieces of bamboo and I have brown paper because I make patterns. So then I made them big wings and they ran around outside with their wings and later they put on my fur coat because they now want feathers on their bodies too. Ag, if this is now done, then it is now over. When they come here, then they say, Ouma what are we going to do today? We always made things, or we baked cookies, or we made or built little things or we went somewhere for the morning, or I took them to the Museum, you know the museum is so unpopular, there is nothing to it, then it's just the three of us there. We spent such incredibly good times at the museum. Outside the Museum there is such a small amphitheatre. Once we held a concert there, so I and "J" sat and "A" stood in the front and then he sang to us. Then it was her turn, then she sang, then the buses and taxis pass us by in Paul Kruger Street and we have our little concert there. Then they sing, sing their hearts out, totally unaware of the surroundings.*

Participant 1: … ag dit was vir my heerlik, so ek het vir twee en 'n half maande betrokke gewees by die skool op 'n baie persoonlike vlak, en elke klas ... dit was vir die kinders, vir "A" was dit vreeslik lekker want dan kom hulle na my toe, dan sê hulle "Oh are you "A's" granny, you're making our costumes?" Met die konsert toe kry ons VIP kaartjies, toe sê hy "Oh my granny is a VIP." So hy was vreeslik trots op ons. Dit was vir hom baie lekker dat ek heeldag daar was. En vir "J" ook, dit was vir haar baie lekker. En ek ken al die ander ouers en ek ken al die ander oumas wat daar by die skool rondhang. So ek was ongelooflik betrokke by hulle. Dit was nie net dat hulle hierna toe gekom het nie. Ek het hulle oral toe gevat en partykeer het ek die kinders na partytjies toe gevat as "M" moet werk. Baie, baie keer het ons hulle na die sport goeters toe gevat as my kinders nie kon gaan nie en gaan help. En dan lees ons sê nou maar oor voëls. Toe lees ek daar vir hulle, die Albatros se vlerkspan is drie en 'n half meter. Toe sê ek vir hulle kom ons maak bietjie vlerke

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> van Albatrosse, en ons gaan sny, ek het bamboesies en ek het baie bruinpapier want ek maak patrone. So toe maak ek vir hulle groot vlerke en toe hardloop hulle buite rond met hulle vlerke en naderhand trek hulle my pelsjas aan want hulle wil nou vere aan hulle lyf ook hê. Ag as dit nou klaar is, is dit nou verby. As hulle hier kom dan sê hulle, ouma wat gaan ons vandag doen. Ons het altyd iets gemaak, of het koekies gebak, of ons het goedjies gemaak of gebou of êrens gegaan vir die oggend, of ek vat hulle Museum toe, jy weet die museum is so ongewild, daar is niks aan nie, dan is dit net ons drietjies daar. Ons het verskriklik lekker tyd spandeer in die Museum. Buitekant die Museum is daar so 'n klein amfiteater. Eenkeer het ons toe daar konsert gehou, toe sit ek en "J" en toe staan "A" voor en toe sing hy vir ons. Toe is dit nou haar beurt, dan sing sy nou, dan gaan die busse en die taxies hier agter ons verby in Paul Kruger straat, en ons hou konsert daar. Dan sing hulle, hulle harte uit, heeltemal onbewus van die omgewing.

> **Participant 14**: ... *And it's not that you love them more, or love your children less than the little one, but that is the only one that you have and you grow so used to her and she to you and she walked into our place any time into our flat and came and watched a bit of TV or just came and sat and said Oupa please make me some tea and that sort of thing and that is how it is that is what we miss you know.*

> **Participant 14**: … En dis nie dat jy meer lief is vir, of minder lief is vir jou kinders as vir die kleintjie nie, maar dis die enigste een wat jy het en jy raak so gewoond aan haar en sy aan jou en sy het enige tyd by ons ingestap by die woonstel en bietjie kom TV kyk of net daar kom sit en sê oupa maak vir my 'n bietjie tee asseblief en daardie tipe van ding en dit is maar alles so wat ons mis jy weet.

Caring for grandchildren offers the grandmother a relationship that is very special in nature as it implies an extremely direct comparison between two stages in the lifespan that are actually very far apart and opposite regarding development, namely, childhood and its progress, and old age and its regression. The grandmother caring for her grandchild elevates the nurturing and educational function of the act of grandparenting (Gattai & Musatti, 1999:35). Since the majority of grandmothers in this study were unemployed, they had ample time to look after their grandchildren and took pride in explaining how special the relationship with a grandchild is.

Sub-theme 3.10: Grandparenting post-emigration

> **Participant 9**: ... *I jump up and down. I'm standing here dancing and I jump and I cry and I am glad that I am sad and I'm all of these things together [laughs laughs laughs]. Sad in the sense that ... I, ehh, I want to be there. I want to go through every phase with her. Uh, I want to see how her little body grows. That little guy ... in London, will never be able to say: [whispers] Ouma's coming. It will be once a year. It will be once a year. We will however try with Skype. Because "A" says the child of friends of hers, uh, talks to Oupa and Ouma every day. And they play games through Skype. Now I don't know exactly what type of games one plays [laughs] over Skype. I have no idea, but it's not the same. It can't be the same. You are not going to feel that little body. Uh, I'm going now, she asked me on Friday evening if I could come, uh a week before the birth.*

> **Participant 9**: … Ek spring op en af. Ek staan hier en ek dans en ek spring en ek huil en ek is bly en ek is hartseer en ek's al die goed deurmekaar [lag lag lag]. Hartseer in die sin van ... ek, ehh, ek wil daar wees. Ek wil elke fase saam met haar deurgaan. Uh, ek wil sien hoe haar liggaampie groterword. Daai outjie ... in Londen, gaan nooit vir my kan sê: [fluister stem]: Ouma kom. Dit sal eenkeer 'n jaar wees. Dit sal eenkeer 'n jaar wees. Ons gaan wel probeer met Skype. Want "A" sê vriende van haar se kind, uh, praat elke dag met oupa en ouma. En hulle speel speletjies oor Skype. Nou ek weet nog nie mooi watse speletjies speel mens [lag] oor skype nie [lag-lag]. Ek het

> nie 'n idee nie, maar dis nie dieselfde nie. Dit kan nie die selfde wees nie. Jy gaan nie daai ou lyfie voel nie. Uh, ek gaan nou, sy't Vrydagaand gevra of ek 'n week voor die geboorte, uh, sal deurkom.

There is no doubt that the birth of a grandchild is an important experience in the life of the grandmother. Life cycle changes involving birth, illness and death may be particularly painful for emigrants and the parent who has to cope with grief without their family members. Even positive events such as births may carry an underlying pain for the grandparents if they are unable to be present to share the joy. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002:266) explain that these families are forced to "deal with life cycle changes over a broader geographical space."

It is typical for a grandparent to visit children when a grandchild is born. To be with a child and newborn grandchild, parents have to plan well in advance and can only stay for a limited period. It was clear that missing out on this important phase in one's daughter's life was experienced as yet another loss. Knowing that it would be difficult to form a bond and maintain a bond with the new grandchild was very concerning for Participant 9, the parents of the unborn baby largely determine what the contact with the grandmother will be. Gattai and Musatti (1999:40) explain that the possibility of experiencing a significant relationship with the grandchild is closely linked to the grandmother's relationship with the child's parents, especially with the mother, whether she is the grandmother's daughter or daughter-in law.

Participant 1: ... *I mean jou still at least have contact with their lives, and uhm, but you are no longer part of their lives. You know if you for example told me "J" was now at gymnastics, then I don't know what she is doing at gymnastics. She explains to me she balances on the beams, she does this or she does that, but I am not there. While here I was everywhere, always with her, I took them to sport, I took them to school, I took them ...*

Participant 1: ... Ek bedoel jy het darem nog kontak met hulle lewens, en uhm, maar jy is nie meer deel van hulle lewe nie. Jy weet as sy byvoorbeeld vir my gesê het "J" is nou by die gimnastiek dan weet ek nie wat maak sy by die gimnastiek nie. Sy verduidelik vir my sy balanseer op die paaltjies sy maak dit of sy maak dat, maar ek is nie daar nie. Terwyl hier was ek oral, altyd by haar, ek het hulle na die sport toe gevat, ek het hulle skooltoe gevat, ek het hulle ...

Participant 4a&b: … [wife]: ... *yes, she is getting terribly smart now. But what is very sad for me with my mom and dad that are still here now, and they are both in their 70's and they have now not yet, they had the privilege also to see the little things. Ag we hope that if everything goes well and that they can come and visit [wife]: Yes. I say, well life is now not really like that, I mean any one of us can die at any time but I think all the time about specifically my dad, because he is now getting very old and he's not very healthy so I think about it all the time, then I think I hope nothing happens to him before they can come and visit because it is so important for me that they at least just, you know see the great-grandchildren. [man]: You don't see them when they learn to walk, you don't see them when they learn to talk ... [wife]: Small little things like the other evening, at least we can Skype, if there are no problems with the internet and such things, but at least the other evening we could when we were sitting here and it was so wonderful for me to see him now ... the image was so clear, and I could then see her. She sat on the couches playing and it's so nice to see now. She is three now and is getting so smart, but she still battles because she does*

not really speak a language, it is actually Afrikaans, English and Polish which she still mixes so you can't really communicate with her a lot, but she did sing "twinkle twinkle little star" for us. So yes ... [wife]: Yes I send her Afrikaans DVD's uh ... Carika's [inaudible 34;01]. yes, laaities and ladies and she apparently enjoys it thoroughly. "A" puts it on for her regularly and they also made a photo album with some of our photos and so on which she now can see regularly. Oupa and Ouma and whoever.

Participant 4a&b: … [vrou]: Ja, sy raak vreeslik oulik nou. Maar wat vir my ook hartseer is met my ma en pa wat ook nou nog hier is, en hulle is ook altwee in hul 70's en hulle het nou nog nie, hulle het die voorreg gehad ook om die ou kleingoedjies te sien nie. Ag ons hoop nou maar as alles nou maar goed gaan en dat hulle kan kom kuier. [vrou]: Ja. Ek sê, wel die lewe is nou nie rêrig so nie, ek meen enige een van ons kan enige tyd doodgaan maar ek dink die hele tyd aan my veral my pa, want hy word nou baie oud en hy's nie baie gesond nie so ek dink die hele tyd daaraan, dan dink ek ek hoop hy kom iets oor nie voordat hulle kan kom kuier nie want dit is vir my so belangrik dat hulle ten minste darem net, jy weet die agterkleinkinders kan sien. [man]: Jy sien hulle nie wanneer hulle leer loop nie, jy sien hulle nie wanneer hulle leer praat nie ... [vrou]: Klein ou goedjies soos nou die aand, ons kan darem Skype, as daar nou nie probleme is met die internet en al sulke goed nie, maar ons kon darem nou die aand toe het ons hier gesit en dit was vir my so wonderlik om hom nou ... toe was die beeld en alles nou so mooi, en ek het haar toe nou gesien. Sy het so gesit op die banke gespeel en dis so lekker om nou te sien. Sy is nou 3 en sy raak so oulik, maar sy sukkel nou nog want sy praat nou nog nie rêrig 'n taal nie dis maar Afrikaans, Engels en Pools wat sy nog so meng so jy kan nog nie rêrig met haar vreeslik kommunikeer nie, maar sy het darem vir ons "twinkle twinkle little star" gesing. So ja ... [vrou]: Ja, ek stuur vir haar Afrikaanse DVD's uh ... Carika se [inaudible 34:01] Ja, laaities en ladys en sy geniet dit blykbaar verskriklik. "A" sit dit gereeld vir haar op en hulle het ook 'n foto album gemaak met van ons fotos en so aan wat sy nou gereeld kan sien oupa en ouma en wie ook al.

Participant 8: *… So that was an enormous, she is wonderful, she sends me, she is like me, she takes tons of photos, she always sends me photos so she really tries from her side to make me feel part of it. But it is terrible to know … you know … you speak with your grandchildren over the telephone, but they don't actually know who they are talking to. You know once and I mean the youngest one, the eldest one has got Autism, but he's been helped a lot there for which I am eternally grateful that they moved there, what they do for the kids there, it is amazing, amazing. But like the younger one went to his father the other day and he said "where is your mommy?" and my son said "no she is overseas" and he said "have you lost her, because I can't see her anywhere." And my son said "no no no you speak to her on the telephone sometimes," that shows you the distance that is there. That Sunday when he spoke to me he said "granny you can come here and you can sleep in my bed, you can come here there is a place for you you don't have to be lost anymore". So it is actually impacting on them as well.*

Participant 6: *... I again make an effort to, with the children "I want to build memories". I want the children to miss me when I'm gone and they must remember that Ouma rolled on the lawn with them and so and my husband is not such a person. It feels to me as if when she is there and she has the children, the bond with her child will not be that strong as mine is at the moment with my other grandchildren because I knew them from birth ... but I know it is just as bad for him you know but I think for a mother, specifically if there are grandchildren, it really is very difficult. I think it is easier if the grandchildren are born there.*

Participant 6: … Ek weer maak 'n effort daarvan om met die kinders, "I want to build memories." Ek wil he die kinders moet my mis as ek weg is en hulle moet onthou ouma het saam met hulle op die gras gerol en so en my man in is nie so mens nie. Dit voel vir my as sy daar is en sy het kinders, gaan die verbintenis met haar kind gaan nie so sterk wees as wat myne is op die oomblik met my ander kleinkinders nie omdat ek hulle van geboorte af geken het … maar ek weet dis vir hom net so erg jy weet maar ek dink vir 'n ma veral as daar kleinkinders is, is dit rêrig baie swaar. Ek dink dis makliker as die kleinkinders daar gebore word.

Participant 5a: *... Now I really have the cat ... and my grandson ... [very sad, silence] in my little workroom, where I work, there are little pieces of wood and plastic and things, he loved coming in here and then he takes a little block of wood and hammers another block onto it and he builds something, he built little things, then he always asked, Oupa may I this or that. Then I said of course he may use all my equipment and may build everything then he builds all the things there. Sometimes I still find it there, haai sjoe! It is difficult for me! [very sad, silence].*

Participant 5a: … Nou het ek darem die kat … en my kleinseun … [baie hartseer, stilte] het in my werkskamertjie, waar ek werk, daar is stukkies hout en plastiek en goed, hy het so graag daar ingekom en dan vat hy 'n blokkie hout en kap nog 'n blokkie daarop vas en hy bou 'n ding, hy het

goedjies gebou, dan het hy altyd gevra oupa mag ek dit of dat. Dan sê ek natuurlik hy kan al my gereedskap gebruik en kan alles bou dan bou hy al die goed daar.Soms kry ek dit nog daar, haai sjoe! Dis swaar vir my! [baie hartseer, stilte].

Participant 19a: … *I think this question that you are asking is a very good one. Because the contact, the communication with your child is ... is [inaudible 2:35] your phone, my telephone, and talk to them now in Beijing, actually clearer as the two of us are talking to each other now in any case and uh ... so you also don't see them every day when they are in the Cape. You know, for us who are now retired. And the grandchildren, look the grandchildren are important, they grow up so quickly. You know, we have now for example seen them a year ago, the oldest ones, the grandchildren, you know, but we talk to them, we have regular contact.*

Participant 19a: … Ek dink dit is 'n baie goeie vraag wat jy vra. Want die kontak, die kommunikasie met jou kind, is ... is mos maar, [inaudible 2:35] jou foon, my telefoon, en praat nou met hulle in Beijeng, eintlik duideliker as wat ons twee nou praat met mekaar maar in elk geval en uh ... so, jy sien hulle ook maar nie heeldag as hulle in die Kaap is nie. Jy weet, vir ons wat nou al afgetree is. En die kleinkinders, kyk die kleinkinders is ter sake, want hulle groei onder jou oë uit. Jy weet, ons het hulle nou byvoorbeeld 'n jaar laas gesien, die oudste een se, die kleinkinders, jy weet, maar ons praat met hulle, ons het gedurige kontak.

Participant 1b: ... *You can never again hold them. I can never again hold them. That holding, you know, it is an absolute ... the children slept with us on the bed, they showered with us, they swam with us, they were forever on top of you. It's suddenly just, it's gone. [very sad]. The distance ... [crying] the [silence] that I can't hold them, that I can't press them to me [very emotional]. I talk to them and I see them on Skype, but the immediacy, you know of sharing every day with them. You know, like children, they say something cute at a certain moment, you know. And you miss all those little things. You miss a moment's cute-ness, the involvement with each other, I miss it a lot [blows nose]. And they were for such a long time part of my life. They brought such joy into our house.*

Participant 1b: … Jy kan hulle nooit weer vashou nie. Ek kan hulle nooit weer vashou nie. Daardie vashou jy weet, dis 'n absolute ... die kinders het by ons op die bed geslaap, hulle het saam met ons gestort, hulle het saam met ons geswem, hulle was altyd op jou. Dis skielik net, dis weg. [Baie hartseer]. Die afstand ... [huil] die, 'n [stilte] dat ek hulle nie kan vashou nie, dat ek hulle nie kan vasdruk nie [baie emosioneel]. Ek praat met hulle en ek sien hulle op Skype, maar die onmiddelikheid, jy weet van, om elke dag met hulle te deel. Jy weet soos kinders, hulle sê iets ouliks op 'n oomblik, jy weet, En jy mis al daardie goedjies. Jy mis 'n oomblik se oulikheid, die betrokkendheid by mekaar, ek mis dit baie [blaas nuus]. En hulle was vir so lank was hulle so deel van my lewe. Hulle het so 'n vrolikheid in ons huis ingebring.

Participant 13a&b: ... *[man]: It will happen here as well. [wife]: Probably would have happened here too, yes. [wife]: No, there is nothing that we can do about it. There is but nothing ... we ... we now hope to see each other every year, we went last year, and we went again this year en hopefully they will come next year. Yes, but yes ... it is not, they ... they , it is no longer their first ... they used to be fanatical, you know that we should come and visit, and we must come and they will come.*

Participant 13a&b: ... [man]: Dit sal maar hier ook gebeur.[vrou]: Waarskynlik hier ook gebeur het, ja. [vrou]: Nee, daar is niks wat ons daaraan kan doen nie. Daar is maar niks ... ons…ons hoop nou maar om mekaar elke jaar te sien, ons het nou verlede jaar gegaan, en ons het hierdie jaar weer gegaan en hulle kom nou hopelik volgende jaar. Ja, maar ja ... dit is nie, hulle ... hulle, dit is nie meer hulle heel eer ... hulle was uhm ... fanaties, jy weet dat ons moet kom kuier, en ons moet kom en hulle sal kom.

Participant 5a: ... *I think the missing of, uhm, also for them, for this phase of being able to have an Ouma and an Oupa, and now ... it is a big loss. Yes, you know, I would not even know what it feels like for them. Because they are in a new country, in a new environment, and we are not part of that environment, so I don't think they miss us there. You know, they will possibly miss us here. So in any case I gather we are not part of that little picture. They have not seen us in that little picture ... It is another place, it is a new place, it is a new country.*

Participant 5a: … Ek dink ook die gemis van, uhm, vir hulle ook, vir hierdie fase om 'n ouma en 'n oupa te kan hê, en nou ... dit is 'n groot gemis. Ja, jy weet, ek sal nou nie eers weet hoe voel dit vir hulle nie. Want hulle is in 'n nuwe lande, in 'n nuwe omgewing, en ons is nie deel van daardie omgewing nie, so ek dink nie hulle mis ons daar nie. Jy weet, hulle sal ons dalk hier mis. So in elk geval ek skat ons het nie deel van daardie prentjie nie. Hulle het ons nog nie in daardie prentjie gesien nie. … Dis 'n ander plek, dis 'n nuwe plek, dis 'n nuwe land.

Participant 7: ... *His loss was there, on a personal level and that is why he was always willing, so we scraped all the pennies together and we went regularly and he was willing to go and he made a very big contribution regarding being there for the children and it was satisfying for him. He also gave a lot of attention to the religious aspect of the children's development when we were there. He went with them to museums, or if they wanted to play chess or wanted to play a game on the carpet with the small boy, he was always willing to fully participate while we were there.*
Participant 7: … Sy verlies was daar, op 'n persoonlike vlak en daarom was hy altyd bereid, so het ons al die pennies bymekaar geskraap en ons het gereeld gegaan en hy was bereid om te gaan en hy het 'n geweldige bydrae gelewer as hy daar is ten opsigte van die kinders en dit was vir hom bevredigend. Hy het veral wat ook die religuese aspek van die kinders se ontwikkeling het hy geweldig aandag aan gegee as ons daar is. Hy het saam met hulle museums toe gegaan of as hulle wou skaak speel of 'n speletjie op die mat wou speel met die klein seuntjie, hy was altyd bereid om volledig deel te neem terwyl ons daar is.

General agreement has evolved regarding the basic predictors of contact and the quality of the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Whitbeck, Hoyt & Huck 1993:1025). In their classic study of American grandparenthood, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) found that one of the most important factors affecting intergenerational contact is the distance between the residences of the grandparents and their offspring. Results show that living more than 100 miles from the nearest grandparent is associated with reduction in grandparent-grandchild relationship quality (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1992). Geographic distance is the strongest predictor of frequent or infrequent contact. All relevant studies have found this result, and it is evident that most grandparents maintain frequent contact with their grandchildren when it is feasible to do so (Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998:283).

Gender of the grandparent is also relevant. Grandmothers are more likely than grandfathers to have frequent contact. It also makes a difference if the grandparents are linked to a set of grandchildren through a daughter or a son. Maternal grandparents are more likely than paternal grandparents to have frequent contact with sets of grandchildren. The effect of lineage is greater for grandmothers than grandfathers (Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998:283).

Maintaining intergenerational relations and family continuity is challenging for transnational families. Emigration has a strong tendency to loosen family ties and to disrupt intergenerational relations (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). It was clear that the participants in this study felt that they were missing out on various stages of their grandchildren's lives. The distance had an effect on their relationship. If they had a good relationship and the grandparents were involved from birth, it is more likely that the relationship will endure. This does, however, rely on frequency

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of contact after emigration. Since the grandparents are not involved in the daily lives of the grandchildren, they lose touch with the everyday happenings and rely on the parents to keep them informed.

<div style="background-color:#d7e4bc; padding:8px; font-weight:bold;">Sub-theme 3.11: Bonding with the grandchild(ren)</div>

Participant 7: ... *But I saw it already with this little girl of mine … suddenly at age 13, if I now arrive therein Canada, it was always a ritual, in die evenings when she goes to bed, then her Ouma comes and lies with her and I scratch her little back and we chat about all sorts of things, and then at 13 she wanted nothing to do with me anymore. She was completely aloof and this kept on for about three or four years until she was about 15 or 16 and then it again ... but there was never again intimate contact ... so yes, I don't want to say that it does not bother me but that I saw in the run of life, grandchildren move away from Ouma and Oupa, Ouma and Oupa are no longer a factor.*
Participant 7: … Maar ek het dit reeds gesien met hierdie dogtertjie van my, skielik op 13, as ek nou daar kom in Kanada, dan was dit 'n ritueel, saans gaan sy bed toe en dan kom lê ouma by haar en ek krap haar ruggie en ek praat met haar allerhande praaitjies, en toe sy 13 was toe wil sy niks met my te doen gehad het meer nie. Sy was heeltemal afsydig en dit het omtrent drie of vier jaar aangehou tot sy omtrent 15 of 16 was en toe het dit nou weer … maar daar was nooit weer die intieme kontak ... So ja ek wil nie sê dit pla my nie maar dit het ek gesien in die loop van die lewe, is kleinkinders beweeg weg, hulle beweeg weg van hulle ouers af, kinders beweeg weg van hul ouers af, klein kinders beweeg weg van ouma en oupa af, oupa en ouma is nie meer 'n faktor nie.

There is an opportunity for change in the grandchildren's relationships with grandparents when grandchildren move through the young adult years. The findings of the study indicate that the grandparent-grandchild bond and parental ties to the grandparent and grandchild generations are not static – they vary across time. Grandchildren's reports demonstrate that their closeness to grandparents was more likely to decrease than increase (Monserud, 2010:380). The author explains that these findings are in accord with Erikson's (1959; 1968) stages of psychosocial development across the life course. In adolescence and young adulthood, individuals are developing their own identity, exploring their independence and establishing new interpersonal relationships. Their interests and concerns shift away from their family of origin towards relationships with peers, friends and partners (Monserud, 2010:380).

<div style="background-color:#d7e4bc; padding:8px; font-weight:bold;">Key Findings: Theme 3 – Intergenerational relationships</div>

From the themes and sub-themes it was clear that the quality or extent of attachment between the parent and the adult-child(ren) prior to emigration was a determining factor in the kind of relationship after emigration. This theme showed

that the quality or type of relationship between the adult-child and parent before emigration would remain after emigration. If the parent and adult-child had a good relationship before the emigration, this kind of relationship would continue, but if they had had a troublesome relationship, it would remain troublesome even after emigration of the adult-child. The nature of the relationship does not change. What does, however, change is the type and frequency of contact.

There are also certain variables that have an effect on the relationship and one of these is gender. The emigration of a daughter was experienced as more traumatic than that of a son. When there were grandchildren involved, it highlighted the loss since the participants experienced it as an even "double loss," because they had not only lost their child, but also their grandchildren. Daughters-in-law had an effect on the relationship and if this relationship was experienced as positive, it was beneficial to the parents. The adult-child(ren), especially the daughter-in-law, determined access to and frequency of contact between grandparents and grandchildren.

6.3.2.4   THEME 4: TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The aim of this theme is to describe the experiences and feelings of parents concerning their communication with their adult-children and not to determine the frequency or medium of communication. In this section, writing letters and sending letters by fax are discussed first. The focus then shifts to modern day technologies such as cell phones, sms and other electronic forms of communication. The effect of long distance communication is described, followed by a focus on visits and lastly, keeping contact between the parent and the adult-child is discussed.

Sub-theme 4.1: Writing letters

Baldassar (2007b:392) states that kin work is largely conducted through efforts to "stay in touch" including visiting, writing letters, making phone calls, organising reunions, celebrations and holidays, keeping family albums and sharing photos and sending gifts and cards. Putting time and effort into providing family with moral and emotional support is a way of building a reliable relationship. In Finch and Mason's

(1990) terms, "staying in touch" builds, and builds on, the history of negotiated commitments that make up family relationships.

Participant 5a: *... My daughter is a particularly bad writer, if you write her a letter because I am a person who communicates a lot with e-mail and I write long and complicated and very interesting letters, so I write quite long and I would really like to write my daughter long stories and I know the chances that she will not respond at all are very good. Or she will just say hi, thank you very much pappa for the very long letter.*
Participant 5a: … My dogter is 'n besondere vrot skrywer, as jy vir haar 'n brief skryf want ek is 'n ou wat baie kommunikeer per e-pos en ek skryf lang en "complicated" en baie interessante briewe, So ek kan nogal lank skryf en ek sal baie graag vir my dogter wou lang stories skryf en ek weet die kanse dat sy my glad nie antwoord nie is baie goed. Of sy sal sê net haai, baie dankie pappa vir die baie lang brief.
Participant 8: *… Hopefully within the next three years I will have a better connection to the children. Like I write them little letters now, but they don't know who the letters come from, they can't write back because they are too small.*
Participant 18: *… I think so, I think so, yes. I have now just uh ... Friday, was it Friday, Saturday I received a letter from them and ag, you can see yourself it was "K", "K's" letter.*
Participant 18: … Ek dink so, ek dink so, ja. Ek het nou net uh ... Vrydag, was dit Vrydag, Saterdag het ek 'n brief van hulle gekry en ag, jy kan self sien dit was "K", "K" se brief.

The very first article that the researcher read about the parent left behind was written by Pauline Boss (1993:365). The title was "*The experience of immigration for the mother left behind: The use of qualitative feminist strategies to analyse letters from my Swiss grandmother to my father.*" In this article, she tells the story of an immigrant, her father, who emigrated to America and his mother who was left behind in Switzerland. The story took place in 1929 when the only way of communicating was by letter. As suggested by Boss (1993:376), there was a possibility that the family might never see each other again because of the distance. Sophie Grossenbacher (the mother of Boss's father) adapted by keeping her son present in her thoughts. She frequently wrote letters to him, serving as "chats."

Letter writing appears to be the least interactive form of communication, because the writer must wait so long for a reply (Climo, 1986). In this study, only a few participants mentioned writing letters as a way of communicating with their adult-children. Baldassar (2008:254) states that letter writing appears to have reduced dramatically. She found that some of her participants stopped writing letters when their children began sending e-mail messages.

The researcher found that although some of the parents wrote letters, letter writing and sporadic phone conversations did not resemble the daily virtual instantaneous communications that are currently available and so easily accessible.

Sub-theme 4.2: Sending letters via facsimile

Participant 7: ... *I would send the faxes to her and then she would a few days after the faxes she would then phone me and then we would now chat for half an hour or so.*

Participant 7: … *Ek sou vir haar die fakse stuur en dan sou sy so paar dae na die fakse sou sy nou vir my bel en dan sal ons nou vir so half uurtjie praat.*

Maruška Svašek (2008:220) explained that her mother became quite deaf over the years, so having a ''real'' conversation over the phone proved to be increasingly difficult, therefore the fax machine became their major channel of long-distance interaction. She added that the fax machine triggered a variety of feelings, including love and worry, brought about by her mother's decreasing health.

Participant 7 wrote letters and then faxed them to her daughter. She mentioned that she was not interested in using new technologies as communication mediums and was not planning to change her way of communication.

Sub-theme 4.3: Sending gifts using postal services

Participant 12: … *Agg, very, very, very important, and you know uhm, what's the bad thing about it is that I always used to have so much pleasure in buying my daughters uhm just lets say a scarf or a handkerchief or a new fancy box of tissues. I always had so much pleasure in that. It didn't have to be expensive things, but just little things I could slip into their bag and that, you can't do that, you can't do that, because uhm you can buy it and it cost you about R200 to sent it over there and then the whole thrill of having that is gone. Like I used to knit my daughter lots of jerseys and uhm in all the colours, navy, I knew her style of jerseys what she like to wear nice big one and uhm then I still had the machine and I wasn't in the wheelchair and I use to knit her loads of jerseys you know I had to find out if someone was going and tied them quickly or else post them and it would cost you $200 and then they will get there and they are all opened them at customs and then this will be missing and that will be missing and uhm …*

Participant 8: … *No, and the one day I made them all uhm, I do beadwork, and I made them each a special bracelet for each of them and I've put them into special little bags and everything was just … and it went on to interior first and then it went on there and when she got it the whole packet was ripped open and all the names were off and so they never … You know there's nothing personal, there's nothing personal it's all … long distance.*

The post-war and 1970s migrant cohorts initially stayed in touch via the virtual "voice" and "presence" of letters, postcards and gifts, which were exchanged at most weekly, but commonly monthly (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding, 2007:117). Special "transnational objects" including photos, letters, cards, memorabilia and gifts were important, largely because of their tangibility – they could be touched and held and thus took the physical place of the longed for person or location. They represented, or more specifically, "stood for" the absence of being. Baldassar (2008:258) writes that much like the meta-languages and messages of virtual communication exchange, people intent to "read between the lines" of letters and cards and interpret

the frequency, type and timing of gifts in relation to the health and wellbeing of not only their far-away kin, but of their transnational relationships as well.

Boss (1999:3) says:

> At my vulnerable moments, my family was 'there for me. One day I found in front of my mailbox a heavy package wrapped in brown paper, tied with butcher cord and stamped with a massive amount of postage. It was a shoebox full of my father's homegrown potatoes. 'Make some soup, my mother wrote. It will help make you feel at home there.' And it did.

In the current study, gifts were exchanged, but the participants mentioned how expensive it was to send a gift overseas and as experienced by Participant 8, the parcel does not always arrive in good condition to its destination.

Sub-theme 4.4: Telephone conversations

Participant 12: … *You know in the first place the telephone, there is a delay and then you get a bad line and it's very, very expensive and you don't actually, they already asking you another question and you still answering the other question, and it's very gargled it's not, so it's not good. So uhm, it's very seldom you get a good line. … my son and my daughter. She sent a sms actually, saying please phone home, Dad's not well, and then they phoned and then they kept in touch regularly and they phoned. I mean he did, he phoned everyday, sometimes twice a day. Yes, or twice a day, because him and my husband were very close, very close and uhm and that was lovely to see.*
Participant 15a: ... *You know, now "W", in Australia they get, because they have parents in South Africa, they get certain advantages where a telephone, where they can phone cheaper.*
Participant 15a: … Jy weet, nou "W" het, in Australië kry hulle, omdat hulle ouers in Suid-Afrika het, kry hulle sekere voordele waar 'n telefoon, dat hulle goedkoper kan bel.
Participant 8: … *Every Sunday and we speak for at least an hour. So in that respect our communication and our talking is fantastic which would not happen, like when we were there on a visit I could not talk to him like that because ... she was there the whole time.*
Participant 19a: ... *And uh ... you have now not become estranged from your child, because we have a constant ... as I say, constant contact, as you know you can phone two or three times a week, let's say what does it cost to phone to China. Ag, it will not make you rich, but it will also not make you bankrupt, and it is not necessary, because they also phone and so on.*
Participant 19a: … En uh ... jy het mos nie vervreemd van jou kind nie, want ons het 'n gedurige ... soos ek sê gedurig kontak, jy kan mos 2, 3 keer 'n week bel, sê maar hoe wat kos dit om China toe te bel. Ag, dit sal jou nie ryk maak nie, maar dit sal jou ook nie bankrot maak nie, en dit is nie nodig nie want hulle bel ook en so aan.
Participant 07: *... As I say, she did, I think she did, it was recently that it also happened, say the last year or two, the conversations were mostly not as intense and as long, then I often wished that I could talk to her for longer, but I can't afford it, I could not afford the money there and on top of that also have a huge telephone account, but then it became, like as I say she now phones almost every second day and I then talk to her, sometimes up to an hour and an hour and a half, we talk the biggest load of nonsense and we laugh and make jokes and she knows exactly what has happened here in the last two days and I know exactly what has happened to her there. For me it is very, it is much more immediate than a letter on the computer.*
Participant 07: … Soos ek sê sy het, ek dink sy het, dit is in die laaste ruk wat dit ook gebeur het, so sê die laaste jaar of twee, gewoonlik was die gesprekke nou nie so indringend en so lank nie, dan het ek miskien baie keer gewens ek kon langer met haar praat maar ek kan dit nie bekostig, ek kon nie die geld soontoe bekostig en nog 'n groot telefoonrekening hê nie, maar dit het nou so geword, soos ek sê sy bel nou omtrent elke tweede dag en dan praat ek met haar, soms tot 'n uur

International telephone calls account for one of the main sources of connection amongst a multiplicity of global social networks. For many of today's migrants, transnational connectivity by means of telephone calls is at the heart of their lives. These calls join migrants and their significant others in ways that are deeply meaningful to people both ends of the line.

It could be argued that telephone calls hold a special place in the creation of virtual co-presence because of their ability to transmit voice that is heard (Climo, 1986). In his article aptly named, "*Cheap call: The social glue of migrant transnationalism,*" Vertovec (2004:219) states that low-cost calls serve as a kind of social glue connecting small-scale social formations across the globe.

The majority of participants in this study made use of the telephone as a means of communication. It was clear that the participants wanted frequent contact with their offspring; they wanted to stay in touch with their children's world and therefore made an effort to contact them on a regular basis. Set times seemed to be important and created a fixed virtual "appointment." The frequency of communication increased with certain life situations such as illness, and in times of crisis, the children contacted the parents more often to provide their support.

Sub-theme 4.5: Internet communication technologies

The capacity for communication has clearly changed from a situation when post-war family members relied on exchanging letters at long intervals, to a context in which most families today are able to exchange messages several times a day (Baldassar, 2007b:401).

Because of the distance that separates them, transnational family members are reliant on two types of technologies and two modes of communication to facilitate their transnational exchanges. These are communication technologies which occur

across distance and provide virtual contact through the use of phone, fax, e-mail, sms texts, websites, postal and banking systems; and travel technologies, which allow people to visit each other (to be co-present) and have face-to-face contact such as during visits.

<table>
<tr><td>Sub-theme 4.6: Electronic mail (e-mail)</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Participant 7: ... Then I received an e-mail from her and I sent back a short e-mail. Then perhaps we would Skype, but I know exactly what she looks like, and I know exactly what my grandchildren look like, I went there enough to see them. And then I have the telephone conversation which makes me feel as if I am talking to her, as if she is staying right here in "E" street where she always lived. That personal voice contact is worth much more to me as for example electronic letters that I receive. Uhm, I know people don't understand this, because I live totally, I, I, and how many people have already tried to convince me to Skype, I say for what reason must I Skype? I don't know, it, it, it actually threatens me, it threatens me.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Participant 7: … Dan het ek van haar 'n e-pos gekry en ek het 'n epossie teruggestuur. Dan het ons miskien geskype, maar ek weet presies hoe lyk sy en ek weet presies hoe lyk my kleinkinders, ek het genoeg soontoe gegaan om hulle te sien. En dan het ek die telefoongesprek wat vir my laat voel ek praat met haar sy bly hier in "E" straat waar sy altyd gebly het. Daai persoonlike stem kontak is vir my baie meer werd as byvoorbeeld elektroniese briewe wat ek kry. Uhm, ek weet mense begryp dit nie, want ek leef heeltemal, ek, ek, en hoeveel mense het al my probeer oortuig ek moet Skype, ek sê vir wat moet ek Skype? Ek weet nie, dit, dit, dit bedreig my eintlik, dit bedreig my.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Participant 12: … Uhm, I can't do without the uhm Facebook, the Skype and e-mailing. I can't do without. You know in the first place the telephone, there is a delay and then you get a bad line and then I don't know then the door bell rings or something like that so if you're on Skype you see them and if you can just wait you can just go to the door and come back and then they are still there and so that kind of thing. That's fine, but the phone, it's very, very expensive and you don't actually, they already asking you another question and you still answering the other question, and it's very gargled it's not, so it's not good. So uhm, it's very seldom you get a good line.</td></tr>
</table>

ICTs (internet communication technologies) allow families to connect virtually in lieu of geographical proximity (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:13). Emigrant families embrace ICTs as a way of overcoming geographical distance and national boundaries, strengthening their connection, identity and survival (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:14).

In this study, the researcher found the participants used various forms of communication depending on the situation and their financial position. Although e-mail was often found to be the easiest medium to communicate with loved ones, an array of mediums were used.

<table>
<tr><td>Sub-theme 4.7: Skype as a useful tool</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td>Participant 2: … But, about since a year ago the little boy had thrown away the earphones and we have tried it about a couple of months ago but now we can see them but they can't see us, so there is something wrong there. Uhm, It does help, being able to see them and them seeing you,</td></tr>
</table>

> *but not seeing those little one's growing up and being a part of their lives, as well. We speak to "D" as I say once a week and catch up on the news and this is uhm, very, very special. Uhm, If we don't speak to him for one reason or other, that he is on duty or whatever the case may be, it's a, it's really very sad, because one uhm, look so forward to hearing what is going on and if they are all allright and so on.*

> **Interview 08**: *… He said he has actually got a webcam and one of my friends gave me a webcam, so I will ask "V" or somebody who knows to get me onto Skype and show me how to do it. I hate technology. I hate going onto my e-mail, I hate using that. I am a very, very I … don't … like … change … at … all. So if you have to push me into a situation of not knowing. I don't need to see him this much. I would like the webcam and Skype for the children, they would have a better indication of who I am and I will always say to them when I come visit you next, hopefully within the next three years I will have a better connection to the children. Like I write them little letters now, but they don't know who the letters come from, they can't write back because they are too small. So, so ja … I feel that the next visit is going to be a very important visit because then it is connecting with children who will remember me, what I can remember from my grandparents when is was about 5, 7, is not much, so they sit with that.*

Sub-theme 4.8: Skype was <u>*not*</u> seen as useful

> **Participant 7**: ... *And I know exactly what my grandchildren look like, I went there enough to see them. And then I have the telephone conversation which makes me feel as if I am talking to her, as if she is staying right here in "E" street where she always lived. That personal voice contact is worth much more to me as for example electronic letters that I receive. Uhm, I know people don't understand this, because I live totally, I, I, and how many people have already tried to convince me to Skype, I say for what reason must I Skype? I don't know, it, it, it actually threatens me.*

> **Participant 7**: … *En ek weet presies hoe lyk my kleinkinders, ek het genoeg soontoe gegaan om hulle te sien. En dan het ek die telefoongesprek wat vir my laat voel ek praat met haar sy bly hier in "E" straat waar sy altyd gebly het. Daai persoonlike stemkontak is vir my baie meer werd as byvoorbeeld elektroniese briewe wat ek kry. Uhm, ek weet mense begryp dit nie, want ek leef heeltemal, ek, ek, en hoeveel mense het al my probeer oortuig ek moet Skype, ek sê vir wat moet ek Skype? Ek weet nie, dit, dit, dit bedreig my eintlik.*

> **Participant 1b**: ... *In the beginning we Skyped, but Skype is very difficult for me, we don't have a good time where we are all together. Because they have to first Skype us during lunch time here with us. Then it is early in the evening, and then they don't check their computers, because then they are in the bathroom, or they are taking a bath, or they are eating or they whatever, you know.*

> **Participant 1b**: … *Ons het in die begin geskype, maar Skype is vir my baie moeilik, ons het nie 'n lekker tyd wat ons almal saam is nie. Omdat hulle ons moet hulle soos in etenstyd Skype hier by ons. Dan is dit vroegaand, en dan kyk hulle nie op die rekenaar nie, want dan is hulle in die badkamer, of hulle bad, of hulle eet of hulle wat ook al, jy weet.*

> **Participant 5a**: ... *Yes because my whole life long I have enjoyed her face terribly. When she was small I knew when she, when she laughs then she laughs from ear to ear you know and if you say something wrong to her then her face falls like this. I always told her you are going to step on your face [laughs]. Her lip can get so long, she she cannot possibly hide her emotions or her face [very excited]. I love it, she talks with her face. Now where must I now see it, the image on Skype looks to me like a photo, like a photo that they break up. I don't see ... I miss it terribly.*

> **Participant 5a**: … *geweet as sy, sy lag dan lag sy van oor tot oor jy weet en as jy vir haar iets verkeerd sê dan val haar gesig so. Ek het altyd vir haar gesê jy gaan op jou gesig trap [lag]. Haar lip kan so lank word sy kan glad nie haar emosies en haar gesig wegsteek nie [baie opgewonde]. Dit is vir my lekker sy praat met haar gesig. Nou waar moet ek dit nou sien, die beeld op Skype lyk sy vir my soos 'n foto, soos 'n foto wat hulle so opbreek. Ek sien nie… ek mis dit vreeslik.*

> **Participant 13a&b**: ... [man]: *So every time, when he ... when the Skype rings, then he runs, not necessarily to go, it is less satisfying for him than for me, but I run, you know I run. Sometimes he doesn't even come, then she has to say, quickly call Pa, I quickly want to tell him something. But Sundays, you know, then we talk. It is not so difficult for me, it is so superficial for me. For me it is so uh ... It is not unsatisfactory for me. It is naturally fantastic when you think about the fact that you are talking to someone who is 9000 kilometres. But that is exactly what it is, they are far, boy, it's far. I am not terribly emotional about talking to them over the Skype, it's not that. Its just isn't for me so ... when she then talks with them I feel as though it's sort of done now. And if they want*

> *to say something specific to me, then they call me. Uh ... yes, I can't tell you, I think it's just because I know it's just a ... poor consolation, the Skype, you know. [wife]: ... You see it's the distance, yes, we ... we have up until now, visited them every year, but uh ... other than that we also communicate with Skype. You know, and it is ... it is, it is not satisfying enough.*

Participant 13a&b: ... [man]: So elke keer, as hy ... as die Skype lui, dan hardloop hy nie noodwendig om te gaan nie dis vir hom minder bevredigend as vir my, maar ek hardloop, jy weet ek hardloop. Hy kom partykeer nie eers nie, dan moet sy sê, roep vir Pa gou ek wil gou vir hom iets sê. Maar Sondae, jy weet, dan praat ons nou maar. Dit is nie vir my so moeilik nie, dis vir my so vals. Dis vir my so uh ... Dit is nie vir my onbevredigend. Dit is natuurlik fantasties as jy dink jy praat hier met iemand wat 9000 kIlometer. Maar dis presies wat dit is, hulle is vêr jong, dis vêr. Ek is nie vreeslik emosioneel om met hulle oor die Skyp te praat nie, dis nie dit nie. Dit is net nie vir my so ... as sy nou met hulle praat voel ek soort van dis nou afgehandel. En as hulle spesifiek vir my iets wil sê, dan roep hulle my. Uh ... ja, ek kan nie vir jou sê nie, ek dink dis maar omdat ek weet dit is maar 'n ... dis maar 'n skrale troos, die Skype, jy weet. [vrou]: … Jy sien dis die afstand, yes, ons ... ons het nou nog elke jaar gaan kuier vir hulle, maar uh ... verder kommunikeer ons met Skype. Jy weet, en dit is ... dit is, dit is nie bevredigend genoeg nie.

Migrant respondents explained that their "technological management of distance" (Parreñas, 2001a:130) through phone calls, text messages and Skype enabled them to convey their love and concern for their elderly parents. The extra information provided by hearing and seeing people, if only virtually via the phone or Skype, arguably improves the highly valued ability to cross check the validity of what is being said, how it is being said (Baldassar, 2008:254). However, Marchetti-Mercer (2012a:384) comments that some people found the use of technology such as Skype to maintain the relationship frustrating, almost alienating.

A problem with Skype is that it drops calls, "Sometimes it'll go for four, six, maybe more hours without dropping; sometimes it'll drop once and then drop again in 10 to 15 minutes" (DSL Reports, 2008). Three of the research participants mentioned how frustrating it was to communicate and "lose the connection."

In this study, certain participants benefitted from using Skype, while others could not relate to Skype at all. For participant 12, using Skype when her husband was critically ill in hospital helped them to keep contact with their children and helped the children to keep abreast of their father's health.

Sub-theme 4.9: Cellular phones

> **Participant 17**: ... *"W" now with the surgery also, he said Ma, it's not so bad, you must just stay calm. You will not have pain. But I did not really believe him, and that's how it was. And he said we are just a phone call away. If you really have a problem, Ma, we will come immediately.*

Participant 17: … "W" het nou toe met die operasie ook, toe sê hy Ma, dit is nie so erg nie, jy moet net rustig wees. Jy gaan ook nie pyn hê nie. Maar ek het hom nie eintlik geglo nie en dit was so. En hy het gesê ons is net 'n oproep vêr. As Ma regtig 'n probleem het dan kom ons dadelik.

> **Participant 5a**: ... *You should actually find out if you have other alternative forms of communication that work excellently. We have the following: we have a cell phone that works like a bomb, I press a button and I talk to my daughter, but I don't phone her a lot, I hardly very seldomly phone her, well I actually hardly ever phone her. Usually I will phone them if there is something I want to know, or something that they need to know, or if there are forms or papers that look as if they should have them, then I will phone them and say this thing has now arrived here should I scan it and forward it ? So I don't chat a lot on a phone, I as it is do not really chat a lot on the phone, I use a phone for business … the conversations are very short, but the other day, she phoned me and we then talked for a very long time and it was very pleasant.*

> **Participant 5a**: … 'n Mens moet nogal vasstel of jy ander alternatiewe vorms van kommunikasie het wat uitstekend werk. Ons het die volgende: ons het 'n selfoon wat werk soos 'n bom, ek druk 'n knoppie dan praat ek met my dogter, maar ek bel haar nie baie nie, ek bel haar bitter min, wel ek bel haar amper nooit nie. Gewoonlik sal ek hulle bel as daar iets is wat ek wil weet, of wat hulle moet weet, of as daar vorms of papiere is wat lyk of hulle dit moet hê, dan sal ek hulle bel en sê hierdie ding het nou hier aangekom moet ek dit scan en aanstuur? So ek klets nie baie op 'n foon nie, ek klets in elk geval nie baie op die foon nie, ek gebruik 'n foon vir besigheid … dit is maar baie kort gesprekke, maar ek het nou die dag, sy my gebel en toe het ons baie lank gepraat en dit was baie lekker.

Mobile cellular has been the most rapidly adopted technology in history. Today it is the most popular and widespread personal technology on the planet, with an estimated 4.6 billion subscriptions globally at the end of 2009 (ITU World Telecommunication, 2009).

The migration of children, especially to urban areas, often benefits parents' material support, while the recent spread of cell phones has radically increased their ability to maintain social contact (Knodel, Kespichayawattana, Saengtienchai & Wiwatwanich, 2010:811). Cell phones do not replace face-to-face interaction; they provide new opportunities for constructing a "co-presence" in spite of distance (Horst & Miller, 2006; Panagakos & Horst, 2006).

Participants in this study frequently used cell phones for communication between family members to increase the ability of migrant children and their parents to maintain contact. Cell phones were also used to provide social support despite geographical distance.

Sub-theme 4.10: Text messaging

> **Participant 11**: … *No, with "J" I have got no problem with that ja, and uhm, he, as I say, ok, say I don't have a problem with him. I know his goes there for a long time and then I cannot really go there because of financial problems but uh ... it takes me time to go there and uh ... I, I see that as long as he come here in South Africa and come and see and then communicate telephonically or per e-mails or whatever or sms I, I don't have any problem with that.*

> **Participant 3**: ... *Now he is working on his own so I can phone him any other time as well, and then we chatted, we chatted nicely and we can Skype and we see each other on Facebook and we talk to each other from time to time and we send sms's but uh … your child is not close to you.*

> **Participant 3**: … Nou werk hy op sy eie so ek kan hom enige ander tyd ook bel, en dan het ons gesels, ons het lekker gesels en ons kan Skype en ons sien mekaar op Facebook en ons praat van tyd tot tyd met mekaar en ons stuur sms'e, maar uh ... jou kind is nie naby jou nie.

Messaging via cell phone is a pivotal example of how mediated communication may be reshaping distance and presence. Texting can create an ambient virtual co-presence in which people have an ongoing awareness of others. Text messaging allows for communication of insignificant or non-urgent updates (Ito & Okabe, 2005:264). The ability afforded by mobile phones and e-mail to send and receive messages at any time is greatly valued, particularly by younger kin, who are comfortable using this technology (Baldassar *et al.*, 2007).

Transnational migrants can use social technologies like texting to cultivate this "ambient co-presence" among family members who are in other countries and to share information that would typically be inaccessible across geographic distances (Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012). They do not require the deliberate opening of a channel of communication, but are based on the expectation that someone is within "earshot" (Ito & Okabeb, 2005b:264). The researcher found that the participants used this form of communication in conjunction with other communication technologies.

Sub-theme 4.11:	**Sending remittances**

The money migrants send, not only provides critical support to families, but may support education and the acquisition of professional skills (Vertovec, 2001:575).

> **Participant 16**: *… And then they want me to have a lot of money. I didn't have. Because he sent the money for me to buy a ticket. … But he didn't finish because he, he didn't have money to help other children. He stopped to continue with the degree. Because he was helping us. So with the money that he earned there he sent some money.*

> **Participant 10b**: *… But what I can say is look, she's always there for us. Once you verified what you need. We can just take the phone or just sms her. Look "N," we need so much. Then it will come. She'll give you, you know. Even our children. Even, look our daughters, Yeah. If they have any problems they would just contact her and she is there for them. And we feel because she have now, you know, stabilised herself to such an extent financially and also she's able to be in a position to provide the necessary help. Look our daughters, sometimes it was the eldest daughter, has now bipolar problems, she doesn't work but she can always tell her sister look man I'm short of this and I'm short of that and she always provide. Our daughter, the other one that's in Durban, sometimes also she has, now her daughter is being suffering from cancer.*

In many countries, people leave mainly to improve their financial situation and those left behind depend on the emigrants for financial support. Not surprisingly, a

substantial body of literature on the impact on those left behind, focuses on the so-called "remittances" (money) sent "home" by those emigrating (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a:378). Furthermore, remittances not only improve the economic wellbeing of family members at the origin, they also serve to reinforce and maintain transnational bonds (Clark, Glick & Bures, 2009).

However, reasons for migration are not always related to the economic constraints of the children's family in the country of origin. Among a sample of more recent migrants, financial support was most likely to flow from parent to child with migration not being motivated by economic need, but rather by career or lifestyle choices. (Baldassar, 2007b; Baldock, 2000; Uribe, 2013). Financial support was commonly provided to assist migrant children with purchasing a house and/or car and to fund regular home visits (Baldassar, 2007b:389).

The researcher found that the children of Participant 16 were sending remittances to assist the family. This participant experienced financial difficulties and one of the reasons for the children's emigration was to provide financial support to the parents. Participant 10 also mentioned that their daughter was supporting them financially.

Sub-theme 4.12: Communication mediums to break barriers

Interview 15b: ... *now "W" has, in Australia, they get, because they have parents in South Africa, they get certain advantages where a telephone, so that they can phone cheaper. Then "W" says phone me, and then she talks for easily two hours on the telephone with me. So we, then she says to me "ma tell pa to make you coffee." Then the two of us sit, we sit for two hours. And chat. And it feels as if she has come to visit me.*
Interview 15b: … nou "W" het, in Australië kry hulle, omdat hulle ouers in Suid-Afrika het, kry hulle sekere voordele waar 'n telefoon, dat hulle goedkoper kan bel. Nou sê "W" bel my, En dan praat sy maklik tot twee ure oor die telefoon met my. So ons, dan sê sy vir my "ma sê vir pa hy moet vir jou koffie maak." Dan sit ons twee nou, Sit twee ure. En gesels. En dit voel asof sy by my kom kuier.

The participant in interview 15 described that while having a telephone conversation with her daughter; it felt as if her daughter was visiting her. This coincides with various research that suggests that ICTs can connect loved ones in ways that facilitate closeness (Baldassar, 2008; Castro & Gonzalez, 2009; Vertovec, 2004). Research on communication technologies suggests that virtual communication can help create the sense that loved ones is present, despite geographic distance (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:17). Emigrant families embrace ICTs as a way of

overcoming geographical distance and national boundaries, strengthening their connection, identity and survival (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:15).

Baldassar *et al.* (2007) demonstrates that "virtual co-presence" through telephone, text messages and e-mail has sped up communication amongst distant kin, making them more aware of each other's daily rhythms and concerns.

The distinctive feature of technology-mediated tools is that they break distance and time limitations that prevent ongoing family communication. This quality could be modifying the ways emigrants and their relatives abroad construe geographical separation. Geographical distance does not eliminate the interactions per se, but influences the way they are mediated or carried out (Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012:6).

Sub-theme 4.13: Time differences and communication

Participant 6: ... *But because I work and I do not have Skype at work and uhm ... we do it over weekends but also not regularly, because you know, the time difference is so bad and they are busy with their own things. Even we are busy, then they will phone and say can we Skype then we will say no we are in the shops.*
Participant 6: … Maar omdat ek werk en ek het nie Skype by die werk nie en uhm doen ons dit oor naweke maar nie gereeld ook nie, want jy weet die tyds verskil is so sleg en hulle is besig met hulle eie goed. Selfs ons is besig, dan sal hulle sal bel en sê kan ons Skype dan sal ons sê nee ons is in die winkels.
Participant 1a: ... *O to find times that suit them all is quite difficult. We do not have a set time. She works strange hours. Some evenings she phones me, then it is half past nine for her, with my birthday last month, ag last week, they phoned me, for them it is half past nine in the evening, they all went to fetch her at work and they phoned me one after the other. Because it's late for the children to only talk to us so late, they go to bed early. So it's difficult to find a time.*
Participant 1a: … So om die tye te kry wat hulle almal pas is nogal moeilik. Ons het nie 'n vaste tyd het nie. Sy werk snaakse tye. Party aande bel sy my, dan is dit half tien vir haar, hulle het met my verjaarsdag verlede maand, ag verlede week toe bel hulle my, vir hulle is dit half tien in die aand toe het hulle almal vir haar gaan haal by die werk en toe bel hulle almal my so op 'n ry. Want dis laat vir die kinders om so laat eers met ons te praat, hulle gaan slaap vroeg. So dis moeilik om 'n tyd te kry.
Participant 12: *… I usually wait for them because they have to wake up, you see, so if they wake up I can Skype them 07h00 in the morning in Canada and then they're just ready to go to bed. But I usually wait for them and then their 07h00 in the morning is my 17h00 here and then we can talk a bit before they all rush off and it's better that time because then maybe the whole family are there and morning they're all getting up then.*
Participant 7: ... *You see we sit with this time-thing of the eight hours' difference and I told her, little sister you can phone me any time during the night, the telephone is next to my bed and I'll chat to you. So that really cheered us up so she now phones me whenever she can and when it's suitable. And it is, it is like I say, worth a lot to me.*
Participant 7: … Jy sien ons sit ook nou met hierdie tydsding van die agt uur verskil en ek het vir haar gesê my sussie jy kan my enige tyd in die nag bel, die telefoon is langs my bed en ek gesels met jou. So dit het ons nou opgehef so sy bel my wanneer sy kan en wanneer dit inpas. En dit is, dit is soos ek sê, vir my baie baie werd.
Participant 2: … *And uhm, it was a great sadness when they left, but this is what they wanted and we have to accept it even though it was, it was not easy because anytime you love anybody*

> *for them to move so far away is not easy and off course America is not like your children moving to England or Europe where I mean there is an hour's difference in time delay.*

> **Participant 14**: ... *No, they are currently in their summer they are also now, they are 10 hours ahead of us. So it is now, let's say it is 15:00 then it is 01:00 in the night for them. So it is also difficult to find a time that's convenient for all.*

> **Participant 14**: … *Nee, hulle is huidiglik in hulle somer is hulle ook nou, is hulle 10 ure voor ons. So dis nou, kom ons sê dit is 15:00 dan is dit 01:00 die nag by hulle. So dis ook moeilik om 'n tyd te vind wat vir almal gemaklik is.*

Baldassar *et al.'s* (2007) research indicates that people constantly struggle to find time to "stay in touch." The cost of calls, the quality of the phone line and the challenges posed by time differences influence people's sense of satisfaction with the virtual co-presence provided by phone calls. Many families resolve these difficulties by deciding on a regular phone time, usually Sunday afternoons, when people are generally freer and calls are often cheapest.

The time differences reduce the spontaneity of the interaction and require forward planning, which is not always easy (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a:384). Parents in this study had access to a wide range of communication but frequent communication was hindered by time differences. The participants mentioned that they had set times for communicating with their children. They described it as an appointment that guaranteed frequent communication and a feeling of staying connected with their children's lives. This set appointment gave the parents structure and peace of mind, knowing that the child would be contacting them.

Sub-theme 4.14: Effect of distance on communication

> **Participant 12**: … *And it was very, very hard for us then but we sort of accepted it because that is where his work was and that so and we had this long distance and we sort of be in contact every day because they left the computer and that for me. Everything is … a birthday wish is a telephone call or it's a voice. It's not a hug, it's not anything like that and, and it's the waiting for them … because they in different things … waiting to see if they are going to phone you for your birthday, waiting to see if they are going to phone you give you any news about this and this and this. You know that it is coming but you don't know when, so you are always waiting. You are always waiting for, for uhm family.*

> **Participant 2**: … *Well, obviously you have more communication when they are closer. Uhm, so you are there with everyday events and I would say without a doubt the people who are closer, you would have, not necessarily more love, but you are more involved.*

In the past decade, the concept of transnationalism has migrated across disciplinary boundaries. Anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and other scholars have consumed the term (Smith & Guarnizo, 2006:3). Memories are attached to relationships (Falicov, 2007) that have historically been maintained by infrequent

contact. In the context of the emerging ICTs, professionals must reconsider who the family is and consider the notion of "virtual families" (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:16).

Transnational families "live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely 'familyhood', even across national borders" (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:16). The boundaries between absence and presence are blurred and subtle experiences of togetherness may develop.

Messaging technologies have been developed for "connected presence." Phatic communication is becoming increasingly important, because simply keeping in touch may be more important than what is actually said. In a sense, any type of mediated contact can sustain social bonds in the realm of "connected presence" (Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005:5).

Being a transnational migrant involves a reconfiguration, although not necessarily a rupture, of existing relationships with family and friends. While much emotional investment goes into the maintenance of transnational contact with the left behind family and significant others, the embodied co-presence is considered a penultimate goal. Longing to be embraced, the touch and the handshake, remain a hope and aspiration for transmigrants (Skrbiš, 2008:237).

Sub-theme 4.15: Decision-making over long distances

Participant 17: ... *for example when the dog was so ill. My dog, they bought me this big dog. And then the dog just when the school broke up last term. The dog was very sick and then I had to phone, she could not walk. So I phoned them first. And, what "W" said to me was Ma do whatever the vet tells you to do now. And "E" said Ma, if you now have to do what you have to do, then you must do it now. Then I said the dog can't walk, I need to take her now. The vet told me he could not do anything for her, he would put her down. And, that's how it is. So, then I phoned them and they again just said, Ma, you must now just do it. So, when there are important decisions that need to be taken or things that would be in their interest, then, then I phone them. I don't easily do things on my own.*
Participant 17: … byvoorbeeld toe die hond ook so siek was. My hond, hulle het vir my so 'n groot hond gekoop: En toe is die hond nou net toe die skool gesluit het verlede kwartaal. Toe is die hond baie siek en toe moes ek nou bel, toe kon sy nie loop nie. Toe bel ek hulle eerste. En, wat "W" vir my sê, Ma doen wat die veearts jou sê wat jy nou moet doen. En "E" sê Ma, as jy nou moet doen wat jy moet doen, moet jy dit nou maar doen. Toe sê ek die hond kan nie loop nie, ek moet haar nou vat. Die veearts het vir my gesê hy, hy kan nie vir haar iets doen nie, hy sal uitsit. En, dis maar so. So, toe het ek hulle gebel en hulle het ook maar net gesê, Ma, jy moet nou maar dit doen. So, as daar belangrike besluite geneem moet word of goeters wat in hulle belang sou wees dan, dan bel ek hulle. Ek doen nie sommer dinge op my eie nie.

The introduction of social technologies into the lives of these families makes emigration "more acceptable than ever before," giving "distant individuals the means, to not only manage and maintain their connections, but also to negotiate their roles through time" (Aguila, 2009:100). Owing to the advances and wide availability of ICTs in the last decade, these technologies have not only influenced family relations but have changed family identity too. For instance, families make core life cycle as well as mundane decisions in consultation with family members located in different countries (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:13).

Sub-theme 4.16: Withholding personal information

Participant 8: ... *I cannot allow myself to feel that. I can say to him I miss you, over the telephone, but I cannot cry because then he gets, it takes away from his strength from his side, because I know he feels guilty, leaving us behind, I know he misses us. So if I give in to this absolute feeling of drowning, it is really drowning in sorrow, I can't do that.*
Participant 1a: ... *Because, you are scared to write stuff that's emotional, because it will be written in white and black. You don't want to waste time talking about stuff that's disturbing while ... I think our conversation becomes much more superficial in terms of, how are you, what are you doing, did you have a good day, you know. So there is no longer much depth in the conversation.*
Participant 1a: … Want, jy is bang om goed te skryf wat emosioneel is, want dit staan op wit en swart. Jy wil nie tyd mors om oor goed te praat wat ontstellend is nie, terwyl ... Ek dink ons gesprek raak baie meer oppervlakkig in terme van hoe gaan dit, wat doen jy, het jy 'n lekker dag gehad, jy weet. So daar is nie meer baie diepte in die gesprek nie.
Participant 19a: ... *You know what, you write, if you were to pick up the phone your mother ... and cry bitterly and now I miss them so much, and that's how it is, and my leg hurts so badly, and whatever your problems may be, you create an uncomfortable situation, it is, it is, what you, well we have this, we tell them, they don't moan in our ears, moan is quite a strong word, don't complain because we miss them, yes we have really not seen them in a very long time. Missing big and small, the bigger ones you don't tell them you miss them [inaudible 48:33], but it's, we talk to each other in good spirits and then you hide things. ... which is a sensitive issue, for me. I on a Sunday, the youngest was still in Secunda, I had a heart attack. Off to hospital and "D" was then still in Dubai, well he was here within 24 hours. Which I don't want ... what is he coming here for. I say, what did I now say, wait to see what will happen first and then, he says no he is going to hospital and so on. But you must be careful to hide it. It depends, then we learn to handle things that never, such crisis times, you must rather just tell them. I don't' think they also do the same, when they now say the little one has chicken pox or one of them has such a sore throat that does not seem to get better, we phone up to 3, 4 times a week. I want to know how the child is. That's how it is, you know but uh ... that's a tricky one. I say, to get onto an aeroplane [inaudible 50:00] small operations [inaudible 50:05] and whatever else, but must probably not try to hide, depending on what specifically it is but uh ...*
Participant 19a: ... Weet jy wat, jy skryf, as jy die telefoon sal optel jou ma ... en vreeslik huil en nou verlang ek so, en dit is so en my been is so seer, en wat ookal jou moeilikheid is, dan maak jy dit 'n ongemaklike situasie, dit is, dit is wat jy, wel dit het ons, ons sê hulle, hulle kerm nie om ons ore nie, kerm is darem 'n kwaai woord, kla nie oor ons verlang, ja ons het julle darem lank laas gesien. Verlang na groot of klein, vir die grotes sê jy nou nie verlang [inaudible 48:33] nie maar, dis ons praat met mekaar in goeie gees en dan steek jy weg … wat 'n baie sensitiewe ding is, vir my. Ek het hier op 'n Sondag, toe was die jongste een nog in Secunda gewees, het ek 'n hartaanval gekry. Hospitaal toe en "D" was toe nog in Dubai, wel hy was binne 24 uur hier gewees. Wat ek nie wil hê nie ... wat hy hier kom maak. Ek sê, wat sal ek nou sê, wag nou maar eers dat die ding eers aangaan en dan, sê jy nee wat hy gaan by die hospitaal en sus en so. Maar jy moet versigtig wees om dit weg te steek. Dit hang, dan leer ons hanteer wat nog nooit, sulke krisis tye, jy moet maar vir hulle sê. Ek dink ook nie hulle doen maar dieselfde, as hulle nou sê die kleintjie

> het nou waterpokkies of een het so seer keel wat nie gesond word nie, bel ons tot 3 4 keer in 'n week in, ek wil hoor hoe dit gaan met die kind. Dit is nou maar so dit is, jy weet maar uh ... daai is maar 'n moeilike ene. Ek sê, op 'n vliegtuig klim, [inaudible 50:00] klein operasies [inaudible 50:05] en wat ook al, maar jy moet seker maar nie probeer wegsteek, afhangende van wat dit nou ookal is maar uh ...

Participant 13b: ... *Sometimes wake up at night, you know, that I experience such an intense longing for the children, it is unbelievable. But do you know, funny, I say ... I never tell them this, but I do say I miss them, you just say you miss them. But I don't think they are aware of our real hurt. But, well. Ag, no you know I don't want to burden them with it, they know we miss them, I do not want them to know the intensity of it, it is not necessary, because this will also pass, I am sure about it, it will, yes.*

Participant 13b: … Word partykeer in die nag wakker, weet jy, dat ek so 'n intense verlange het na die kinders, dit is ongelooflik. Maar weet jy wat, snaaks, ek sê ... ek vertel dit nooit vir hulle nie, maar ek sê ek verlang, jy sê mos maar jy verlang. Maar ek dink nie hulle weet van ons regtige seer nie. Maar nou ja. Ag, nee wat ek wil hulle nie daarmee opsaal nie, hulle weet ons verlang, ek wil nie hê hulle moet die insentiteit daarvan weet nie, dis nie nodig nie, want dit sal ook verby gaan, ek is seker daarvan, dit sal, ja.

Participant 12: … *And when they've achieved something, they will let you know and when they're not doing so well, you don't know about it, you can't share things. … So they won't share their heartache with you? … little bit of it, but not uhm, … if I can put it to you in uhm, … maybe, uhm this will be easier … your daughter can come and visit you at home and you can see that she is looking a little bit unhappy, and you can say to her, uhm is anything wrong, uhm "I" and I had a bad argument this morning and, and you know … and this kind of thing and that kind of thing, and then the next day she will come and say, no everything is fine or else she can say to her, go home and work at it, go home and work at it … Because you, you this is your last, this is your only link with them and if you don't have peace and that was it, and uhm you know and uhm that closeness, then they're lost forever. And uhm you have to prevent that, so actually when you're, when you're uhm talking to them and when you are writing with them, you can't just say hallo "S" how are you today, you know or you're not looking so good today but all that type of thing. You've got to say to them how are you, your pictures are lovely, you're looking good, and everything you've got to give positive all the time. You can never give negative cause then you won't step further this way or they won't step further that way.*

Baldassar (2007b, 2008), indicates that even with technology, parents will hide illness and the aging process from their adult-children. As noted previously, people were aware of carefully managing the information they shared with loved ones to ensure they did not cause unnecessary distress to the other party. Many consciously hid, or attempted to hide, the full truth about their emotional state of being (Baldassar, 2007b:404).

Both children and older parents conceal or change the information they share with each other. They scrutinise what they want to share because they do not want to cause apprehension unnecessarily (Baldassar, 2007b). For example, older parents may hide the fact that they are physically ill or depressed (Baldassar, 2007b). Hiding or altering information is a recurring activity between migrants and older parents. However, one important challenge faced by children and parents is that when information is manipulated, this may result in a lack of support and solidarity between parents and children (Baldassar, 2007a; Uribe, 2013).

Participants in this study did not want to burden their children with their longing and tried to downplay it. Often heard were the words: "As long as the children are all right." The researcher found that parents discussed serious matters like their health with their children and valued their input concerning important decisions. Participant 17 and 18 discussed their health issues with their children. When participant 12's husband fell ill, she contacted the children and they assisted her by making frequent phone calls and visiting her.

Sub-theme 4.17: Not using information technologies

Participant 17: ... *I am stupid. My child says I am technologically challenged. No, the, the, computer passed me by. They want me to Skype, but I can't Skype. I cannot even the computer, ag, did the course and everything, but I am not, I also have a "laptop," but don't think I can work on it.*
Participant 17: … Ek is onnosel. My kind sê ek is tegnologies gestremd. Nee, die, die rekenaar het by my verby gegaan. Hulle wil hê ek moet Skype maar ek kan nie Skype nie. Ek kan nie eers die rekenaar, ag het die kursus gedoen en als, maar ek is nie, ek het 'n "laptop" ook, maar moenie glo ek kan hom werk nie.
Participant 7: ... *The other thing that I just, you now just said, uhm, you don't write e-mails at all, uhm, why not? My dear heart, it is such a long story and I have talked about it so much. I, a friend at one stage tried to get me so far, she even gave me an old computer, for me to write on the computer and so I tried to master the basic principles and as far as my creativity goes it was a total failure ... and I am not a, I don't know how, it is just, I am not, I am just not up to it. I am not up to the ... because I do also see the pitfalls of electronics.*
Participant 7: … Die ander ding wat ek net, u het net nou gesê, uhm, u skryf glad nie emails nie, uhm, hoekom nie? … My liewe hart, dit is so 'n lang storie en ek het al so baie daaroor gepraat. Ek het, 'n vriendin het, op 'n stadium vir my probeer so ver kry, sy het selfs vir my 'n ou rekenaar persent gegee om op die rekenaar te skrywe en ek het so die basiese beginsels daarvan probeer bemeester en dit wat my kreatiwiteit betref was dit 'n totale mislukking. … En ek is nie 'n, ek weet nie hoe, dit is net, ek is nie, ek is net nie lus daarvoor nie. Ek is nie lus vir die ... want ek sien ook "the pitfalls" van die elektronika.
Participant 19a: ... *man, no as I say I am computer illiterate, I don't have … don't want one in my life.*
Participant 19a: … Man, nee soos ek sê ek is computer illiterate, ek het nie ... wil nie een hê in my lewe nie.

Emigrant families embrace ICTs as a way of overcoming geographical distance and national boundaries, strengthening their connection, identity and survival (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:14). Not all the participants could afford ICT's or knew how to use them. Marchetti-Mercer (2012a:384) found that the some older people were uncomfortable with technology such as Skype or e-mail and had to be "trained" to use these innovations.

As seen from the above quotations, some of the participants did not want to make use of the latest technology. Participant 19 and 7 were 76 and 78 years of age respectively and had never used the new technologies. They might have had no

need to use them until their children emigrated and that led the researcher to assume that using "new" technologies were daunting for them. It could also be related to adaptation to change at their age.

Sub-theme 4.18: Visits

Transnational family members are reliant on two types of technology to facilitate their transnational exchanges: communication technology, which has been discussed, and travel technology that allows people to visit each other (to be co-present) and have face-to-face contact, for example, when visiting.

Sub-Theme 4.19: Visits – preparation: Before the actual visit

> **Participant 8**: … *Then I have got "J" in the Cape and I have got "V" my daughter living here … What is the difference between "P" living in New Zealand and "J" living in Cape Town? … I know that I can see "J" whenever I can, I can't see "P" and there are times when you miss them so much it hurts [very tearful] but it is okay, because I know he is safe …. When I miss "J" I phone him and we see each other two to three times a year. We are very close, I am so lucky, I am close with all three my kids, I think I am very fortunate and we talk about everything and anything and we can say anything to each other which for me is quite unusual because you find these days when talking to my friends they are very disconnected from their children, there is no children, not look down on their parents, but it is as if you don't know what I am talking about, and that I don't have with my kids and I do miss "J" enormously, because we have got a good relationship as well, but I know I can see him, like he is coming at the end of September so I know I am going to see him. I saw him two months ago, so it is different. If I can see my child once a year, that would make it different. If I had the money to fly down every year to see him in New Zealand it would not be that bad. I can live with that. Even with your children staying in South Africa, seeing them once a year over Christmas is the norm, it is not a strange thing, so I could live with that. But the fact knowing, that I will see him ... Say now I live 'till eighty, I will see him hopefully ... three or four times before I die. That is ... what is ... killing.*

The exchange of financial, practical and emotional support can occur through virtual and face-to-face modes, but for obvious reasons, personal and accommodation support can only occur during visits (Baldassar, 2007b:389). Climo (1988:61) explains that this phase requires preparation, planning and organisation. Participants in this study found the financial impact of the visits to be a concern. The fact that they went to visit for long periods had other implications, such as finding someone to take care of their property and pets.

Sub-theme 4.20: Visits – travelling

> **Participant 2**: … *But in anyway, as I say one can never ever really say, that you are happy with a situation like this. Aaii, there, this is somebody that you love and his family and they are far away. Too far away! Uhm I am very grateful actually because last year when I went across for the first time they had a direct flight from here, to just beyond Miami but it was still 15 hours in the plane.*

> *And going there was fine, but coming back I had the most horrific jetlag, I can't tell you. I said to my husband the other day I have never really felt the same since I have been back. I do not know whether if I picked up the "Yuppy" flu or something on the plane, but thank God, "D's" green card has now come through and so they are coming here in December … I actually went to visit them because "L" (other son) and "L" (daughter in law) were there for quite a long time you know before he came back he was at "D" University and I went over every single year. I mean I have been to America about 9 or 10 times now, and uhm, but they came back ... and then off course when "D" was there studying we went over quite a lot and we saw them once a year, but you know the trip to America, there is a lot of jetlag and it is not an easy trip to make as I say you know you have your kids going to Europe or England in time delay and there is no delay, there is no jetlag or anything like that.*

> **Participant 5a**: ... *Yes, for sure we are already looking out for tickets again, it is terribly expensive. If I now had to, I would scratch the money out from somewhere and I can afford it but I am actually busy all the time scratching around in my funds, which I should actually use to look after myself. And there is another thing that I always say one does not really care what I have often seen people, who say they will just not go again because it is just too expensive. Even if you have money, you don't spend your money on something that is really absurd. The price of the tickets is at this stage completely absurd.*

> **Participant 5a**: … *Ja, nee verseker ons kyk nou al weer vir kaartjies, dit is verskriklik duur. As ek nou moet dan krap ek dit erens uit en ek kan dit bekostig maar ek is eintlik elke keer besig om in my fondse te krap wat ek eintlik moet gebruik om vir myself moet sorg. En daar is nou ook 'n ander ding wat ek eintlik altyd sê mens gee nie om wat ek al baie gesien het met mense, wat sê hulle gaan net nie weer nie want dit is te duur. Al het jy geld, jy gee nie geld uit op iets wat regtig absurd is nie. Die kaartjies se pryse op hierdie stadium is heeltemal absurd.*

The possibility of actual visits could be thwarted by distance and financial constraints, as many South African emigrants choose distant destination countries that are difficult to travel to for elderly parents. From a future perspective, this may also be an obstacle to maintaining long-term connections as the journey itself may be strenuous and difficult, especially for older parents (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a:387). In addition, upon arrival, older parents may be overly tired and require time to recover (Climo, 1988:62).

Sub-theme 4.21: Visits – adjustment

> **Participant 1b**: ... *But everything, and then I arrived there, you know, here at our place I am the queen of the house and there I am suddenly no longer the queen of the house, I am put in my place. You know, because I may not now do this, and I may now not do that. So it was also an anti-climax, this was now also not enjoyable.*

> **Participant 1b**: … *Maar alles, en toe kom ek nou daar aan, jy weet, hier by ons is ek die koningin van die huis en daar is ek skielik nou nie meer die koningin van die huis nie, ek word op my plek gesit. Jy weet, want ek mag nou nie dit doen nie en ek mag nou nie dat doen nie. So dit was ook 'n antiklimaks, dit was ook nou nie lekker nie.*

The first day or two is regarded as a period of adjustment and the time the visitor unpacks. A certain amount of discussion focuses on living routines including when, where, and what to eat, where to sleep and bathe. During the adjustment period, children and parents talk, and show and tell news of events about themselves and

other family members. Differences in lifestyle and activity-level conflicts make their first appearance during the adjustment period (Climo, 1988:63).

Sub-theme 4.22: Visits – settling in during visits

Participant 7: ... *And I integrate and we integrate fully into their household, but there are so many aspects related to such a type of visit. In the first place you are in your child's house for a long time, you must know your place, and it's not always easy, you must allow them to totally with their own lives, as life goes on when you are not there, you must not ask but where are you going now and may I go along and you must just stay in your little corner. And if you are invited out of your little corner, then you are very glad but you yourself don't ask to be allowed out of your corner. This is in a certain sense the foundation for the success of these visits. And initially I had to, as I say, learn in a certain sense, where my place was.*
Participant 7: … En ek integreer en ons intergreer volledig in hul huishouding, maar daar is soveel aspekte verbonde aan so 'n tipe kuier. In die eerste instansie is jy vir 'n lang periode in jou kind se huis, jy moet jou plek ken, dis nie al dag maklik nie, jy moet hulle volledig toelaat om met hulle lewe, soos die lewe aangaan as jy nie daar is nie, jy moet nie sê maar waar gaan jy nou en kan ek saamgaan nie en jy moet net in jou hoekie bly. En as daar vir jou uit jou hoekie uitgenooi word dan is jy baie bly maar jy vra nie self om uit jou hoekie uit te kom nie. Dit is in 'n sekere sin die basis vir die sukses van hierdie kuiers. En aanvanklik moes ek, soos ek sê, my in 'n seker sin my plek leer ken.
Participant 12: … *The visits were, the visits with my daughter, excellent. Uhm, we shared their bad days, we shared, but my husband and I made a thing that we would ... what we arranged was that we will stay in our room until her husband had gone to work and the children had gone to school and wait to say bye-bye granny or something like that will they come and give you a peck. But we will not be like eight people in the kitchen you know or something like that. So we would leave them and my daughter will take them and when she came back from taken the kids to school then we will go down and then will have tea with her and then we will all have supper at night.*

The heart of the visit begins around the second or third day. Both planned and spontaneous events and interactions characterise the settling in period (Climo, 1988:63).

Sub-theme 4.23: Visits – separation and departure

Participant 8: … *It was extremely difficult saying goodbye after that, because it was as if I had taught myself not to feel deeply about the fact that they are not there, and coming back from that visit made it worse. Uhm then I realised that they were far away.*

The period of separation and departure varies somewhat with the length of the visit. Importantly, a significant outcome of "seeing" children, grandchildren and parents is that visitors feel more reassured and more accepting of the migrant's decision to settle abroad. In this way attachments with significant kin are revived, and in the case of grandchildren, formed and developed. These attachments ensure people feel they are maintaining a sense of "closeness" with significant family members, that they still "know" each other (Baldassar, 2007b:394).

Sub-theme 4.24: Visits – first visit

Participant 15b: … *But this you know, that there is no finality. Your child, you will. And what makes it difficult is that you don't, if you have perhaps been in the country to which they have gone and the circumstances that would await them. If you had possibly known this then it would have been easier for you. But you have never been there before. You know ... you can't when you think of them you don't know what to think, because it is unfamiliar. You know. And you wonder how your child that unfamiliar situation and you think of the trauma they would experience if they were now here, you know. I feel like crying right now again ... [very sad].*

Participant 15b: ... Maar hierdie weet jy dat daar is nie finaliteit nie. Jy sal jou kind. En wat dit moeilik maak is dat jy nie die, as jy miskien al in die land was waar hulle heen gegaan het en die omstandighede waarin hulle sou kom. As jy dit miskien sou geken het dan sou dit ook vir jou makliker gewees het. Maar jy was nog nooit daar nie. Jy weet. … Jy kan nie as jy aan hulle dink weet jy nie waarheen om te dink nie want, dis onbekend. Jy weet. En jy wonder hoe jou kind daai onbekendheid en jy dink wat se trauma hulle ervaar as hulle nou hier, jy weet. Ek wil sommer nou weer huil ... [baie hartseer].

The need to undertake a visit in order "to see" the wellbeing of distant family is most strongly expressed by parents of recent migrants soon after their child's migration. This is perhaps because most parents have little, if any, access to information from other people about their migrant children (Baldassar, 2007b:404).

Sub-theme 4.25: Visits – last visit

Participant 7: ... *Yes, it is a concern for her and it's also an adaptation for her because she always consoled herself, I often said to her, Sus, the time will come that we can no longer go and then she said no we will make a plan. And now she realises that she cannot make a plan with everything and now she has to adjust herself to that as well. And it is not easy for her, she said to me the other day ma I promise you, you will see me once a year, but it is such a schizophrenic situation ... and I think she realises it very well, and I also told her, I told her it is for me, my lifeline, and she follows up on that, she adheres to it totally, I can see she also has a desire for it, and especially now that she realises that we will perhaps, we will definitely not go again ... but the visits were very important to me, but that's now over. We went for the last time now. it is quite simply, no more, it is a risk, my husband is 85, you no longer get insurance and the insurance that you do get, excludes any heart condition or cerebral, let's say a stroke or a heart attack are excluded, so even if you pay a lot, you cannot claim insurance for conditions which are in actual fact conditions that afflict the elderly. So we have now decided, and the flights, we need to take three flights and it takes us sometimes almost 40 hours from leaving our little gate here until we get there and the flights are incredibly uncomfortable, you sometimes sit a whole night at in airport and especially my husband just said there is no way that he will do it again.*

Participant 7: … Ja, dis vir haar 'n bekommernis en dis vir haar 'n aanpassing want sy het haarself altyd getroos, ek het vir haar baie keer gesê sus daar gaan 'n tyd kom wat ons nie meer kan gaan nie dan het sy gesê sy nee ons sal 'n plan maak. En nou besef sy jy kan nie met alles 'n plan maak nie en nou moet sy vir haar ook daarby aanpas. En dit is ook nie vir haar maklik, sy het ook vir my nou die dag gesê ma ek belowe jou, jy gaan vir my een maal 'n jaar sien, maar dit is ook 'n skisofrene situasie … en ek dinksy besef baie goed en ek het dit ook vir haar gesê, ek sê dit is vir my, my leeflyn is en sy, sy volg dit op, sy volg dit absoluut, en ek kan sien sy het self ook behoefte daaraan en veral noudat sy weet ons gaan miskien, ons gaan definitief nie weer gaan nie … maar die kuiers was vir my baie belangrik, maar dit is nou verby. Ons het nou vir die laaste keer gegaan. Dit is net eenvoudig, nie meer, dit is 'n risiko, my man is 85, jy kry eintlik nie meer versekering nie en die versekering wat jy kry, sluit byvoorbeeld enige hart kondisie of serebrale, sê nou maar beroerte of 'n hartaanval sluit dit uit, so al betaal jy hoeveel, jy kan nie aanspraak maak op versekering vir kondisies wat eintlik die kondisies is wat oumense aantas nie. So ons het nou maar besluit, en die vlugte, ons moet drie vlugte neem en dit vat vir ons byna soms by 'n 40 uur van ons

> hier by ons hekkie uitgaan tot ons daar inklim en die vlugte is ongelooflik ongemaklik, jy sit baie keer 'n hele dag op 'n lughawe en veral my man het net gesê daar is geen manier waarop hy dit weer gaan doen nie.

Visits undertaken by people who do not visit often, perhaps only once or twice in a lifetime, are often described as special visits, as being somehow different and set apart from routine motivations to visit (Baldassar, 2007b:405). Concerning this study, the researcher found a definite distinction between the first visit, the visits in between and then the very last visit.

Sub-theme 4.26: Parents should keep in contact

> **Participant 8**: … *Nothing makes it better, nothing makes it better. I don't think there is one thing you can do that makes it better. But don't, don't stop communicating, even if they do, because I know that happens a lot. Because life, life is life. I think I am extremely fortunate that my son phones me every week, because he doesn't have to. His life is busy, and I know many of my friends, my one friend's son is overseas and if she speaks to him once every four months it is a lot. So I would say communicate even if your kids don't communicate, make a point of phoning. It helps me to know that every Sunday at seven o'clock that phone rings, I sit and wait for it. It helps me ... to connect. So if you could get a time when both parties know that is the time that you are spending together. You make a fixed appointment to, to connect. Uhm it is good for both parties because then you don't lose life. Because life goes so fast that you lose interest. And if you have missed one or two calls and one or two weeks have gone by and you don't know what goes on there is nothing to talk about anymore.*

> **Participant 15b**: ... *Because she, we talk about everything, she knows about everything going on in our lives and we know about everything happening in her life. With Skype it's the same, you know, you, you, one has to, one has to talk to one another about your daily lives, you know, because they know exactly what's happening in our lives and we know exactly what's happening in their lives, that she took part in a competition. You must know everything, all that stuff, they say, you know, you must, you must sms, mamma, mamma, will send an sms later, you know, then she says, oo "G has now run" you know, "and she has just won the 100 meters" or whatever, or whatever. You know. And then she will then phone the following day and then we chat about it.*

> **Participant 15b**: … *Want sy, ons praat oor alles, sy weet alles wat in ons lewe aangaan en ons weet alles wat in haar lewe aangaan. Met die Skype dieselfde, jy weet, jy, jy, mens moet, mens moet met mekaar gesels oor jou daaglikse lewe, jy weet, want hule weet presies wat in ons lewe aangaan en ons weet presies wat in hulle lewe aangaan, dat sy 'n kompetsie gehad het. Alles moet jy weet, alles daai goed, sê hulle, jy weet, jy moet, jy moet sms, mamma, mamma sal sommer 'n sms stuur, jy weet, dan sê sy oo, "G het nou gehardloop", jy weet, "en sy het nou die 100 meter gewen" of wat ookal, of wat ookal. Jy weet. En dan sal sy nou die volgende dag bel en dan gesels ons nou daaroor.*

The participants stressed the importance of staying in contact with their children living abroad. The exchange of emotional and moral support was clearly influenced by long distance, but it was not necessarily inhibited by it. It appears that as long as family members work hard at "staying in touch" by making use of all the technologies available to them, they can maintain mutually supportive relationships across time and space (Baldassar, 2008:406). The researcher was well aware of the effort that parents invested in staying in contact with their children and she sometimes got the impression that it was not reciprocated in all the relationships.

Key Findings: Theme 4 – Transnational communication

This theme showed that parents and adult-child(ren) that have emigrated stay in contact with each other by using various modes of communication and available technologies. The participants used letter writing, faxing, telephone and cell phone conversations, texting and e-mail. Older participants were hesitant to make use of new communication technologies and preferred telephonic conversations. The latest communication technologies assisted with keeping in contact, but not without challenges such as time differences. Visits were important for the participants, because although new technologies have developed rapidly and are readily available, they cannot replace the co-presence and physical contact needed.

6.4   SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings from the nineteen interviews with 24 participants as they related to the research question composed for this study. In order for the reader to have a better understanding of each of the participants, the researcher introduced each participant by providing biographical information such as gender, age, ethnicity, marital status and the number of children that have emigrated. The researcher felt it was important to share her personal experience of each participant with the reader in order for the reader to gain more insight into the life world of the various participants and thus a profile of each participant and or couple was provided.

A vast amount of information was collected from the 24 research participants. Thematic analysis was used to identify relevant experiences, attitudes, feelings and insights that participants reported and quotations were provided to indicate the trustworthiness of the results. The qualitative research findings were presented by discussing the four main themes and related sub-themes that were identified during the data analysis, namely: Emigration of the adult-child; Emigration and loss; intergenerational relationships and transnational communication.

From the themes and sub-themes, it was clear that loss, and specifically ambiguous loss, was a golden thread running through each interview. Loss touched each participant in various ways depending on the attachment between the different role players. Although communication technologies have vastly improved and

participants can virtually stay in contact every second of the day, nothing can replace physical co-presence.

In the next chapter the researcher attempts to empower the professional by recommending guidelines, from her experience and findings of this research. The stages of emigration are used as basis for the professional to gain insight into the world of the parent left behind and for the parent to gain self-knowledge and insights in understanding their attachment with their child.

In the next chapter, guidelines for empowering the professional to assist the parent left behind will be revealed.

7. CHAPTER 7: GUIDELINES FOR EMPOWERING THE PROFESSIONAL TO ASSIST THE PARENTS LEFT BEHIND

7.1 INTRODUCTION

While considering the title of this research study, "*Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: an experiential journey,*" the researcher was reminded of a letter written by Richard Feynman, a Nobel Prize winner in which he made the following comment to a former student: "The worthwhile problems are the ones you can really solve or help solve, the ones you can really contribute something to. A problem is grand in science if it lies before us unsolved and we see some way for us to make a little headway into it" (Feynman, 2005:198). The researcher recognised assisting the parents left behind as a "worthwhile problem." During this qualitative investigation, the researcher engaged in her own experiential journey while making a "little headway into" the life world of the South African parents left behind.

The attachment one has for another stays the same but after emigration there is a categorical difference in the relationship (Boss, 2006:163). Connection as it used to be is now impossible. The therapeutic goal is for a perceptual shift in the relationship – one that accepts the ambiguity and uncertainty of absence and presence. Boss (2006:162) affirmed: "Closely attached people who become separated though ambiguous loss suffer a trauma even greater than death." She further states that regaining resiliency, revising one's attachment is essential and therefore the next chapter will focus on gaining insight into the attachment between the parent left behind and the adult-child(ren) that has emigrated.

As the study progressed, the researcher believed she had an ideal blueprint of how the proposed guidelines should evolve. She envisioned that just as death is not a clear-cut loss, the parent's loss of a child that has emigrated is also experienced as a clear-cut loss. Early during the research journey, the researcher realised that the loss of an adult-child to emigration should rather be seen as an ambiguous loss.

Boss (2006:176) advised the use of arts with the ambiguous loss of attachment: "Because revising attachment is primarily an experiential process, the arts are especially helpful. When people are experientially moved by emotions evoked

through the arts, they are in a place where change is less frightening and relational revisions become more possible."

Numerous roads can lead to an attempt to contribute to the knowledge base that can empower the professional to assist the grieving parent left behind. To support the parent on their journey towards adapting and accepting life after the emigration of their adult-child, the researcher would like to provide the professional with practice guidelines to facilitate this journey.

In this chapter, the researcher uses the isomorphism between the art of M.C. Escher and emigration to comprehend the complexity of the phenomenon of emigration. Guidelines are given to the professional in the form of literature information on relevant topics. The chapter is structured according to the stages of emigration that the parent left behind may experience and relevant background information, practical guidelines and questions are provided to enable the professional to facilitate the therapeutic process. Lastly, reconstruction of meaning by using art therapy and creative writing is discussed as an alternative mode of therapy to assist these parents.

7.2 USING ART TO COMPREHEND THE PHENOMENON OF EMIGRATION

The child that has emigrated is physically unavailable, yet alive and mentally and emotionally still part of the family. This ambiguity of the child being simultaneously available and unavailable leaves many parents left behind unable to make sense of their circumstances and they subsequently feel immobilised. The researcher, like the parents left behind, experienced the ambiguity of the situation and in an attempt to comprehend this phenomenon and enable professionals to assist these parents, she chose to visually illustrate this ambiguity using the art of Maurits Cornelis Escher (National Gallery of Art, 2014).
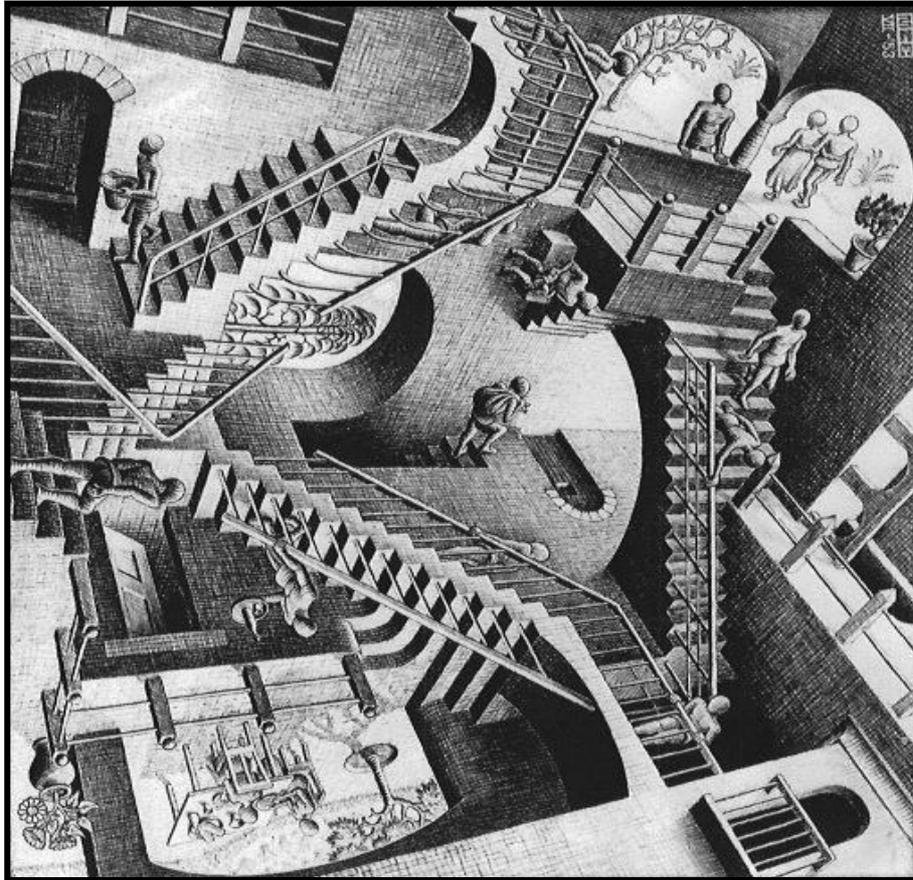
Picture 7.1: Escher: *Relativity – Source: National Gallery of Art, 2014*

When looking at the drawing of "Relativity" by Escher" (National Gallery of Art, 2014), one is amused and puzzled by various staircases which go every which way and by people moving in opposite directions on a single staircase. In this work of art, Escher shows an incomprehensible world. By drawing stairs that never go the same way and floors that are up, down, right and left, he demonstrates this strange reality. As illustrated in this brilliant artwork, two people are moving side by side and in the same direction, yet one is moving downstairs and the other upstairs. This can illustrate the multi-faceted phenomenon of emigration but upon closer inspection, similarly to when closely looking at art, we realise there is more depth and complex meanings associated with the concept of emigration.

The researcher would like to point out that our first impression and interpretation of emigration might appear uncomplicated, but each parent left behind has a unique perception and understanding of emigration although they share the same "staircase" – that of the emigration of an adult-child(ren). In this study, the researcher attempted to understand and establish the relationship between these

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different perceptions. In her experiential journey towards finding an intervention approach to assist the parents left behind, she was constantly reminded of the endless possibilities and impossibilities of this task, similar to the images in Escher's lithograph, "Relativity."

Escher (2013) describes this artwork as follows:

> Here we have three forces of gravity working perpendicularly to one another. Three earth-planes cut across each other at right angles, and human beings are living on each of them. It is possible for the inhabitants of different worlds to walk or sit or stand on the same floor, because they have differing conceptions of what is horizontal and what is vertical.

Hofstadter (1999:97) describes the staircases in Escher's lithograph, "Relativity" as:

> Islands of certainty upon which we base our interpretation of the overall picture. Having once identified them, we try to extend our understanding, by seeking to establish the relationship that they bear to one another. It is impossible for the inhabitants of different worlds to walk or sit or stand on the same floor, because they have different perceptions of what is horizontal and what is vertical. Yet they may well share the use of the same staircase.

While considering the phenomenon of emigration the researcher had to confront her own subjective perceptions. She had to make a paradigm shift regarding what defines a family, what constitutes communication as well as in her beliefs regarding therapy. The parent left behind and the adult-child(ren) that has emigrated share a history and a future. Although geographically far apart and often separated by multiple time zones, they still constitute a family. The fact that they don't share a geographical space as compared to the staircases in the art of Escher, (National Gallery of Art, 2014) has implications for all involved.

The researcher was confronted with new developments in communication technology that were unfamiliar to her, which opened new avenues for examining and understanding transnationalism. This influenced her vision for assisting the parents left behind. The researcher realised that with the ambiguity of the loss, helping professionals would have to make provision for the ongoing experience of the loss by the parents left behind. Therefore, the researcher would like to take the professional on a journey of the infinity of the emigration phenomenon in order to enable him or her to assist the parents left behind.

7.3 A WORD TO THE PROFESSIONAL BEFORE COMMENCING WITH THE THERAPEUTIC JOURNEY

Not every parent left behind will seek help from a professional, but those who are experiencing difficulties in adjusting and accepting their new circumstances might seek such assistance. To become aware of the reality of the emigration experience and establish a solid therapeutic alliance with the parents left behind, the professional needs to use core principles of effective client care.

Rober (1999:211) implies that the professional is a well-trained expert of the therapeutic conversation and therapeutic process, with the knowledge, skill and experience to bring therapy to successful completion. When a client comes to therapy, he/she tells a story that Rober (1999:211) describes as a selection of things told and things left untold. Corey (2005:17) states: "One of the most important instruments you have to work with as a counsellor is yourself as a person." The professional needs to create a safe therapeutic environment for therapy and have empathic recognition for the stories told by the client. To create this context of trust and safety for the parents, the integrity of the professional is crucial. He/she should be modest, respectful and open towards the integrity and the uniqueness of the family (Rober, 1999:8).

In order to enhance the professional's sensitivity to culturally diverse values and to provide culturally attuned therapy, it is recommended that the professional acquire culture specific knowledge and competencies to understand the life world of the client so as not to fall prey to stereotypical evaluations that deprive people of their individual histories (Falicov, 1998:5-6). From a cultural perspective, it is advisable that helping professionals should learn, understand and use the culturally based terms and realities people themselves use (Rosenblatt, 2001, 2003).

As professionals, we need to familiarise ourselves with the impact of emigration on the parents left behind – a process that puts stress on individuals and families. The professional needs to have a healthy openness and be sensitive to the symptoms that are symbolic of emigration stress (Levenbach & Lewak, 1995:379). The professional who is knowledgeable about the stressful effects of emigration, who is emotionally available and cognitively able to understand the pain that lies behind emigration loss, is in a good position to assist the parent to gradually make sense

of their new circumstances (Levenbach & Lewak, 1995:387). Without specific understanding of the losses and adjustments sustained as a result of emigration, the professional will be handicapped when assisting the parents left behind.

In "*Loss, Sadness and Depression,*" Bowlby (1980:15) expresses the trauma of loss:

> Loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human being can suffer. And not only is it painful to experience but it is also painful to witness, if only because we are impotent to help. To the bereaved nothing but the return of the lost person can bring true comfort. Should what we provide fall short of that, it is felt almost as an insult.

The emphasis of Bowlby's words is twofold and include the pain of the loss experienced by a person and the feelings of powerlessness felt by professionals and others in trying to aid and comfort those people. Rycroft and Perlesz (2001:64) observed that as a professional, you can not change the experience of loss and that makes assisting the parent challenging. During interviews with the research participants, the researcher was invited into their world where loss, and very often multiple losses, was part of their lives. She realised that with loss, our sense of order and meaning are threatened, even shattered, and we struggle to adjust. It is as if this loss invades our whole being.

The table below provides the professional with an overview of the process of assisting the parent left behind in their quest to acceptance and creating new meanings in their lives after their emigration journey.

Table 7.1:   **An overview of the therapeutic journey**

Demographical information: Parent left behind
• Age and health of the parent
• Marital status of the parent
• Parent's place of residence
• Financial position of the parent
• Existing family structure
THE STAGES OF EMIGRATION
Stage 1: Pre-emigration of the adult-child
• Emigration decision-making process

• Reasons for emigration
• Temporary or permanent emigration
Stage 2: The act of migration
• Rituals in saying goodbye
Stage 3: Post-emigration of the adult-child
• Demographical information: Adult-child that emigrated
• Age of the adult-child
• Gender of the adult-child
• Marital status of adult-child
• Place of residence in South Africa before emigration
• Frequency of contact prior to emigration
• Relationship between parent and adult-child
• Relationship between parent and grandchildren
• Parent's insight into the adult-child's new world
• Letting go of the adult-child and grandchildren
• Comparing emigration of an adult-child to losing a child to death
• Ambiguous loss is not always problematic
• Grief and bereavement
• Parent's coping strategies
○ Coping strategy: Experiencing the emigration as successful
○ Coping strategy: Maintaining transnational communication
○ Coping strategy: Visits
○ Coping strategy: Religion
Stage 4: Reconstruction of meaning
• Using creative art through poetry to reconstruct meaning
• Using the art of writing to reconstruct meaning

7.4 POPULATING THE PARENT'S COLLAGE WITH DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

With the growing interest in arts-informed approaches in research, a collage as a form of inquiry has been attracting interest in qualitative circles because it allows researchers to work in a non-linear and intuitive way by arranging image fragments that reveal unconscious connections and new understandings (Butler-Kisber &

Poldma, 2010). Robertson (2002:2) defines a collage in the following manner: "Collage reflects the very way we experience the world with objects given meaning, not from something within themselves, but rather through the way we perceive they stand in relationship to one another." Neilsen (2002:208) uses the term "listening visually" when referring to collage-making. The researcher wanted the parent to be able to "see" him/herself and thus contextualise him/herself visually in his/her world and specifically in relation to the emigration process. The researcher felt that the idea of using a collage to represent and convey the various perspectives and subjective frames of reference of the parents left behind could be an effective tool when investigating the phenomenon of emigration.

Each therapeutic process starts with a "blank canvas" that the professional needs to "colour in" or populate to reflect the journey of loss of the parent(s) left behind. The starting point in the process of collage-making is the collection of demographical information, followed by gathering detail of the parent's subjective emigration experiences.

Before commencing with the parent's emigration story, the professional needs to explore the reason for the consultation and the parent's expectations. What do they think they will gain from the appointment, what are their goals for this session and future sessions? The researcher recommends that the professional commence with a statement such as, "Tell me about your child's emigration?" Feedback obtained during this study indicated that the parents would normally begin with the main reason for their child's decision to emigrate.

The following sections can be used to guide the professional in populating the parent's collage. These sub-headings, with relevant questions, can serve as a guideline to understanding the subjective experience and perceptions of the emigration of their adult-child(ren).

7.4.1   Demographical information: Parent left behind

- **Age and health of the parent**

  Elder (1985:40) states: "Each generation is bound to fateful decisions and events in the other's life course." With few exceptions, the lives of parents and their children are connected in significant ways, as long as both generations are alive

(Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 1998:924). The consequences of life course changes that are experienced by both generations are not mutually exclusive, but influence each other. An example mentioned by the authors is that changes in an older persons' health have certain outcomes or influences on the lives of their adult-children (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 1998:924).

The age of the parents and their position in the life cycle at the time of their child's emigration had a profound effect on their physical and emotional needs. Most parents in this study felt deprived of frequent physical contact with their children. From the research, it was found that younger parents wanted an active relationship with their child and grandchildren. They wanted to share and be part of their children and grandchildren's lives, especially if they had lived in close proximity to one another and had had frequent contact prior to emigration. Older participants needed their children more often in terms of practical assistance with certain daily tasks and when making life altering decisions, for example, when choosing a retirement home. Older parents were often unable to visit their children abroad for various reasons. For example, difficulty in travelling and obtaining travel insurance.

"As the population ages, a major challenge is to consider how to increase the quality and years of healthy life" (Drewnowski, Monsen, Birkett, Gunther, Vendeland, Su & Marshall, 2003:299). Healthy aging is described as a lifelong process of optimising opportunities for improving and preserving health and physical, social, and mental wellness; independence; quality of life; and enhancing successful life-course transitions (Health Canada Workshop, 2004).

Health, as defined by the World Health Organisation (1952), extends beyond the mere absence of disease or illness to include physical, mental and social wellbeing. During later life stages, physical health plays an important role in a person's subjective wellbeing (Smith, Borchelt, Maier & Jopp, 2002:728). Smith *et al.* (2002:716) state that in old age, the challenges of dealing with chronic illness and impairments in physical, sensory and cognitive functioning have an extensive impact on the nature and routine of everyday life.

Age and health of the parent

1. Name	
2. Age	
3. Male or Female	
4. How would you describe your current health?	
5. Has your health deteriorated after the emigration and if so, in what way?	
6. Are you taking any prescribed medication?	

- **Marital status of the parent**

When the parents in this study were happily married, it did not diminish the loss, but they felt they were sharing the loss of their adult-child – they were in it together. They experienced the emigration as their combined loss and tried to comfort and support each other. It was found, however, that there are gender differences when experiencing loss. In this study, a husband did not experience the loss as intensely as his wife did, because he was still working and his sole focus was not on the children. A stay-at-home mom experienced the loss as profound and acute.

One couple in this study were not happily married, so they could not support each other and instead concealed their real feelings concerning the loss. This situation could aggravate the experience of loss since the one person that should provide support, is apparently not understanding and not sharing in the loss. The divorced parents' experiences were intensified. The emigration was experienced as yet another ambiguous loss to deal with on their own. In this study, the divorced fathers were not involved in their children's lives. When a mother had remarried, it was found that she experienced her partner not as very understanding, because the new spouse did not share her longing to be with her child. The widowed parents described a very strong bond with their children. They experienced the family unit as very intimate because "it was just the three or two of them." If the widowed mother had not remarried, the loss of her adult-child(ren) was intensified.

The professional needs to determine the parents' support system. Is there anyone who understands the loss and can comfort or assist the parent in times

of crisis? In the current study, in some cases, friends of the children assisted the parent(s) and became a support system. One of the participants described how she deliberately searched for younger women to befriend in order to have a younger support group.

Marital status of the parent

1. What is your marital status?	
1. If married, are you and your spouse mutually supportive of each other? *Describe*.	
2. If widowed, how long ago? Do you have a support system? *Describe*.	
3. If divorced, how long ago? Do you have a support system? *Describe*.	
4. If single, do you have a support system? *Describe.*	
5. Is your current partner involved with your children?	
6. Is there anybody who understands your loss and is supportive of you?	

- **Parent's place of residence**

Where are the parents currently residing? Are they living, for example, in a house, in a security complex or townhouse or in a retirement village? The professional needs to determine whether the child's emigration had an effect on the parents' living arrangements. Where did they live before the child(ren) emigrated?

In this study, a few parents had to relocate because of their child(ren)'s decision to emigrate. Participant 14 had to move as he was living with his son in a granny flat behind their house on the same stand. Participant 15 had relocated from one town to another to be closer to one of her daughters and shortly afterwards the daughter emigrated. This had implications for the parents since their life changed radically and they had to deal not only with losing their child but also with losing familiar surroundings and friends by having to relocate. The professional needs to determine whether the parents have a support system where they are currently residing, whether the support is in the form of friends, other siblings or neighbours. These support systems can be utilised in times of need.

Parent's place of residence

1. Where are you currently staying? *Describe*.	

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2. Can you accommodate your children when they visit? *Describe*.	
3. After the emigration of your child(ren), did your living arrangements change?	
4. Did you live in close proximity to your child before the emigration?	
5. Do you have a support system at your place of residence? *Describe*.	
6. Do you feel safe at your current residence? *Describe*.	

- **Financial position of the parent**

    The parent's financial status affects accessibility and frequency of contact with their adult-child that has emigrated. It determines their ability to acquire the appropriate hardware and software needed to use computer-mediated communication programs such as Skype, SMS, WhatsApp and e-mail. Most parents in this study were able to afford the necessary communication devices and mediums to communicate with their adult-child(ren) and grandchildren.

    However, not all parents were in a financial position to visit their children abroad. Some of the parents described how expensive it was to visit their children and that they were not financially able to do so as often as they would have liked.

Financial position of the parent

1. How would you describe your financial position?	

- **Existing family structure**

    If the parents had only one child, the loss was experienced as more acute as there were no other siblings to partly fulfil the other child's role, whether physically or emotionally. It frequently happened that both children had emigrated and this doubled their loss. However, it must be stressed that if there are remaining sibling(s), they can never replace the child that has emigrated as parents have unique attachment bonds with each child.

    It is recommended that the names of the children be requested to make the collage of the parent more personal. It also shows that the professional assisting the parent are really interested in the family. A genogram of the family can be created.

Determining the existing family structure

1. How many children do you have?	
2. How old are the children?	
3. How many children have emigrated? What are their names?	
4. When did they emigrate?	
5. Where do the children that have *not* emigrated live? What are their names?	
6. What kind of support are you receiving from your children that have *not* emigrated?	

7.4.2   📌   A word to the professional: Parent's collage

The parent's general demographical information has been collected and the first part of the collage is now complete. The collage can be illustrated graphically as follows:

MARITAL STATUS OF THE PARENT

PARENT'S PLACE OF RESIDENCE

FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PARENT

EXISTING FAMILY STRUCTURE

AGE AND HEALTH OF THE PARENT
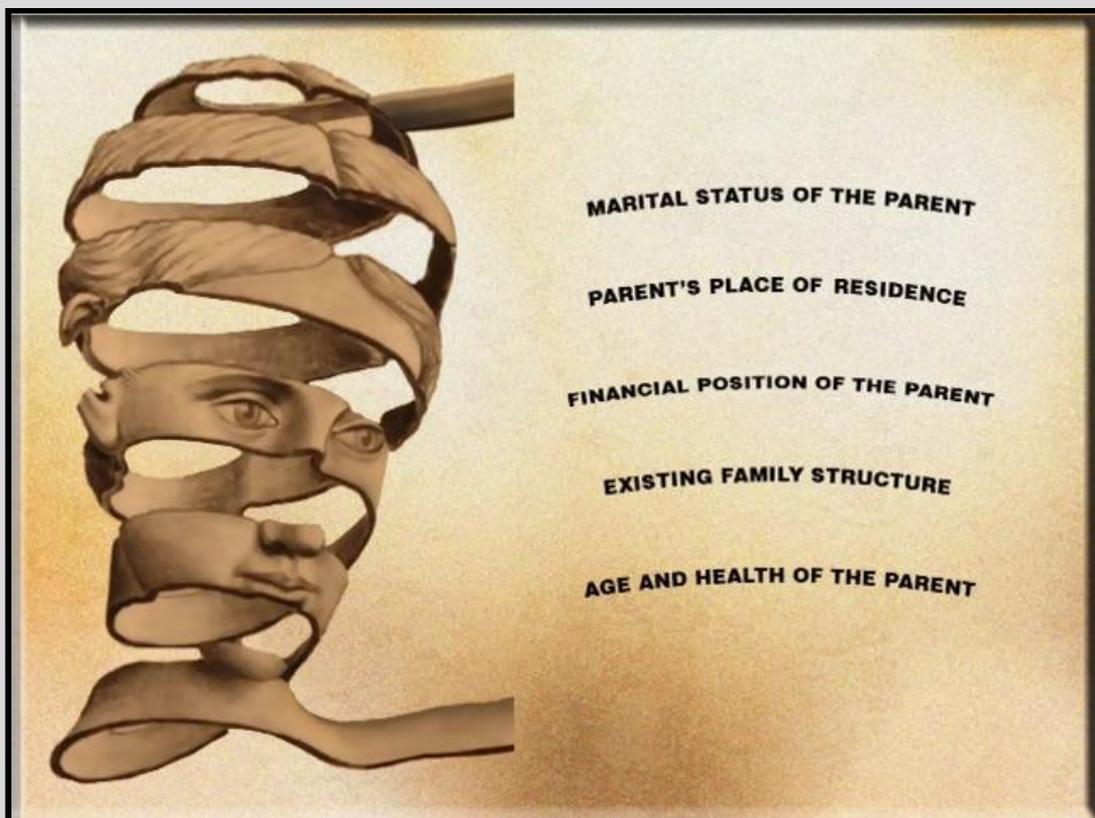
Adapted from M.C. Escher's Bond of Union 1956 lithograph (Escher, 2015)

The second part of populating the collage is to capture the essence of the emigration story. Because of our multi-cultural composition, parents will show differences in their subjective experiences. A unique drama will characterise each migration experience. To show these unique perceptions the researcher identified various stages that the parents may experience during the emigration of their adult-child(ren).

7.5 POPULATING THE PARENT'S COLLAGE USING THE STAGES OF EMIGRATION

The researcher identified the following stages in the parents' journey of their adult-child's emigration: Pre-emigration of the adult-child, the act of emigration and post-emigration. These three stages, with their relevant information and guiding questions, will empower the professional to "colour in" or populate the collage of each parent in order to obtain a clear picture of their subjective experience and journey of emigration loss. They will also provide the professional with necessary guidelines to give structure to the therapeutic process. The final stage, namely Stage 4: Reconstruction of meaning will empower the professional in assisting the parents to seek new meaning in their lives. Within this general framework, a therapeutic programme for the parent can evolve.

The researcher presents the stages as follows: General information is given about the stage and possible questions are provided to structure the interview. Important applicable theme knowledge is provided in shaded sections where necessary. This will empower the professional by providing him/her with additional in-depth information regarding specific topics. The researcher would like to stress that these stages should not be considered as static, but should be seen as an aid to structure consultation with the parent.

7.5.1 Stage 1: Pre-emigration of the adult-child

In the pre-emigration stage, three aspects need to be addressed, namely the decision-making process, reasons given for emigration and the temporary or permanent nature of the emigration. In the current study, it was found that the way the parents experienced these three aspects had an effect on their journey towards acceptance in general.

7.5.1.1 Emigration decision-making process

The traumatic effects of emigration may begin when the child(ren) decides to emigrate. This prelude to migration begins when the first concrete actions towards a commitment to migrate are made by the adult-child(ren). These activities can be an exchange of letters, application for visas, or any other act that substantiates the intent to migrate. The time span of this stage varies with the circumstances. The researcher found various scenarios in the timeframe of the decision-making process, ranging from months to even years before the child finally emigrated. When the child was offered a job, the process was less complicated and much shorter and the child left quite soon after the decision was made. The fact that the child was at least guaranteed an income and had the opportunity to be successful, helped the parent to make peace with the emigration. A lengthy process, on the other hand, might allow the parents to get used to the idea of their child's emigration. They might even become involved in assisting the child during this process.

Whether they were involved or not involved in the decision-making process to emigrate had a profound impact on parents' adaption to the emigration of their adult-child(ren). Mason (1999:171) refers to this concept as a "licence to leave." The researcher found that parents in this study believed that because of the current economic and political situation in the country, emigration was the best decision. Most parents considered the advantages and disadvantages of emigration, and believed the child(ren) would be better off and therefore felt they could give "permission" for them to leave. In their minds it "legalised" the child(ren)s' decision to emigrate and it gave them a "license to leave." Parents in this study tried not to make the child feel guilty about leaving the country and mostly supported his/her new endeavour.

Parents that were involved in the decision-making process showed less resistance to the child's decision to emigrate. Baldassar (2007a:280) found that those individuals whose migrations were supported as appropriate life-courses by themselves and their families were likely to enjoy less fractious transnational family relationships than those individuals whose migration met with disapproval. Most parents in the current study accepted the decision to emigrate and it made their own adjustment to the idea a little easier. Although they were consulted, the final decision

to emigrate resided with the child. Some parents felt that they should not be involved in the decision-making process and left the decision exclusively to the child.

Emigration decision-making process

1. What was the extent of your involvement in the decision-making process? *Describe.*	
2. What were your initial thoughts regarding their emigration?	
3. In your opinion, did they make the right decision to emigrate? *Describe.*	
4. How did you feel about their decision to emigrate?	

7.5.1.2   Reasons for emigration

Emigration is described by migrants as an act loaded either with negative motivations and connotations (such as "to escape political oppression") or with positive connotations (such as "to make a better living"). So, "to make a better living" (positive) may imply "escaping from a bad living situation" (negative). Despite the fact that migration is usually the result of a collective decision, some people tend to be labelled as "responsible" for or as "motivator" of the migration (Sluzki, 1979:379-381).

The reasons for the emigration partly determined the parent's acceptance of their child leaving the country. If the sole reason was the current socio-political climate and instability in the country, they experienced the loss as forced upon them for reasons out of their control. If their child was exposed to violent crime and it was the deciding factor, they blamed the government and people in positions of power for their loss and felt very bitter and enraged. If the reason to emigrate was to enhance their financial and/or professional position and career, the parents were more accepting of the decision and justified it by saying the child would be better off living in the new country.

The reasons for emigration in the South African environment vary. In this study, crime played a role in many of the children's decision to emigrate. This added another dimension to the parents' adaptation process. Rape, armed robbery and other kinds of crime "forced" the children to leave, which left the parent with other unresolved issues. A single reason for migration, with a value judgment attached to it, may provide us with valuable clues as to the family's coping styles.

Reasons for emigration

1. In your opinion, why did your child(ren) emigrate?	
2. How do you feel about their reasons to emigrate?	
3. Do you blame anyone/anything for the emigration?	
4. In your opinion, who suffered the greatest loss from their emigration.	

7.5.1.3   Temporary or permanent emigration

It must be kept in mind that although the very act of migration may constitute a brief transition (couple of hours by plane), it is generally very traumatic for the emigrants and the parents left behind. The mode or style of the migratory act varies considerably. Migration can be seen as a trial period or an immutable fact (Sluzki, 1979:379-381).

Various scenarios have been identified that impact on the parent's dealing with the loss. One scenario found in this and other studies was when emigrants affirm that they will migrate "only for a short period." They plan to "emigrate" for a given period with the purpose, for instance, to further their studies, earn good money and then to return. Some do return while others return for a short period, just to leave again on a permanent basis. Some never return. This has an implication for the parent since they see the process as temporary and if it becomes permanent, it is yet another loss that they have to adapt to.

In addition, the emigrant might use a country such as New Zealand as a stepping-stone to eventually emigrate to Australia. Once they have made a move, it seems it's easier to move to another country since they have already been through the emigration process. Some of the children of participants in this study were world travellers, having lived in many countries across the world. These parents felt it was not possible for them to "follow" their children by also emigrating, since they might emigrate just to find the child is moving once again, leaving them behind.

Some adult-children vow never to return to South Africa, not even to visit, so the act of migration becomes something final and unchangeable. In this study, Participant 8 said her child and his family would never come back to South Africa since being victims of a serious crime incident, namely armed robbery, had been the main

reason for their emigration. This is very difficult for the parents to deal with especially if they are not in a financial position to visit the child.

Temporary or permanent emigration

1. Was this the first time that you child(ren) attempted to emigrate?	
2. Were you under the impression that the move was temporary?	
3. If so, when did you realise that it was not?	
4. Is there any possibility that they will visit South Africa? *Explain*.	

In stage 1: Pre-emigration of the adult-child, the focus was on the onset of the emigration process, the child's decision to emigrate and the parents' involvement or non-involvement in the decision-making process. The reasons for emigration were explored and lastly, the permanency of the child's emigration and the repercussions for the acceptance and adjustment were addressed.

7.5.2 Stage 2: The act of emigration

The act of migration is a very short stage, but it is viewed as a life altering experience for parents left behind. It is the culmination of a period of preparation and the final event of the adult-child(ren) physically leaving. The preparation took place weeks or months before, but actually leaving the country is the first experience of loss for the parents left behind. Parents associate an airport with loss and emotional turmoil.

7.5.2.1 Rituals in saying goodbye

With death there are prescribed rituals such as the receipt of the death certificate, the reading of a written will and an obituary in the newspaper. Then there is typically a type of funeral where friends and family members gather to lay the deceased to rest. These cultural practices and social support systems help to facilitate the grieving process. During these rituals, their loss is publicly perceived as a real loss and the loved ones left behind receive empathy and community support (Betz & Thorngren, 2009:359). However, with emigration, like other types of ambiguous loss, there are no prescribed rituals and often the loss of the parent is not acknowledged as legitimate.

Because migration is in most circumstances a transition, with little or no prescribed mourning rituals, migrants and the ones left behind have only their own private

rituals to assist them in dealing with this painful act (Boss, 1999; Rycroft & Perlesz, 2001). Despite the fact that the relationship has changed irrevocably, the person suffering the loss, feels unable to grieve because the person they grieve for is still alive. This loss is rarely acknowledged in an effective mourning ritual (Rycroft & Perlesz, 2001:60). The purpose of rituals is to protect the world and people against the pain of loss. They guard communities against the mayhem that loss can produce. The lack of social sanction for the loss may inhibit the acceptance of its reality and the lack of suitable rituals for mourning this loss, complicates the process even further. People may try to suppress their grief and move on as socially expected, without giving themselves permission to mourn their loss.

Falicov (2001, 2007) stressed the function of rituals and their significance in helping families to cope with the numerous ambiguous losses. In order to determine how the parent left behind experienced the act of the child leaving the country for the first time, the saying goodbye at the airport or other gatherings, the following questions can be used as a guideline.

Rituals in saying goodbye

1. Was there an official farewell or gathering before the emigration?	
2. Were you at the airport, and if not, whose decision was it?	
3. What would you have done differently at the airport, if anything?	
4. Have you made any specific association with an airport? *Describe.*	

7.5.3 Stage 3: Post-emigration of the adult-child

During this stage, the parent has to deal with the fact that the child has physically left and the relationship as it was known has irrevocably changed. Hofer (1996:581) offers the following insight in this regard: "If there is one thing this animal model of loss has to tell clinicians who work with the stress of loss in individual patients, it is, look carefully for exactly what was lost." It is the relationship to the loss that matters (Melnick & Roos, 2007:104). For some parents, simply defining their experience as a loss worthy of grief may be comforting.

7.5.3.1 Demographical information: Adult-child that emigrated

In order to assist the parent, it is important to have background information on the adult-child that has emigrated.

- **The age of the adult-child that emigrated**

Silverstein and Bengtson (1997:452) found that there is a realignment of child-parent relations as the child ages. Young adults initially rely heavily on parents with respect to concrete resources when leaving home. In their transition "flight" to independence, they also depend on the parents to support their emotional and material needs. Middle-age children occupy career and parenting roles that may limit their ability to invest in parental relationships. They disengage from their parents because alternative family and work-related demands may replace practical integration with their parents (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997:452).

The age of the child at the time of emigration affected the parents left behind in different ways, and possibly influenced the parents' reaction and experience of the loss. When the child emigrated directly after leaving school, the parents were worried about whether the child was emotionally mature enough and concerned if they were able to cope with the demands of adjusting to a new country. When an older adult-child was successful in South Africa, parents were concerned about their ability to retain their lifestyle and reach equal career and financial success in the new country.

Age of the adult-child that emigrated

1. How old was your child when he or she emigrated?	
2. How old were you at the time?	
3. How long ago did your child emigrate?	

- **Gender of the child that has emigrated**

Kaufman and Uhlenberg (1998:927) highlighted that several differences have been found between genders in intergenerational relationships. The first difference is that females are more engaged than males in maintaining intergenerational relationships. Secondly, same sex dyads tend to differ from cross sex dyads, that is, children identify more strongly with the parent of the same sex. The third aspect is the mother-daughter relationship that has been found to be stronger than any other dyad type. The number of siblings the adult-child has can mediate the relationship between a child and her or his parents.

The parents' age and the age difference between a parent and a child can also have an effect on the relationship.

In this study, Participant 8 indicated that with her son's emigration, she did not think of emigrating herself, but if her daughter were to emigrate, she would definitely consider emigration.

Gender of the child that has emigrated

1. What is the gender of the child that has emigrated?	
2. Did the gender make a difference? *How*?	

- **Marital status of adult-child**

In this study, some of the participant's children emigrated as a single person. The participants were worried that the young adults would struggle abroad and that it would be difficult for them to cope without parental support at such a young age. During this period, most unmarried children met their partner abroad. Some couples returned to South Africa to get married, while others got married abroad. Once the child was married, the participants wanted to get to know the new spouse and build a relationship with him/her but this was difficult given the geographical distance. Cultural differences further hindered the building of these relationships.

Factors such as whether the adult-child was married when he/she emigrated as well as the relationship with the in-law child(ren), played an important role regarding contact with the rest of the family. The daughter and daughter-in-law are usually seen as the "gatekeepers" of the family. The researcher found that the child who had emigrated kept contact with his/her own parents and if there was a good relationship with the daughter or son in-law, this was experienced as beneficial to all relationships.

Marital status of adult child

1. Did he/she emigrate as a single person?	
2. Is he/she still single and living abroad?	
3. In case of marriage, from which nationality is his/her new partner?	

- **Place of residence in South Africa before emigration**

When the adult-child and parents lived in the same town and had frequent contact, it inevitably accentuated the loss. The more frequent the contact before emigration, the more difficult it was for the parents to adjust. Two of the research participants had lived in the same suburb as their child prior to emigration and had had frequent contact and involvement with the grandchildren.

Place of residence in South Africa before emigration

1. Where did the child stay before emigration?	
2. Did you live in the same town or suburb?	
3. Did you live in close proximity to your child?	

- **Frequency of contact prior to emigration**

Family connectedness – the obligation to care for and support one another – is a defining feature of the extended family. "This cultural tendency toward family connectedness seems to withstand migration and to persist in some form for at least one or two generations" (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Most adults maintain meaningful relationships with their parents, despite parents being less involved in the day-to-day lives of their adult offspring (Ainsworth, 1989). In addition, most adults depend on parents during stressful times (Cicirelli, 1983). When parents, especially mothers, have built their lives around their children, the separation and loss is profound. However, if they have led separate and fulfilled lives apart from their children, it makes it slightly easier for them to adapt.

Frequency of contact prior to emigration:

1. How often did you visit each other in South Africa?	
2. How often did you communicate?	
3. Were you satisfied with the frequency of contact?	

7.5.3.2   A word to the professional: Adult-child's collage

The first step in populating the collage was to collect demographical information concerning the parent. The image below now represents data pertaining to the adult-child that was collected using relevant questions.
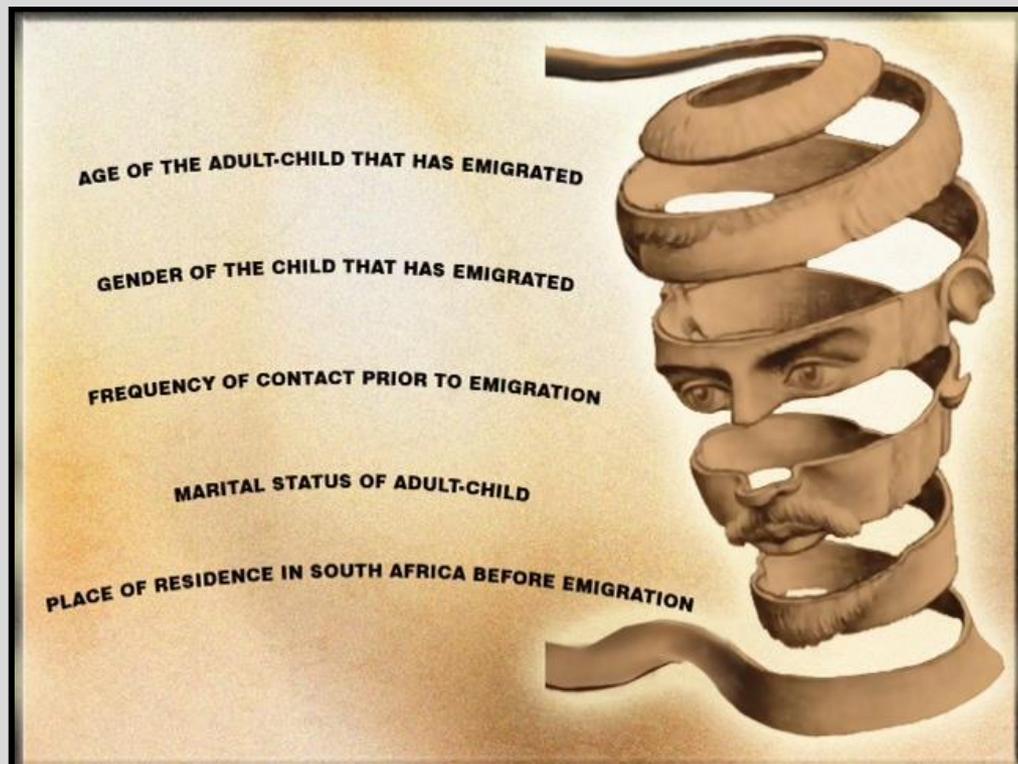
Adapted from M.C. Escher's Bond of Union 1956 lithograph (Escher, 2015)

Up to this point in the process of populating the collage, the professional has collected the necessary personal information from the parent regarding both role players, namely the parent and the adult-child. It is recommended that the professional share his/her insights, based on the "collage" information, with the parent in order for the parent as well as the professional to form a "gestalt" view of the loss that the parent is experiencing.

7.5.3.3   Relationship between parent and adult-child

The parent-child bond is the most fundamental of all human relationships and this bond can be grasped by referring to the attachment theory (Climo, 1992:1). It is recommended that the professional have insight in this special relational bond.

Dankoski (2001:185) emphasises that secure attachments provide the safe haven and secure base that is needed to deal with life cycle transitions. Without this secure base, transitions may be experienced as particularly stressful. The nature of these transitions entails the renegotiation of attachment bonds among family members. "During family life cycle transitions, we need others to be there for us and family relationships need to change to fit new demands" (Dankoski, 2001:185).

A substantial empirical literature study of families in later life suggests that aging parents and their adult-children typically remain very involved with one another over the life course. In order to assist the parent in determining what was lost, the researcher recommends focusing on the relationship and attachment bond between the parent and the adult-child. Transitions, such as emigration, evoke our attachment needs and heighten our attachment behaviours. During these transitions, the support of family members is needed to cope with stress and to explore and learn how to deal with the new challenges posed by changes in the family.

In order to assist the parents in dealing with their loss, the professional needs to determine the quality of the relationship with the adult-child, now and prior to emigration. The relationship between the parent and adult-child, as described from the parents' perspective, will shed light on the extent of their loss and eventually how they will deal with that loss.

7.5.3.4 **A word to the professional: Parent-child attachment and individuation**

Parent-child attachment and individuation

Attachment theory stems from the influential work of John Bowlby. Bowlby (1979:127) views attachment as "the propensity of human beings to make affection bonds to particular others." Bowlby (1979:129) explicates that attachment behaviour continues throughout one's life. According to this theory, a child who is exposed to responsive and consistent caregiving develops the expectation that others will be available and supportive when needed. The relationship with the parent determines the child's capacity to make affectional bonds later in life. Fraley (2002:135)

emphasises that the way we think, feel and behave in our adult relationships is a reflection of our attachment history.

Attachments are our emotional links to others and evolve into affectional bonds (Ainsworth, 1989). Thus, the quality of attachment security developed in infancy and early childhood becomes a trait-like personal characteristic that forms a foundation for day-to-day psychological functioning throughout the lifespan. Significant loss may cause these assumptions to be revised as their perceived accuracy and utility is challenged. The concept of mental representations of attachment relationships was proposed by Bowlby (1979) in order to explain why older children and adults do not require physical proximity in order to feel securely attached. He extended our understanding of the bonds that tie people to each other and of the consequences when separations and losses occur.

Parenting styles influence the quality of child-parent attachments. A parental style that represents emotional warmth, responsiveness, communication and parent-child trust is more likely to result in a secure attachment bond. In contrast, a parental style characterised by being intrusive, less responsive and controlling can lead to an insecure attachment between parent and child (Belsky, Jaffee, Hsieh & Silva, 2001).

Ainsworth (1989) took forward Bowlby's seminal theory on attachment and developed the idea of using attachment style as a basis for understanding responses to separation and loss. An insecure attachment style will activate anxious or avoidant responses to loss or separation, while the securely attached person will demonstrate qualities of resilience when faced with loss. Before we can fully comprehend the impact of a loss and the human behaviour associated with it, one must have some understanding of the meaning of attachment (Worden, 2009:13).

The term "attached individuation" is used to convey the idea that the process of children gaining independence does not suggest a severing of deep connections with their parents. Research demonstrates that individuation from, and connection with parents are deeply intertwined processes (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Miller & Lane, 1991; Quintana & Lapsley, 1990). Attachment and differentiation are not mutually exclusive but mutually supportive. Indeed, it appears that children's individuation is best achieved in the context of strong bonds with parents (Miller &

Lane, 1991; Karp, Holmstrom & Gray, 2004:358). A complicated intertwined process exists between a child gaining independence and their connection with their parents. Individuation and attachment are mutually supportive. When a strong attachment bond exists between a parent and a child, a child can achieve individuation successfully (Karp *et al.,* 2004:358).

On separation, Mahler (1979:4) writes: "… and individuation consists of those achievements marking the child's assumption of his own individual characteristics. These are intertwined but not identical developmental processes; they may proceed divergently, with a developmental lag or precocity to one another."

In Jung's (1953:171) words: "Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last and incompatible uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self." Jung (1972:168) explains that to realise a sense of separateness and self, we need to leave the "the magic circle of the mother and family." Individuation is a path rather than a goal, a process that continues rather than a destination. Individuation is the unfolding of self through life.

Relationship between parent and adult-child

1. Describe your relationship with your child when he/she was younger?	
2. What was your relationship with the child before he/she left?	
3. What do you miss most about your child? *Describe.*	
4. What would be different if they had not emigrated? *Describe.*	

7.5.3.5   Relationship between parent and grandchild(ren)

Grandparenthood brings along new excitement (Walsh, 1999). It stimulates the memory recollection of earlier parenting experiences, both positive and negative (Dankoski, 2001:177). The researcher found that if a strong attachment bond was established prior to the emigration, it was possible to maintain a good relationship with the grandchild, but frequency of the contact was the key. If there was no contact prior to emigration or if the child was born overseas, it was more challenging, but not impossible to be part of the grandchild's life. One participant described how her grandchild saw her: "… my granny lives in a computer," which stresses the

challenge of maintaining a close and meaningful grandparent-grandchild relationship.

Relationship between parent and grandchildren

1. How many grandchildren do you have?	
2. What are the ages of your grandchildren? What are their names?	
3. How old were they when they left?	
4. Where do your grandchildren who have not emigrated live?	
5. Have more grandchildren been born to your family that have emigrated?	
6. How often do you have contact with them?	
7. What type of communication medium do you use to communicate?	

7.5.3.6   Parent's insight into the adult-child's new world

Not only the parent, but also the adult-child has experienced loss. The parent needs to be made aware of his/her child's experience as an emigrant. The researcher recommends that the professional understand the situation of the emigrant child in order to equipped him/herself to aid the parent in understanding the child's new world. This understanding may eventually lead to the parent celebrating his/her child's tremendous courage in leaving a familiar world behind to start a new life in totally unfamiliar circumstances. In addition, the parent may learn to view this achievement in a positive light, not only for what the child has achieved, but also to give themselves credit for their parenting skills.

7.5.3.7   A word to the professional: The adult-child that has emigrated

The adult-child that has emigrated

The decision to migrate has at its core two ambiguous poles – frustration with the conditions in the home country compelling the emigrant to move and love for family and surroundings pulling in the other direction (Falicov, 2005:198). Not all individuals have both the desire and the means to migrate to a new country.

The emigration experience for the adult-child begins in their country of origin, long before the immigrant arrives in the new country. Segal, Mayadas and Eliott (2006:11) explain that it is in their home country that the motivation to emigrate arises, and it is from here that emigrants draw their resources – economic, social

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and emotional – to undertake the greatest challenge of their lives. This process is lengthy and complex, with the success of the emigrant being dependent on the interplay of personal and environmental factors (Segal, Mayadas & Eliott, 2006:4). Those individuals whose migrations are supported as appropriate life courses by themselves, their parents and communities, are likely to enjoy less fractious transnational family relationships than those individuals whose migration meets with disapproval (Baldassar, 2007a:280).

Boneva and Frieze (2001:477) asked the following question: "Is there a set of motives, values, and traits that characterise the personalities of people who emigrate?" In their aptly named article, "*Toward a concept of migrant personality,*" these authors argue that the desire to emigrate is associated with a specific set of personality characteristics that differentiates people who want to emigrate from people who want to stay in their country of origin. In a cross-cultural study on desires to emigrate, Frieze and colleagues found evidence that economic and other environmental factors cannot fully account for the desire to emigrate (Frieze, Boneva, Šarlija *et al.*, 2000). Various studies have shown that this desire is often prompted by psychological attributes of the decision-makers and is strongly influenced by non-rational considerations. While the decision to leave their homeland may have a rational backdrop, it may implicate much more of the individual's personality (Goldin, 2002:1).

Bonevaand Frieze argues that individuals who want to emigrate possess a syndrome of personality characteristics that differentiate them from those who want to stay in their home country. This migrant personality syndrome is seen as only one of a variety of factors that determine migratory behaviour. Their research found that those who want to resettle in another country tend to be more work-oriented, have higher achievement and power motivation, but lower affiliation motivation and family centrality than those who do not want to leave their country of origin. Resilience, flexibility, openness and strength are valuable personality features that can facilitate successful adaptation to their new world. This process of adaptation is, however, not linear (Boneva & Frieze, 2001:477).
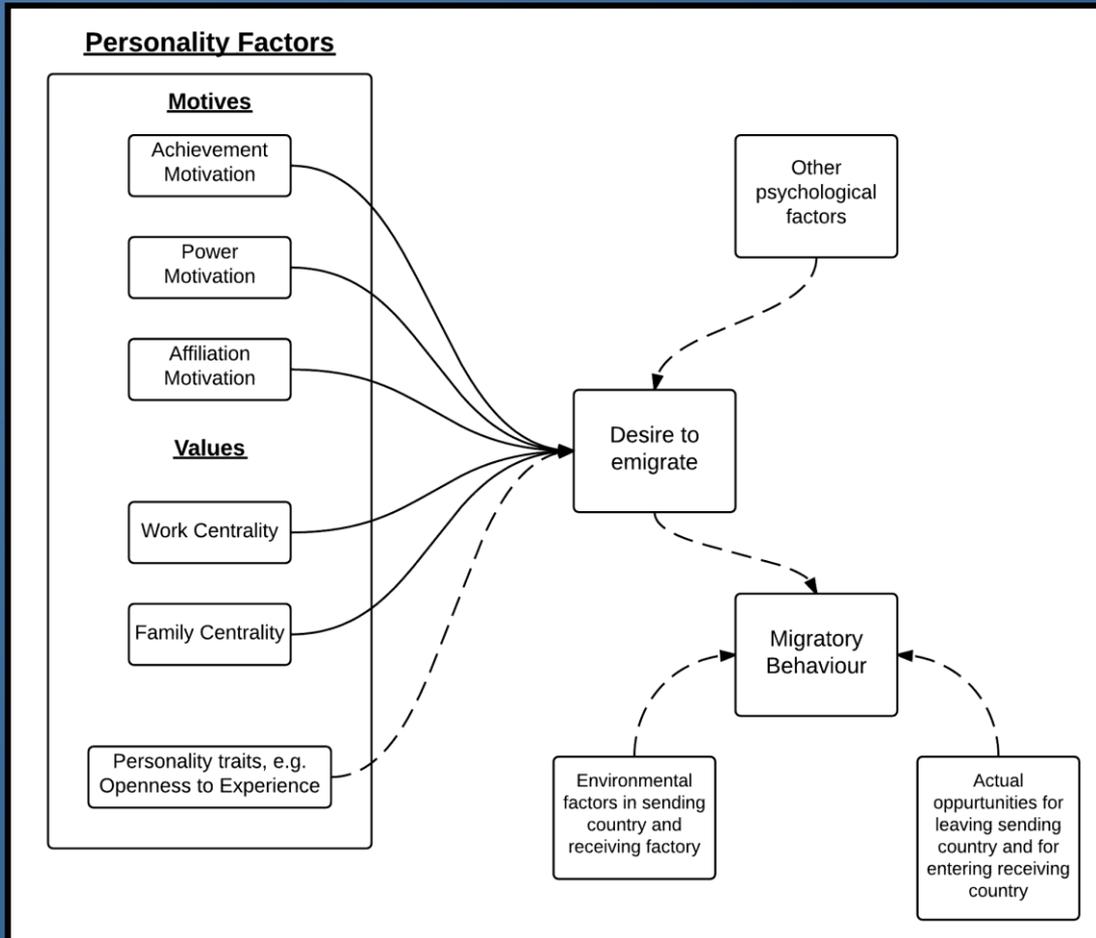
Figure 7.1:   **The role of personality in desires to emigrate (Boneva & Frieze, 2001)**

Boneva and Frieze (2001:479) propose a model of personality characteristics (Figure 7.1) that contributes to desires to emigrate or stay. The personality pattern, together with other psychological factors, interacts with environmental factors and opportunities to produce actual migratory behaviour. These authors pointed out that a certain pattern of personality characteristics will be predictive of higher levels of desire to emigrate.

Regardless the reason for migration, a spectrum of tangible and intangible elements and symbols from one's country of origin can be lost due to migration and could initiate a process of grieving reactions and emotional distress (Casado & Leung, 2002:10). Physical losses refer to tangible losses, such as loss of loved ones and possessions. Symbolic losses, which are often not recognised as losses, refer to intangible, abstract losses, such as loss of status, social role and identity (Casado & Leung, 2002:10).

A vital theme that became apparent in the literature points to the numerous losses that are endured when an individual is separated from their homeland. These losses include the loss of mother tongue; home; attitudes; traditional values; customs; social structure; social support systems and family ties; status; income; religion; familiar environment and surroundings. These may all have a significant effect on a migrant's adjustment and transition to the new country (Casado & Leung, 2002). Migration involves the loss of the familiar, including language (especially colloquial and dialect), attitudes, values, social structures and support networks (Bhugra & Becker, 2005:19). Other migration-related losses experienced are loss of shared values; relationships and places of emotional significance; feelings of security and safety; connectedness to others; and a deep sense of loss of self-identity (Aroian, 1990; Lijtmaer, 2001). These losses can initiate certain emotions, reactions and responses, which can affect an emigrant's mental and emotional state significantly.

Parent's insight into the adult-child's new world

1. Have you visited your child?	
2. What do you know about your child's new life?	
3. Do you think your child made the right decision by emigrating?	
4. From what you gather from your child, is he/she happy in the new surroundings?	
5. Who do you think benefitted the most from them emigrating?	
6. Who do you think was hurt or lost the most by them emigrating?	

7.5.3.8   Letting go of the adult-child and grandchildren

Stroebe (2002:133) states that there is a possible link between a person's attachment style, internal working model and way of letting go, following a loss. The separation of emigration can strike deeply at unresolved separation issues. Coping with separation depends on how the individual coped with earlier experiences, such as going to school, adolescence and marriage. These are important stepping-stones toward separateness. An efficient parent will facilitate these "migrations" by providing a safe holding environment (Levenbach & Lewak, 1995:383).

In this research, it was found that it is just as difficult to let go of the grandchildren, as it is to let go of the children, especially if there was frequent contact between the

grandparent and the grandchildren. If the grandchild was born in South Africa and the grandparent was involved from birth, letting go was excruciating.

7.5.3.9   **A word to the professional: Letting go**

Letting go

Folk wisdom says that there are two lasting gifts parents can give to their children – one is roots, and the other is wings. From the well-known wisdom of Kahlil Gibran [sa] concerning children: "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent …" Barbara Kantrowitz (2006:1) makes the following statement: "Letting go – are there two more painful words in the boomer-parent lexicon?" Barber (1989:22) explicates that researchers investigating parental responses to "empty-nest" transition have largely ignored the possible influence of cohort membership. This author notes that persons launching a child at one point in history might evaluate it quite differently from a group at another point in history. Letting go is the final frontier for boomer parents, who've made child rearing a major focus of their adult lives. According to Jung (1972:168), to realise a sense of separateness and self, we need to leave the "the magic circle of the mother and family."

For Asbach and Shermer (1994:96), "Separation has to do with the boundary and space between mother and infant. It is a process of mutual distancing and of engagement from symbiotic and transformed psychic reality dependence." Life is a continuous process of holding on and letting go. The process occurs gracefully most of the time, with little awareness. Sometimes we are forced to end a relationship before we are ready and as a result, we are thrown out of rhythm and need to construct a new balance (Melnick & Roos, 2007:104).

Boss (1999:15) advises that parents should change their perception of whom the child is in order to minimise loss associated with a child leaving home: "The family portrait should be revised." The author explicates that relationships with growing children are excellent examples of the continual challenges parents face to change their perceptions of who's in and who's out of the family.

Letting go of the adult-child

1. How would you describe the history of your letting go of your child?	
2. Can you see similarities between your history of letting go and the emigration of your child?	
3. What coping mechanism did you use to deal with letting go?	

7.5.3.10   A word to the professional: Ambiguous loss and chronic sorrow

Ambiguity and chronic sorrow

The child has moved physically, not just from the neighbourhood, suburb or town. He/she has moved to another country, even another time zone, therefore, there is a loss of proximity due to geographical distance. This geographical distance implies loss of the relationship as it was known to both the parent and the child.

They are missing out on physical contact, visits on special days, and celebrations like the birth of a new grandchild. The geographical distance has a life altering effect on the relationship as it was known. This type of loss is defined as ambiguous loss.

In this study, the South African parent left behind found the painful ambiguity surrounding their loss a challenge to comprehend. This loss ran like a golden thread through the whole emigration process (Boss, Beaulieu, Wielen, Turner & La Cruz, 2003:456).

Every transition in life is a loss of some kind as endings and beginnings are entangled – and endings carry the potential of loss (Scott, 2013:249). Loss can be divided into two types, physical and symbolic. Physical loss refers to tangible loss, such as the loss of a loved one and tangible personal possessions. Symbolic loss refers to abstract loss or intangible loss such as loss of status, loss of one's hopes or ideals related to what a person believes should have been, could have been, or might have been.

The concept of ambiguous loss helps us recognise and understand the unique perceptions and emotions associated with losses that are irresolvable (Boss,

2004b). "There are two types of ambiguous loss, physical absence with psychological presence, and physical presence with psychological absence. In both types of ambiguous loss, those who suffer the loss have to deal with something very different from ordinary, clear-cut loss" (Boss, 2006).

Just as the experience of non-finite and ambiguous loss can and does last a lifetime for parents of children with disabilities, so does the loss of children to emigration. Because the loss is intangible or uncertain, the mourning process becomes complicated. Ambiguous loss is characterised by factors that inherently impede the grieving process (Boss, 1999).

A never-ending rollercoaster, ambiguous loss takes its toll on family members physically, cognitively, behaviourally and emotionally (Boss, 1999). Physically, they may suffer from fatigue, sleep disruption, headaches or stomach aches. Cognitively, they may become pre-occupied with the loss, forgetful, dream about the loss, or worry. Behaviourally, they may experience talkativeness, quietness, crying, hyperactivity, inactivity, sighing, support seeking, withdrawal, dependence or avoidance. Emotionally, they may feel loneliness, yearning, anxiety, depression, fear, anger, irritability, apathy or relief (Weiner, 1999 in Betz & Thorngren, 2006:361).

To work with families or individuals experiencing ambiguous loss, Boss (1999) recommends we first understand our own fear of the phenomenon and of having no answers. As professionals, it is recommended that we engage in our own experiential and didactic work, reflecting on our own ambiguous loss.

A related concept to non-finite loss is that of chronic sorrow. Jones and Beck (2007, cited in Harris & Gorman 2011:2) explained that as individuals try to reconcile themselves between the world that is known through their experiences and the world in the future that is now anticipated, they feel a sense of chronic despair and ongoing dread. The parent left behind envisioned active participation and playing a direct role in the lives of their children and their grandchildren. With the adult-child geographically so far from them, they now face the reality, depending on their physical health and financial situation, of only seeing the adult-child and

grandchildren when finances allow. Therefore, they feel a sense of chronic despair and ongoing apprehension.

Numerous losses experienced by families on a daily and ongoing basis are not recognised by society and subsequently, the magnitude of the loss is frequently unrecognised or not acknowledged by others (Harris & Gorman, 2011:2). The research participants in this study viewed their situation as abnormal. They often felt a sense of disconnection from the mainstream and what is generally viewed as "normal" in human experience. They have children but they feel childless, especially when they see other families visiting and spending family time together. They experienced powerlessness over their declining health as this might prevent them from seeing their children and/or grandchildren again. The helplessness and powerlessness associated with the loss seemed to increase with age as the parent became more vulnerable.

The professional must allow the parents left behind to vent their emotions in a non-judgmental environment and assist them in understanding what the child's emigration means to each of them personally (Olshansky, 1962). The professional can become a key agent of change by helping the parents locate educational materials that enable the family to better understand the effect of emigration bereavement. In this regard, the researcher wants to stress the importance of the professional being well-informed. The role of the professional "becomes more of a facilitator seeking the most appropriate means to assist the left behind in their adjustment to their changed circumstances" (Murray, 2001:234).

Because of the inherent nature of ambiguous loss, there is no one-size-fits-all model for helping parents cope with its multifaceted stressors. Boss (2006) recommended that instead of one best intervention, interventions should to be tailor-made.

7.5.3.11 Comparing emigration of an adult-child to losing a child to death

"The death of a child brings the most difficult grief because the sense of selfhood involved in parenting is a central part of the being" (Klass, 1993:361). With the death of a child, the parent experiences an irreparable loss, for the child is an extension

of the parent. Described aptly by Klass (1993:344): "When a child dies, a part of the self is cut off."

We are sometimes forced to end a relationship long before we are ready. In the current study, some of the participants experienced their child's emigration as a devastating loss and even compared it to the loss of a child to death. The interpretation of loss and hence the reaction to it will be affected by factors unique to each individual and culture.

Comparing emigration of an adult-child to loosing a child to death

1. Have you ever compared the emigration of your child to losing a child to death? *Explain.*	
2. If so, where do the similarities lie? *Describe.*	

7.5.3.12 Ambiguous loss is not always problematic

Storytelling can transform grief into a growth process, rather than leaving the family stuck. "… a person's story of loss is not real, and thus not resolvable, until someone is willing to hear it" (Betz & Thorngren, 2006:365). The researcher advises the professional to ask the parent to tell his story and where he/she commences could be an important indication of what is uppermost on their mind.

To determine whether ambiguous loss is problematic, Boss (2006) advised that from a structural point of view, it is problematic when decisions are put on hold, daily tasks are not done, family members are ignored or cut off and rituals and celebrations are cancelled. Psychologically, ambiguous loss is problematic when there are feelings of hopelessness that lead to depression and passivity and feelings of ambivalence that lead to guilt, anxiety and immobilisation. Although some individuals may exhibit symptoms that must be treated (e.g. suicidal ideation, addiction, violence, major depression), ambiguity is normal in this abnormal situation.

Should the answers to the questions below lead the professional to believe that the parent is finding it difficult to cope, the possibility of complicated grief, should be investigated and the option of referring the parent to a professional specialising in grief should be considered.

The following diagram – *Multidimensional aspects of uncomplicated grief* reactions – can be used as a guideline to determine the parent's extent of grieving using the different dimensional aspects to identify uncomplicated grief.
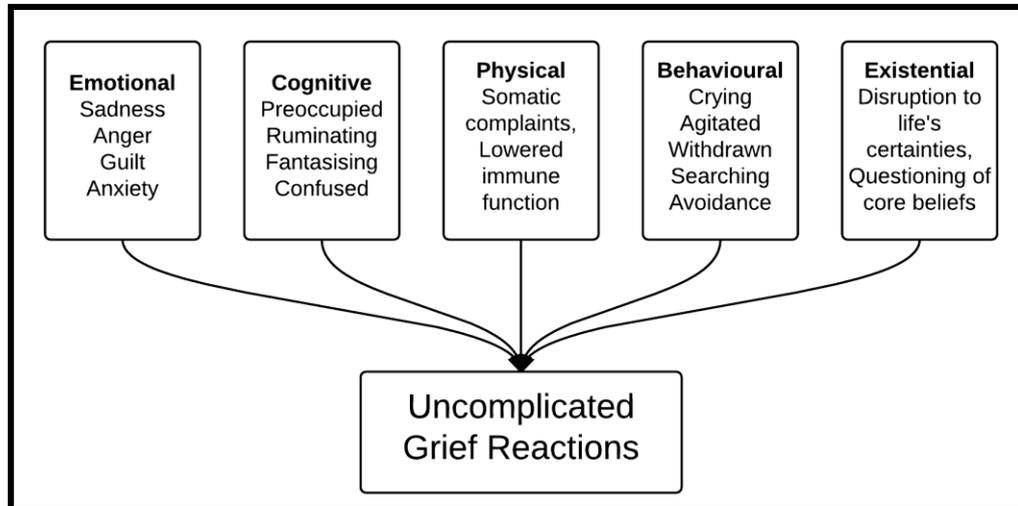
Figure 7.2: **Multidimensional aspects of uncomplicated grief reactions. Source: Center for Advancement of Health (CFAH), 2003:72**

Ambiguous loss is not always problematic

1. Are you experiencing problems with sleeping and/or eating?	
2. Are you experiencing any of the following emotions - irritability, moodiness or aggression?	
3. Are you experiencing feelings of hopelessness and/or anxiety?	
4. Are you having thoughts of death and dying?	
5. Are you finding it difficult to perform day-to-day tasks?	
6. Are you using any anti-depressants or prescribed medicines?	

7.5.3.13 **A word to the professional: Parent and adult-child's collage**

The professional has populated the collage with information concerning the parent as well as the adult-child. The image below represents the aspects dealt with that pertain to the relationship between the parent and the adult-child as well as grandchildren. With this information, the professional will be able to continue the journey of assisting the parent with reconstructing meaning.
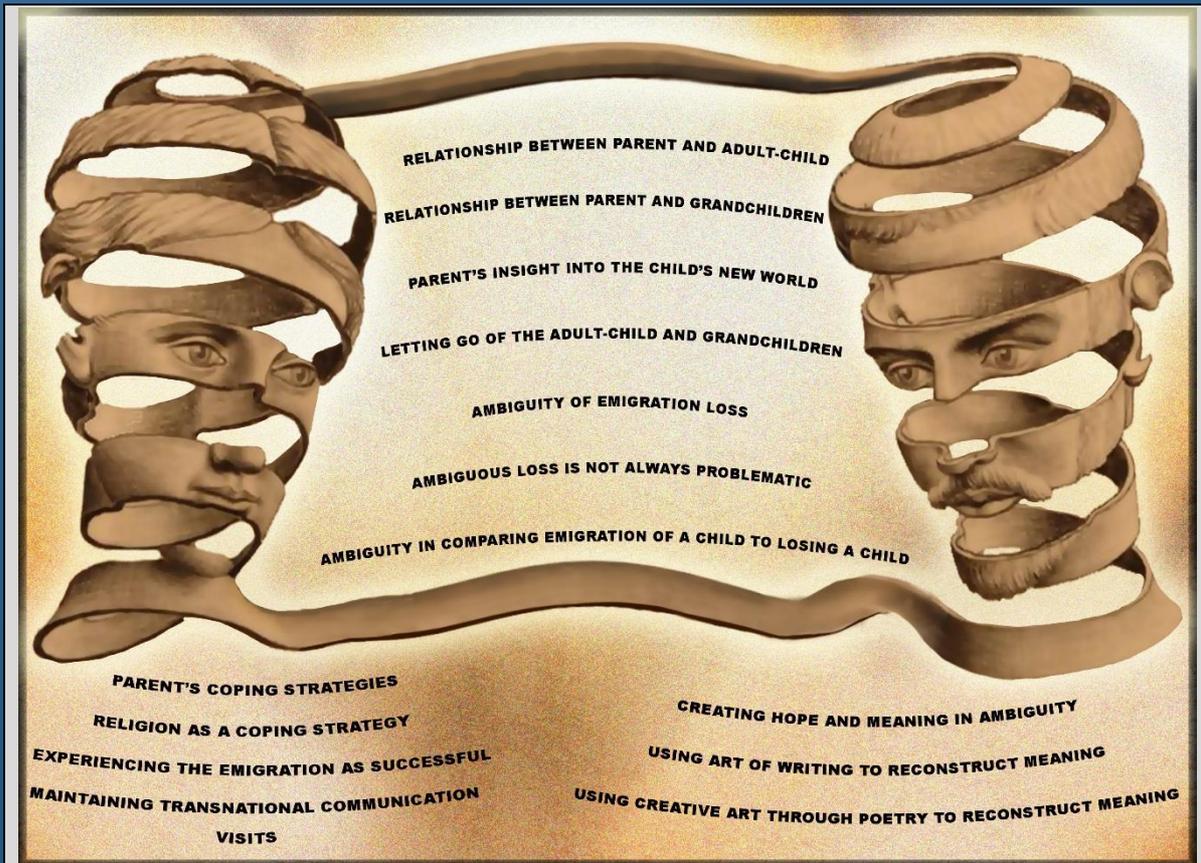
Adapted from M.C. Escher's Bond of Union 1956 lithograph (Escher, 2015)

During each interview, the researcher shared the intense grief and heartache of the parent left behind. Death and loss were themes that ran like a connecting thread through all the interviews with the research participants whose child(ren) had emigrated. The shorter the duration of time between the interviews and the child's emigration, the more emotionally expressive the research participants were. For this reason, the researcher felt it appropriate and important to discuss the concept of grief and bereavement.

7.5.3.14 A word to the professional: Grief and bereavement

Grief and bereavement

"What is grief? The most intuitive meaning of grief is the intense and painful pining for and preoccupation with somebody or something, now lost, to whom or to which one was attached" (Parkes, 2007:23). Cochran and Claspell (1987:93-100) explained that compiling a short list of isolated symptoms is not possible; it is also

inadequate to describe the complex experience of grief. These authors define grief as "a core experience of loss ('living loss') that transforms the world into an 'empty and cruel place' and may take on many forms and arise in very different ways. It is not a static condition. Grief is the story of loss where different parts (beginning, middle and end) shape and reshape the meaning of the other" (Cochran & Claspell, 1987:108).

Grief can be conceived as a prototype of intense but normal sadness Horwitz & Wakefield, in (Jakoby, 2012:680). Riches and Dawson (2000:12) explicate that normal grieving is a difficult period of adjustment from a taken-for-granted socially familiar position to a painful and socially difficult one. It is therefore portrayed as the psychological cost of forced adaptation to a new and unwelcome role.

Various authors defined the following concepts that need to be taken into account when addressing bereavement:

- *Bereavement* is the situational circumstances around having lost someone significant. It also involves grieving for what had been expected of the person or hoped for (Field, Hart & Horowitz, 2009:408).
- **Coping** relates to processes dealing with the bereaved situation in which people find themselves. Grief symptomatology will change when coping is successful (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schut, 2007:9).
- **Mourning** is culturally bound in a given society; it refers to the expression or practices of grief which is the affective reaction to the loss (Stroebe *et al.*, 2007). Mourning applies to the ''acts expressive of grief'' (Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987:7). Grief refers to what is felt, mourning to what is done (Lofland, 1985:173).

Rando (1992:45) explains that all forms of complicated mourning result from attempts to deny, repress, or avoid aspects of the loss, its pain, and the full realisation of its implications for the mourner and help the unwilling bereaved survivor hold onto, and avoid relinquishing, the lost loved one." 'Integration of the loss does not occur and acute grief is prolonged in the form of complicated grief.

Abnormal grief reactions can be delineated into four distinct patterns: chronic, exaggerated, delayed and masked grief.

- **Chronic grief** is a prolonged reaction that is "excessive in duration" and which "never comes to a satisfactory conclusion" (Worden, 1982:59). This unresolved grief associated with ongoing loss has been labelled as delayed grief, chronic grief and even chronic sorrow (George, Vickers, Wilkes & Barton, 2007:229).
- **Exaggerated grief** is defined as a reaction to loss that is excessive in intensity (Worden, 1982:59).
- **Delayed grief** is an emotional reaction that is not commensurate with the loss but may be experienced more fully at a later time (Worden, 1982:59). It has become widely accepted that individuals who do not openly grieve following the death of a loved one or show few signs of working through emotional pain of loss will eventually suffer delayed grief reactions (Bonanno & Field, 2001:800).
- Finally, **masked grief** occurs when a person experiences difficulties in their functioning as is evident in their physical symptoms and/or maladaptive behaviour, but they are not able to acknowledge these symptoms and associate them with their loss (Bonanno & Kaltman, 2001:708).

7.5.3.15   Parent's coping strategies

Although resources may be limited when dealing with ambiguous loss, the professional needs to explore what parents are already doing to cope with their loss. Rycroft and Perlesz (2001:63-64) recommended that people capitalise on what is still available. The effect of these strengths and weaknesses will express themselves during the months, sometimes years, after the migration.

Harris and Gorman (2011:2) advise the professional to focus on what is still present, on identifying innate strengths and abilities. In addition, the professional should also assess possible resources that the parents are not utilising.

- **Coping strategy: Experiencing the emigration as successful**

  In this research, it was found that if the parent felt the child's emigration was successful, it aided them in coping with the loss of their adult-child. When the child was "forced to leave" due to specific negative circumstances in the country, the parents often verbalised that the child was better off in the new country.

Parents in this study stated that their grandchildren with special needs (emotional needs or learning difficulties) received better care and stimulation in the new country. This made coping with the loss more bearable as they saw the emigration as, in the best interests of their grandchild.

Coping strategy: Experiencing the emigration as successful

1. Was your child successful in South Africa before the emigration? *Explain*.	
2. Is he/she successful in the new country? *Describe*.	
3. In your opinion, is the child happy with his/her new life abroad?	
4. In your opinion, are the grandchildren's educational needs satisfactorily met?	

- **Coping strategy: Maintaining transnational communication**

"No one can predict how the parent-child bond will respond to the latest challenges of civilisation, namely distant living arrangements as a result of frequent moves and the aging revolution that has dramatically increased the human life span." Reading this statement by Climo (1992:1) led the researcher to think about the way the participants in this study kept in contact with their children. The researcher concluded that the parent-child bond remains the same but the communication mediums they use to stay in contact over vast geographical distances have evolved and communication can occur instantaneously. Therefore, the parent-child bond will endure even over multiple time zones.

Researchers suggest that information communication technologies can connect loved ones in ways that facilitate closeness despite geographic distances (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:14). New technologies "heighten the immediacy and frequency of migrants' contact with their sending communities and allow them to be actively involved in everyday life in fundamentally different ways than in the past" (Levitt, 2001:22). These technologies, however, require continuous learning, flexibility and adaptation (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:23).

Professionals need to remind and encourage parents to maintain multiple links to social networks and to master the latest communication technologies to stay in touch. Despite the lack of a common geographical space, computer-mediated

communication mediums are used firstly, to maintain pre-existing relationships and secondly, to build on that relationship, not only with their children but also with their grandchildren (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011:17).

Coping strategy: Maintaining transnational communication

1. How do you communicate with your child?	
2. Are you satisfied with the means of communication?	
3. How often do you communicate with your child and/or grandchildren?	
4. Are you computer literate?	
5. Are you aware of different modes of communication?	
6. How would you like to improve your communication?	
7. Are you willing to learn new technologies to communicate?	

- **Coping strategy: Visits**

   Visits are about reuniting families and the goal is to make meaning of the separation, to share stories and to reinforce family identity that could have been lost over the time of separation. The joyful reunion of family members can be celebrated by a special meal, exchanging gifts and taking photographs. Memories and narratives can be shared among loved ones by recalling life events prior to and during the separation. These catch-up life narratives can result in creating empathy for each family member's story (Falicov, 1998, 2003).

Coping strategy: Visits

1. Are you in a financial position to visit your children?	
2. If not, is it possible for your children to assist you financially in order to visit them?	
3. Have you visited your children?	
4. What was the visit/s like? *Describe*.	
5. What was the best part of the visit?	
6. What didn't you enjoy about the visit?	
7. Are you planning to go again?	
8. How long do you normally stay/visit with your children?	

- **Coping strategy: Religion**

In the search for meaning, several of the research participants frequently referred to their spirituality and faith. A number of parents in this study used their religion as a guide on their journey of understanding and accepting the loss of their child to emigration. They used their spirituality and faith in "God" as a key to creating a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. Johnson (1995:192) noted, "Religion enhances a person's ability to face death; to find meaning in one's life; to accept losses; to lessen loneliness, grief and unhappiness; and to find value support for later life." In this study, some parents used religion to justify the emigration of the adult-child, believing that it was "God's" will.

Grandparents felt that it was essential to teach their grandchildren about "God" and that it was important that the family went to church in their new country. Although there are various ways in which the participants tried to create meaning in their lives, the researcher found that religion was emphasised the most.

Coping strategy: Religion

1. Are you using religion as a means to cope with your loss?	
2. Have you always used religion as a means to cope with difficult situations? *Explain*.	
3. Is the use of religion beneficial in coping with your child's emigration? *Explain*.	

7.5.3.16   A word to the professional: Creating hope and meaning in ambiguity

> **Creating hope and meaning in ambiguity**
>
> Two components are evident in the construction of meaning. Firstly, there is power in comprehending the causes and antecedents of the loss itself, and secondly the loss has to be integrated into the self of the person in a constructive and meaningful manner. Just to compete with the loss is debilitating, as loss is wrapped with ambiguity. To find new meanings in our lives we need to experience a psycho-social transition. Our assumptions of the world need to be revised when we are faced with

a large discrepancy between our taken-for-granted world we currently find ourselves in (Parkes, 2007:24).

George Engel (1961) argues, "Grief represents a departure from the state of health and wellbeing, and just as healing is necessary in the physiological realm in order to bring the body back into a homeostatic balance, a period of time is likewise needed to return the mourner to a similar state of psychological equilibrium." As the person starts to emerge from preoccupation with the lost one and a past that has gone, opportunity for revising one's life philosophy may emerge. Life will probably never be the same again and it is important to acknowledge that (Boss, 1999:17). Significant relationships are with us forever; they never end. They are integrated into our lives and become part of our thoughts (Melnick & Roos, 2007). Adaptation is often an ongoing task and an individual needs to manage his/her real word and not the one that should or could have been (Schultz & Bruce, 2005:135).

Closure is a myth valued by a culture intolerant of ambiguity (Boss, 2006). Our hunger for closure is a by-product of our culture that prizes knowing answers, fixing problems, and moving on. Boss recommends we adapt our thinking on this point and urges professionals to have patience and full awareness and not to push for closure when the loss is ambiguous. At best, if we are very lucky, the pain and obsessive focus that accompany large loss fade in time and the loss becomes integrated into our own, new and ever-changing self, receding largely into the background (Melnick & Roos, 2007:104). The professional should refrain from guiding the parent toward acceptance of their child's emigration as the ultimate goal of the therapy. Instead, they need to allow the parent to manage and determine the pace of their own therapy.

If not closure, then what is the therapeutic goal? Naming the situation as one of ambiguous loss is a first step. Knowing their distress has a name and is validated helps externalise the problem. Doing this diminishes their tendency to feel guilty and blame themselves (or each other) for the situation with statements like, "If only I had done this or done that …" Boss *et al.*, (2003) points out: "Our therapeutic task after loss is to externalise blame." It is important to name the external ambiguity and to increase tolerance for never having a clear answer. Parents must be allowed to

acknowledge the pain of what has happened, that life may never be the same again, and that the ambiguity may continue indefinitely. Boss (1999) explains that mastery in a situation of non-finite or ambiguous loss will focus on changing what is internal, such as perceptions, feelings or memories, and not on external things like other people, the situation or the environment. The professional can help to normalise the family members' experiences, even if the situation is not typical, by assuring the family that no matter how they have responded to the loss, their feelings and behaviours are understandable given the situation. The family is less likely to be resistant to therapy if they feel validated by the professional.

In recovery work, the professional may need to help people reconstruct a new sense of normality, identity and relatedness to adapt to altered conditions. We cannot make meaning for them; our task is to support their efforts to find their own meaning from their experiences (Frankl, 1984). In times of deepest despair, hope is most essential for recovery. Hope fuels energy and investment to rebuild lives, revise dreams, renew attachments, and create positive legacies to pass on to future generations. Walsh (2004) stated: "Resilience involves 'mastering the possible', coming to accept what has been lost and cannot be changed, while directing efforts to what can be done and seizing opportunities for something good to come out of the tragedy. In the wake of devastating trauma, we can help families regain hope in their future possibilities. Recovery is a journey of the heart and spirit, bringing survivors back to the fullness of life" (Walsh, 2004).

Victor Frankl (1969:70) emphasised the importance of meaning, noting that it is "essential to life." Rolland (1994) comments: "Meaning is a common human quest for a map, known or felt, that guides decisions and action, that gives coherence to life, that weaves past, present, and future together in continuity, that shapes patterns of behaviour in relation to the common and uncommon challenges of life."

7.5.4   Stage 4: Reconstruction of meaning

Humans search for understanding about the realities surrounding them. Individuals attach different meanings to the same event by contemplating the event in their mind to comprehend the causes and consequences of it. A major life occurrence can constitute multiple incidents and experiences. Humans will cognitively process it, be

preoccupied with it and exchange narratives about it for several days, weeks or years (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999:1250).

Following the loss or death of someone special, some may find meaning in religion, others in understanding the cause of the death or loss, yet others in exploring the implications for their own lives. If we feel pain, we try to learn the cause of it. Once we understand how and why an event has occurred, we are more prepared to deal with it should it happen again (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999:1250).

7.5.4.1 Using creative art through poetry to reconstruct meaning

One of the most prevalent reasons why people begin therapy is because they report suffering from emotional distress (Mahoney, 1995). Disclosure is unequivocally at the core of therapy. Although a natural way of understanding traumas is by talking with others, many upsetting events cannot easily be discussed. For this reason, the researcher found the use of art therapy beneficial since the participant could express him/herself through art.

Therapy has evolved and the need for more all-inclusive therapy approaches has become evident. However, approaches that use mediums such as fine arts, poetry, music and movement are slow to advance and be acknowledged by the traditional therapeutic society. Creative arts therapies do not follow the conventional medical model of therapy in which specific pathology or illnesses are identified in the individual (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). By using poetry as a form of creative art therapy, parents can mature their creative potential for healing and growth. In creative art therapies, individuals display self-expression through their work of art. Their art, irrespective of the medium used, allows them to express abstract concepts and subjective experiences (Kempler, 2003:217).

In this study, Participant 5 shared the following poem with the researcher:

"Yes you will ask me now what is the connection with this, but I also write poems or at least I used to, now I just write little rhymes, but there is a poem that says "that's all ... it's the blonde it's the blue it's the veld it's the air and a bird is turning above ... in lonely flight, it's the exile related to the ocean, it's a grave ... in a lonely" by Eugene Marais that came to mind I never shared this with anyone:"

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it's the blonde

it's the blue

it's the veld

it's the air

and my child is leaving on a lonely flight,

that's all (silence)

She will return one day over the mighty ocean,

and stand next to my grave with a falling tear

that's all.

"Now that poem (silence) tells me, how I feel. They are gone and they will come and bury me again (silence) and that is I don't know why on earth I went and changed that poem in my head in such an awful way, but that's how it is, it is like that, I tell you it is in my head (laughs and then sad)."

"*Ja, jy sal nou vra wat is die daarmee verband, maar ek skryf self gedigte of ek het vroeër dae geskryf, nou skryf ek net rympies, maar daar is die gedig wat sê " dis al …dis die blond dis die blou dis die veld dis die lug en 'n voël draai bo…in 'n eensame vlug, dis die balling gekoppel aan die oseaan, dis 'n graf …. in 'n eensame" van Eugene Marais wat in my kop opgekom het ek het dit nooit vir iemand gesê nie.*"

dis die blond

dis die blou

dis die veld

dis die lug

en my kind gaan weg op 'n eensame vlug,

dis al (stilte)

Sy sal eendag weer kom oor die groot oseaan,

en staan bymy graf met 'n vallende traan

dis al.

"*Nou daai gedig (stilte) vertel vir my, hoe voel ek. Hulle is weg en hulle sal my weer kom begrawe (stilte) en dit is ek weet nie hoekom op die aarde het ek nou daai gedig in my kop so aaklig gaan verwerk nie, maar dit is so, dit is so, ek sê vir jou dis in my kop (lag en dan hartseer).*"

Ross (1975) stated that poetry as a medium for therapy does not limit expression; it uses symbolism of language but it is not restricted to the rules of grammar. Poetry

therapy can facilitate reaching deep subconscious levels by using metaphors and symbolic imagery. By using the universal medium of language, parents can "re-create" in a manner that is exclusive and unbound by external rules and guidelines (Kempler, 2003:218).

The researcher included the following poem by IL de Villiers (2008): Farewell for Jaques/*Afskeid vir Jaques*. It is a perfect summary of what many parents in the current study have experienced and described in the interviews. This poem can be used in consultation with the parent to read it and discuss the possible similarities they might have experienced.

Farewell for Jacques - IL de Villiers (2008)

***He who is tired of London is tired of life - * Samuel Johnson**

*Earth has not anything to show more fair - * Wordsworth:
Composed on Westminster Bridge

London is now an exhausted, worn out city:
Even Samuel Jackson would agree today,
We leave the National Gallery with TS Eliot:
Human kind cannot bear very much reality.

I know, you know, *we* know there are minutes left.
Our days together have dissipated like chimney smoke.
Under Lord Nelson we agree that we'll say goodbye at the station:
We'll part in two directions, all of us home, continents apart.

Your wife walks ahead with the push-cart to Charing Cross.
Your daughter with her small tiara holds my hand.
You saunter with your mom. Later you press me to your body
On the steep escalator - I do the same: "I will miss you,"
We say simultaneously.
The underground passengers take a nap or read,
We have one more stop to travel together. Piccadilly, and we shuffle out, stepping
Carefully like old people, seeing your hands, small hands, waving to us.

> A suction wind rustles you away. A voice cautions:
>
> "Mind the gap"

Afskeid vir Jacques - IL de Villiers (2008)

He who is tired of London is tired of life – Samuel Johnson

Earth has not anything to show more fair- Wordsworth:
Composed on Westminster Bridge

Londen is nou 'n uitgeputte, uitgediende stad:
Selfs Samuel Johnson sou vandag so dink.
Ons loop uit by die National Gallery me T.S. Eliot:
Human kind cannot bear very much reality.

Ek weet, jul weet, *ons* weet dat daar is minute oor.
Ons dae saam het sag soos kaggelrook verdwyn.
Onder Lord Nelson se ons ons moet op die stasie groet:
Ons gaan twee koerse, almal huis toe, vastelande ver.

Jou vrou loop met haar stootkar voor ons na Charing Cross.
Jou dogter met haar klein tiara het my aan die hand.
Jy drentel met jou ma. Later druk jy my teen jou vas
Op die diep roltrap-ek ook vir jou: "Ek sal jou mis,"

Sê ons gelyk. Die moltrein-passasiers dut voort of lees,
Ons ry nog een stop saam. Piccadilly, en ons skuifel uit, trap
Oumens-versigtig , sien jul hande, handkies, vir ons wuif.
'n Suigwind suis jul agterna. 'n Stem maan:
"Mind the gap."

7.5.4.2   Using the art of writing to reconstruct meaning

Writing as a means of processing one's life experience is not a recent practice. History is filled with examples of individuals, some literary, others not, who have turned to writing for solace, comfort and companionship during trying life occurrences. James Joyce, Anne Frank and May Sarton are literary examples of

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contemporary writers who used the art of writing to imitate life (Baker & Mazza, 2004:141).

Writing can lead to greater self-understanding, clarification, resolution and closure. Writing can also reduce inhibition of emotions and negative impacts on the immune system (Baker & Mazza, 2004:145). Pennebaker and Seagal (1999:1243) suggested that structuring one's experiences into a coherent narrative allows the person to express and explore emotions and attitudes surrounding distressing life events, which become manageable as the writer derives meaning from the story and resolves psychological conflict associated with it.

The beauty of a narrative is that it allows us to tie all of the changes in our life into a broad comprehensive story, that is, in the same story we can talk both about the cause of the event and its many implications. Much as in any story, there can be overarching themes, plots and subplots – many of them arranged logically and/or hierarchically. Through this process, the many facets of the presumed single event are organised into a more coherent whole. Suggesting to parents to keep a journal may facilitate the process of forming a narrative about their experiences, as well as reinforce progress and support the change of maladaptive behaviours.

The researcher used a letter written by Lize Beekman (2012) and adapted it to reflect an experience of loss without losing the essence of the message. At the end of the first session, the researcher recommends that the professional share this letter with the parent. The letter should be placed in a sealed envelope for the parent to read in his/her own time. The parent should be encouraged and motivated to write about his/her own feelings after reading this letter. It is up to the parent to share this creative writing with the professional during the next session. The discussion of the letter can be a useful point of entry for the following therapeutic session.

"This suitcase is fragile … please handle with care"- Lize Beekman (2012)

"Someone once told me that when animals are feeling sick, they love nothing better than to lie down in sunspots, because sunlight is healing. I don't know if this is true, but I do know that in these past few months, I've found rare moments of calm basking in the warmth of a fire or the heat of the sun. That's where I am now as I'm writing this to you - warming myself on a sun-drenched chair.

I am not sick but my heart is broken. My Beloved was taken away from me. My existence was shaken to the core. Within seconds, life as I knew it was changed forever. Nothing will ever be the same again.

I am not the only, the first or the last person who has to survive such immeasurable loss, longing and sadness. Those of you who have suffered on a similar road will know that it is not humanly possible for me to simply cut off my emotions and pretend that all is well. So this letter to you, dear reader, is stripped of all pretence - I am writing with my broken heart on my sleeve."

In these recent, last, hard months, I have tried to make sense of your leaving and a specific quote that often came to mind in this period: "Life is a journey." But when your world has stopped turning, the idea of a journey is an impossible sum that refuses to add up. After all, it signifies movement. Journeys have a starting point and a final destination. They encompass sounds, places and people and have a goal of some sort - albeit a special event or a new discovery. It implies that you pack a suitcase and that you'll be coming back home at some point but you didn't. You not only packed a suitcase you packed your life in order never to return … For a long time (and still now, sometimes) the idea and implication of a journey left me cold. Airports associated with never ending stories. Anything that would depart and arrive; all sounds, places and people, was so much in conflict with what was happening inside of me, that it was impossible for me to process.

At some point you realise that inexplicably, impossibly, life does go on and that you have no choice but accept it. You have to keep going, even if it means learning to walk again. You have to pack your suitcase. Walk you must …and pack you must … There is no other alternative. Granted, nothing will ever be the same again: what we do and experience, the people who cross our paths and especially the one person who shares our life's journey, become part of the fibre of our being, they are woven into our flesh.

When we unpack, our thoughts dwell on the memories of the journeys we took. And this brings me to what I'm most aware of at this stage, what deeper insight I have gained in my loss. This is what I can share, this is what's written on the heart I'm wearing on my tear-stained sleeve: Dear Reader, every single day we are packing a proverbial suitcase for a symbolic journey. And somewhere down the line, we will unpack our suitcase again, taking out those things we carried foremost in our hearts and thoughts on that voyage. The precious items are varied. It may be sharing a cup of coffee in bed before the day takes you on your separate ways. It might be, sharing your first bicycle ride or gathering flowers or

even silkworms. Know that every hour is a suitcase you're filling, and one day you'll have to unpack it again.

I spend my days unpacking our baggage. Mine and my Beloved's. We have a lifetime's worth of luggage that we have filled without reserve, I'll say it again: I am honoured and grateful that the suitcases I'm unpacking, are bulging with the most beautiful, precious memories foremost in my thoughts. As a mother, I knew that you were only borrowed for a short but very precious period. There is nothing in the world I desire more, and it will remain the most fervent wish of my heart … but it wasn't meant to be. At the very least I get to look up with every precious memory, because keeping my gaze downcast doesn't do our beautiful memories justice. And in any case, angels don't leave footprints.

May you pack with care and have a safe journey

7.6   SUMMARY

The landscape of modern intervention is changing and the need for variety in treatment methods is apparent. To empower the professional to assist the parent left behind, the researcher used the art of Escher (National Gallery of Art, 2014) to comprehend the emigration phenomena. In doing so, it was evident that emigration, like the art of Escher, is much more complicated than meets the eye. It forced the researcher to shift her paradigms with regards to emigration, the family and therapy. The researcher wanted to use art as an instrument in understanding and assisting the parent in the process of their adult-child emigrating.

To guide the professional in populating the parent's collage, relevant questions were provided and serve as a guideline to understanding the subjective experience and perceptions of the parent regarding the emigration of their adult-child(ren). Additional information in the form of "*A word to the professional*" can empower the professional to understanding the life world of the parent left behind. The researcher identified the following stages in the parent's journey of their adult-child's emigration: Stage 1 - Pre-emigration of the adult-child, Stage 2 - The act of migration and Stage 3 - Post-emigration of the adult-child.

Stage 4 was indicated as the reconstruction of meaning, it addressed the parent's quest to recreate meaning in their lives after the emigration of their adult-child(ren).

In assisting the parent in reconstructing meaning, creative art in the form of poetry was used. In addition, the researcher used an example of the art of writing a letter, to motivate the parent to use creative writing during their search to create new meanings in their lives.

The following chapter will focus on Summary, conclusions and recommendations.

# 8.	CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 8.1	INTRODUCTION

South Africa has lost many citizens to emigration during the last two decades. This phenomenon has led to many parents being left behind in South Africa without their adult-children. Limited scholarly work is available on this topic. In this study, the researcher focused on the experiences of the parents left behind after their adult-child(ren) emigrated. The research findings, conclusions and recommendations attempt to contribute to the knowledge base of this phenomenon and to improve support services for these parents.

This chapter commences by addressing the goal, objectives and research question of the study. The study was guided by the following research question: *"What are the experiences of South African parents left behind once their adult-child(ren) have emigrated?"* Against this background, the chapter proceeds, describing how the goal and objectives were met. The research question was resolved by indicating the key findings and conclusions of this study. Key findings were provided for the empirical study under the following themes:

| Theme 1 – Emigration of the adult-child |
| Theme 2 – Emigration loss |
| Theme 3 – Intergenerational relationships |
| Theme 4 – Transnational communication |

Conclusions were provided for the following chapters: Research methodology (Chapter 5), Literature studies Chapter 2, 3 & 4), Empirical study (Chapter 6) as well as conclusions regarding the doctoral seminar were provided.

Recommendations were disclosed in the form of guidelines for assisting the parent left behind (Chapter 7) as well as feedback provided from the delegates of the doctoral seminar. Recommendations for future research were provided, followed by concluding remarks at the end of the chapter.

8.2   SUMMARY

The goal, objectives and research question of this research study will subsequently be addressed, as well as how they were realised.

8.2.1   Goal of the research study

The goal of the study was: *To explore and describe the experiences of parents left behind in South Africa after their adult-child(ren) has emigrated.*

8.2.1.1   Research outcome

In order to meet the goal set for the research study, the researcher interviewed participants who met the requirements set for the sampling criteria. Even though qualitative research is not representative, the researcher attempted to select research participants from various ethnic groups in South Africa. The gender of the participants was important and the researcher ensured that both male and female participants were included. In five of the interviews both the mother and farther were jointly interviewed. Each participant was encouraged to tell his/her "story" about their experience of their adult-child(ren)'s emigration. The researcher, in line with the requirements of qualitative phenomenological research, read as little as possible about the subject in order to conduct the interviews with an open mind and avoided influencing the participants in any way.

Participants' experiences concerning the emigration of their adult-child(ren) were explored and each interview was audio recorded. Interviews were transcribed and typed verbatim. To identify possible themes during the data analysis phase, the researcher repeatedly listened to and read each transcribed interview. After the data analysis phase, it was possible to explore and describe the experiences of the participants in depth.

The following literature studies were carried out:

Emigration and transnational communication
Post-parental intergenerational relationships
Ambiguous loss, attachment and grief

The theoretical framework of this study was based on ambiguous loss and the attachment theory. These theories were linked to the empirical findings.

The subjective descriptions of participants' experiences regarding the emigration of their adult-child(ren) were portrayed in the form of direct quotations and the data collected provided the researcher with detailed descriptions of the experiences of participants. This information broadened the existing knowledge base.

8.2.2 Objectives of the research study

The goal of this study was achieved through the realisation of the objectives of the study. The objectives of the study were:

- to contextualise experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren);
- to describe emigration and the impact on the family members left behind as a global phenomenon;
- to provide a broad theoretical overview of the phenomenon of emigration from a South African perspective;
- to explore and describe the experiences of South African parents left behind as a result of the emigration of their adult-children;
- to formulate practice guidelines for helping professionals with regard to addressing the impact of emigration on the parents left behind after the emigration of adult-children and
- to provide conclusions and recommendations as well as to heighten the awareness of the helping professions regarding these parents.

Each objective will subsequently be addressed, and the researcher will indicate how the objectives and the goal were achieved.

| **Objective 1**: *To contextualise the experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren).* |
| In order to broaden the knowledge base for this research study, the researcher discussed emigration as a worldwide phenomenon and in particular in the South African context. In Chapter 1, the focus was on the prevalence of emigration and reasons given by the South Africans parents for their adult-children's emigration. The change of government in 1994 and the high crime statistics shows higher incidences of emigration than any other period in the South African history. Crime |

and the political history make the South African emigration phenomena unique. The emotional cost of emigration was considered and it seemed as if the absence of the adult-child had a negative effect on the parent's psychological wellbeing. Attachment theory was relevant as one of the theoretical framework(s) underlying this research as it described the attachment relationship between the parent and child from birth and the effect thereof throughout life. The second theoretical framework that related to emigration was ambiguous loss, a theory developed by Pauline Boss (1999).

Objective 1 was further met in Chapter 2, where current research concerning emigration and emigration statistics were investigated. The exact amount of emigrants from South Africa could not be confirmed. The main reasons for emigration were researched and the high incidence of violent crime was found to be a major determining factor for South Africans to emigrate. In Chapter 4, the researcher focused on the experience of loss by the parents left behind after the emigration of the adult-child(ren). The effect of loss and specifically emigration loss was investigated. Ambiguous loss, as a form of loss, was extensively highlighted. The concept of migratory grief was described. The feelings and experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren) were explored in depth.

Objective 2: *To describe emigration and the impact on the family members left behind as a global phenomenon.*

Chapter 2, Emigration and transnational communication, provided a theoretical basis for emigration. This chapter focused on various aspects regarding emigration and focused on the impact of transnational communication on emigration. To put emigration into perspective, the literature study in Chapter 2 included the effect of emigration on the adult-child and the effect it had on the parent(s) left behind. The focus of this study was not on all the family members, but on the parents left behind as stated in the title of the thesis. With the use of various communication technologies, the adult-child that emigrated and the parents left behind can communicate and unite despite the vast geographical space between them. Transnational communication is the glue that holds these families together.

Objective 3: *To provide a broad theoretical overview of the phenomenon of emigration from a South African perspective.*
Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 provide a broad theoretical overview of emigration as a global phenomenon and contextualised emigration from a South African perspective. Emigration is a worldwide phenomenon and South Africa is no exception to this trend. Not only white people are emigrating, but people of all races. The amount of skilled South African emigrants living abroad has grown steadily over each decade leading to the term "brain drain." For various reasons, statistics available on emigration are not a true reflection of the actual number of people that have emigrated. Reasons for emigration given by South African citizens are related to reasons given by citizens of other countries. However, our high crime rate, especially violent crime, is an additional motivation and push factor to emigrate. Available literature in the South African context focuses mainly on the economic costs of emigration, while the emotional cost has not received nearly as much attention.
Objective 4: *To explore and describe the experiences of South African parents left behind as a result of the emigration of their adult-child(ren).*
Qualitative research aims to add depth and detail to the theoretical propositions that appear to explain the causes of various occurrences. This research has provided a thematic analysis of the findings according to the themes and sub-themes generated from the study, which describe the insights and experiences of parents left behind because of the emigration of their adult-child(ren). The empirical findings in Chapter 6 were described in-depth according to the following themes and sub-themes: Emigration of the adult-child, emigration loss, intergenerational relationships and transnational communication
Objective 5: *To formulate practice guidelines for helping professionals with regard to addressing the impact of emigration on the parents left behind after the emigration of adult-children(ren).*
In Chapter 7, practice guidelines were proposed to empower the professional in assisting the parent left behind through each stage of the emigration process. In this guideline, specific demographical questions were suggested to obtain information in order to provide a detailed profile of the parents left behind as well as their subjective experiences concerning the emigration of their adult-child(ren).

With this information, it is possible to explore and describe the impact of emigration on these parents and empower the professional by providing a better understanding of the world of the parents. With this demographical information, it is possible to determine the parent's place in the emigration stage in order to plan the therapeutic process. This will aid the professional to customise the therapeutic process in order to best assist the parents left behind and address their needs.

Objective 6: *To provide conclusions and recommendations as well as to heighten the awareness of the helping professions regarding these parents.*

This objective was fulfilled in this chapter (Chapter 8) by providing the key findings and conclusions from the study and recommendations for future research in order for helping professionals to assist the parents left behind. Feedback and recommendations from colleagues in the field of social work, psychology as well as from parents and other interested parties that attended the research seminar, were revealed.

8.2.3 Research question

What are the experiences of South African parents left behind, once their adult-child(ren) has emigrated? was the broad research question posed. This question was answered by the key findings and conclusions below and reflected the innermost experiences faced by parents left behind.

8.3 KEY FINDINGS OF STUDY

Subsequently, the key findings of this study will be discussed.

8.3.1 Key Findings: Theme 1 - Emigration of the adult-child

THEME 1: EMIGRATION OF THE ADULT-CHILD	
Sub-theme 1.1	Defining emigration
Sub-theme 1.2	Reasons for emigration
Sub-theme 1.3	Violent crime as reason for emigration
Sub-theme 1.4	Parent's involvement in the decision-making process
Sub-theme 1.5	Airport goodbyes

Based on the research findings of this study, as discussed and presented in Chapter 6, and the literature study in Chapter 2, the researcher identified the following key findings associated with the emigration of the adult-child:

- One of the participants in this study aptly described emigration as an amoeba, as emigration is all about change and adjustments. From the time that the child decides to emigrate, the process of change is set in motion for all relevant role players.

- Crime, often serious violent crime, was given as the most important reason for the emigration of their child(ren) by some of the parents. During interviews, parents often commenced by referring to crime as the reason for their children's emigration - especially when the child was involved in violent crime and thus experienced it first-hand. A further repercussion of crime experienced first hand, is that some children claimed they would *never* return to South Africa, not even to visit.

- Most parents saw crime as a legitimate reason to emigrate. When crime was given as a "license to leave," it was used to justify the emigration of the adult-child(ren). The parents further justified the decision to leave by explaining that it was much safer for the children in their new destination country. These reasons made it easier for the parent to accept the emigration, as they believed that it was in the best interest of the child not to reside in South Africa.

- Some of the parents that were not involved in the emigration decision-making process experienced the decision with shock and disbelief and felt excluded from this important life-changing decision. By not being involved in the decision-making process made it harder for the parents to accept the decision of the children to emigrate.

- Irrespective of the reason for the emigration, only negative connotations were found towards airports. Parents experienced saying goodbye to their child(ren) at the airport, as devastating and distressing.

8.3.2   Key Findings: Theme 2 - Emigration loss

THEME 2: EMIGRATION LOSS
Sub-theme 2.1:   Was a loss experienced?
Sub-theme 2.2:   Ambiguous loss
Sub-theme 2.3:   Comparing emigration loss to death in general
Sub-theme 2.4:   Comparing emigration loss to the death of a child
Sub-theme 2.5:   _Not_ comparing emigration loss to the death of a child
Sub-theme 2.6:   Parental ill-health and dying
Sub-theme 2.7:   Longing
Sub-theme 2.8:   Effect of parents on the researcher's emotions
Sub-theme 2.9:   Dealing with a child's emigration
Sub-theme 2.10:   Gender differences in dealing with emigration loss
Sub-theme 2.11:   Religion and dealing with emigration loss

Based on the research findings of this study as discussed and presented in Chapter 6, and the literature study in Chapter 4, the researcher identified the following key findings associated with emigration loss:

- Loss was experienced on various levels by all parents and it affected each participant in different spheres of their lives. The ambiguity of the loss was apparent in each case. The fact that the adult-child(ren) is emotionally available but physically absent had an effect on their interpretation of the boundary of the family. The uncertainty of the loss made it difficult to deal with.

- The loss of "what could have been" amplified the experience of ambiguity and ambiguous loss. Parents imagined how the relationship with their adult-child(ren) and grandchildren should have been, how they could have played a more active role in their lives and this caused them tremendous distress.

- Missing out on being a grandparent and thus to play an active role in the lives of their grandchildren, was experienced as a loss for the participants. This was especially true for those grandparents that had an existing bond with their grandchildren and were very involved with their grandchildren prior to the emigration.

- Intense feelings of longing and heartache for the adult-child that had emigrated were evident. Some mothers reported crying unstoppably for lengthy periods of time because of the intense longing they experienced. These participants missed their adult-child(ren) tremendously and in some instances it even made them physically sick.

- The participants described how they sometimes downplayed their longing for their child in order not to make the child feel guilty for emigrating. The participants did not want to upset the children by talking about their intense feelings of longing.

- A number of parents compared their experience of their child emigrating to that of losing a child to death. Although they could still communicate with the child, the child was not physically available. The geographical distance between them, thus the "unreachableness" of the child, made it seem as if the child was dead. This ambiguity was hard to deal with.

- Experiencing the child the same as being dead was especially evident in situations where the parent was not in a financial position to visit the child abroad or did not have the means to use the latest communication technology to communicate with them on a regular basis. Some parents felt that they were deprived of being part of their adult-child's new life and world.

- In most instances, the relationship between adult–child and parent remained mostly unchanged after emigration. In line with the attachment theory, a bond has been formed and the relationship will stay the same. In some instances parents reported that their relationship with the adult-child grew stronger especially when both parties made an effort to communicate on a regular basis. Some of the parents stressed the fact that it is the parent's responsibility to stay part of their children's lives by means of active communication.

- The parents made an effort to stay part of the adult-child's life by frequently communicating and by visiting their children. It was found that visiting the child abroad made it easier for the parent to visualise the child in his/her new world. Being familiar with the physical surroundings of where the child(ren) lived, helped the parents to find peace of mind regarding their child's new living environment and safety. It provided them with a mental picture, placing the child in context within this new and unfamiliar world unbeknown to the parents.

- During serious illnesses, the parents appreciated the child(ren)'s involvement and support. The vulnerability of illness intensified the need for emotional and

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physical support of loved ones. Support systems available to older generations decrease over time as they become physically less active in social extra-mural gatherings. Support systems diminish as close friends pass away and when adult-child(ren) emigrates. A void is left in terms of the emotional and physical support that the adult-child used to provide to their parents. Practical issues like seeking medical attention become difficult, as they might not be able to drive themselves to various destinations.

- In times of serious illness, parents frequently mentioned that they had the desire to see their children while they were still alive. Although the parents voiced the need to see their children before they died, they made it clear that they did not want to trouble their children and that should they die, there was no need for the children to return to South Africa.

- Parents appreciated it tremendously when the child could visit them during times of need. They valued their efforts and time, knowing the child had commitments to fulfil in their own, life abroad.

- The researcher experienced most of the parents' narratives as emotionally intense, especially those adult-child(ren) that emigrated as a result of experiencing brutal, violent crime which resulted to in the emigration. Being in the "moment," during the interview as the parent(s) reflected on their experiences of loss, the researcher was emotionally touched during many of the interviews.

- Each parent had his/her own way of dealing with loss. Most parents explained that the adult-child(ren) are better off living abroad, where violent crime is less evident and school systems are superior. This made it easier to deal with the emigration loss. Participants frequently described how well schools abroad accommodate children with special needs in contrast to that of the South African school system.

- Gender differences between the parents in dealing with loss were evident. Parental responsibilities, especially the emotional caregiving of the children, mostly fell disproportionately on the mother. It was found that when the mother had invested a great deal of her time and energy into relationships with her adult-child(ren) and grandchildren, the void that was created was difficult to fill and these mothers found it more difficult to deal with their loss.

- Most fathers were not as involved with their child(ren) and/or grandchildren or to the same extent as their wives and were often still consumed by their

occupations. They dealt with the loss by staying involved with their careers and keeping themselves occupied.

- Many parents turned to their religion in dealing with their loss. It was important to a number of grandparents that their children teach their grandchildren about "God" and take them to church. As religion brought them some form of consolation, they hoped that it would also bring the children consolation. Some parents believed that religion gives hope and teaches us that there is purpose in everything.

- In some instances parents believed that the emigration of their children was an answer to their prayers. That it was God's way of keeping their children safe by granting the children the opportunity to emigrate. This also served as "a licence to leave" since it is seen as a direct act of God.

8.3.3 Key Findings: Theme 3 - Intergenerational relationships

THEME 3: INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
Sub-theme 3.1:   Relationship with adult-child prior to emigration
Sub-theme 3.2:   Relationship with adult-child post-emigration
Sub-theme 3.3:   Seeking advice over long distances
Sub-theme 3.4:   A feeling of "childlessness"
Sub-theme 3.5:   Relationships with daughter/son in-law
Sub-theme 3.6:   Gender and relationships with adult-child(ren)
Sub-theme 3.7:   Grandparenthood
Sub-theme 3.8:   Role of a grandparent
Sub-theme 3.9:   Grandparenthood prior to emigration
Sub-theme 3.10:   Grandparenting post-emigration
Sub-theme 3.11:   Bonding with the grandchild(ren)

Based on the research findings of this study as discussed and presented in Chapter 6, and the literature study in Chapter 3, the researcher identified the following key findings associated with intergenerational relationships:

- The relationship prior to emigration influenced the quality of the relationship post-emigration. Some parents reported that since the emigration, the relationship between them and the adult-child(ren) has strengthened and that they

communicate better. Yet, other parents felt that their relationship post-emigration deteriorated. It was, however, clear that the essence of the relationship remained unchanged. This correlates with the attachment theory discussed in Chapter 4 claiming that an established relationship or attachment bond does not change once it has been formed.

- With the parents' aging, medical concerns arose and important decisions had to be made. It was found that role-reversal occurred in their relationship and that parents were now seeking advice from their adult-child(ren) regarding important issues. Seeking advice from their adult-child(ren) did not only pertain to medical issues but also the need to consult with their adult-child(ren) about making other important decisions, for example financial aspects.

- Some parents reflected that it became increasingly difficult to fulfil the parent role such as giving advice. The huge geographical distances made it difficult to provide practical advice to their adult-child(ren) as they were not familiar with their child's new circumstances. Looking after the grandchildren is one of many practical support acts that disappear and can not be fulfilled by the parent left behind.

- Some parents compared their child(ren)'s emigration to that of being "childless." It was found that when a child emigrated, physical contact or co-presence became very limited and parents felt deprived of their usual parental roles and involvement in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

- How things should or could have been caused them tremendous ongoing distress. Observing other parents with their adult-child(ren) and grandchildren was a constant reminder of what they had lost. Important celebrations like births and anniversaries accentuated this loss. It was especially the case where all their children had emigrated or where an adult-child had a very close relationship with the parent.

- A child that emigrated as a single individual often met their future partner in the new country. Parents found it challenging to build a relationship with these new partners, especially when the new wife or husband of their adult-child was from a different cultural background. In addition, the geographical distance further complicated matters such as getting to know them and developing a bond with them.

- When the relationship between the parents and the son- or daughter-in-law was strained before emigration, it was difficult to build a better relationship with them post-emigration. The challenges that came with the geographical distance posed additional difficulties that made it even more difficult to improve the relationship.

- It was found that children were more inclined to keep regular contact with their own parents than with their in-laws. Children would invest in the relationship with their own parents by communicating on a regular basis rather than with his or her in-laws.

- It was evident that different dyads of relationships were experienced differently. For instance, the mother-daughter relationship was experienced differently to the mother-son relationship. Some of the parents mentioned that if it were their daughter emigrating, they would seriously consider emigrating too in order to remain close to her. Parents felt that if their son emigrated, they would not contemplate making the same sacrifice since they experienced a different bond with their daughter-in-law.

- The daughter or daughter-in-law was seen as the gatekeeper of the family and she determined the frequency of contact with the parents and between the grandparents and grandchildren. It was found that, depending on the relationship, a daughter allowed her own mother more access to the grandchildren. The daughter and daughter-in-law determines to a great extend the level of involvement of the grandparents in the lives of the grandchildren.

- The researcher experienced it similar to giving "front row seats" to her own mother rather than the mother-in-law. The power of the daughter as the gatekeeper should not be underestimated.

- It was found that some grandparents missed their grandchild(ren) more than they missed their own adult-child. Various factors influenced this, such as the age of the grandchild, the frequency of contact and the quality of the relationship prior to emigration. When this attachment bond was strong, grandparents experienced a tremendous loss. Grandparents felt that they had been deprived of their role in their grandchild(ren)'s lives. The contributions they could have made to the upbringing of the grandchild had been diminished.

- Contact with the grandchild(ren) depended on the communication medium the child preferred to use, as well as the age of the grandchild. Younger grandchildren had to rely on their parents to assist them, for instance, in writing a letter and

therefore the adult-child living abroad determined the frequency of contact. When a parent did not acknowledge the important role that a grandparent can play in the lives of their grandchildren and thus not encourage frequent communication with the grandparent, the attachment bond between grandparent and grandchild was negatively influenced.

- Grandparents felt they have missed out on the development of the grandchild(ren). Visits often only occurred once per year and for most participants even less frequently. Grandparents felt that during those visits both parties had to get to know each other from scratch again due to the long lapse of time between visits.

8.3.4 Key Findings: Theme 4 - Transnational communication

THEME 4: TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNICATION	
Sub-theme 4.1:	Writing letters
Sub-theme 4.2:	Sending letters via facsimile
Sub-theme 4.3:	Sending gifts using postal services
Sub-theme 4.4:	Telephone conversations
Sub-theme 4.5:	Internet communication technologies
Sub-theme 4.6:	Electronic mail (e-mail)
Sub-theme 4.7:	Skype as an useful tool
Sub-theme 4.8:	Skype was _not_ seen as useful
Sub-theme 4.9:	Cellular phones
Sub-theme 4.10:	Text messaging
Sub-theme 4.11:	Sending remittances
Sub-theme 4.12:	Communication mediums to break barriers
Sub-theme 4.13:	Time differences and communication
Sub-theme 4.14:	Effect of distance on communication
Sub-theme 4.15:	Decision-making over long distances
Sub-theme 4.16:	Withholding personal information
Sub-theme 4.17:	Not using information technologies
Sub-theme 4.18:	Visits
Sub-theme 4.19:	Visits - preparation: Before the actual visit
Sub-theme 4.20:	Visits - travelling

THEME 4: TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
Sub-theme 4.21:   Visits - adjustment
Sub-theme 4.22:   Visits - settling in during visits
Sub-theme 4.23:   Visits - separation and departure
Sub-theme 4.24:   Visits - first visit
Sub-theme 4.25:   Visits - last visit
Sub-theme 4.26:   Parents should keep in contact

Based on the research findings of this study as discussed and presented in Chapter 6, and the literature study in Chapter 2, the researcher identified the following key findings associated with transnational communication:

- A number of older parents in this study preferred writing letters as a means of communicating with their child(ren) and/or grandchild(ren). Some of these parents were not familiar with computer technologies, and felt threatened by them and therefore used letter writing as a way to communicate. Some participants preferred sending their written letters by fax to ensure that the child received them.

- Sending parcels abroad is very expensive. Often the item never reached its intended destination or was damaged by the time it arrived. Parents indicated that their child(ren) appreciated receiving something culturally familiar from "home." This was found to be a comforting gesture to all parties concerned. As an alternative to sending gifts using postal services, parents found it more assuring to ask friends going abroad to take a specially prepared gift with them and deliver it personally. By knowing that the children will receive the parcel that they have prepared with effort, love and attention gave them peace of mind since their efforts were not in vain.

- The use of the telephone by all the participants were evident in this study. It was the preferred medium of communication among all the parents. Parents found it the most convenient and easiest to use. Clearly hearing the voice of their loved ones was very important and comforting. Although some experienced unclear telephone lines from time to time, they still chose to the telephone as preferred medium to make contact with their loved ones.

- Parents that were familiar with the use of computers and internet communication applications often used e-mail. Many parents enjoyed writing e-mails to their family members abroad, but reported that the children often replied only to selective sections of their mail. Parents felt that not all their questions were answered and/or they received a much shorter e-mail in return.

- The use of Skype as a means of communicating with loved ones abroad was found to be very useful by many parents. They appreciated the occasions that they could, not only have a conversation with their adult-child(ren) and grandchild(ren), but also see them in real-time. However, some parents found the use of Skype frustrating and unreliable. The auditory and visual aspects of Skype did not always function perfectly and it discouraged them to use it.

- The use of Skype as a communication medium gave the adult-child the means of determining how their parents were really doing, especially when a parent's health was deteriorating and they did not want to upset the child. By means of video interface, the adult-child could evaluate the health condition of the parents for themselves. The parent on the other hand can see how the grandchild is physically growing and developing by means of Skype.

- Parents found the use of cell phones convenient to stay in contact with their loved ones abroad. This form of communication is instantaneous and parents often send and received short phatic messages.

- Residing in different time zones was found to hinder the frequency and flow of communication. To overcome the barrier, both parties had to agree on a pre-arranged time to establish contact with each other using either phone or Skype as a means of communication. Some parents felt communication with their children could not be spontaneous and attempting to pre-plan a communicating time that suits both parties was hampered, not only by living in different time zones, but also by finding an appropriate time between the adult-child(ren)'s and grandchild(ren)'s busy schedules.

- A few parents received money from their adult-child abroad but they stated that it was not their only source of income. In this study, one parent received remittances from all three her children on which she relied every month. This parent had experienced financial problems for a lengthy period of time and the adult-children working abroad helped the family to cope financially.

- Some parents had a set appointment to communicate with their children. This appointment was the highlight of their week and they cherished the time spent "together."

- A number of parents were not familiar with the use of the latest communication technologies. They did not have the relevant computer hardware or software available and more importantly were not familiar with the use of it. A number of parents felt they were too old to learn and were not interested in acquiring new skills to enable them to communicate by means of the latest technologies with their adult-child(ren) and/or grandchild(ren).

- As the parent left behind, advances in age, they rely more on their adult-child(ren) to assist them when they need to make important decisions, for example, moving to a retirement village, old age home or frail care. In this study, it was found that when parents communicated with their children they often withheld information regarding their health in order to protect their adult-child(ren). They felt that their loved ones abroad already have enough on their plate and did not want to become an unnecessary burden to them.

- The younger parents in the study made use of the latest technologies on a regular basis to stay in touch with their family abroad. Their computers were seen as their most important link with their children and grandchildren.

- The majority of parents in this study enjoyed their visits abroad tremendously. They experienced the visits as an opportunity to strengthen and rekindle their relationship with their loved ones. Visits were planned for and budgeted well in advance and the build-up towards the date of departure was rejuvenating.

- Yet, some participants had negative experiences regarding visiting their children. The lengthy periods spend in their children's homes caused tension. They had to adapt to their children's' lifestyle, this was not always an easy task especially for long periods of time.

- Gender differences between the parents were noticed during visits. Mothers found it easier to adapt to the new environment and home of their adult-child. They often became involved in the day-to-day chores of the family home and enjoyed looking after their grandchild(ren). Fathers found it more challenging to settle in a new role in an unfamiliar household.

- In addition, mothers were more eager to visit their children frequently. In some instances, the mother would return for a visit to her children without her husband.

- Visits from the children to the parents in South Africa were always a highlight for the parents. However, it was mentioned that the children had various other commitments such as visiting the in-laws and friends or attending to other business appointments. They thus did not spend all their time with the parents.
- For various reasons, the "last visit" to their adult-child(ren) was significant. For some parents, the distance of travelling became too difficult and for others, their failing health prevented them from visiting their children abroad.
- The "last visit" was yet another loss in the trajectory of losses already experienced by the parent left behind. This marked the end of a stage in the emigration experience for the older parent.

8.4   CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study regarding the research methodology, the literature study, the research findings and the doctoral seminar will be discussed below, based on the key findings

8.4.1   Conclusions: Research methodology

The conclusions of the study are in line with the goals and objectives set in Chapter 1: General introduction.

- **Research approach**

  The researcher identified the qualitative research approach as the most appropriate since it aims at understanding the meaning that research participants give to their experience. The use of qualitative methodology was beneficial in uncovering the subjective perceptions of participants' experiences of their adult-child(ren) emigrating. There is a void in the scientific literature concerning the experiences of South African parents left behind. The aim of the study was to get rich in-depth descriptions from participants. The researcher was the main instrument in obtaining this information.

- **Research design**

  This study was consistent with the aims of a phenomenological research design. The aim was to provide *in-depth and rich descriptions* of the subjective experiences of parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren).

Phenomenological research is descriptive and discovery-orientated, allowing participants to describe their life story without the researcher leading or influencing them. The researcher refrained from making judgements and adopted an open attitude toward the phenomenon.

Each participant was the author of their own life history, each entitled to their own unique experience concerning the emigration of their adult-child(ren). Phenomenological research allows for sharing our understandings and insights with others. This approach appealed to the researcher as the design allowed the researcher to gain first-hand knowledge by being part of each participant's life world for a short period. The flexibility and artistic side of this approach provided a platform for the researcher to be "creative" and to use other media like art to describe the phenomena.

- **Research population**

The population of the study refers to people residing in South Africa, specifically in Gauteng province, who are the parents of adult-child(ren) who have emigrated. The boundary or parameter of living in the Gauteng province separates the population from the rest of South Africa and the universe.

- **Purposive sampling**

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to identify the first participant. Snowball sampling was subsequently used to identify the other participants fitting the sampling criteria. The researcher believes that the guidelines compiled from the data and findings provided by this sample, could empower professionals to reach a better understanding of the experiences of the parents left behind.

- **Size of sample**

Nineteen interviews were conducted and in five interviews, both the parents were present. Although it was a small sample size, it is large in qualitative terms. Gender distribution was equal in this sample. The researcher found the mothers more willing to partake in the study. This might be because they were not employed full time and might have had more time to partake in the study.

Due to the sampling method used, the racial distribution of the research sample was not representative of the South African population. Although the parents left behind have been described mainly as a phenomenon amongst the white portion of the population, literature reveals that it is not only the white population that is emigrating and being affected. The sample included participants from different racial groups. The researcher believes that the findings are sufficient to provide some understanding and insightful information regarding the life world of the parent left behind.

- **Data collection**

During qualitative research, the researcher took cognisance of the fact that data collection and analysis is an ongoing process. This process included conducting the interviews, having the interviews typed verbatim and then listening to the voice recordings of the interviews. Conducting interviews at the place of residence of the parent provided additional information from sources such as photographs and personal documentation between the parent and the adult-child.

- **Data analysis**

The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and repeatedly read by the researcher. The ATLAS.ti program was utilised to assist in the data analysis of vast amount of unstructured information and resulted in the categories yielded from within each theme. This program facilitated the researcher to identify patterns or themes from direct quotations and to provide rich data representation. To ensure trustworthiness of data, peer debriefing, personal reflectivity, member checking and an audit trail were provided.

8.4.2   Conclusions: Literature study

The researcher, in line with the requirements of phenomenological research, read as little as possible about the subject before conducting the interviews. This enabled her to enter the interviews with an open mind and avoid influencing the participants in any way.

When writing the research proposal for the Research Ethics Committee, the researcher did a limited literature review to determine if research regarding emigration and the effect on the parent left behind had been undertaken. Research

concerning the emigrant is extensive, but with regard to the parent left behind, the scientific research is scant.

Doing the literature study only after conducting the interviews ensured that the researcher was not biased and that the researcher conducted the research without preconceived ideas. The participants were not led to give information or answers that the researcher "wanted" to hear.

The topics for the literature study chapters were decided upon during the data analysis process. After various themes were confirmed, the researcher determined what needed to be researched in existing literature in order to substantiate the findings and achieve the goal and objectives of this study.

The literature studies were presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The rationale for including three chapters was to create an understanding of the most important themes that were derived from the research:

Chapter 2: Emigration and transnational communication

Chapter 3: Post–parental intergenerational relationships

Chapter 4: Ambiguous loss, attachment and grief

In Chapter 2, emigration and related aspects such as transnationalism were discussed with the aim to create an understanding of what emigration entails and the circular effect of emigration on communication. When looking at emigration statistics, it was clear that this phenomenon has an impact on South Africa as well as on the rest of the world. The current research findings confirmed previous literature findings, that emigration in South Africa is more visible in the white community and that the reasons for emigration in South Africa are mostly due to high crime statistics. The so called "brain drain" as discussed in the literature was confirmed by the current research study. Especially when a couple emigrated, the chance of one of them being highly qualified was rather high.

The development of information communication technologies had an effect on the experience of emigration for both the adult-child(ren) that left and the parent that stayed behind. When reading extensively regarding the phenomenon of emigration and communication, it became apparent to the researcher how the concept of

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"staying in contact" had changed over the past two decades. The articles written a few years ago stressed the probability of emigrants never seeing their families again. The finality of the emigration was much more visible and the contact between the role players was restricted to a few letters and maybe one visit during the whole period. Due to the lack of sufficient communication media, maintaining contact required much more effort and commitment from both sides.

Today, however, people can be in contact on a daily basis and depending on their financial situation, the probability of co-presence visits is more realistic. Travelling costs and availability of travel options have improved tremendously and flights to almost any destination in the world are possible. For this reason, the researcher focused on the effect of transnational families and communication and the latest computer-mediated communications to reinforce interpersonal relations. The research findings confirmed the literature findings that even though communication media has developed and contact can occur on a regular basis, the need for physical contact and being with each other cannot be satisfied virtually.

In Chapter 3, the primary focus was on the parent adult-child relationship. To contextualise the relationship the researcher focused on the demographic trends since the ways in which individuals experience and cope with life transitions varies from generation to generation. For a better understanding of the parent adult-child relationship, attention was given to the mid-life and post-parental phases. The social dynamics between parent and adult-child, as well as the interconnectedness between parent and adult-child were reviewed. Many participants were in the post-parental phase and had grandchildren, therefore, grandparenthood was investigated. Predictors of contact between grandparents and grandchild(ren) were researched in order to determine what the effect of emigration would be on the grandparents left behind.

In Chapter 4, ambiguous loss, attachment theory and grief were discussed. Ambiguous loss and the attachment theory were used as the theoretical framework for this study and could be linked throughout the study, as it was relevant and applicable with regard to these participants' experiences. Ambiguous loss is an uncertain and incomplete loss and impedes on grieving; it freezes the grieving process. The research findings confirmed that the parents left behind experience

ambiguous loss, which was in line with the theoretical framework. In order to understand this concept of loss, the researcher focused on the attachment between the parent and the adult-child, which was also evident throughout the study. The attachment theory was also very evident and relevant as theoretical framework in the guidelines recommended for assisting the parent left behind in chapter 7.

8.4.3   Conclusions: Empirical study

8.4.3.1   Theme 1 - Emigration of the adult-child

The emigrant and his/her adaptation to the new country was not the focus of this study. However, an understanding of the life world of the adult-child as an emigrant can be beneficial in the parent's journey of reconstructing meaning after the emigration of their adult-child. An emigrant is a unique individual with special qualities. To be successful and adapt in a new country requires perseverance and the ability to adapt to unfamiliar circumstances, qualities that might have been part of the upbringing during the formative years of that adult.

Through the upbringing of the adult-child, the parent contributed to raising the child to become an individual who wants to explore and who can adapt easily to new situations and be successful in any environment. This realisation can be beneficial to the parent in knowing that he/she played an important role in raising a child with such special qualities. Being aware of the difficulties in adapting as an emigrant and knowing that your child has succeeded, can aid in the acceptance process.

Parents left behind gave various reasons for the emigration of the adult-child(ren). Crime was one of the most frequent reasons given for the emigration of their children. The researcher found that crime as a reason for emigration could be seen as a double-sided sword. On the one hand, parents rationalised the decision of their children to emigrate as in the best interest of the child. On the other hand, they blamed the government for forcing their child(ren) to leave. According to one parent, crime is the sole reason for their child leaving the country as well as the decision of the child never to return, not even for a visit. The latter intensifies the loss of the parent even more. In a situation where the parent is not in a financial position to visit the child, this could mean never seeing the child again.

Living in South Africa, the researcher is aware of the high violent crime statistics, however, it is a daunting experience to hear it first hand as described by so many of the participants. To experience a parent describing the ordeal of his/her daughter being raped or being brutally attacked is emotionally draining. The researcher was provided with rich descriptions of emotional and physical pain. These descriptions accentuate the seriousness of violent crime that we are faced with in South Africa. Having a child emigrating is already challenging, having a child emigrating due to such an ordeal is even more difficult to bear.

Being involved in the emigration decision-making process of the adult-child can be a reflection on the attachment relationship between them. If they have a mature and open relationship, they should be able to discuss important issues such as the decision to emigrate. The researcher believes that being involved in the decision-making process might not necessarily diminish the experience of loss, but might assist in preparing the parent for the emigration process right from the onset. The attachment theory was very relevant in this theme.

Rituals at the airports or private gatherings are unique to each family and can have an effect on the grieving process. During the emigration process, the first formal goodbye at the airport was memorable to most parents. The researcher recommend that families discuss the best way for all concerned regarding farewells, and what will be beneficial and acceptable to all parties. All the parents in this study had negative connotations with saying goodbye at the airport. Irrespective of the reason for the emigration, saying goodbye to a child(ren) remains a traumatic and distressing experience. The lack of rituals intensifies the grieving process with this ambiguous loss.

8.4.3.2   Theme 2 - Emigration loss

All the participants experienced a loss. The researcher wants to stress that although the parents in this study experienced a loss, it was not a pathological reaction. The parents in this study were fully functional individuals, but their lives changed considerably when their child(ren) emigrated. The emigration left emptiness and an immense void in their lives that they tried to comprehend and accept to the best of their abilities. Ambiguous loss as framework was on the foreground in this theme.

It will be beneficial to the professional to be able to differentiate between complicated and uncomplicated grief. If grief becomes pathological, the professional needs to know when to refer the parent to experts in the field. The effect of long distance grief and bereavement on all role players should be taken into consideration.

Social workers and other professionals working in various institutions, for example, old age homes, retirement villages and churches, should be made aware of the loss that can be suffered by parents when a child(ren) emigrates. Professionals need to be aware of the concept of emigration loss, the stages of emigration and its associated ambiguities. By being informed, the professional will be able to understand the parents' situation and provide relevant support and practical assistance and guidance where necessary. The professional can empower the parent in order to equip them to deal with the ambiguous loss of emigration.

The world of the parent left behind does not change to the same extent as that of the adult-child(ren) that has emigrated. Their surroundings are unchanged, but they have lost their adult-child(ren). Their world becomes "smaller" as the child has left a void. In contrast, it is learned from existing literature that the adult-child(ren)'s world expands considerably. They are adapting and creating a new life for themselves abroad, their focus and attention divided among various new challenges, while the parent left behind may focus only on the child that has emigrated. This accentuates the parent's experience of their loss and the ambiguity thereof impedes their grieving process.

As older generations become less physically active in social and extra-mural activities, available support systems also decrease. Support systems diminish as close friends pass away and when adult-child(ren) emigrates, a void is left in terms of the emotional and physical support that the adult-child used to provide to their parents. Practical issues like seeking medical attention became difficult. Support groups, whether co-presence support groups or social media support groups, could be of great benefit to the parents left behind. They can compare their personal experiences of the emigration process with each other and provide mutual support and understanding. When parents gain insight into the emotional effect of emigration on their holistic functioning, it can enhance their understanding of the

impact on their lives. This knowledge can assist them in dealing with the situation in a positive way.

Parents were divided in their decision whether to inform the adult-child(ren) of complicated or difficult situations, such as the extent of their illness. In times of crisis, you want to be near loved ones and people who care for you. Yet, the parents did not want to burden their children unnecessarily, as they felt that the adult-child(ren) had to travel a great distance to support the parent physically.

The parents' parting with their adult-child(ren) forms part of their behavioural pattern of letting go. It is the opinion of the researcher that when a parent found it hard to let go of the child during previous life cycle phases, letting go of a child to emigration would be experienced as even more challenging. When a parent accepted letting go of the child during previous life cycle phases and perceived it as a milestone and natural part of life, they were more inclined to let go of their adult-child to emigration, without falling into deep sorrow. The attachment theory was evident here.

Siblings left behind are also affected by the emigration. Parents need to take into consideration the perceptions and feelings of the siblings and guard against alienating their other child(ren) while only focusing on the child(ren) that has emigrated. Strengthening bonds with remaining children is beneficial to the parent and the siblings left behind, as they will be able to provide mutual support.

Parents can be made aware of the fact that loss can lead to personal growth and that one should try to focus on the positive aspects. The opportunity to travel to the destination country of the adult-child to visit and explore different cultures could be very enriching. These opportunities might not have been available to them if their adult-child(ren) had not emigrated.

The ambiguity of the loss was clear and the link with the theoretical framework was evident. While some participants described the loss as similar to losing a child to death, they could still talk to the child that has emigrated, even though the child was physically unavailable. The ambiguity of the situation made it difficult to deal with, since it is a never-ending situation.

8.4.3.3   Theme 3 - Intergenerational relationships

The attachment between the parent and the adult-child(ren) was established prior to emigration. Although geographical distances affect the nature and frequency of contact, the parent adult-child attachment bond can continue as long as they are both committed, nurture their relationship and maintain frequent contact by communicating on a regular basis. Regular communication at structured times was experienced positively by the parents as they looked forward to hearing from their loved ones. It gave them the opportunity to feel part of their children's lives.

The roles of the child and the parent tend to reverse as the parent ages. Parents seek their adult-child(ren)'s advice and support and the adult-child(ren), on the other hand, becomes more independent. It is the researcher's opinion that when there are siblings left behind, who are available to provide support, parents left behind might find it more comforting to seek advice from them, rather than from the adult-child(ren) that has emigrated. Open and frequent communication between siblings is imperative when discussing important decisions regarding their parent(s).

Parents that compared the adult-child(ren)'s emigration to a feeling of "childlessness," made the researcher aware of the chronic nature of the situation. The comparison of the migration loss to chronic sorrow was evident. The researcher concluded that the loss of a child to emigration could not be replaced by a relationship with a remaining sibling. The longing for one child cannot be compensated for by the physical presence of another child.

It is the researcher's opinion that when a daughter emigrates, parents, especially the mother, experiences it as an emotional loss and more devastating than when a son emigrates. However, this will depend on the attachment bond between parent and child prior to emigration. Generally, daughters are more inclined to allow their own mother closer proximity to her personal family space than she would allow her mother-in-law. It is perceived by society that a son tends to become more involved with his wife's side of the family and hence grandchildren from that relationship have more contact with the daughter-in-law's parents. These natural behavioural patterns between adult-children and their own parents, as well as adult-children and their in-

laws, have an impact on the parents left behind. This plays a significant role in the loss they experience.

The researcher is of the opinion that it is essential for the daughter (own or daughter-in-law) to be aware of her important role as "gatekeeper." She has the "power" to allow the grandparents into, or omit them from their family abroad. Her role as gatekeeper should never be underestimated in this intergenerational family structure.

There is a certain period for a grandparent to bond with a grandchild. If grandparents are actively involved from the birth of their grandchild and remained part of that child's life, they develop a strong attachment bond with that child. Once a grandchild approaches adolescence, it becomes difficult to maintain a close relationship. The quality of the relationship with the teenage grandchild prior to emigration will determine the future attachment and relationship with that child.

To form an attachment bond with a grandchild over time zones and geographical distance is challenging. To perform typical grandparent activities is a challenge due to the geographical distance. Not being able to provide special treats or look after grandchildren deprive the grandparents left behind of an important role in the lives of their grandchildren. They felt that they are missing out on this important phase in their lives. Grandparents find it hard and frustrating to get to know a grandchild born abroad and establish a relationship with that grandchild.

To invest in these relationships, grandparents need to make a conscious effort to learn new communication technologies and to communicate frequently with their grandchildren. To facilitate this, it is important for the adult-child to understand the importance of this relationship or bond, ensure they provide the necessary motivation from their side and ascertain that the effort is reciprocated. It is very important to the grandparent left behind to receive regular photographs and updates regarding their grandchild(ren)'s development, activities and achievements. The attachment theory was evident in this theme.

8.4.3.4   Theme 4 - Transnational communication

Modern information and communication technologies have created a "global village"

in which transnational families can communicate with each other across the world. The rise of the internet in the 1990s resulted in transnational families being able to stay close to their loved ones, using communication technologies, which provide virtual contact, for example, e-mail, SMS texts, websites and Skype.

Before the rise of internet technology, the chances existed that one might never see one's loved ones again. Communication depended on letter writing and that meant a letter every now and then, depending on the postal service. Modern communication technologies enhance the immediacy and frequency of contact between loved ones and they can actively stay involved in each other's lives.

Despite the availability of modern internet communication technologies, there may still be people that prefer writing letters in the traditional way. Some of the participants were not familiar with the latest communication technologies and found the idea of communicating via internet daunting.

Communication technologies have improved tremendously. Transnational families are now able to communicate instantaneously and on a regular basis. This enhances their interpersonal relationships and is invaluable to both parties. When Skype was used as a means of communication, vital non-verbal communication was not lost. The physical co-presence can, however, not be replaced and is experienced by the parent as an enormous loss. The longing to embrace and touch each other, however, remained their primary aspiration.

Gifts have symbolic meanings and are cherished by the parents. Most parents have time available to make something special for the adult-child like a quilt, something that comes from the heart that provides meaning and self-worth. Parents value gifts from abroad and therefore reliable postal and courier services are important.

Despite the availability of modern communication mediums, the parents' ultimate goal was to observe for themselves that the adult-child who had emigrated, was doing well. In order to alleviate stress and anxiety, it was important to form a mental picture of the child's new living environment. The first visit to the child assists in creating this image so that the parent is familiar with the child's new "world."

During visits, the physical co-presence renewed the attachment bond between transnational family members. Parents could maintain a sense of closeness with their adult-child(ren) and grandchild(ren). Attachments could be formed and developed with new members of the family, including grandchildren, despite the limited duration of the visits. To maintain these bonds, frequency of contact is of utmost importance. The attachment theory was evident in this theme.

Visits are loaded with high expectations and anticipations. This can result in extreme disappointment and disillusionments. Parents have high expectations of seeing their loved ones and envisage a perfect visit with wonderful and happy moments, but sometimes find themselves disillusioned. The relationship with the in-law child also affects the visits, especially if it is a strenuous relationship and the son or daughter has to accommodate the parents for a lengthy period.

8.4.4   Conclusions: Doctoral Seminar

During the presentation of the research seminar, the researcher gave an overview of how the research was conducted. In short, she discussed the research methodology and gave an overview of the research method and process. The empirical findings, focusing on the main themes and sub-themes, were highlighted as well as the practice guidelines to empower the professional to assist the parent left behind. The aim of the seminar was to give participants information regarding the life world of the parent left behind. A questionnaire was compiled with questions taken from the practice guidelines and participants were asked to make suggestions concerning the practice guidelines, recommendations for future research as well as comments regarding the findings and presentation of the seminar.

In retrospect, too much information was provided in a very short period of time. The researcher would recommend focusing on specific aspects such as either the methodology or an in-depth discussion of the key findings of the study or the proposed practice guidelines for professionals to assist parents. By giving a general overview of the methodology and key findings in the same seminar, the researcher felt that the crux of the study could not be discussed in-depth.

Participants commented on the relevancy of the study in the South African context. They reflected that this study could make a vast difference in the support and

understanding of these parents. Comments were made that the researcher was sensitive and empathetic towards the research participants. The findings of the study were also confirmed during the seminar by the feedback received from parents attending the seminar who have "lost" a child(ren) to emigration.

Conclusions from the seminar delegates:

"Covers such a diverse and relevant aspects of this topic."
"Very detailed, objective as well as extremely involved perspective."
"Provides ample substance in the form of real experiences to which one can relate to in such circumstances."
"Very relevant."
"It is never over … It is a new old concept that makes new sense again."   "Dis nooit klaar nie … Dis 'n nuwe ou begrip wat nuwe sin maak."
"Very interesting, lots of information that affirm my feelings, having two of my children overseas."
"I think the research is very relevant in the South African situation. Thank you very much for an interesting research presentation."   "Ek dink die navorsing is baie relevant in die SA situasie. Baie dankie vir 'n interessante navorsings aanbieding."
"Very insightful and the research done was refreshing, creative and different."
"Research is very relevant and appropriate since the problem has for many people traumatic and emotional consequences; it would be a good idea to make it available to the media."   "Navorsing is baie aktueel en toepaslik aangesien die problem vir baie persone traumaties en emosionele gevolge het, sal dit goed wees om dit aan die media bekend te maak."
"Such research does not exist, it is a huge contribution."   "Daar bestaan geen so studie nie en dit is 'n groot bydrae."
"Extremely well put together, great in-depth research."
"One sided, I never experienced it as a loss. It was enrichment all the way the last twenty years. My daughter experienced loss on the other side."
"I am of the opinion that the study is extremely relevant in today's society and can make a huge difference in terms of support of these parents."

"Ek dink die studie is uiters relevant in vandag se samelewing en kan nog 'n groot verskil maak in terme van ondersteuning aan hierdie ouers."
"The presentation was done with great enthusiasm and hence also inspires us to identify the target group (the parents) in our society and to support them." "Die aanbieding was baie entoesiasties aangebied en sodoende ook inspirerend om die teikengroep (die ouers) in ons samelewing raak te sien en te ondersteun."
"Support groups or workshops can be offered to the target groups." "Ondersteuningsgroepe of werkswinkels kan vir die teikengroepe aangebied word."
"*Awareness must be done in order to bring "immigration parents" into contact with each other - support groups."* "Bewus making moet gedoen word om "immigrasieouers" met mekaar in kontakte bring - support groups."
"Skype room for old age homes."
"'Preparation' and 'support groups' for parents/families that stay behind."
"*Important to support the parent who remains behind and to help him/her to re-construct their lives."* "Belangrik om die ouer wat agterbly by te staan en te help om sy lewe te re-konstruktureer."
"*The researcher was very sensitive and empathetic towards the participants*." "Die navorser was baie sensitief en empaties teenoor die respondente."
"I believe the study had therapeutic value for the respondents in that the researcher approached them with empathy and gave them enough time." "Ek glo die studie was van terapeutiese waarde vir die respondente deurdat die navorser hulle met empatie en genoegsame tyd benader het."

8.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Subsequently the recommendations will be discussed, focussing on recommendations for practice, recommendation from the seminar delegates and recommendations for future research.

8.5.1 Recommendations for practice: Guidelines for empowering the professional to assist the parent left behind

The proposed practice guidelines, to empower the professional in assisting the parent left behind was a result of the empirical study. Evaluating or implementing these guidelines was not an objective or part of the goal of this study. The practice guidelines are recommended from this study and can be further refined and adapted to other therapeutic interventions dealing with different types of ambiguous loss.

Based on the research findings of this study as discussed and presented in Chapter 7, guidelines for empowering the professional to assist the parent left behind were recommended with researcher recommending the following key issues for practice:

Art by Maurits Cornelis Escher (2013) was used and is recommended to visualise the complex phenomenon of emigration and to enhance the professional's understanding of the life world of the parent left behind. Each parent tells a story about their experience of their child's emigration from their subjective frame of reference. During the therapeutic process, the professional can use a collage as a form of inquiry to understand and document the parent's journey regarding this phenomenon.

During the therapeutic process, the professional collects the parents' personal demographical information and records the subjective experiences of their child(ren) emigrating using the three stages of the emigration process to populate a collage for each parent. The collage can be used as a therapeutic functional aid and a means to, not only discuss and record relevant information, but to activate other senses like visualisation to form a mental picture of where the parent is currently finding him/herself. Demographical information includes the age, health status, marital status, place of residence, financial position and existing family structure of the parent left behind.

To populate the collage, the following three stages of the emigration process as well as relevant sub-headings were identified and are thus recommended for the professional to follow:

Stage 1: Pre-emigration stage
Stage 2: The act of migration

Stage 3: Post-emigration of the adult-child

These stages provide the professional with a framework during the therapeutic process and a therapeutic programme can evolve for the parent. This proposed structure should not be seen as static, but rather as a guideline to be consulted. The outcome of the guideline is to determine which stage of emigration the parents are experiencing and to assist them in their journey towards acceptance and creating new meanings in their lives. The goal of each collage is to help the professional to fully comprehend the parents' experience concerning the ambiguous loss due to emigration.

In chapter 7, Guidelines for *empowering the professional to assist the parent left behind*, the researcher gave additional in-depth information regarding specific concepts, which are indicated as "*A word to the professional.*"

8.5.1.1 Stage 1 - Pre-emigration stage

STAGE 1: Pre-emigration of the adult-child
• Decision-making process
• Reasons for emigration
• Temporary or permanent emigration

Three aspects were identified during the pre-emigration stage, namely, the emigration decision-making process, reasons for emigration and whether the emigration was temporary or permanent. The researcher deduced that when an adult-child engaged their parents in the emigration decision-making process, it indicated the quality of the parent and adult-child relationship. If it was a mature relationship with open communication, the adult-child felt confident to involve the parent in these discussions. It was found that those parents who were involved in the decision-making process were more accepting of their child(ren)'s decision to emigrate. They felt that their opinions were acknowledged and they were supportive of the child's decision, although it did not diminish their feelings of resentment and loss. Other parents reflected that it was not their decision to make and that the child was old enough to lead his/her own life. To "hide" the decision from the parents and or waiting too long to inform them, made it difficult for the parent to adapt to the idea of the child emigrating.

When there are underlying or unresolved issues between the parent and the adult-child, this first stage of pre-emigration will be filled with animosity and tension. If this is the case, it is advisable that the professional take aspects of "letting go" and how attachment bonds were formed, into consideration.

Various reasons were given by the parents for their child(ren)'s emigration, but violent crime was experienced as the most prominent factor. Violent crime, as well as the country's socio-political situation, were reasons given by the parents for their adult-child(ren)'s emigration. Externalising the blame was part of some of the participants' coping mechanisms. If violent crime and the enforcement of affirmative action were perceived as the main reason for emigrations, it gave the parents the right to blame an outside force, in this case the country's current government. Parents were found to be accepting of the decision to emigrate when it was to enhance their child's professional career and/or to improve their financial status and lifestyle. After weighing up the benefits and shortcomings of emigration, some parents were content to give their child(ren) a "license to leave."

Regarding the matter of temporary or permanent emigration, it was found that in some instances the adult-child(en) informed the parent that their emigration would only be temporary in order to earn more money or to advance their careers. The child(ren) sometimes returned, however a number of them never returned to South-Africa or emigrated to another emigration destination. In some cases, the current high levels of violent crime in South Africa changed the decision from temporary residence in a new country to permanent emigration.

If an adult-child stated that they were only emigrating temporarily, but actually never intended to come back, this could indicate that the adult-child(ren) wanted to protect the parent(s)'s feelings by not revealing their real intentions of permanently emigrating. Another possibility is the adult-child(ren) wanted the parent to adjust gradually to the idea of them leaving the country.

The reasons given for the emigration was from the parents' point of view. The reasons from the child's perspective might differ.

8.5.1.2   Stage 2 - The act of migration

> **STAGE 2: The act of migration**
> - Rituals in saying goodbye

The adult-child(ren)'s first physical leaving of the country was identified as the act of emigration. After the build-up of pre-emigration arrangements, parents experienced the first goodbye at the airport or at other arranged gatherings as devastating. Parents in this study had negative connotations with airports, as they associated it with a sense of an ending and thus with feelings of sadness.

There are no prescribed or socially arranged rituals when saying goodbye to loved ones, whether at the airport or private gatherings. Each family in this study had their own unique rituals. In an attempt to diminish the traumatic experience of saying goodbye, it is important that all members in the family agree to the manner in which they wish to say farewell. If a parent is not allowed to say goodbye at the airport, it can have a detrimental effect on that parent's ability to let go of their adult-child(ren), as well as on them in finding a form of closure or acceptance of their loss.

Parents that are included in the decision-making process can aid the process of coming to terms with the loss. The same applies to the letting go process and the manner in which the final "saying goodbye" is conducted. The researcher compared it to rituals at a funeral. Just as these rituals assist in the grieving process, so do the rituals of saying goodbye aid with grieving the loss of the adult-child.

8.5.1.3   Stage 3 - Post-emigration of the adult-child

> **STAGE 3: Post-emigration of the adult-child**
> - Demographical information: Adult-child that emigrated
>   - The age of the adult-child that has emigrated
>   - The gender of the child that has emigrated
>   - Marital status of the adult-child
>   - Place of residence in South Africa before emigration
>   - Frequency of contact prior to emigration
> - The relationship between parent and adult-child
> - Relationship between parent and grandchildren

- Parent insight into the adult-child's new world
- Letting go of the adult-child and grandchildren
- Ambiguity of emigration loss
- Comparing emigration of a child to losing a child to death
- Ambiguous loss is not always problematic
- Grief and bereavement
- Parent's coping strategies
- Creating hope and meaning in ambiguity

The post-emigration stage was the longest stage identified by the researcher and dealt with the time after the adult-child(ren) had left the country. It is the association to the loss that is vital and the focus of this stage was on the relationship between the parent and adult-child(ren) as well as the grandparent and grandchildren. As part of understanding the quality of these relationships, the professional needs to collect certain information about the adult-child(ren) to determine exactly what the parent lost.

The attachment bond between parent and adult-child(ren) and/or parent and grandchild(ren) during pre-emigration, was a good indicator of the current relationship. This information aided the researcher to come to a conclusion regarding the quality of the current relationship and how the geographical distance could either enhance or weaken this relationship. This study found that when the parent had a good relationship with their adult-child(ren) prior to emigration, the quality of the relationship remained the same post-emigration. Therefore, a secure relationship was maintained despite the geographical distance between them. When the relationship between the parent and adult-child(ren) was already insecure and vulnerable, it did not improve post-emigration and often deteriorated even further.

The type or quality of the attachment bond prior to emigration between the parent and a grandchild follows a similar pattern as that between the parent and the adult-child(ren). If a strong bond was established prior to emigration and depending on the frequency of contact post-emigration, it was possible to maintain a good relationship with the grandchild. The researcher found that it was very difficult to form a bond with a grandchild where none existed, for example, when a new

grandchild was born abroad and the grandparent was not present at the birth of the child.

The type of communication medium influenced the quality of the relationship and the frequency of contact with the grandchild(ren). When a grandparent was unfamiliar with internet communication technologies it created a barrier in maintaining and further developing the grandparent-grandchild relationship. A grandparent described how her grandchild saw her: "… my granny lives in a computer," which stresses the difficulty of maintaining a close and meaningful grandparent-grandchild relationship over vast distances.

The loss due to emigration is a type of ambiguous loss that was found to be very difficult for parents to describe and comprehend. There was no clear-cut finality to the relationship and parents experienced chronic despair and sorrow after their child(ren) and grandchild(ren) had emigrated and this was accompanied by high levels of stress. Migration loss was perceived as an ongoing loss affecting the role players. The adult-child(ren) was physically absent but still psychologically present. The loss due to emigration was seen by parents as an abstract loss, as they had lost their hopes and ideals for their adult-child(ren) in terms of what they thought should have been, could have been, or might have been if the adult-child(ren) remained in the country. This missing out on what could have been, could lead to an idealisation of the child that is not healthy for either party.

The more involved parents were pre-emigration with their adult-child(ren) and/or grandchildren during the pre-emigration stage, the greater the loss experienced, especially when they had lived in the same suburb or town and had frequent had contact with each other. Parents found it hard to accept and adapt to the physical distance between them, and their loved ones. Missing out on physical co-presence between them, their adult-child(ren) and grandchild(ren), was frequently mentioned by all participants. Special occasions such as birthdays, other celebration days or times of illness or death in the family, were particularly difficult to accept.

A number of parents in this study compared the emigration of their adult-child(ren) to that of losing a child to death. Although emigration does not have the finality that death brings, some parents compared it to the death of a child, because that is how

severe they experienced their loss. It was seen as a "death" or an ending of their relationship as it was before.

Coping strategies are unique to individuals. Parents in this study used various methods to deal with their loss and to reduce their anxiety. Parent's coping strategies varied between rationalising the reason for the emigration, to being grateful that their loved ones were safe and living a better life abroad. In several instances, parents dealt with the loss by convincing themselves that their child(ren) simply had *no other choice* but to leave the country because of violent crime, either experienced directly or as a preventative action. In addition, the country's current socio-economic conditions and the practice of affirmative action compelled them to emigrate.

Gender differences were found in the parents' way of dealing with their experiences of loss. Mothers were often disproportionately involved with the adult-child(ren) and/or grandchild(ren) and therefore had a stronger emotional bond with the children. Fathers, in this study, were often the main breadwinners and spent their time and energy providing for their families. Although there was a difference in the manner and level in which parents revealed their emotions and dealt with their loss, both parents experienced some form of loss.

A number of parents mentioned that their spirituality gave them the necessary strength to cope with their loss. Their faith and prayers consoled them in time of deep sorrow and gave them meaning and purpose to carry on with their lives.

All parents experienced visits, as a coping strategy and a way to revive attachments with their adult-child(ren) and grandchildren. Those parents who were able to visit their adult-child(ren), to see for themselves that their child(ren) was doing well, coped better. These first visits abroad were usually planned to take place as soon as possible after the adult-child(ren) had left. Physically and visually experiencing the home and the new community where their children lived was beneficial to the parent's peace of mind and wellbeing.

Challenges that the parents experienced while visiting included adjusting to the loved one's new lifestyle and finding their role in the day-to-day routine, especially

when the planned visit was for a long period. These visits ensured that parents felt they were maintaining a sense of "closeness" with their loved ones and that they still "knew" each other. Looking forward to and planning a visit to their children gave parents hope and help strengthen the relationship.

Not all visits were experienced in a positive manner and there were a few occasions where participants were deeply disappointed with the visit. The researcher found a distinct difference between the parent's very first visit, in-between visits and the very last visit. During the first visit, the main purpose was to gain insight in the new world of the adult-child and grandchildren. During subsequent visits, both parties were better equipped and knew what to expect while visiting each other. New roles had been defined and the goal was to spend as much time together as possible. The last visit was yet another loss and a significant defining moment in the life of both the parent and the adult-child. The last or final visit is normally determined by the age or health of the parent and is part of multiple losses experienced by the parent.

Migration is about memory and most importantly, memory of relationships. Ways should be found to keep the memories alive by using alternative methods of therapy and maintaining communication with loved ones. Professionals should encourage the creation of positive memories, not just for the parent, but also for the adult-child and therefore the "art of long distance communication" should be explored to find ways to enhance the communication between all concerned.

8.5.2 Recommendations: Delegates of doctoral seminar

The delegates at the research seminar were asked to complete an evaluation form after attending the seminar and to submit their recommendations on the study. The following sections consist of the delegates verbatim recommendations and viewpoints on the discussed topic.

"Awareness of future care of the elderly."
"Perhaps further investigation into the children's lives "on the other side" – then finding a way of linking better and having more contact."
"Are they missing us as much as we are missing them?"

"A long-term study that looks at the impact of emigration on the relationship between grandmother and grandfather - grandchild."   "'n Langtermyn studie wat kyk na die impak van emmigrasie op die verhouding tussen ouma en oupa- kleinkind."
"How grandchildren experience long term the loss of a grandparent."   "Hoe ervaar kleinkinders oor langtermyn die verlies van 'n grootouer."
"The development of a programme that accompanies families during the process of emigration, for example important conversations, farewell rituals."   "Die ontwikkeling van 'n program wat gesinnne begelei deur die proses van emmigrasie byvoorbeeld belangrike gesprekke, afskeidsrituele."
"For therapy purposes, guidelines to parents on how to cope with the loss and bring new meaning into their lives."
"The understanding of how the "loss cycle" works for parents is helpful even though the loss remains continuous."
"The effect on the siblings' relationships after immigration."
"Looking at the effect on the mother still wanting to visit but the father refuses to"
"Does the parent experience feelings of guilt, guilt in the sense that it is their 'fault' that their children have emigrated?"
"What about teaching children the love for the South African culture, if that will make them stay?"
"Another study of the child who is overseas. The child's positive and negative experiences of the emigration and her/his needs regarding the parent."   "'n Verdere studie rondom die kind wat oorsee is. Die kind se positiewe en negatiewe ervarings van die emigrasie en sy/haar behoeftes van die ouer."
"I wonder whether feelings of guilt by the parents were explored. If indeed they perhaps felt that it was their fault that the children had left."   "Ek wonder of daar skuldgevoelens by die ouers ge-eksploreer was. Indien hulle dalk voel dat hulle skuld is dat die kinders weg is."
"What would the South African culture mean to these parents and children? I wonder to what extent the children attach values to the South African culture and whether this would probably give them a greater "love" for their own country and could possibly be a reason to stay."

> "Wat sou die Suid-Afrikaanse kultuur vir hierdie ouers en kinders beteken? Ek wonder tot watter mate die kinders waarde koppel aan die Afrikaanse kultuur en of dit hulle dalk 'n groter "liefde" sou gee vir hul eie land en dalk 'n rede sou wees om te bly."

8.5.3   Recommendations: Future research

Future research with larger and more diverse samples is needed to confirm and extend the findings of this study. In selecting future samples, attention should be given to including representation from all South African cultures to further refine our knowledge regarding cultural differences and emigration. The children who have emigrated should be included in future research in order to obtain a holistic view of the whole family and their experience concerning emigration. Such a representative sample would contribute to refining the theoretical conceptualisation of the life world of the parent left behind.

The age range of parents in this study was between 50 to 80 years. For future research, the age bracket could include a wider age range. It is advisable to form specific age cohorts focusing on younger middle phase parents, starting from age 40 to 60 and 60 to 80. Parents above the age of 60 have different needs to that of younger ones. The researcher believes that in looking at the various age groups in more detail, specific recommendations can be made to professionals as well as to other institutions dealing with the elderly.

In future studies, the researcher advises that partners or married participants be interviewed separately and then jointly to verify information. Although it will be costly, it is recommended that the adult-child(ren) of the parents left behind also be included in the study. These interviews could be conducted via e-mail or Skype.

Parents left behind come from various cultural and social environments and therefore future research should represent the cultural diversity of the South African population. The researcher recommends that the interviewer be able to converse in the preferred language of the participant. Further investigation can be made into the influence of culture in dealing with loss. In this study, a distinction was noticed in the manner in which different cultures dealt with their loss. Insight into this could

enhance our understanding of cultural differences when dealing with loss in the South African context.

Research in the South African context regarding gender differences in dealing with emigration loss can be beneficial. Knowledge of these differences can empower the professional to assist the parents left behind to develop empathy for each other as they deal with their loss differently. The different gender perspectives can provide alternative viewpoints to assist each other in dealing with the phenomenon. For both parents, this can be important in their journey of acceptance and finding new meanings in their lives.

A "license to leave" can be further investigated to determine what effect it has on the parent's adjustment as well as on the child's adaptation in the new country. When a child perceives a parent as supportive and accepting of the emigration, it can positively influence their adaptation to the new country.

An alternative reason for emigration is the possibility of an adult-child and/or son- or daughter-in-law wanting to get as far away as physically possible from their parents/parents-in-law. Unhealthy attachment bonds might exist between the parties concerned and the adult-child(ren) might see it as a solution to create a vast distance between them and their parents. This aspect could be addressed in the future research.

Future studies could focus on how the personality of a child influences their decision to emigrate. While reading various literature studies, the researcher found that certain personalities are more predisposed to emigration, irrespective of the reason for emigration. There are various interrelated push and pull factors for emigration, for example, reasons can include better financial status, educational and career opportunities, levels of crime as well as the personality of the person emigrating.

As reported by the media, many South Africans that have emigrated are returning to South Africa. Further research could include the effect on the parent left behind when their adult-child(ren) returns to South Africa after living abroad for an extended period of time. Comparing the reasons for leaving versus the reasons for returning could be investigated.

A further recommendation is to determine how different personalities deal with loss. People that naturally have a more positive disposition might deal with emigration loss more effectively.

The behavioural pattern of letting go of a child is another topic that requires further research. Parents let go of their children in various ways, some constructive and some in a destructive manner. These behavioural patterns of dealing with loss are formed during the child's life cycle changes. When parents are aware of these ongoing ways of letting go of a child, they can develop valuable insight into healthy ways of letting go.

The effect of emigration on sibling(s) left behind could be another topic for future investigation. Emigration does not only have an impact on the parent left behind but also on siblings of the adult-child that emigrates. Siblings are left to deal with the day-to-day needs involving the parents, whether physically or emotionally. The child that emigrated steadily loses contact with the parents' realities back home and is not involved in their parents' gradual diminishing health and other age related aspects.

The effect of emigration on siblings' relationships can be an interesting topic of research. It can include the frequency of contact pre- and post-emigration; the needs of siblings versus the needs of the parent left behind as well as the relationship between siblings prior to emigration.

Future research could focus attention on comparing emigration to the death of a child. Findings could be beneficial to professionals assisting family members during their journey of accepting and dealing with their loss.

Previous research studies focused on "migratory grief" of the *emigrant*. Migratory grief of *loved ones left behind* could be a topic for future research.

Consequences of parental ill health and dying while an adult-child(ren) is abroad, is a subject that needs to be researched. The parent as well as the adult-child(ren) abroad needs to be guided in dealing with this traumatic period. The effect of long distance grief should be researched, since it has an effect on all family members.

Further studies could focus on pre- and post-emigration attachment bonds between a parent and an adult-child and the effect on the intergenerational relationship. The attachment theory, by Bowlby (1988), can be studied in more depth to determine the development of the parent-child bond and its effect on the pre- and post-emigration relationship.

A longitudinal study on the long-term effects of emigration on family relationships could be conducted to look at the effect of emigration on the same family during different life stages.

Research could focus on relationships between grandparents and grandchildren living abroad. How are they maintaining and/or developing effective communication with their grandchildren? How are existing relationships nurtured and how is an attachment bond formed with a new grandchild? What are the long-term effect of the experience of loss for both parties involved?

Another important topic is the availability of modern communication technologies, such as Skype, in old-age homes, retirement villages, hospices and hospitals and providing the necessary training and support to the elderly to become familiar with new mediums of communication to maintain intergenerational and transnational contact with loved ones. The elderly needs to be informed on what is available and be provided with the necessary assistance in using these technologies.

Coping strategies of the parent left behind can be researched. The participants frequently mentioned religion as a coping strategy. Various church denominations could be made aware of this phenomenon and encouraged to assist the parent and siblings left behind. Emigration as a theme could be incorporated or presented in workshops or during cell group discussions and relevant emotional support could be provided and effective coping strategies presented to those "left behind."

Developing a programme to educate and inform parents left behind regarding the emigration of their child could be beneficial. When parents obtain the necessary insight into what their child is experiencing as an emigrant, it could be beneficial to their understanding and supporting that child. Through such a programme, both parties could benefit from learning and understanding each other's needs.

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8.6   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The initial title of the research study was, "*The experience of parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children.*" When the researcher commenced with the research, she felt it necessary to change the title by adding "*an experiential journey,*" not aware at that stage exactly what this journey would entail. As it turned out, it was indeed an experiential journey! It was not just about gaining scientific information but also a personal growth experience.

The parent-child attachment is one of the most important bonds a parent will ever form and it lasts a lifetime. To pack your figurative suitcase with special and lasting memories with your children will not only enrich your life journey, but will aid you, as you never know when you will have to unpack that "suitcase." For the parent left behind, the researcher has the utmost empathy in dealing with this ambiguity. However, like most experiences in life, this experiential journey can be a growth experience for the parent left behind.

The researcher trusts that this study will contribute to the field of emigration, and social work in particular, and raise social workers' awareness of the significance of this phenomenon. She also trusts that the practice guidelines for the helping professions regarding the experiences and perceptions of the emigration of a child by the parent left behind will be beneficial during the therapeutic process in which the professional assists the parent on their emigration journey.

> You put together two people who have never been put together before. Sometimes it is like that first attempt to harness a hydrogen balloon to a fire balloon: do you prefer crash and burn, or burn and crash? But sometimes it works, and something new is made, and the world is changed. Then, at some point, sooner or later, for this reason or that, one of them is taken away. And what is taken away is greater than the sum of what was there. This may not be mathematically possible; but it is emotionally possible (Barnes, 2014:67).

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10.   Annexures

Annexure A: Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

1 June 2010

Dear Prof Lombard

Project: **The experiences of parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children**
Researcher: **S Ferreira**
Supervisor: **Dr CL Carbonatto**
Department: **Social Work and Criminology**
Reference Number: **82191094**

Thank you for your response to the Committee's letter of 5 May 2010.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 31 May 2010. Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it would be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to the student.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof. John Sharp
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: john.sharp@up.ac.za

**Research Ethics Committee Members: Dr L Blokland; Prof M-H Coetzee; Dr JEH Grobler; Prof KL Harris; Ms H Klopper; Prof E Krüger; Prof A Mlambo; Dr S Ouzman; Dr C Panebianco-Warrens; Prof G Prinsloo; Prof J Sharp (Chair); Prof E Taljard ; Dr J van Dyk; Dr FG Wolmarans

Annexure B: Registration of title change

Our ref: Ms P Woest / 82191094
Tel: 012 420 2736
Fax: 012 420 2698
E-mail: petru.woest@up.ac.za

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

10 November 2010

Mrs S Ferreira
PO Box 76031
LYNNWOOD
0040

Dear Mrs Ferreira

TITLE REGISTRATION: FIELD OF STUDY – DPHIL IN SOCIAL WORK

I have pleasure in informing you that the following has been approved:

TITLE OF THESIS: **Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: an experiential journey**

SUPERVISOR: **Dr CL Carbonatto**

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE ATTACHED REQUIREMENTS.

1. **PERIOD:**
   (a)   You must be enrolled as a student for at least one academic year before submission of your thesis.
   (b)   Your enrolment as a student must be renewed annually before 31 March, until you have complied with all the requirements for the degree. You will only be liable to have supervision if you provide a proof of registration to your supervisor.

2. **NOTIFICATION BEFORE SUBMISSION:**
   You are required to notify me at least three months in advance of your intention to submit your thesis.

3. **APPROVAL FOR SUBMISSION:**
   On completion of your thesis enough copies for each examiner as well as the prescribed examination enrolment form which includes a statement by your director of studies that he/she approves of the submission of your thesis, as well as a statement, signed by you in the presence of a Commissioner of Oaths, must be submitted to Student Administration.

4. **DATE OF EXAMINATION:**
   If your doctoral examination is to take place after the submission of your thesis, please inform me of the date of the examination.

Yours sincerely

for **DEAN: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

GW-606E

Annexure C: **Request for permission to conduct a research interview**

<div align="center">

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

</div>

Our Ref: Sulette Ferreira

Tel: (012) 809 4187

E-Mail: sulette@942.co.za

To whom it may concern,

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I am a qualified social worker by profession and a DPhil student at the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria. The title of my study is: **Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: an experiential journey.**

It is a well recognised that many South Africans have emigrated. A complete profile of the parents left behind in South Africa and their experiences are currently not available. This study is phenomenological in nature and aims at exploring and describing the experiences of parents left behind after their adult-child has emigrated. Through purposive sampling, a resident at your institution has been selected with whom I would like to conduct an unstructured interview. The interview will be audio recorded and personal data of the participant might also be used with his/her consent.

The proposal for this research has been submitted to the Postgraduate and Research Ethics Committees of the Faculty of Humanities for approval. Copies of

the letter of approval from the Research Ethics Committee, the research proposal and the letter of informed consent will be provided.

As a researcher, I am fully aware of my responsibility to ensure that this study meets all the ethical requirements, specifically voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. The researcher will be supervised by Dr CL. Carbonatto of this department. The results will be published in a doctoral thesis, as well as an article in a scientific journal.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me.

I will be grateful if you would grant me the permission and opportunity to conduct this interview at your institution.

Yours sincerely

Sulette Ferreira
Researcher

Dr CL Carbonatto
Supervisor

Annexure D: Letter of Informed Consent

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Social Work & Criminology

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

SECTION A: RESEARCH INFORMATION

Principal Investigator: Mrs S Ferreira – DPhil Student No: 82191094

Address:

PO BOX 76031

Lynnwood

0040

Dear participant

Doctoral Research Project: Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: an experiential journey.

1. Purpose of the study

The researcher is a qualified social worker by profession and a DPhil student at the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria. In her professional and personal capacity, she has been involved with people left behind after the emigration of loved ones and is interested in further exploring the individual's lived experience of this phenomenon. It is well recognised that many South Africans have emigrated and numerous South African citizens are still in the process of emigrating. A complete profile of the parents left behind in South Africa and their experiences of the emigration are currently not available

My participation in the search to understand the essence of this experience would be helpful to many other people in similar situations.

2. Procedures

An interview will be arranged by the researcher and conducted at a time and place that will be convenient for me. This interview will be audio-taped with my permission and thereafter it will be transcribed in writing. Personal data such as letters, diaries, photographs or e-mails, which can enrich the data for this study, will be used with my permission, if applicable. The information I share will be utilised in the research report.

Articles in scientific journals will be published based on the results of the study. This study protocol has been submitted to the Postgraduate and Ethics Committees of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, for required approval.

The research data collected will be kept in a safe place for 15 years at the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria as prescribed, thereafter it will be destroyed. All signed letters of informed consent will be kept in a confidential file and I will receive a copy of this letter. Only the researcher will have access to this information and the recorded interviews.

3. Risks and discomfort.
It is possible that the recall of certain memories may be emotionally painful to me. Possible risks or harm that could emanate from participation in the research will be dealt with great sensitivity. Debriefing will be done by the researcher at the end of the interview. Should it be necessary, counselling will be arranged by the researcher with a clinical psychologist, in private practice in Pretoria, Dr. Nel.

4. Benefits of research
I may not benefit directly from this research, (no material gain) but may benefit indirectly, because the information obtained by means of this research, will help to explain and give a better understanding of the experiences of South African parents left behind, once their adult children have emigrated.

5. Confidentiality and anonymity
A numerical letter will be assigned to me after the interview by the researcher. This will be used to refer to any personal information about me in the research report. My identity will not be revealed in any manner and will only be known to the researcher.

6. Financial compensation

No form of remuneration or compensation will be provided to me for my participation in this research study. If I have any questions during this study, I can contact the researcher.

Yours sincerely,

Sulette Ferreira

Contact details of the researcher:

Mrs S Ferreira can be contacted at (012) 809 4187 (office hours) or at 082 442 0131 (after hours) if there are any questions or concerns.

SECTION B: RESEARCH CONSENT

I, _____ (Full name and surname of participant) hereby acknowledge that I have been informed about the research study. I am aware of what is required of me as a participant. I have read and understand how the research procedure will be followed. I have asked the relevant questions I may have had and I am aware of the confidential nature of the study. As a participant, I also understand that my identity will be kept anonymous. Finally, if at any point I choose to withdraw from the study I understand I will not suffer any negative consequences.

I will receive a signed copy of this informed consent form.
Please complete the form below:

I, _____ have read and understood the purpose of this study.
(Participant)
Name: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher

I have explained the study to the participant, and provided him/ her with a copy of the letter of informed consent.

Name: Sulette Ferreira

Signature   _____

Date   _____

Annexure E: **Verification of profile information**

Research participant: Verification of profile information

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms or Mr and Mrs

It has been quite some time since we have last corresponded.

My research study on the "Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: an experiential journey," is coming to an end. My passion for this topic has intensified after this amazing journey! Since you have played an integral part from the onset, during the interview stage, I would also like to include you at the end of this journey.

In order to complete my research study I need to verify each research participant's personal profile information. Below please, find my short personal reflection regarding your profile description as a participant. Please verify that my reflections regarding the research interview are correct and that I have not harmed you in any way, that I have not stated anything that is too personal or made you feel you can be identified by this information. If you feel that you would like to change or add anything to your profile, please do not hesitate to do so. Your feedback regarding your personal profile information will be much appreciated. If you feel the need to see me in person to discuss your profile, please feel free to contact me.

In addition, for statistical purposes, may I also ask you to complete the following information, as of 2010 when the interview was conducted.

Interview Number	Age of Parent	Marital Status	Highest qualification of parent	Number of children emigrated	Age of Children emigrated
Participant x					

Highest qualification of child(ren)	Emigration Destination

451

The PhD Thesis (research study) will be published shortly and if you are interested in the findings of the study, please contact me for a personal appointment.

I would like to thank you for your contribution toward this journey. It is my intention to continue to inform and educate the public regarding this important and growing phenomenon. Without your valuable time and personal experience, this journey would not have been possible

Kind Regards

Sulette Ferreira
082 442 0131