

**MOTIVES FOR CHILD HOMICIDE BY MOTHERS INCARCERATED IN FOUR
CORRECTIONAL CENTRES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

MALOPE NTHABISENG FRANCISKA

DISSERTATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

PSYCHOLOGY

in the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
(School of Social Sciences)**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
(TURFLOOP CAMPUS)**

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR THOLENE SODI

September 2014

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family:

My mom and dad, Mary and George Malope

My daughters, Natasha and Casandra,

My siblings, Olivia, Patience, Peter and Emmanuel,

Your love has been an inspiration to me

DECLARATION

I, MALOPE NTHABISENG FRANCISKA, declare that MOTIVES FOR CHILD HOMICIDE BY MOTHERS INCARCERATED IN FOUR CORRECTIONAL CENTRES IN SOUTH AFRICA is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

.....

Full names

.....

Date

.....

Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give thanks to God Almighty for enabling me to complete this research. Without his divine grace and mercy, I would not have made it.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to:

- Professor T. Sodi, for the motivation and moral support, as well as his patience, willingness to teach and direct. Most of all, I thank him for his excellent supervisory skills shown throughout this dissertation.
- The participants whose participation made this a collective rather than an individual contribution.
- Professor S. Tshehla, Ms L. Voigt and Mr M.M. Mohlake, for their assistance in translation and editing of the manuscript.
- My friend and colleague, Nereen who encouraged, supported and assisted me in the development of this dissertation. I will never forget your contribution.
- My mom, Mary Malope, for her warmth, patience, love, encouragement, prayers and support throughout the study and during some of the most frustrating times while completing my study.
- My dad, George, for his love and consistent words of encouragement.
- My siblings, Olivia, Patience, Peter and Emmanuel, for their love, patience, prayers and support shown to me throughout my life and during my study period.
- My daughters, Natasha and Casandra for their bubbly spirits and continued love and understanding even through the most difficult moments.
- My sister in law, Maphuti, for taking good care of my daughters Natasha and Casandra when I was too committed.
- I further acknowledge the Medical Research Council for sponsoring part of my studies.
- I also wish to acknowledge the National Department of Correctional Services as well as the three Provincial Departments, for opening their doors and giving me permission to collect my data within the Correctional Centers.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study was to explore and describe the views on child homicide by mothers. The qualitative research approach, and in particular the phenomenological method of inquiry was used. A sample of seventeen mothers (with ages ranging from thirteen to fifty three years) was drawn from four female correctional centres in South Africa, namely; Thohoyandou (Limpopo Province), Polokwane (Limpopo Province), Johannesburg correctional centre (Gauteng Province) and Durban Westville correctional centre (KwaZulu-Natal Province). The sample was obtained through purposive sampling. All the participants were interviewed using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using the phenomenological method.

The themes that emerged from data analysis were: a) Motives for child homicide; b) Type of methods used in child homicide; and, c) Pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour. The study revealed that there were different motives leading mothers to commit child homicide. These included: child homicide as a result of everyday stressors that the mothers encountered; child homicide as an act of altruism; child homicide to gain acceptance; perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse; child homicide as accidental; child homicide attributed to witchcraft; and, mental illness as a motive for child homicide.

The study also highlighted different types of methods used by the mothers to commit child homicide. The methods included: the use of weapons; hitting, dropping and strangling; suffocation; drowning; and, poisoning. The findings also suggested that pre-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were associated with anger, depression, frustration and self blame. The participants showed post-homicidal ideations and behaviour such as remorse, regret and guilt, whilst others felt a sense of relief and were somehow hopeful about the future. The study is concluded by making recommendations for further research on child homicide based on larger samples.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
Dedication	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Table of contents	vi

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Motivation for study	2
1.3 Aim of the study	2
1.4 Objectives of the study	2
1.5 Definition of concepts	3
1.6 Organisation of the dissertation	4

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Global and historical context of child homicide	5
2.3 Child homicide in South Africa	9
2.4 Motives for child homicide	11
2.5 Cultural aspects of child homicide	12
2.6 Theoretical perspectives of child homicide	13
2.7 Theoretical framework: The relational theory of women's Psychological development	16
2.8 Summary	17

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	18
3.2 Research design	18
3.3 Sampling and setting	18
3.4 Data collection	19
3.5 Data analysis	19
3.6 Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability	21
3.7 Ethical considerations	21
3.8 Summary	22

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction	23
4.2 Demographic profile of the participants	23
4.3 Phenomenological explication	24
4.3.1 Motives for child homicide	24
4.3.2 Types of methods used in child homicide	31
4.3.3 Pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour	35
4.4 Summary of results	38

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction	40
5.2 Emerging themes	40
5.3 Implications for theory	46

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings	48
6.2 Significance of the study	49
6.3 Limitations of the study	49
6.4 Contributions and recommendations	49

REFERENCES	51
-------------------	-----------

APPENDICES

Appendix 1(a): Interview guide	56
Appendix 1(b): Interview guide in Sepedi	57
Appendix 2 (a): Participant consent letter and form	58
Appendix 2 (b): Participant consent letter and form in Sepedi	59
Appendix 3 (a): Consent form to be signed by the participant	60
Appendix 3 (b): Consent form in Sepedito be signed by the participant	60
Appendix 4: Interview Transcripts	61

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

To most contemporary minds, the thought of a mother killing her child evokes a deep sense of horror and outrage as it represents betrayal of the presumption of maternal love and altruism upon which much of civilization rests (Oberman, 2003). Maternal filicide, defined as child homicide by mothers, is a problem that transcends national boundaries. However, little is known about the circumstances and factors associated with the commission, and this lack of knowledge makes prevention difficult (Friedman, Horowitz & Resnick, 2005).

Studies have suggested that multiple factors can cause a woman to kill her own child (Krischer, Stone, Sevecke & Steinmeyer, 2007; Schwartz & Isser, 2000). These include: financial difficulties, social isolation, single motherhood, work-related stress, housing problems, the mother's own upbringing, childhood abuse, traumatisation, marital problems, jealousy, alcohol abuse, physical illness, depression and mood disorders or psychotic symptoms (Haapasalo & Petaja, 1999; McKee & Shea, 1998; Saisto, Salmela-Aro, Nurmi & Halmesmaki, 2001). Friedman, Horowitz and Resnick (2005) postulated that child homicide could be attributable to the following: (1) altruism, (2) acute psychosis, (3) accidental filicide (fatal maltreatment), (4) unwanted child, and (5) spouse revenge filicide.

Unsurprisingly, then, child homicide by mothers is generally regarded as a crime committed by "crazy" women (Oberman, 2003). Upon close examination of the nature of child homicide by mothers across cultural, religious, and geographical lines in the early 21st century, it is clear that this description falls far short of conveying the reality of child homicide. At the most basic level, child homicide is a crime committed by mothers, against their own children, and therefore is by definition, a reflection of the individual mother's experience of the conditions under which she was expected to raise her child. The circumstances that surround child homicide by mothers in different cultures vary widely. Nonetheless, a careful analysis of contemporary cases confirms

one fundamental similarity: in virtually every instance, child homicide is committed by mothers who cannot parent their child under the circumstances dictated by their particular position in place and time (Oberman, 2003).

1.2 Motivation for the study

While the emergent research has refined our understanding of childhood homicides, a major shortcoming of the current body of literature is its exclusive focus on Western post-industrialized societies such as the US, England, Canada and Australia (Adinkrah, 2000). Adinkrah (2000) indicates that although child homicide has been reported for societies across the globe since antiquity, the empirical research on lethal victimization of children in small, non-Western societies has been sparse. Marchetti-Mercer (2003) argues that, although there is a lot of research that has been done in South Africa on homicide in general, there appears to be little that has been done about child homicide by mothers. The dearth of research on infanticide in non-Western societies is regrettable because it hampers a broader understanding of homicide as a behavioural phenomenon (Adinkrah, 2000). Based on the relatively few studies done on child homicide by their mothers in non-Western societies, the current study seeks to contribute to the scant and extant literature on the subject.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the present study was to explore the motives for child homicide by mothers incarcerated in four correctional centres in South Africa.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To describe the lived experiences of homicidal mothers before and after they committed their crimes;
- To explore and describe the thoughts and experiences of homicidal women at the time when they killed their children; and,
- To investigate and describe homicidal women's understanding of the motives that led them to kill their children.

1.5 Definition of concepts

1.5.1 Motives: According to the Oxford Dictionary (Stevenson, 2010), motive refers to the cause or rationale. In the context of this study, motives are understood to refer to the causes or rationale leading mothers to commit child homicide.

1.5.2 Child homicide: Child homicide refers to 'general filicide' which is the killing of any aged child by their mother. In the context of this study, child homicide refers to all cases of women killing their children (neonaticide, infanticide and filicide).

1.5.3 Neonaticide: Neonaticide refers to infant homicides which occur within 24 hours of delivery (Marks, 2006).

1.5.4 Infanticide: Infanticide refers to killing a child of one day, up to one year of age (Krischer et al., 2007).

1.5.5 Filicide: Filicide refers to the killing of an older child (Krischer et al., 2007).

1.5.6 Feticide: According to Wikipedia, feticide refers to an act that leads to the death of a fetus

1.5.7 Mothers: In the context of this study, mothers' refers to women who are biological parents to a child.

1.5.8 Correctional centres: Correctional centres in the context of this study, refers to prisons.

1.6 Organisation of the dissertation

In the first chapter (Chapter One), the background to child homicide and the motivation for the present study were outlined. This was followed by presentation of the aim and objectives of the study, including the research questions that the researcher sought to answer through this investigation. The definitions of some key concepts were also given. Chapter Two focuses on the literature review and specifically focus on the following topics: the global and historical context of child homicide; child homicide in South Africa; motives for child homicide and some of the cultural aspects associated with child homicide. Some of the theoretical perspectives, including the theoretical framework that guided the researcher in the present study are also presented. Chapter Three focuses on the research methodology that was used. In this regard, topics like research design, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations were covered. In Chapter Four, the results of the study are presented. The psychological themes emerging from the data are identified and presented. In Chapter 5, the findings of this study are discussed in relation to the existing body of knowledge on this subject matter. In the last chapter (Chapter Six) of the dissertation, the researcher provides a brief summary of the study and goes on to comment about the potential significance of the study and the limitations of an investigation of this nature. The recommendations are also given.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study of child homicide by mothers is enormously challenging due to the varying extent to which societies perceive and acknowledge the problem of mothers killing their children.

In this chapter, I began by reviewing some international studies that have looked at the global and historical context of child homicide. This was then followed by a review of the literature that looks at child homicide in the South African context. Motives on the particular subject are also discussed in this chapter as well as the popular theoretical perspectives on child homicide. The chapter is concluded by presenting the theoretical framework that guided the researcher in the present study.

2.2 Global and historical context of child homicide

Most studies on child homicide (de Hilari, Condori & Dearden, 2009) have suggested that the phenomenon of mothers killing their children is predominantly caused by social stressors. Research suggests that reasons for committing child homicide include, among others: the desire to control the size and composition of the family; the need to maximise reproductive success; and a desire to ensure social stability (de Hilari, Condori & Dearden, 2009). Economic conditions have also been cited as contributory factors leading to child homicide, particularly in those instances where children are perceived to be a liability to families (Friedman, Horowitz & Resnick, 2005).

There are reports that there have been high incidences of child homicide in countries like Greece, China, Japan, Brazil, England, Italy and France. Disproportionate value placed on male rather than female offspring in countries such as China, Fiji, and India have led to female infanticide and feticide on a scale which may be far greater than official figures suggest (Adinkrah, 2000).

In India, for centuries female infants have been murdered at birth, although the actual practices surrounding female child homicide have not been well documented (Oberman, 2003). Oberman (2003) explains that one Indian current affairs magazine described a thriving practice among midwives, who charge an additional rate for killing female offspring, after having assisted the mother in giving birth. He further reports that the killing may be carried out by a senior woman in the family, generally the paternal grandmother. He concludes by mentioning that in spite of these reports, it seems likely that birth attendants commit many neonitricides in India. The methods by which mothers kill their newborns are, according to at least one source, remarkably similar throughout the country, and include the use of poisonous plants, inducing choking by feeding the baby rice in its husk and various forms of suffocation. These mothers kill their children not out of choice but mostly because their husbands tell them to do so, and without their marital status, they have little in their society.

A more commonplace, but equally difficult to document method of child homicide is the chronic nutritional and medical neglect of girls in India. Such deaths are a direct reflection of the undervaluing of female offspring, and are motivated by precisely the same cultural pressures that contribute to child homicide. Many mothers refuse to breastfeed baby girls, and instead, feed them nothing but water until their death ensues. Although many sources agree that female child homicide is rising in India, there is little agreement as to the cause (Oberman, 2003).

In the United States of America, second or subsequent children born to young, less educated mothers are at greater risk (de Hilari, Condori & Dearden, 2009). De Hilari et al., (2009) explain how programs and policies in the States usually centre on providing couples with more comprehensive reproductive health programmes, including access to family planning and abortion. Programmes also ensure greater social support to help parents overcome the challenges of parenthood. At-risk homes are targeted too, including those with high domestic violence. In the Industrialized world, targeting at-risk individuals is an important strategy for reducing filicide but those single mothers with little formal education are at greater risk.

Marks (2006) outlines that some infant homicides are never discovered, especially those killed soon after delivery, and others are never recorded as such. The pregnancy and delivery of neonaticidal mothers frequently involves denial, dissociation and ego disorganization. The woman may know she is pregnant but to all intents and purposes behave as if she were not. Whereas on the other end, infanticide is usually attributed to either mental illness or child abuse (Marks, 2006).

Attitudes to filicide vary greatly through time and cultural content (Stanton & Simpson 2002). In the South Pacific nation of Fiji, the majority of Fijians of all backgrounds live in rural settings, where unemployment is a major problem. As is common in developing nations, the birth rate is high, and children constitute a high proportion of the total population. The pressures toward childbearing are numerous. Access to family planning services is limited and uneven, and abortion is illegal and is punishable with a 14 year prison sentence for both provider and recipient (Oberman, 2003).

The ethnographic literature specific to West Africa explains that in parts of Nigeria, twins were previously regarded as bad omens and were promptly killed at birth (Bastian, 2001). In some parts of Ghana, beliefs in “Chichuru,” or spirit children have been explained as contributory factors that lead to child homicide (Allotey & Reidpath, 2001). In these cases, deformed or ailing children, births concurrent with tragic events, or children displaying unusual abilities are regarded as spirit children sent “from the bush” to cause misfortune and destroy the family. Frequently, infants with visible deformities and twins are often “eliminated” from the population (Bugos & McCarthy, 1984; Larme, 1997; Mull & Mull, 1987; Scrimshaw, 1984). Consequently, such children are killed to prevent the misfortune from destroying families.

Denham, Adongo, Freyberg and Hodgson (2010) mention that although preventable diseases and, ultimately, the effects of poverty constitute the primary causes of infant and child mortality throughout the Kassena-Nankana District (KND) in Northern Ghana,

local discourse suggests that a number of infant and child deaths are intentionally facilitated by family members.

From the Nankani perspective, spirit children are not human, but are bush spirits masquerading as such. From a biological perspective many of these children have disabilities or are chronically ill. Community members, population health researchers, and development workers have described the spirit child practice as infanticide, a cause of family misfortune, a way to cope with unwanted or sick children, and as a primitive practice grounded in ignorance needing complete eradication. The spirit child remains the subject of considerable speculation and is frequently misunderstood (Denham et al. 2010).

In Ancoraimes-Bolivia, South America, child homicide may be considered acceptable in the case of twin births, when the child is born with defects and, in some instances, the mother is unmarried or has not been able to marry the father of the child (de Hilari et al., 2009). In Qaqachaka-South America, the concept of *nanqha*- translated as “evil”, “extremely ugly”, or “unacceptable” – was used to explain a cause of death and justification for child homicide. For the Bariba of Benin, physically stigmatised infants, such as those born with neonatal teeth, or infants born prematurely or in a breech position might be rejected and killed as malevolent “witch-babies” (Sargent, 1988). Erratic body movements and language difficulties characterise snake children among the Beng of Cote d’Ivoire (Gottlieb, 1992).

Dettwyler (1994) described the local response in Mali to children with developmental delays or disabilities as being evil spirits. Iran children among the Papel of Guinea-Bissau are often born with physical or functional abnormalities. These children are often malnourished or have ambiguous sex characteristics and are sent to the sea or abandoned on an anthill and burnt (Einarsdottir, 2004). Physical and cultural constraints lead to significantly different patterns of reactions in different societies.

Allotey and Reidpath (2001) have indicated, verbal autopsies and the enumeration of similar practices in other settings should consider the complexity and socio-cultural context surrounding local understandings for the varied causes and explanations for child mortality and complex practices such as infanticide. Baiden, Hodgson, Adjuik, Adongo, Ayaga and Binka (2006) have recommended anthropological studies to guide interventions and further validation studies to ascertain the sensitivity and specificity of the use of verbal autopsy to diagnose infanticide.

Historically, it seemed that child homicide had existed in two contexts: Firstly, the killing of handicapped children and the killing of normal but seemingly unwanted children (Moseley, 1986). Motives for these children's deaths had varied. The murder of normal but unwanted children usually involved economic pressures and the social stigma attached to bearing an illegitimate child. On the other hand, the murder of handicapped children is usually related to supernatural and/or superstitious factors (Liema, 2010). In harsh areas of Japan, where it was impossible to raise more than one or two children, disposing of babies by infanticide, desertion in a basket at a temple or shrine, selling for labourers or prostitution, or adoption were culturally sanctioned (Kuono & Johnson, 1995). The practice of infanticide has had a long and persistent history and was widely practiced as a method of controlling population size in many societies. Economic conditions also contributed to the killing of children, particularly those who were considered a liability to families (Resnick, 2005).

2.3 Child homicide in South Africa

Although the uncertainties of a pre-democratic South Africa no longer exist in the new millennium, there have recently been a number of very violent incidents of family murder (Daily Dispatch, 11 February 2002). Daily Dispatch, 11 February 2002 reported six cases of family murder in the media. Three cases were from the English-speaking White community, one from the Afrikaans-speaking White community, and two from the Black community. In all the cases the perpetrator was the father.

In a social context which is regarded to be extremely violent with a high incidence of crime (Pelser & de Kock, 2000) and where abuse against women and children has also recently been highlighted, the phenomenon of family murder is once again on the forefront of media and public speculation. While prior to 1994, violence seemed to be mostly politically related, it seems to have made way for more criminal violence. However, family murder has not disappeared with the new political context. The increasing number of cases of this type of family killing continues to baffle not only the public, but also mental health professionals, because of its sheer horror (Pelser & de Kock, 2000).

In a study commissioned by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Marchetti-Mercer (2003) argues that, although there is a lot of research that has been done in South Africa on homicide in general, there appears to be little that has been done about child homicide by mothers. In the 1980's a large number of homicides were reported in the media focusing on Afrikaans-speaking families. It was speculated that this was a reflection of the uncertainty in the political situation of the time and the Afrikaners, feeling threatened by the upcoming move towards Black majority rule, were killing off their families (Marchetti-Mercer, 2003). It was further highlighted that certain individual characteristics or interactional styles such as emotional immaturity, impulsiveness and poor problem and coping skills interacting with other problematic contextual factors also led to particular feelings of hopelessness and despair. Overall the results from Marchetti-Mercer's (2003) study did not support the view that family murder is restricted to a specific population or language group.

Statistics show that for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 March 2007, 675 women were sentenced for murder in South Africa (Davies, 2008). Although it was reported that some of those women had been convicted for killing their children, statistics were not available with regard to the scale of this crime in South Africa (Davies, 2008). This led Davies (2008) to conclude that there is little empirical research on maternal child homicide. Furthermore in 2009, South African statistics showed that half of the murdered children were cared for by single mothers. Children in the first year of life are

most vulnerable to becoming victims of homicide (Matthews, Abrahams, Jewkes, Martin & Lombard, 2013).

Based on Davies (2008) literature search, the following was found to be the possible reasons for maternal child homicide: recent dissolution of the marriage/relationship, altruism (that is, for the benefit of the child), 'accidental' filicide within the context of child abuse, and partner-assisted filicide within the context of domestic violence. In many instances, it appeared that the mother was lacking appropriate support structures, and was struggling with single parenthood in particularly difficult circumstances. Matthews et al. (2013) concludes that South Africa's child homicide rate is more than twice the global estimate.

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that research on maternal filicide in South African context is still yet to be explored.

2.4 Motives for child homicide

Oberman (2003) outlines five types of child homicide by mothers, these include: neonaticide; fatal child neglect; abuse-related maternal filicide; assisted or coerced maternal filicide; and, purposeful maternal filicide.

Analysis of homicide case histories shows that women who murdered their newborns were motivated by a number of factors (Adinkrah, 2000). Neonaticide involves women, from the widest variety of socio-economic, racial, and religious background, who deny their pregnancy, both to themselves and to others. Their denial is triggered mainly by their belief that, were they to disclose their pregnancies; they would be completely cut off from their social support network (Adinkrah, 2000).

Fatal child neglect (unintentional killings) mostly involves women who live alone. Isolated and relatively poor, these women tend to be adequate parents. On rare occasions, however, they make bad parenting decisions with devastating consequences (Oberman, 2003).

Oberman (2003) further argues that women who kill their children in abuse-related maternal filicides are affected by their demanding tasks associated with childcare. The killings coincide with mealtimes and bedtimes; events that often are accompanied by stress, arguments, and the need to discipline even in stable, loving household. In assisted or coerced maternal filicide, most of these mothers fail to intervene to protect their child from harm at the hands of their male partner. On occasion, however the mother also harms the child. In purposeful maternal filicide cases, there is a degree of mental illness (Oberman, 2003). Oberman (2003) concludes that there is a combination of the mother's illness and her relative isolation as her child's primary caretaker that contributes to the child's death.

The phenomenon of a parent taking his or her children's lives and committing suicide thereafter once again raises urgent questions as to its aetiology and possible intervention strategies (Marchetti-Mercer, 2003).

2.5 Cultural aspects on child homicide

Violent crime and trauma are currently normative within South African society (Hamber & Lewis, 1997). This has led to a situation where some commentators have even referred to South Africa as a country with a "culture of violence" - a society that endorses and accepts violence as an acceptable and legitimate means to resolve problems and achieve goals (Vogelman & Simpson, 1990). Violent crime in South African society as a phenomenon has multiple causal factors that extend beyond mere statistical relationships. Some of these acts of violence, including child homicide, are attributable to a patriarchal society where women and children are devalued and subsequently become vulnerable (Hamber & Lewis, 1997).

2.6 Theoretical perspectives on child homicide

2.6.1 Psychodynamic theory

The psychodynamic theory tended to see women as primarily sexual beings ruled by their drives and impulses. Cowen (1995) explain that of all the theories, Sigmund Freud's view of women had the most far reaching effect on causal explanations of female criminality, particularly delinquency and treatment. In Freud's view, a woman is anatomically inferior: the root of this inferiority is her sexual organs. When a little girl discovers that she lacks a penis, according to Freud she experiences grave disappointment, severe trauma and intense envy. Cowen (1995) indicates that according to Freud, the girl assumes she has lost her penis as a result of castration and so grows up envious and revengeful. The deviant woman, in Freudian terms has not learned to compensate appropriately for her inferior organ. Her criminal behaviour, particularly if it involves aggression, is perceived as a rebellious act against her sex role, and she is as a consequence considered a maladjusted misfit (Cowen, 1995). Based on this theory, it can therefore be argued that women who kill their children are envious of the male figure.

2.6.2 Social learning theory

Social learning theorists such as Bandura (1976), claim that aggressive behaviour is learned through observing and imitating aggressive models. Aggressive behaviour is strengthened and maintained if it has a desirable outcome (reinforcement). Bandura's series of Bobo doll experiments revealed two factors that determine whether observed aggressive behaviour is imitated (Bandura, 1976): Vicarious reinforcement- if model is observed to use aggression and the outcome is desirable, it increases the likelihood that the behaviour will be imitated; and models are more likely to be imitated if the observer admires their status.

Bandura believed that individuals do not actually inherit violent tendencies, but they modelled after these two principles (Bandura,1976). Based on Bandura's theory, it can therefore be argued that child homicide is a result of learned behaviour through observing and imitating aggressive models.

2.6.3 General theory

The general theory of crime claims that the level of self-control is determined in early childhood and does not change throughout the course of life. Ineffective parenting practices, therefore, are the main factors determining the level of self-control according to the theory. According to Buker (2011), Gottfredson and Hirschi (the main proponents of the general theory of crime) suggest that poor self-control is the sole cause of criminal and delinquent behaviour. According to general theory, people who lack self-control tend to be impulsive, short-sighted, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk takers with low frustration tolerance, and will therefore be inclined to engage in criminal and analogous acts (Baron, Forde & Kay, 2007).

Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime and beyond predicted a substantial self-control difference between the sexes such that males will have lower self-control than females. They identified four testable hypotheses: First, females should have higher levels of self-control than males. Second, females should commit less crime than males because they have higher self-control. Third, low self-control should account for female, as well as male, criminal behaviours. Finally, because the development of self-control is directly linked to early childhood socialization, and given their hypothesis of a significant self-control difference between the sexes, differential socialization of females is likely (Blackwell & Piquero, 2005). According to Marenin & Reisig (1995), Gottfredson and Hirschi also argue that cultural variability is not important in the causation of crime. Based on the general theory of crime, it can therefore be argued that child homicide is a result of lack of self-control.

2.6.4 General strain theory

This theory was developed by Agnew (2001) who postulated that there are three dimensions that comprise the theory, namely: strain, negative emotionality, and coping resources. Agnew (2001; 2006) further identified specific stressors that predict crime including child abuse and neglect, abusive peer relationships, victimization, unemployment, and experiences with prejudice and discrimination. General Strain

Theory suggests that the causal mechanisms leading to crime and delinquency can occur either by mediating or conditioning the relationship between strain and crime, for example: strain-negative emotion-crime. Anger is considered to be the most important of these negative states and depression had also received a great deal of attention in numerous tests of General Strain Theory (Jennings, Piquero, Gover & Perez, 2009). Jennings et al. (2009) indicate that some research suggested that when females experience anger, the emotion is likely to be accompanied by other negative emotions such as depression or guilt, wherein the later emotions tend to be inversely related to offending.

Agnew (1992) identified three categories of coping resources. These include cognitive, emotional, and behavioural adaptation to strain. The goal of coping strategies is to reduce or eliminate the strain, thereby riding the individual of the unpleasant emotional state (Jennings et al., 2009). There appears to be a general process in leading to crime and delinquency (as articulated by GST) that is similar for both males and females, but each gender seems to experience the key indicators in qualitative distinct ways (Jennings et al., 2009). Based on the general strain theory, it can therefore be argued that child homicide is a result of strain, negative emotionality, and coping resources.

2.6.5 Feminist theories

Feminist theories suggest that the focus on gender goes beyond simply adding another variable to the study of female crime. In general, the research emphasizes the role of patriarchy and sexual exploitation of women and girls, or “women’s place” in relation to offending (Chesney-Lind, 1997). Many women and girls on the social and economic margins struggle to survive outside of legitimate enterprises, which bring them into contact with the criminal justice system (Bloom & Covington, 1998).

2.6.6 Child homicide as psychopathology

According to Kauppi, Kumpulainen, Vanamo, Merikanto and Karkola (2008), comparison to earlier studies of mentally-ill mothers reveals several similarities. Friedman, Horowitz and Resnick (2005) studied a sample of 39 mentally ill mothers and found that they were suffering from depression and hallucinations and experiencing considerable stressors in their lives, including in their childhoods. Almost 50% of the mothers studied had been abandoned in childhood by their own mothers, as was the case in the mothers in our study. The mothers also had limited education and poor social support (Kauppi, et al. 2008).

Kauppi et al. (2008) indicate that Andrew-Fike explains the aetiology of postpartum depression as not clear, but many studies suggest that hormonal fluctuation, biological susceptibility, and psychosocial stressors being the factors involved. The treatment of depression may empower the mother but the conditions must also be evaluated and concrete help provided by taking care of the baby, if necessary also during the night. If the mother feels helpless and tired, empowerment and treatment may activate her without changing the stress and may lead to suicidal and filicidal behaviour, as has also been argued by Stanton, Simpson and Woulde (2000).

2.7 Theoretical framework on child homicide

For the purposes of this research, the researcher chose the relational theory of women's psychological development as the theoretical framework on child homicide. Furthermore, the researcher included phenomenology as a research praxis.

2.7.1 The relational theory of women's psychological development

This study will be guided by the Stone Centre Model. The model's assumption is that "connection" is a basic human need, and that this need is especially strong in women (Jordan, Kaplan & Miller, 1991). Such connections are so crucial for women that women's psychological problems can be traced to disconnections or violations within relationships whether in families, with personal acquaintances, or in society at large. According to Kaplan (1984), the three major concepts in relational theory are:

- Cultural context: This theme recognises the powerful impact of the cultural context on women's lives.
- Relationships: This theme stresses the importance of relationships as the central, organizing feature in women's development. It focuses on women's connection with others.
- Pathways to growth: The third theme acknowledges women's relational qualities and activities as potential strengths that provide pathways to healthy growth and development. In traditional theory, women's ability to more freely express emotions, and women's attention to relationships, often led to pathologizing them.

The relational model affirms the power of connection and the pain of disconnection for women. As a result, the approach requires a paradigm shift that has led to a reframing of key concepts in psychological development, theory and practice. For example, instead of "self" as a primary focus, there is a focus on relational development. The experience of connection and disconnections are the central issues in personality development, with repeated disconnections having psychological consequences (Covington, 2007). The researcher, in this study, adopted the Stone Center Model and takes a view that participants will be able to identify the disconnections or violations within their relationships that could have led to their child homicidal act.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter, a global and historical context of child homicide was presented. The phenomenon of child homicide in South Africa was also discussed and motives leading to this kind of criminal behaviour were highlighted. The cultural aspects that could contribute to child homicide were briefly discussed whilst the theoretical perspectives were presented. The theoretical framework that guided the researcher in the present study was presented.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The current chapter gives a description of the research methodology that was used in the present study. It gives an outline of the research design, the sampling method, the process of data collection and analysis. Included also in this chapter are the ethical considerations that guided the researcher.

3.2 Research design

In this study, a qualitative research approach, and in particular a descriptive phenomenological method of inquiry was used. In essence, qualitative approach allows the researcher the opportunity to learn and understand different social and cultural contexts. The phenomenological research method investigates an individual's or group's perception of reality as he or she constructs it. These realities may be expressed as an event, programme, relationship and emotion. Phenomenology is concerned with exploring the lived experiences of people being studied. Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2005) suggested that the phenomenological method is aimed at understanding and interpreting the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives.

3.3 Sampling and setting

The sample for this study comprised of seventeen (17) women who had committed child homicidal acts, and were selected from the records of female inmates incarcerated in four correctional centres in South Africa. The centres were in Limpopo Province (Polokwane and Thohoyandou Female Correctional Centres), Gauteng Province (Johannesburg Female Correctional Centre) and KwaZulu-Natal Province (Westville Female Correctional Centre). The participants were selected through stratified purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling is appropriate when one is looking to gain an in-depth understanding of people's experiences (Neuman, 2006). In this regard, the women who had committed child homicide were approached and requested to participate in the study. Though an estimated number of 10 participants was selected, sampling continued to seventeen participants, who were available to participate in the

study. Eighteen of the women who had killed their children were identified amongst the four correctional centres in the three Provinces, however, one out of the eighteen women, was not willing to participate in the study. The ages of women who participated ranged from 13 years to 53 years of age.

3.4 Data collection

The semi-structured, one to one interviews were used to collect data for the present study (see Appendix 4a for Interview guide). In the event where the participant could not speak English or Sepedi (which is the language of the researcher), the services of an interpreter, who speaks that particular language, was sought. As pointed out by Hancock (1998) semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to get in-depth knowledge on the experience of each participant. If the interview schedule is too tightly structured, it may not enable the phenomena under investigation to be explored in terms of either breadth or depth (Hancock, 1998).

The interviews were recorded on an audiotape. The recorded interviews were transcribed and translated (for the non-English transcripts) into English. In this regard, the services of independent language experts were utilised. The translated versions of the transcripts were again translated back into the original language by two independent language experts to ensure reliability.

3.4 Data analysis

The interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to analyse the data. Interpretative phenomenological analysis focused on the cognitive processing of the participants. The key to doing interpretive analysis was to be able to analyze the data accurately and to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding. Phenomenological analysis is concerned with exploring meaning-making, rather than information processing. As suggested by Miller & Crabtree (1992), the following interpretive phenomenological steps were followed to analyse the data:

Step 1: Familiarisation and immersion

This step involved reaching a preliminary understanding of the meaning of the data and immersing the material (this time working with texts-field notes and interview transcripts rather than with living reality). The text is examined thrice to identify themes. Themes are noted through notes, diagrams and mind-maps.

Step 2: Inducing themes

This step involved looking at the material and trying to identify the organising principles that 'naturally' underlie the material. This second step was further broken down into five sub-steps which were as follows: Firstly, the researcher used the language of the participant, rather than abstract theoretical language, to label the categories. Secondly, the researcher moved beyond merely summarising content and think in terms of processes, functions, tensions, and contradictions. Thirdly, the researcher found an optimal level of complexity by grouping common themes and subthemes. Fourthly, the researcher worked repeatedly through the themes so to experience different outcomes of the results occurring from these themes, instead of settling for one system too quickly. Lastly, the researcher remained focused on what the study was about.

In the present study, the themes/categories derived from the second step were coded either from the research questions or the participant's responses.

Step 3: Coding

This step entailed marking different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more of the themes. A code was either a phrase, a line, a sentence, or a paragraph, identifying the textual 'bits' by virtue of their containing material that pertains to the themes under consideration. The content of the text was referred to as a discrete idea, explanation, or event, and any textual 'bit' was labelled with more than one code if it referred to more than one theme (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Step 4: Elaboration

This step involved finding that grouped together extracts, under a single theme, can actually differ in many ways, or that there were different kinds of sub-issues and themes that come to light.

Step 5: Interpreting and checking

The current step involved transforming the themes/categories that had emerged from the data and presenting them as psychological themes that reflected the experiences of the homicidal mothers.

3.6 Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

In this study credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability was ensured by rational analysis of spontaneous recognition, where the researcher continued to look if patterns fitted together logically and whether the same elements were arranged to constitute an entirely different pattern. As recommended by Terre Blanche et al. (2006) the reliability and validity in this study was further ensured by submitting the analysed data for confirmation by a different researcher suggested by the supervisor to look for identical patterns and to an outside reader who can recognize the logic of the experience and how it related to her own experience.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Child homicide is a sensitive matter, also taking into consideration the stigma associated with murder. Accordingly, ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Research and Ethics Committee of University of Limpopo whilst permission to enter the correctional facilities to interview the participants was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services. Since this study was dealing with sensitive issues, care was taken to ensure that participants understand what was involved when recruited for the study. Names of the participants were not mentioned. Along with this, volunteerism to participate and freedom to decline or withdraw after the study had started, was emphasised and explained thoroughly to the participants.

Written informed consent was obtained from each participant, after they had been thoroughly and truthfully informed about the purpose of the interview and the research, before engaging in interviews with the researcher. Participants were not given any benefit or incentive for taking part in this research. The participants were made aware that the study might be perceived as dealing with private, painful and perhaps embarrassing issues. In this regard, confidentiality, autonomy and privacy was assured and emphasised. The participants were also assured to be protected against any harm, be it physical or emotional. The researcher referred participants who were showing some emotional distress to the available psychological professionals in the Department of Correctional Services. The researcher also refrained from value judgements during interviews, no matter how “guilty” the participant was in legal or ethical terms. In the event where the researcher was emotionally moved by what was revealed in the interviews, arrangement was made for debriefing.

3.8 Summary

This chapter gave a description of the research methodology that was used in the present study. A qualitative research approach, in particular, a descriptive phenomenological method of enquiry was used. An outline of the research design, the sampling method and the processes of data collection and analysis were also presented. The ethical considerations that guided the researcher were also highlighted.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the interviews conducted with seventeen (17) mothers who had committed child homicide. The researcher will first present the demographic profile of the participants. This will be followed by phenomenological explication of the protocols obtained from the participants. The following themes that emerged from the data will be presented: a) Motives for child homicide; b) type of methods used in child homicide; and, c) pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour. The chapter will be concluded by giving a summary of the results of the study.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the participants

The sample comprised of seventeen (17) participants who qualified to participate in the current study. Four (4) were mothers incarcerated in the Limpopo Province (two in Thohoyandou and two in Polokwane correctional centres). Three (3) were incarcerated in Gauteng Province's Johannesburg correctional centre. In the KwaZulu-Natal Province, the ten (10) participants that were interviewed were incarcerated in the Westville correctional centre. The majority of the participants were found in KwaZulu-Natal Province, and were therefore, Zulu speaking. The other participants were also speaking their mother tongue except for a few participants who spoke English.

The participants' ages ranged from 13-19 (13%), 20-26 (62%), 27-33 (6%), 34-40 (13%), 41-47 (0%) to 48-54 (6%) years of age (see Table 1 below). The median age of the participants was 26 years (SD: 6.0). The majority of the participants (90%) had dropped out of school, due to falling pregnant and had under grade 12 level of education. Based on the findings, it is evident that the participants were mostly below the age of twenty one (21) when they took the life of their child or children and they were also single parenting.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

Participant No:	Year committed murder	Current Age	Marital Status	Language	Province
1	2005	26	Single	Xitsonga	Limpopo
2	2011	23	Single	Tshivenda	Limpopo
3	2010	22	Single	Sepedi	Limpopo
4	2009	22	Single	Sepedi	Limpopo
5	2009	53	Married	Setswana	Gauteng
6	2010	25	Single	English	Gauteng
7	2011	35	Single	Southern Sotho	Gauteng
8	2011	25	Single	English & isiZulu	KZN
9	2011	25	Single	English & isiZulu	KZN
10	2010	22	Single	English & isiZulu	KZN
11	2009	19	Single	isiZulu	KZN
12	2007	25	Single	isiZulu	KZN
13	2011	32	Single	English & isiZulu	KZN
14	2009	20	Single	isiZulu	KZN
15	2011	13	Single	isiZulu	KZN
16	2007	23	Single	isiZulu	KZN
17	2010	37	Single	isiZulu	KZN

4.3 Phenomenological explication

4.3.1 Motives for child homicide

Based on the phenomenological accounts given by the participants, it does appear that there are a number of motives for child homicide by the incarcerated mothers. All the participants were able to explain what motivated them to murder their children. In their subjective accounts, most of the participants tended to attribute their actions to everyday stressors that they faced in their lives. In addition to the everyday stressors,

there were a number of other subthemes that were identified. These are: child homicide as an act of altruism; child homicide to gain acceptance; perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse; child homicide as accidental; child homicide attributed to witchcraft; and, mental illness as motive for child homicide.

a) Everyday stressors as motives for child homicide

This study found that everyday stressors have been a motive for child homicide in the case of some of the participants. This suggests that some of the participants felt overwhelmed by their circumstances and then opted to commit child homicide, as to deal with their stress.

The following extracts illustrate this:

P2: I realized that I was unemployed and I didn't have money to support the child. Then it came to my mind that I should terminate the pregnancy.

P3: I was arrested because I killed a child. I think there were several causes. For one, I fell pregnant while still in school. So I had to quit school. But then my boyfriend left me because his family did not want me or the child. And my mother did not have the money to look after my child, because she worked as a domestic.

Based on the above statements, it can be suggested that the mothers had been experiencing every day challenges and stressors. Consequently, it does appear that this triggered the homicidal feelings that resulted in the killing of their children.

b) Child homicide as an act of altruism

The findings from the study suggest that some women who murdered their children perceived their actions as altruistic. In other words, they interpreted their homicidal behaviour as justifiable action that was intended to bring relief to their children who were seen as suffering. These "altruistic" homicidal acts or "mercy killings" were thus intended to stop or prevent the child's suffering from financial difficulties. The following extracts from the interviews corroborate their experiences:

P6: Now I had both children with the same man. So, after the second baby, my boyfriend started acting up, he was not taking care of the children. And he was cheating on me. And, you know he was abusive to me, like emotionally; he was abusing me emotionally. And then I had financial problems because he was not taking care of the children.

P10: All I meant to do was to stop my child's suffering. It seemed better that I suffer alone. However, in the process I created another problem.

P15: The father of the child never bothered to come and check up on the baby. The baby had only one towel napkin. Then the daughter of the family also fell pregnant and had a child whose father remained unknown. Both babies continued to suffer as no one was prepared to provide for them. Eventually they kicked me out of their home. I went to stay at another place where things were even worse. They expected me to go fetch wood from the forest as well as to shepherd their cattle and goats with the baby on my back, rain or sunshine. They also did not give me food and yet I was breastfeeding. That is when I decided to kill this child so I can at least suffer alone.

As reflected in the above extracts, it does suggest that child homicide was committed by some of the participants as an act of altruism. In other words, the mothers' intentions were to relieve their children from difficult circumstances.

c) Child homicide to gain acceptance

It does appear that in some cases, the need for acceptance by loved ones (i.e. families or partners) could have motivated the women to kill their children. The following extracts seem to highlight this:

P4: ...My maternal uncle started to hate me. One time he found me eating, and proceeded to grab my food and throw it away. At the time I was living with my uncle and my grandmother; and my grandmother was simply too afraid of my

uncle. So I left right away, and began to ask myself why they should all hate me only because I have had a child. I then thought that maybe if I took this child's life they will love me again.

P7: I think the final straw was when my grandfather rejected me as his grandchild and often beat me up in public. So I thought it best to take mine and the child's lives.

P9: Ee, I was, didn't want my boyfriend to know that I was pregnant.

P14: The only way out for me and my kids then appeared to be death. And maybe on the day that my mother sees the three graves of my kids and me, maybe then she will begin to love me. I did not realize then that it was the wrong decision I was making. It just felt like the only avenue available to me at the time.

Looking at the above extracts, it does appear that feeling unloved by an uncle, a grandmother or a mother motivated the mothers to take the lives of their own children. In other words, feeling unloved or rejected by significant others (like a mother, grandmother or uncle) appears to be a powerful trigger that can lead to child homicide.

d) Perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse

It does appear that some of the mothers who were convicted for killing their children had a history of having been physically and/or sexually abused by a family member or guardian. These earlier unpleasant experiences appear to have motivated them to murder their children. In one case the participant indicated that she murdered her child because she was sexually assaulted. Others made it clear that the abuse that they experienced motivated them to commit the crime. The following extracts illustrate this:

P1: I did this because I was raped. After I was raped, I became pregnant.

P8: Maybe I would have killed myself only if it had been only me he hit and left the baby alone and left the child...but because he also hit my child ...I decided to kill them.

P16: *This step mother of mine was cruel. So, I chose to return to my child's father, although we were no longer together. But when I got there the man told me off, and accused me of only turning to him because I was mere skin and bones. So I got really riled. I then unwrapped my head covering, tied the baby to a tree, and strangled it.*

The above statements suggest that some of the participants, who were perpetrators of child homicide, were victims of either sexual, physical or emotional abuse.

e) Child homicide as accidental

In one case, a participant explained her homicidal behaviour as accidental. In other words, the participant maintains that her intention was not to kill but to discipline the child. The following extract illustrates this:

P13: *I didn't have any reason which, I could say, required that I punish my child; I am speaking about the manner in which we black people discipline our children. I was coming back home, returning from the nearby market. When I got home, my child was ... [pause]. She was like 7 at that time. Seven years old, and she was a beautiful girl, [begins to smile and look up]. She was intelligent.....Well, yes. She was playing in the rain. Then I took a stick, just a small stick, and I hit her about three times. I must have reacted that way because she was having a cold. She had been coughing and sneezing. So, I was like, "Why are you playing in the rain?" She had even removed the jersey and the shoes. So I was punishing her for that indiscretion. I was not really PUNISHING [stresses the word] her. I was just, as a mother, letting her know that what she was doing was wrong. Just a little bit of discipline you know....Then it just happened. She ran away. She ran to hide in the other room where my friend was. Then she went and sat behind my friend. The next thing I heard, she was gasping like someone who is short of air. And that was it! [silence].*

Based on the above extract, it can be suggested that the participant did not have any intentions to kill her child. In other words, her actions do not appear to have been pre-meditated and planned.

f) Child homicide attributed to witchcraft

The role of culture in behaviour seems to have emerged in some of the participants' explanations of their homicidal behaviour. For example, some of the participants perceived their actions as involuntary and a consequence of witchcraft or evil intentions by others. The extracts below support this view:

P5: I ended up in here because I killed my child. But it was not something that I had planned. I was simply overtaken by events, and found myself having done so. You see, I was asleep. It was on the..., no, I can't remember the date anymore. I used to have this problem: I would hear my name being called, and I would respond. In the morning, I would tell my husband about how in my sleep I keep hearing my name being called out, but I do not know the person that is calling me.

P12: I told them that I had not killed my child; I love my child. This was my child they were talking about. I had given birth to that child at the age of sixteen. But the community came alongside the police and claimed that in fact I used to visit inyangas (traditional doctors). Indeed after I'd taken the child for that strengthening ritual, I started losing my mind from time to time. I do not know that they gave me but I would sometimes not know where I had left the child. But this time I felt it deep inside of me that I had not killed my child.

Based on the above statements, it can be suggested that the mothers attribute their homicidal actions to cultural forces that are beyond their control. In this regard, the participants tend to believe that their actions were a result of the evil intentions of some community members who were bewitching them.

g) Mental illness as motive for child homicide

The subjective accounts given by some participants suggest that they may have been suffering from some form of mental illness at the time when they committed the homicidal acts. The following statements by two participants illustrate this:

P11: I fell pregnant in 2008. I was still in school. Then I got ill; I had epilepsy. I was admitted at the hospital, and while I was there, I gave birth. It was a baby boy, and my mother and elder sister took him home after he was discharged. I remained in hospital since I was still unwell. The extent of my sickness was such that the doctors thought I was not fit to go home. So they offered to look after the child. I was eventually discharged and could go home. Then sometime in March 2009, I was still not well enough, and my mother had gone to a stall in Durban where she was selling...Then my sister asked if I were okay with looking after the kids – hers and mine. I said yes I don't have a problem, she can go out. They were still babies both of them; mine was 4 months old while my sister's was 2-3 months old. All I asked was for her to prepare the kids' milk bottles. This entire side of mine was shaking so I could not use it to hold a baby. I could only give the child its bottle so it can suckle until it fell asleep. So my sister went out. I think.... I will say 'I think' because they tell me the child suffocated. I think it was choked by the milk bottle, but I do not know for sure what happened.

P17: I can't recall much because I have this mental illness that must have taken over.

Based on the above statements, it does appear that some of the participants may have been going through some form of mental illness that could have inhibited their capacity to meet the intense emotional, physical, and psychological demands of their young children. Consequently, this may have triggered the homicidal feelings that resulted in the death of their children.

4.3.2 Type of methods used in child homicide

It was found that a variety of methods were used by the mothers in killing their children. These included the use of weapons; killing by hitting, dropping or strangling the child; suffocation; drowning; and, poisoning.

a) The use of weapons

Most participants reported that they made use of weapons such as axe and gun to kill their children. In one case, the mother explained that she had shot her children using her father's gun. The following comment by the participants illustrates this:

P7: ...and my, my father's gun [I hand over a tissue]...I took it, and went to the room...where I [tearfully] slept. Huh [exhales loudly]. I went inside and wrote a letter, a suicide letter. And after that I shot my sons.

Another participant described that the child had some of his body parts cut off, while another participant made use of an axe to murder her children.

P12: So they found the stiff body of the child, with his tongue and penis having been cut off. Now how on earth could I mutilate my baby like that, particularly since I had already been in police cells for a while by then? But because of my stupidity and fear of my boyfriend's threats, and because my mother is a timid person – my father had long left us to fend for ourselves – so they knew that they could do as they please because we had no one to fight on our behalf. So my mother just kept quiet throughout this whole ordeal.

P14: So I took a weapon and went out to execute this decision. The kids were asleep so I first hung myself. I was starving, having been kicked out of my mother's house and being no longer able to go to my in-laws for any assistance. But I went to my man's home, in the outside room where we were staying, and I dished up for the kids because they were complaining of hunger. When they had finished eating, I then decided that there was no better time for me and my kids to exit this life. So I hung myself having taken pills. Then it occurred to me that

the kids' father had died, and their grandmother does not love them, so I should kill them first and me thereafter. After all, I thought, having killed the kids would give me all the guts I needed to kill myself too. So I started by killing the girl, and proceeded to lay her on the bed while she still had some life in her. Then I came to boy and killed him too. And then it was my turn, so I took an axe and intended to sever my neck on the place where I had been operated on. I kept trying, even as you can see the scars, but I could not succeed.

b) Hitting, dropping, strangling

Some participants reported that they killed their children by hitting, dropping, choking or strangling them. The following extracts illustrate this:

P3: *I choked him.*

P13: *Well, yes. She was playing in the rain. Then I took a stick, just a small stick, and I hit her about three times. I must have reacted that way because she was having a cold. She had been coughing and sneezing. So, I was like, "Why are you playing in the rain?" She had even removed the jersey and the shoes. So I was punishing her for that indiscretion. I was not really PUNISHING [stresses the word] her. I was just, as a mother, letting her know that what she was doing was wrong. Just a little bit of discipline you know.... Then it just happened. She ran away. She ran to hide in the other room where my friend was. Then she went and sat behind my friend. The next thing I heard, she was gasping like someone who is short of air. And that was it! [silence].*

P15: *I strangled it.*

P16: *Moreover," he continued, "you are one-eyed, so what good can you be to me?" So I got really riled. I then unwrapped my head covering, tied the baby to a tree, and strangled it. Why I did it, I cannot say.*

P17: *Well, I dropped the child on the bare floor.*

c) Suffocation

Two participants reported that they suffocated their children. In these two cases, the participants particularly mentioned that they put wrapped towels around the children's heads to suffocate them. The following extracts support this:

P4: I wrapped a towel around her face and sat on it.

P9: I just put him in a towel. Then I wrapped him and put him in a plastic bag.

d) Drowning

A few participants described how they killed their children by drowning them in dams. In one case, the participant hoped that by drowning the child, she too would drown. The following extracts reflect this:

P1: I am here is because I killed my two-year-old child. I drowned my child in the dam.

P7: Yes, the dams are pretty deep. So I dunk myself and the child. When I resurfaced, the child had already died.

P10: I could neither feed nor clothe the child. I too had nothing to eat. Then I felt it was cruel to bring up my child under these conditions. It would be better if I struggled by myself and did not have an extra person to worry about. So I went to the river. When I got there, I grabbed the child and threw it in the river.

e) Poisoning

Some of the participants indicated that they drank poison to kill their children, for example:

P2: Ee....it wasn't born. It was a still birth 'cause I was 7 months pregnant. I decided to terminate the pregnancy when it was already a baby. Yes, I was pregnant. I was dating a boy. When the guy ran away, I was depressed and then

I looked for medicine to drink to terminate the pregnancy. The next door neighbours knew I was pregnant and then realized that I was no longer pregnant, because I had terminated and thrown the child away. Then they reported the case to the police and the police arrested me. And then the police asked me about the pregnancy and where the baby was. I explained what I had done. Then they said I was in conflict with the law, because it was not allowed.

In one other case, the mother drank the poison with the intention to kill herself too, but survived, this is what she had to say:

P6: *Well, I used rat-poison. I took it, and mixed it with sour milk. I then drank the mixture, and proceeded to give it to the kids as well. Afterward, I took them to my bedroom, put them down on my bed and then lay down next to them. And I don't know what happened thereafter.*

Based on the above findings, the methods used by mothers in committing child homicide included the use of weapons; hitting, dropping or strangling the child; suffocation; drowning; and, poisoning. The phenomenon of a mother killing her child or children and attempting to commit suicide, thereafter, was also evident in these findings. The findings also suggested that mothers who used weapons; drowning and poisoning of the children; also tried to kill themselves using the same type of methods. The desire to die with the child or children was secondary to these mothers. However, these mothers survived the attempt to end their own lives.

On the other hand, the mothers who used either hitting, dropping or strangling their child as methods to kill the child, were mostly found to either have a mental illness or acted out of anger or the death even being accidental.

These findings also suggest that child homicide followed by attempted suicide, is likely to be pre meditated rather than child homicide committed out of rage, mental illness or even accidental.

4.3.3 Pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour

The findings demonstrated the phenomenological explication of pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour by the mothers who committed child homicide.

a) Pre-homicidal ideations and behaviour

It does appear that some participants felt persecuted by some negative ideations (notably, anger) that subsequently led them to commit the homicidal acts. The following extracts illustrate both the ideations and the subsequent behaviour by some of the participants:

P3: I was angry. I felt lost. I had no one to look after my child for me.

P8: I was aware of them, but my anger prevented me from thinking logically.

P16: So I got really riled. I then unwrapped my head covering, tied the baby to a tree, and strangled it. Why I did it, I cannot say.

Most participants had suicidal thoughts which were preoccupying their minds before the event.

P1: No, I did not think I would end up in jail. I did not think I would get caught or arrested. All I thought was that I must kill the child and then kill myself.

P6: I was only planning to kill myself because I was, well, I am actually a suicidal person.

P7: I think the final straw was when my grandfather rejected me as his grandchild and often beat me up in public. So I thought it best to take mine and the child's lives.

P8: And I waited and waited and waited ...and then, while I was waiting, into my mind came the thought to kill my child and myself.

Some participants reported experiencing feelings that were associated with depression. They suggested that they felt useless, helpless and blamed themselves for their situations. The following statements support the emotional experiences encountered:

P6: I saw myself as someone who is useless and I was also blaming myself for making children that I can't look after; I can't take care of them.

P14: Then I began to feel helpless as it was clear that nothing was going my way.

b) Post-homicidal ideations and behaviour

Almost all the participants bitterly regretted the deaths of their children, mourned their loss, and also wished that their actions could be reversed. They felt remorseful, and were embarrassed and filled with pain for taking their children's lives, as reflected in the following extracts:

P1: [sniffs] I regretted that I had thrown the baby into the dam. I regretted and I was thinking I should have taken the child and run away where nobody could trace me.

P2: ... I feel remorseful.....I regret the crime that I committed, because I failed to make a good decision. It was a bad decision.

P3: I did not think that there would be consequences. But now I so regret it all.

P4: ...But at times I do feel remorseful.

P5: All I feel is pain. Nothing else matters. Only pain. My child deserved to live.

P6: And hmm, I am, er, most of the time, I regret what happened quite a lot. I regret doing what I did because I know that I could have done something better than what I did.

P7: I'm embarrassed.....At the moment I regret very much what I have done.

P9: After the thing happened and I came here, I regretted everything a lot.

P10: I feel remorse. Ever since it happened, I have been remorseful. But it has happened and it can't be undone.

Another participant described a sense of relief for not having to manage the difficulties of parenting as well as the abuse she went through.

P16: I really do feel free now, much more now, than when I was on the outside.

c) Suicidal ideations and behaviour as precursors to child homicide

It does appear that some of the participants had engaged in some suicidal behaviour, some even ending up in hospital, before they killed their children. In most of these cases, a stressful family life appears to have been a trigger for the suicidal behaviour. The following extracts confirm these subjective experiences by the participants:

P1: No, I did not think I would end up in jail. I did not think I would get caught or arrested. All I thought was that I must kill the child and then kill myself.

P6: And then I had financial problems because he was not taking care of the children. So I had to be on my own and see what to do; but I didn't know where to go, where to start. I had long dropped out of school, and I was not working; my father also was not employed. So I didn't know how to go about making ends meet. As for killing my children, I didn't plan it. I was only planning to kill myself because I was, well, I am actually a suicidal person. I have attempted suicide both before and after I had had children. So I was planning to kill myself. But when the time came, I started wondering what will happen to my children? Who will look after them? Where will they go? So then I decided to kill even my children. But, unfortunately, my children died on the spot and as for me, I was taken to the hospital, and I survived.

P7: Yes, the dams are pretty deep. So I dunk myself and the child. When I resurfaced, the child had already died. "What do I do now?" I thought, "Do I carry her on my back and go into the township?" I then left her and went away, shaking, shivering, it was snowing.

P8: ...and my, my father's gun [I hand over a tissue]...I took it, and went to the room...where I [tearfully] slept. Huh [exhales loudly]. I went inside and wrote a letter, a suicide letter. And after that I shot my sons [breathes hard because of crying; speaks much slower and softer], and when I took the gun to myself, there were no bullets left. And then I decided to take pills, tablets. I overdosed myself [sniffs].

P14: So I started by killing the girl, and proceeded to lay her on the bed while she still had some life in her. Then I came to boy and killed him too. And then it was my turn, so I took an axe and intended to sever my neck on the place where I had been operated on. I kept trying, even as you can see the scars, but I could not succeed.

The findings suggested that pre-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were mostly emotions like anger, depression, frustration, self blame, suicide ideations and attempts that are evident in the participants' phenomenological accounts. The post-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were of remorse, regret, guilt, confused, while others felt a sense of relief and somehow hopeful about the future.

4.4 Summary of results

The sample comprised seventeen (17) participants aged between 13 to 53 years, who were incarcerated in four selected correctional centres in three South African provinces. The participants were from different language groups in South Africa. These included Sepedi, Xitsonga, Southern Sotho, Tshivenda and isiZulu speaking mothers.

This study revealed that there were different phenomenological explications leading mothers to commit child homicide. Motives for child homicide included everyday stressors that the mothers encountered. Other subthemes identified were: child homicide as an act of altruism; child homicide to gain acceptance; perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse; child homicide as accidental; child homicide attributed to which craft; and, mental illness as motives for child homicide.

The study also highlighted different types of methods used by the mothers to commit child homicide. The methods included: the use of weapons; hitting, dropping and strangling; suffocation; drowning; and poisoning.

The findings also suggested that pre-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were mostly of anger, depression, frustration, self blame, suicide ideations and attempts that are evident in the participants' phenomenological accounts. While the post-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were of remorse, regret, guilt, confused, while others felt a sense of relief and somehow hopeful about the future.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The current chapter presents and discusses the findings of this study in relation to the existing body of knowledge in this subject matter. It also reviews the contribution of the study in terms of the aims set out in the first chapter. These findings will be discussed according to the emerging themes identified in chapter 4. The findings will also be discussed in terms of their implications for psychological theories on child homicide by mothers.

5.2 Emerging themes

5.2.1 Motives for child homicide

In this study, psychosocial everyday stressors that individuals faced stood out to be the common triggers leading to child homicide. Furthermore, the participants explained different motivations for murdering their children including: child homicide as an act of altruism; child homicide to gain acceptance; perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse; child homicide as accidental; child homicide attributed to witchcraft; and mental illness as motive for child homicide.

a) Everyday stressors as motives for child homicide

Haapasalo and Petaja (1999), McKee and Shea (1998), Saisto et al. (2001), and Schwartz and Isser (2000), suggest that financial difficulties; social isolation; single motherhood; work-related stress; housing problems; the mothers own upbringing; a childhood of abuse; traumatisation; marital problems; jealousy; alcohol abuse; physical illness; depression and mood disorders or psychotic symptoms. The present study lent support to these findings as it revealed that in most cases, the participants opted to commit the murders due to these everyday stressors that they were facing.

b) Child homicide as an act of altruism

In a South African study, Sussman and Kotzee (2013) point out that the most frequently reported reason in a homicide suicide setting is the breakdown of an intimate relationship. A deluded 'altruism' appears to be the primary motive in maternal filicide-suicide, and altruistic reasons were found in both maternal filicide-suicide cases in their study.

Consistent with the above findings, the present study found that most mothers who had killed their children, were basically committing "mercy killings." They wanted to save their children from difficult circumstances. Farooque and Ernst (2003) explain mercy killing as killing by women whose motive was to stop or prevent the child from suffering.

Most of the perpetrators were no longer in relationships with the fathers of their children when the phenomenon occurred. Most of them were also lacking support from their family members. The mothers reported that they were trying to save their children from suffering caused by the deprivation of basic needs.

Consistent with the previous study by Davies (2008), the present study found that very few filicidal mothers had prior criminal records. In fact, in this study, none of the mothers had prior criminal records and their motives were mostly "altruistic". This suggests that there is a context behind such an act and it is important to understand that context so that effective interventions can be implemented (Davies, 2008).

c) Child homicide to gain acceptance

The findings in this study suggested that some of the mothers committed child homicide so as to gain acceptance. In one case, the participant wanted to be accepted by a family member, her uncle, while in another case she needed acceptance from her boyfriend. In this particular case, the participant hid her pregnancy from her current boyfriend and killed her baby at birth by suffocating and flushing it down the toilet. Oberman (2003) explains that these girls deny the inevitable birth of their child that they tend to mistake labour pains for a need to defecate, and the overwhelming majority of

their babies are born while their mothers labour in the toilet. One of the observations about these cases is that the girls tend to endure labour and deliver in silence, perhaps bespeaking a profound level of fear, if not one of psychotic dissociation.

As Oberman (2003) states it, these girls seem to fear, perhaps reasonably, that, without a strong support network, they would be unable to afford to raise a child.

De Hilari et al (2009) explains how the parents of the baby can be uncertain about accepting the baby. The decision to kill the child is considered mutual (both parents decide); however, men and grandparents have the greatest influence over this decision.

d) Perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse

In this study, most mothers who were convicted for killing their children had a history of physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse from a family member or guardian. According to the findings, participants were either sexually assaulted, emotionally or physically abused, which then contributed to them deciding to murder their children. Some mothers expressed it in a form of being angry or having given up.

This study agrees, with Davies (2008), who argues that a woman kills her child as an unconscious act of aggression turned towards herself on account of her own internalised aggressive parental images. She destroys her child literally as her parents destroyed her symbolically. Failure of mentalization is thus linked to poor attachments with significant caregivers in the context of personal histories of neglect and/or abuse.

e) Child homicide as accidental

In a study by Mathews, Abrahams, Jewkes and Martin (2013), it was found that mortality was the most extreme consequence of child abuse, but it is not always conceptualized within the framework of child abuse and neglect. While Mathews et al. (2013) were undertaking research for the recent National Female and Child Homicide study in South Africa, it became apparent that medical practitioners, and especially forensic pathologists, often deviate from their legal and ethical obligations when the

cause of a death raises suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Matthews, Abrahams and Martin (2013) argue that fatal child abuse remains hidden, and the perpetrators literally get away with murder.

However, in the current study one case was found to involve the killing of a child due to physical abuse. The mother of the child explained the incident as unintentional and therefore, felt she did not deserve to be incarcerated. The participant expressed the love of her child and how she hit her slightly with a stick, only to discipline her from playing in the rain.

f) Child homicide attributed to witchcraft

It is evidence that bewitchment beliefs remain prevalent in black South African communities, despite the influence of Western rational-scientific explanatory frameworks (Ivey & Myers, 2008). Hund (2003) points out that before the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957, witchcraft-related violence was not viewed as a problem in South Africa: tribal authorities mediated grievances and sentences were usually banishment or the payment of compensation. The Act was based on the assumption that witchcraft does not exist and was aimed at eradicating the belief in witchcraft: basically, it is a crime to act on that belief.

Ivey and Myers (2008), quote Mojalefa and Van Staden (1999) by stating that bewitchment may manifest in a number of different ways, such as hallucinations, fainting daily at the same time and place, dreams or sightings of a naked person in one's room, public undressing, eating excrement and other taboo substances, and voluntary confessions of evil doings. In this study, some mothers felt that they were under some spiritual influences and somebody had made them do it. They felt that they were not actually themselves when they murdered their children. In one case, the participant indicated that she had heard voices which instructed her to kill her child. In another case, the participant felt that the whole idea was planned by the father of the child for ritual purposes. Some of the body parts of the deceased were missing, when it was found. Ivey and Myers (2008) explain that in circumstances where body parts have been removed from a corpse it is believed that the person may have been killed in

order to harvest these parts to make particularly powerful muti. Such murders do in fact occur in South Africa and are strongly associated with bewitchment practices (Ivey & Myers, 2008).

g) Mental illness as motive for child homicide

Although some participants in the present study tended to manifest some degree of mental illness, it was evident that it was not simply the mother's mental illness that led to the child's death; instead the combination of the mother's illness and her relative isolation as her child's primary caretaker that contributed to the child's death. There were clear indications that a significant depressive or psychotic episode inhibited the mother's capacity for meeting the intense emotional, physical, and psychological demands of her young child. The example that can be given is that of a mother who simply dropped her child on to the concrete floor. This mother had been left alone with the child by her brother who had gone to work. The fact that the brother mentioned that the incident happened because the deceased mother's illness had reoccurred, suggested that she may have been suffering from brief psychotic disorder. Brief psychotic disorder is defined in the DSM-IV-TR as a condition that involves the sudden onset of psychotic symptoms, lasting from 1 day to 1 month, with an eventual return to pre-morbid levels of functioning (Grobler, Weiss, Lebelo and Malerotho, 2011).

5.2.2 Type of methods used in child homicide

A recent South African study by Sussman and Kotze (2013), argued that shooting is the most frequently used method of both homicide and suicide in most studies, followed by asphyxia and then stabbing. Beating and jumping or pushing from a height and poisoning are also occasionally used. Unlike the above mentioned findings, this study found that most mothers who killed their children used methods or weapons such as sharp objects like axes, as well as drowning and suffocations. Few other methods used in other cases were shooting, hitting, dropping, strangling and poisoning.

5.2.3 Pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour

a) Pre-homicidal ideations and behaviour

Research by Cartwright (2001), suggested that although some forms of psychopathology may render an individual more vulnerable to committing rage murder, these observations do not appear to account for the majority of cases. In reviewing psychiatric illnesses that may be associated with rage-type murder, it has been argued that psychotic illness is seldom evident in the rage-type murderer. Psychotic dissociative symptoms are transient and appear better explained as a feature of the borderline personality structure. Although poor intellectual functioning may play a role in some forms of crime, it does not appear to be associated with explosive murder.

Depressive and post-traumatic conditions, on the other hand, appear to be more readily associated with rage-type murder, although it is, at present, difficult to understand the temporality of such conditions (Cartwright, 2001).

The findings of the present study are in support of the above assertions after identifying a few cases of mothers committing murder out of rage or feeling depressed. However, most murders in the current study were achieved due to the mothers feeling depressed. The mothers felt helpless and hopeless and wanted to save their children from difficult circumstances. Suicide ideations mainly occupied their minds prior to the event.

Pillay and Wassenaar (2007) explain the level of hopelessness as a critical indicator of suicide intent. They argue that hopelessness refers to pessimism or negative thinking about the future. Individuals who are unable to see a positive outcome to their situation are considered to be at higher risk than those who believe that their problems can be resolved. Young people who appear to have little or no social support also constitute higher suicide risks than those who have friends and family to whom they can talk. In the current study, most of the mothers committed the murder before 21 years of age and they felt that they had no support from family members, and no one could help them. They also felt that they had no one to talk to about their circumstances.

b) Post-homicidal ideations and behaviour

Davies (2008) explains that after the fatality, women who have killed their children tend to experience guilt and to suffer the stigma of failed mothers. Consistent with this assertion, the present study found that all but one of the mothers felt remorse, embarrassed and were full of pain for taking their children's lives. They regretted the deaths of their children. They mourned their loss and longed for what was done to be undone. However, in one of the cases in the present study, where a mother did not express remorse, the mother described a sense of relief for not having to manage the difficulties of parenting as well as the abuse she personally had encountered.

c) Suicidal ideations and behaviour as precursors to child homicide

In the study by Sussman and Kotze, (2013) the cases involving female subjects comprised of maternal filicide-suicide. They explained that in homicide suicide studies, the perpetrator generally used the same method to commit suicide as was used in the homicide(s), while in their study, only four (4) cases demonstrated this. In the case in which shooting was the method of homicide, it was the same method used for the unsuccessful suicide.

This study found that many of the mothers were intending to relieve their children and themselves from difficult circumstances. They managed to kill their children but survived their suicidal attempts. The study also found that most of the mothers used the same method of child homicide to attempt suicide.

5.3 Implications for theory

As indicated in Chapter 2, this study was guided by the Stone Centre Model which assumes that "connection" is a basic human need, and that this need is especially strong in women (Jordan, Kaplan & Miller, 1991). The circumstances that were identified in support of the theory were as follows: Firstly, the study found that there were many participants who had lost their own mothers at an early age and were raised either by their fathers or by other family members like step mothers, grandmothers and

uncles or their neighbours. The participants were found to be mostly physically or emotionally abused by their relatives. Secondly, most of the participants were found to no longer be in a relationship with the father of the deceased child and they had lacked support from them prior to the incident. Lastly, these mothers were found to be either pregnant again at the time of incarceration, or they had delivered their babies prior to that, from a different partner, with whom they were no longer in a relationship too. Most of these mothers pointed out their psychosocial stressors made them to feel helpless and hopeless and that pushed them to take matters in their own hands by killing their children.

Evidently, connections are so crucial for women. Disconnections within relationships, whether in families, with personal acquaintances, or in society at large can cause psychological problems for women. The relational model affirms the pain of disconnection for women as well as the power of connection.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings

The aim of the current study was to explore and describe the views of child homicide by mothers incarcerated in four correctional centres in South Africa. The qualitative research approach, and in particular the phenomenological method of inquiry, was used. The sample was obtained through the use of purposive sampling techniques. The sample comprised of seventeen (17) participants, whose ages ranged from thirteen (13) to fifty three (53) years.

Most of the participants spoke their home languages and only a few participated in English. The researcher conducted the in-depth semi-structured interviews in English or Sepedi with each participant so that a clear description and exploration of child homicide could be obtained. With other participants who could not speak Sepedi or English, use was made of an interpreter. Data was analysed according to the steps proposed by Terre Blanche et al., (2006).

The themes that emerged from the data analysis were: Motives for child homicide; type of methods used in child homicide, and; pre- and post-homicidal ideations and behaviour. In this study, subthemes of motives for child homicide were found to be psychosocial everyday stressors that individuals faced, which seemed to trigger the onset for child homicide. Furthermore, the participants explained different motivations for murdering their children including: child homicide as an act of altruism; child homicide to gain acceptance; perpetrators of child homicide as victims of abuse; child homicide as accidental; child homicide attributed to witchcraft; and mental illness as motive for child homicide.

The types of methods used in the study included the use of weapons; killing by hitting, dropping or strangling the child; suffocation; drowning; and, poisoning.

The findings also suggested that pre-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were mostly emotions like anger, depression, frustration, self-blame, suicide

ideations and attempts that are evident in the participants' phenomenological accounts. The post-homicidal ideations and behaviour of the participants were of remorse, regret, guilt, confused, as well as a sense of relief and somehow hope for the future.

6.2 Significance of the study

The researcher believes that a study of this nature has contributed the following:

- Deepened understanding of social psychology, particularly on subject matters such as gender and criminal behaviour, particular child homicide;
- Created the opportunity to test the applicability of Western theories of criminal behaviour (like relational theory of women's psychological development) in an African context.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The researcher identified the following limitations in this study: Firstly, the results of the present study cannot be generalised to the entire population of child homicide by mothers in all Provinces since only four correctional centres in three of the nine Provinces in South Africa were used to conduct the present study. Secondly, the study focused only on biological mothers who have committed child homicide. Other groups, for example step mothers who had committed child homicide were not interviewed. Consequently, the present study gave only the perspective of the biological mothers who were incarcerated. Lastly, language is complete and certain errors could occur during translation. Many responses given by the participants could not be easily translated into English. This suggests that some omissions might have therefore occurred in the process of translation.

6.4 Contributions and recommendations

The findings of the current study have shed some light into areas of further research. From these findings, further research needs to be conducted. A much bigger sample needs to be used, in other female correctional centres to enable the generalizability of the findings to the entire country.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- More studies involving larger samples should be conducted so as to provide more generalizable results regarding child homicide by mothers;
- It is recommended that more child homicide studies should be conducted so as to generate more information that could contribute to the efforts in developing rehabilitation and clinical interventions for women who have killed their children; similar studies focusing on other groups like fathers who commit child homicide should also be conducted to shed more light on this phenomenon.
- Development of non-Western centred perspectives in terms of criminal behaviour should be developed, tested and documented; and,
- It is also recommended that the issue of psychosocial rehabilitation be looked into and addressed. This is a comprehensive process that will offer mothers who have committed child homicide the opportunity to reach their optimal level of independent functioning in the community.

REFERENCES

- Adinkrah, M. (2000). Maternal infanticides in Fiji. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(12), 1543-1555.
- Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency. *Criminology*, 30, 47-87.
- Agnew, R. (2001). Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 38, 319-361.
- Agnew, R. (2006). *Pressured into crime: An overview of general strain theory*. Los Angeles: Roxbury.
- Allotey, P. & Reidpath, D. (2001). Establishing the causes of childhood mortality in Ghana: The 'spirit child'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 52, 1007-1012.
- Baiden, F., Hodgson, A., Adjuik, M., Adongo, P.B., Ayaga, B. & Binka, F. (2006). Trend and causes of neonatal mortality in the Kassena-Nankana district in Northern Ghana, 1995-2002. *Tropical Medicine and International Health*, 11, 532-539.
- Bandura, A. (1976). Self-reinforcement: Theoretical and methodological considerations. *Behaviourism*, 4, 135-155.
- Baron, S.W., Forde, D.R. & Kay, F.M. (2007). Self-control, risky lifestyles, and situation: The role of opportunity and context in the general theory. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 35, 119-136.
- Bastian, M. (2001). The demon superstition: abominable twins and mission culture in Onitsha history. *Ethnology*, 40, 13-27.
- Blackwell, B.S. & Piquero, A.R. (2005). On the relationships between gender, power control, self-control and crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 33, 1-17.
- Bloom, B.E. & Covington, S.S. (1998). Gender-Specific programming for female offenders: What is it and why is it important? *The Centre for Gender & Justice*. CA: La Jolla.
- Bugos, P.E. & McCarthy, L.M. (1984). Ayoreo infanticide: A case study. In G. Hausfater, and S.B. Hardy (eds). *Infanticide: Comparative and evolutionary perspectives*, pp. 503-520. New York: Aldine Publishing Company.

- Buker, H. (2011). Formation of self-control: Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime and beyond. *Aggression & Violent Behaviour, 16*, 265-276.
- Chesney-Lind, M. (1997). Girls' crime and woman's place: Toward a feminist model of female delinquency. *Crime & Delinquency, 35*, 5-29.
- Covington, S. (2007). The Relational Theory of Women's Psychological Development: Implications for the Criminal Justice System. Institute for Relational Development. *Centre for Gender and Justice, Female Offenders: Critical Perspectives and Effective Interventions (2nded)*. Ruth Zaplin, 1-23.
- Cowen, B. (1995). *Women and crime, in violence and the prevention of violence*. In L. Adler & F. Denmark (eds). Conn: Praeger.
- Daily Dispatch. (2002). *Editorial opinion: Wholesale slaughter*. Monday, 11 February 2002.
- Davies, L. (2008). *Mothers who kill their children: A literature review*. Cape Town: Stellenbosch University Press.
- de Hilari, C., Condori, I. & Dearden, K.A. (2009). When is deliberate killing of young children justified? Indigenous interpretations of infanticide in Bolivia. *Social Science & Medicine, 68*, 352-361.
- Denham, A.R., Adongo, P.B., Freyberg, N. & Hodgson, A. (2010). Chasing spirits: Clarifying the spirit child phenomenon and infanticide in Northern Ghana. *Social Science & Medicine, 71*, 608-615.
- Dettwyker, K. (1994). *Dancing skeletons: Life and death in West Africa*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Einarsdottir, J. (2004). *Tired of weeping: Mother love, child death and poverty in Guinea-Bissau*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Farooque, R. & Ernst, F.A. (2003). Filicide: A review of eight years clinical experience. *Journal of the National Medical Association, 95*(1), 90 -94.
- Friedman, S.H., Horowitz, S.M. & Resnick, P.J. (2005). Child murder by mothers: A critical analysis of the current state of knowledge and a research agenda. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 162*(9), 1578-1587.
- Gottlieb, A. (1992). *Under the kapok tree: Identity and difference in Beng thought*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Grobler, G., Weiss, E.A., Lebelo, E. & Maleratho, E. (2011). Culture, religion and psychosis – A case study in Limpopo Province, South Africa. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 14, 239 – 240.
- Haapasalo, J. & Petaja, S. (1999). Mothers who killed or attempted to kill their child: Life circumstances, childhood abuse and types of killing. *Violence & Victims*, 14, 219-239.
- Hamber, B. & Lewis, S. (1997). An Overview of the Consequences of Violence and Trauma in South Africa. *Research report written for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation*. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- Hancock, B. (1998). *Trend focus for research and development in Primary Health Care: An introduction to qualitative research*. University of Nottingham/Trend Focus Group.
- Ivey, G. & Myers, T. (2008). The psychology of bewitchment (Part I): A phenomenological study of the experience of bewitchment. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 38(1), 54 – 74.
- Ivey, G. & Myers, T. (2008). The psychology of bewitchment (Part II): A psychoanalytical model for conceptualising and working with bewitchment experiences. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 38(1), 75 – 94.
- Jennings, W.G., Piquero, N.L., Gover, A.R. & Perez D.M. (2009). Gender and general strain theory: A replication and exploration of Broidy and Agnew's gender/strain hypothesis among a sample of South-Western Mexican American adolescents. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37: 404-417.
- Jordan, J.V., Kaplan, A.G. & Miller, J.B., (1991). *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the stone centre*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Kaplan, A. (1984). *The self-in-relation: Implications for depression in women*. *Work in progress No. 14*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Centre, working paper series.

- Kauppi, A., Kumpulainen, K., Vanamo, T., Merikanto, J. & Karkola, K. (2008). Maternal depression and filicide - case study of ten mothers. *Archives Women's Mental Health, 11*, 201-206.
- Krischer, M.K., Stone, M.H., Sevecke, K. & Steinmeyer, E.M. (2007). Motives for maternal filicide: Results from a study with female forensic patients. *International Journal of Law & Psychiatry, 30*, 191-200.
- Larme, A.C. (1997). Health care allocation and selective neglect in rural Peru. *Social Science & Medicine, 44*, 1711-1723.
- Liema, M. (2010). Filicide followed by parasuicide: A comparison of suicidal and non-suicidal child homicide. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 34*(8), 558-562.
- Marchetti-Mercer, M.C. (2003). Family murder in post-apartheid South Africa: Reflections for mental health professionals. *Health, SA: Gesondheid 8*(2), 83-91.
- Marenin, O. & Reisig, M.D. (1995). A general theory of crime and patterns of crime in Nigeria: An exploration of methodological assumptions. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 23*(6), 501-518.
- Marks, M. (2006). Infanticide. *Psychiatry, 5*(1), 13-15.
- Matthews, S., Abrahams, N. Jewkes, R. Martin, L.J. & Lombard, C. (2013). Under reporting child abuse deaths: Experiences from a National study on child homicide. *South African Medical Journal, 103*(3), 132 -133.
- McKee, G.R. & Shea, S.J. (1998). Maternal filicide: A cross-national comparison. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 54*, 679-687.
- Miller, W. & Crabtree, B. (1992). A template approach to text analysis: Developing and using codebooks. *Qualitative Research* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 5,147-149.
- Moseley, K.L. (1986). The history of infanticide in western society. *Issues in Law & Medicine, 1*,345-361.
- Mull, D.S. & Mull, J.D. (1987). Infanticide among the Tarahumara of the Mexican Sierra Madre. In N. Scheper-Hughes (ed), *Child survival: Anthropological perspectives on the treatment and maltreatment of children*, pp. 113-134. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

- Neuman, W.L. (2006). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (6th ed). University of Michigan: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Oberman, M. (2003). Cross-cultural patterns in and perspectives on contemporary maternal filicide. *International Journal of Law & Psychiatry*, 26(5), 493-514.
- Pelser, A. & de Kock, C. (2000). Violence in South Africa: A note on some trends in the 1990's. *Acta Criminologica*, 13(1), 80-93.
- Saisto, T., Salmela-Aro, K., Nurmi, J.E. & Halmesmaki, E. (2001). Psychosocial predictors of disappointment with delivery and puerperal depression: A longitudinal study. *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, 80, 39-45.
- Sargent, C. (1988). Born to die: Witchcraft and infanticide in Bariba culture. *Ethnology*, 27, 79-95.
- Scrimshaw, S.C.M. (1984). Infanticide in human populations: Societal and individual concerns. In G. Hausfater and S.B. Hrdy (Eds). *Infanticide: Comparative and evolutionary perspectives*, pp. 439-462. New York: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Swartz, L.L. & Isser, N.K. (2000). *Endangered children: Neonaticide, infanticide and filicide*. New York: CRC Press.
- Stanton, J. & Simpson, A. (2002). Filicide: A review. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 25(1), 1-14.
- Stanton, J., Simpson, A. & Wouldes, T. (2000). A qualitative study of filicide by mentally ill mothers. *Child Abuse Neglect*, 24(11), 1451-1460.
- Stevenson, A. (2010). *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd ed). Oxford University Press.
- Sussman, P. & Kotze, C. (2013). *Psychiatric features in perpetrators of homicide – unsuccessful – suicide at Weskoppies Hospital in a 5-year period*. South Africa: University of Pretoria.
- Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K. & Painter, D. (2006). *Research in Practice: Applied methods for the Social Sciences*. (2nd ed). Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. (2005). *Research at grass roots for the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. (2nd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1(a): Participant Consent Letter

Department of Psychology
University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)
Private Bag X1106
Sovenga
0727
Date

Dear Participant

Thank you for showing interest in this study that focuses on the motives for child homicide by mothers incarcerated within four correctional centres in South Africa.

Your response to this interview will remain strictly confidential. The researcher will attempt not to identify you with the responses you give during the interview or disclose your name as a participant in the study. Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary and that you have the right to terminate your participation at any time.

Please answer all the questions as honest as possible. Your participation in this research is very important. Thank you for you time and cooperation.

Yours Truly

.....
Malope N.F.
Masters Student

.....
Date

.....
Prof T. Sodi
Supervisor

.....
Date

Appendix 1(b): Participant Consent Letter in Sepedi

Lengwalo la Tumelelo la Motšeakarolo

Department of Psychology
University of Limpopo
Turffloop Campus
Sovenga
0727

Tšatšikgwedi

Thobela Motšeakarolo

Re leboga ge o bontšha kgahlego ya go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše di amago mabaka a dipolao tša bana ka bommago bona bao ba tswaleletšwego dikgolegong tše nne mo lefaseng la Afrika borwa.

Dikarabo tša gago mo poledišanong ye di tla ba khupamarama. Monyakišiši o tla leka go se go amaganye le dikarabo tše o difago dipolelišanong goba go hlagiša leina la gago bjalo ka motšeakarolo dinyakišišong tše. Ka kgopelo, lemoga gore go tšeya karolo ga gago dinyakišišong tše ke ka maithaopo, le gore o na le toka ya go kgaotša go tšea karolo ga gago nako engwe le engwe.

Ka kgopelo, araba dipotšišo ka moka ka tshepagalo yeo e kgonagalago. Go tšeya karolo ga gago dinyakišišong tše go bohlokwa kudu. Re leboga nako ya gago le tšhomišano.

Wa lena

.....
Malope N.F.
Morutwana wa Masters

.....
Tšatšikgwedi

.....
Prof T. Sodi
Mohlali

.....
Tšatšikgwedi

Appendix 2 (a): Consent Form to be signed by the Participant

Consent Form

I..... hereby agree to participate in a masters research study that focuses on the motives for child homicide by mothers incarcerated in four correctional centres in South Africa.

The purpose of this study has been fully explained to me. I further understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can terminate my participation in this study at any point should I not want to continue and that decision will not affect me negatively in any way.

I understand that this is a research project, whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally. I understand that my details as they appear in this form will not be linked to the interview scheduled and that my answers will remain confidential.

Signature

Date.....

**Appendix 2(b): Consent Form to be signed by the Participant in Sepedi
Foromo ya Tumelelo go sainiwa ke Motšeakarolo**

Foromo ya Tumelelo

Nna..... ke dumela go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše tša go ithutela Masters tše di amago mabaka a dipolao tša bana ka bommago bona bao ba tswaleletšwego dikgolegong tše nne mo lefaseng la Afrika borwa.

Ke hlaloseditšwe morero wa dinyakišišo tše ka botlalo. Gape gape ke kwešiša gore ke tšea karolo ka go lokologa le go se gapeletšwe ka mokgwa o fe le o fe go dira bjalo. Gape ke kwešiša gore nka fetšiša go tšea karolo ga ka dinyakišišong tše nako engwe le engwe ge nka se rate go tšwela pele, le gore sepheto seo se ka se nkame gampe ka tsela e fe goba e fe.

Ke kwešiša gore se ke porojeke ya dinyakišišo, yeo morero wa yona e sego go nkholo ka bonna. Ke kwešiša gore ditaba tšaka ka mokgwa woo di tšwelelang ka gona mo foromong ye di ka se amaganywe le letlakala la dipoledišano le gore dikarabo tšaka di tla dula e le khupamarama.

Mosaino.....

Tšatšikwedi.....

Appendix 4(a): Interview guide

1. I would like you to share with me your understanding of why you have ended up in this correctional facility.
2. Kindly share with me what you think could have motivated you to commit the homicidal act.
3. Kindly describe to me your understanding of your life and experiences before and after you committed the homicidal act.
4. I would like you to share with me your thoughts, feelings and experiences at the time when you committed the homicidal act.
5. Looking back at your life now, how would you describe the crime that you have committed?

Appendix 4(b): Interview guide in Sepedi

1. Ke rata ge o ka abelana le nna kwešišo ya gago ya gore goreng o ikhweditše o le ka kgolegong ye?
2. Ke kgopela gore o abelane le nna kgopolo ya gago ya gore o ka ba o khuweditšwe ke eng go tšea kgato ya polao.
3. Ke kgopela gore o ntlhalošetše kwešišo ya gago ya bophelo le maitemogelo a gago pele le morago ga kgato ya gago ya polao.
4. Ke kgopela gore o abelane le nna dikgopolo, maikutlo le maitemogelo a gago ka nako yela o beng o tšea kgato ya polao.
5. Ge o lebelela morago bophelong bja gago, naa o ka hlaloša bjang tiragalo yela o e direleng?

Appendix 5: Interview Transcripts

PARTICIPANT 1 - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (LIMPOPO PROVINCE-LP)

Researcher (R): *[Begins with explanation of reason for the interview by the Tsonga interpreter to the participant. Noise in the background from the corridor].* How are you sisi? [sister]

Participant (P): I'm fine. [soft response]

R: Will you please raise your voice, because we are going to audio tape the interview, neh?

P: Okay.

R: My name is Nthabiseng. I'm from the University of Limpopo as she explained to you *[referring to the interpreter]*. I want to thank you for your time, allowing us to have this interview with you and ask you questions.

P: *[nods]*

R: Please will you talk because I cannot record a nod? *[nods and smiles]*

R: I have some questions that I will go through with you; please respond freely. Explain the way you experienced things, how you saw them for yourself.

P: Mhm! *[nods]*

R: This research will help us if we need to plan things like rehabilitation programmes. It will help us to know where to help if we want to devise new programmes, you know.

P: *[nods]*

R: Research has been done regarding women who have committed similar crimes in mainly urban areas of western societies and the results indicate family problems, money problems and such like. Now we want to investigate the reasons for women in non-rural, non-western societies committing this kind of crime.

P: *[nods]*

R: *[takes out consent form as explained to her earlier]*. So, I am going to ask you to sign the consent form *[noise continues in the background]*.

P: *[signs]*

R: Thank you very much. Okay, so where are you from?

P: Giyani. *[softly]*

R: How old are you?

P: 26

R: Did you go to school?

P: Here in prison. *[referring to the correctional centre]*

R: What level are you at?

P: Level 4 *[Abef]*

R: So you did not go to school before?

P: Long time.

R: You left at what level?

P: Standard 4.

R: Have you worked before?

P: Mhm mhm! *[shaking her head]*

R: Are you married?

P: No

R: Do you have other children?
P: Two.
R: So you are a single mother?
P: [*nods*]
R: Was the deceased child a boy or a girl?
P: Boy.
R: What age?
P: Two
R: So you speak Tsonga/Shangaan?
P: Yes.
R: Can you share with us your understanding of why you ended up in this correctional centre?
P: I will speak Shangaan.
R: Okay.
P: I am here is because I killed my two-year-old child. I drowned my child in the dam.
R: Okay.
P: I did this because I was raped. [*Participant begins to cry. She takes a tissue offered to her, wipes her eyes and then continues*]. After I was raped, I became pregnant. I tried to explain to the father of the boy [*rapist*]. The father and his mother gave me money and said that I should not report the case. After that, I was arrested in 2005.
R: Okay. That was the year you took the child to the dam?
P: Mhm! [*yes*].
R: Okay ... mhm. When you look back, how would you describe your life before you had the experience?
P: Before I killed the child?
R: Yes.
P: I had not accepted the child, and to make it worse I did not know which of the three rapists the father was. [*becomes silent and cries softly*]
R: Did you have other children before that one?
P: No.
R: Did you have them after?
P: Yes. I was pregnant when I was incarcerated but I didn't know. Then I had twins.
P: Mhm.
R: And they are not from a rape?
P: Mhm Mhm! [*no*]
R: Okay. Can you explain to me what your life was like before the rape?
P: I was living well.
R: And then, during this experience what went through your mind? What were you feeling? I understand that it was a challenge that you couldn't accept the child. What else were you thinking? [*She does not respond*]. What made you think that you did not have an option? That you just had to take that life? Did you consider that you might end up in a correctional centre, or didn't you care? What were you thinking?
P: No, I did not think I would end up in jail. I did not think I would get caught or arrested. All I thought was that I must kill the child and then kill myself.
R: So, you tried to kill yourself also?
Participant: [*nods and sniffs tearfully; silence follows*]

R: When you look back now at the experience, how do you feel? Is there anything you feel you could have changed?

P: [*voice breaks and begins to cry*]: Because I will be released next year, I keep thinking that I will meet those boys that raped me [*continues to cry*]. It is in my mind all the time.

R: So, you are saying that you are afraid that they will rape you again? Or you are afraid because of your past experience?

P: [*crying*] It hurts me because I know that after the release everyone will be talking about me, saying that this is the one that killed her child.

R: Oh, that is what you think it is going to be like?

P: Mhm! [*yes*]

R: How long have you been here?

P: Seven years.

R: Seven years ... okay. Don't you think that by now they will have accepted that it has happened and if they talk, it will just be at the beginning and then they will stop?

P: Ee. [*yes*]

R: Mhm! What do you think your life will be like after you are released? As you have studied while you have been here, what do you think you will be able to do with that opportunity? What do you think you will be able to do?

P: I will look for a job and work.

R: Okay. So you think your life may improve?

P: [*silence ... then sniffs*]: The problem that I have is this ... my parents do not know what happened exactly. [*begins to cry again*]

R: How come they do not know? You did not get the chance to tell them?

P: [*shakes head and sniffs*]

R: They do not come to visit you here?

P: They do. [*still crying and speaking with a broken voice*]. I only told them that I wanted to kill the baby and I wanted to kill myself.

R: And what did they say to you?

P: They thought that I was playing [*still sniffing and in tears*].

R: Mhm. So, after you killed the child, what happened? You wanted to drown yourself also?

P: Mhm! [*no*]. I took Jik and drank Jik, but I did not die. I was sick.

R: Okay ... okay. It was the same day?

P: Mhm! [*no*].

R: It was a different year?

P: [*nods*]

R: So, after the child died, nobody knew about it for a long time?

P: Mhm! [*yes*].

R: For how many years?

P: [*seems to have difficulty understanding my question but then explains*] The very same day I took the child and drowned him in the dam, I decided to go to the police station and report what had happened.

R: Were you regretting what you had done?

P: Mhm! [*yes*]

R: So you felt afterwards that you shouldn't have killed the child?

P: [*sniffs*] I regretted that I had thrown the baby into the dam. I regretted and I was thinking I should have taken the child and run away where nobody could trace me. [*no longer tearful*]

R: Mhm. When you reported what happened to the police, you left the child in the dam?

P: Mhm! [*yes*]

R: So, the police took the child out?

P: [*she nods and then explains*] When we went to the dam to look for the child, we found that he was no longer in the water but now on the bank.

R: On the same day?

P: Mhm! [*yes*]

R: Mhm! All right. I thank you very much for sharing with us your experience, neh. It was a very sensitive e ... experience, but you took the time to talk to us about it ... we really appreciate it. And ...

P: Mhm! [*okay*].

R: How do you think other women can be helped, so that they do not have the same experience as this?

P: If a woman has been raped, she should talk earlier and be open about it else she could commit suicide or do something wrong.

R: Okay. What programmes do you think could help, like now, that you are going back into society? What programme could help a person like you now?

P: After I was incarcerated, I accepted the situation but then I came here pregnant and had the twins. After the children were taken back to my home, I started to feel differently.

R: You wanted to be with your children?

P: [*nods*].

R: Oh okay. So, when you leave here next year will you be with them?

P: Mhm! [*yes*].

R: They are now with your family?

P: Mhm! [*yes*].

R: They come here to visit you?

P: Mhm! [*yes*].

R: Okay sisi ... Thank you very much once again. I wish you all the best and I do believe the situation will improve.

P: Mhm! [*yes*].

R: All right. Dankie.

P: [*leaves*]

PARTICIPANT 2- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (LP)

Researcher (R): *[An interpreter begins by explaining the study to the participant in siVenda. There is background noise of sewing machines worked by other inmates. The participant was also busy with sewing before the interview, and continued afterwards. She was given the consent form to sign too].* All right, I want to begin by saying thank you very much neh, for agreeing to talk to us...e...it means a lot to us as it will help in many ways. I know it is very difficult, as you also said, as it might remind you of the past. If there is a need for us to refer you to a psychologist afterwards, if you need that, we can suggest it to the authorities ...

Participant (P): Mhm! *[softly spoken throughout]*

R: ... and find you the necessary help, because it is advisable to get help for whatever difficulties you are going through.

P: Mhm!

R: *[Interpreter begins to interpret, asking me to repeat what I had said so she could repeat it sentence by sentence].* Okay, how old are you?

P: 23

R: 23. And you are from?

P: Botswana *[changed country]*.

R: How many children do you have?

P: None.

R: None...okay...and how old was that child *[the deceased]*?

P: ee....it wasn't born. It was a still birth 'cause I was 7 months pregnant. I decided to terminate the pregnancy when it was already a baby.

R: Oh, you terminated it yourself?

P: Mhm! *[yes]*.

R: Okay. Which year was that?

P: 20 ... 2011.

R: 2011 neh...and how long will you be here?

P: Where? In South Africa?

R: No, incarcerated.

P: 10 years.

R: 10 years, okay. *[rattling of papers; wondering what else to ask her. Interpreter seems exhausted and absent-minded at times. It is the same interpreter as for the first interview that took place not too long ago. However, interview continues].* Let's discuss your studies. How far did you study before being brought here?

P: I ended up at form 2.

R: Form two?

P: Mhm! *[yes]*

R: So you didn't work?

P: Mhm! *[no]*

R: No work experience. Okay, do you understand why you are here? Why you are incarcerated?

P: Mhm!

R: Can you explain to me?

P: Yes, I was pregnant. I was dating a boy. When the guy ran away, I was depressed and then I looked for medicine to drink to terminate the pregnancy. The next door neighbours knew I was pregnant and then realised that I was no longer pregnant, because I had terminated and thrown the child away. Then they reported the case to the police and the police arrested me. And then the police asked me about the pregnancy and where the baby was. I explained what I had done. Then they said I was in conflict with the law, because it was not allowed. Mhm.

R: Okay. Can you explain what pushed you to do that?

P: I realised that I was unemployed and I didn't have money to support the child. Then it came to my mind that I should terminate the pregnancy.

R: Okay, do you have parents?

P: Yes.

R: You didn't think that they could help you?

P: Ah, they are in Botswana.

R: Oh and you were here in South Africa?

P: Mhm! [yes].

R: Okay, so how do you feel about it now?

P: It hurts me in my heart. It is very painful. Always it is very painful.

R: You wish you hadn't done it?

P: A lot. I feel remorseful.

R: Are you sorry because you ended up in jail, or because you feel that you may have been able to take care of the child?

P: I regret the crime that I committed, because I failed to make a good decision. It was a bad decision.

R: Okay, if...if you had not been incarcerated, if they had never found out, do you think you would still regret what you have done?

P: It will always stay in my mind.

R: So what were your thoughts and feelings at that time? Oh, I think you have explained that one. [*Question was read from a questionnaire since the interview was semi-structured*]. So, looking back now, what do you think you could have done differently?

P: I feel that if I hadn't committed this offence, there may have been someone to help me.

R: Okay...okay, that's why you said you made a bad decision?

P: Mhm!

R: Alright. And then mhm...what do you think we can advise other people, other women, so that they don't find themselves in the same difficult situation?

P: I will tell them that if when dating a guy, they become pregnant and he runs away, they don't have to make bad decisions like this.

R: Okay, and then ... erm...as a way forward, what do you plan for your future because in 10 years you will be out neh? You will be 33. What do you hope to do because you will still be young?

P: After the release I will go to my parents.

R: Do they visit you here?

P: Only my sister.

R: Only your sister. She is in South Africa also?

P: Mhm, Zimbabwe.

R: Okay. But what are you planning to do? You could have a career as you now know how to sew.

P: During this time, I am receiving training in many things.

R: Mhm.

P: I can sew clothes, so I believe after my incarceration I will look for a job.

R: Mhm. You haven't thought of starting your own company? [giggles]

P: [smiles].

R: Now, thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experience, even though it is a difficult thing that you shared with us.

P: Okay.

R: May God bless you.

[As she is about to leave, the interpreter and I feel that I should ask a few more questions so we continue].

R: How do you feel now? Is this interview disturbing you?

P: I have attended different programmes while being incarcerated and I am trying to cope. I have even seen the social worker and received counselling. I feel I am fine. I do not need further interventions after this.

R: Okay. [A short discussion with the interpreter concerning what I had heard her mention slightly, after which I continue]. Do you talk to other people?

P: I talk to my friends here but I once shared with the social worker.

R: So you feel that you can recover from what happened, you can move on?

P: Yes.

R: What was the environment at home when you fell pregnant? Were your family supportive or not supportive?

P: Yes, they were supportive.

R: Who were you staying with?

P: The first time I came to South Africa, I came with my sister.

R: Okay, and then this guy that you met, how did you meet and what happened?

P: We met here in South Africa. We didn't know each other before.

R: Did you live together?

P: We cohabitated and stayed together, but it lasted less than a year.

R: That is why you decided to terminate the pregnancy?

P: Mhm. At home they knew that I was staying with a guy in South Africa. My sister knew it. She is the one who told my family.

R: Mhm. Do you have regrets about that? That you shouldn't have moved in with him? What could you have done differently?

P: I regret too much.

R: Did your family ever try to advise you not to live with this man because you were too young?

P: No. Before I became pregnant and we were staying together the father of the deceased child used to support me. He was working at a scrap yard. Before I was pregnant everything was going well but then things changed after the pregnancy. The family of my boyfriend didn't know me at all.

R: And you didn't know them?

P: Mhm!

R: Okay...all right. Thank you very much, neh. It has been a helpful interview.

P: Mhm!
R: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT3- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (LP)

Researcher (R): Well, okay, the significance of this research will emerge when we analyze our interviews of all those with experiences similar to your own. Thereafter we shall try to develop programmes with which we can help prevent others from falling into the same predicament. So we are looking to find out what causes this behaviour. From researches conducted in other countries we have learnt such factors as lack of money and lack of support to be responsible. Accordingly, we desire to find out the causes which prevail especially in our rural areas. Perhaps it is early pregnancy, who knows?

Participant (P): Mh-hm

R: That is what we hope our research will help reveal. Now I have with me you copy of a letter which explains more about our research. Feel free to read it later.

P: Alright

R: But this other letter is a consent form. It confirms that you willingly agreed to this interview.

P: Mh-hm

R: So please sign it as confirmation that you have no objections whatsoever.

P: Indeed, there is no problem at all.

R: You sign over here, and fill in today's date over here, and your names here. Thank you very much my sister. This is your copy; you may ask them to keep it safely in your file.

P: Okay

R: Alright then, by the way, where do you come from?

P: I come from Thabazimbi.

R: Thabazimbi, alright. And are you married?

P: No

R: How many children do you have?

P: Just one.

R: How old was the one who passed away?

P: 2 years old.

R: And was it a boy or a girl?

P: A boy

R: And for how long have you been incarcerated here at the correctional facility?

P: Do you mean when was I sentenced?

R: Yes

P: Last year, on the 6th of August.

R: Last year?

P: Yes

R: Oh, 2012 then?

P: Mh-hm

R: Okay. And the child passed away last year as well?

P: No

R: When?

P: In 2010

R: 2010... Right, could you now just tell me in your own words and according to your understanding, why you were arrested and even imprisoned.

P: You wish to know why?
R: Yes, basically as far as you understand all that has happened. Basically, I am looking for your story, as you see it.
P: You want me to start from after I had committed the....
R: Well, all that happened
P: Okay, I was arrested because...
R: Yes my dear...
P: I was arrested because I killed a child.
R: I see. Now please tell what led to you ending up killing the child.
P: I think there were several causes. For one, I fell pregnant while still in school. So I had to quit school. But then my boyfriend left me because his family did not want me or the child.
R: Oh?
P: Yes, and my mother did not have the money to look after my child, because she worked as a domestic.
R: And so you felt that the child would deprive you of a future?
P: Mh-hm
R: I see. And, I even forgot to ask you about your age.
P: I am 22 years old at the moment.
R: 22 neh?
P: Mh-hm
R: [*phone rings in the background*]Alright, er, and now when you look back, how do you feel about that decision?
P: Well, it was a very bad decision.
R: And how did the child exactly?
P: I choked him.
R: You choked him?
P: Yes
R: I see. But how?
P: With my very hands.
R: Ah. Was it because you were angry perhaps? So angry that sat down and planned the entire thing?
P: Yes
R: Do you recall how you were feeling at the time, or what you were thinking?
P: I was angry. I felt lost. I had no one to look after my child for me.
R: That you had no one to help you out?
P: Yes
R: So you thought killing him would eliminate your problem.
P: Yes I did. In fact, I did not think that I might end up here.
R: How then did you see things ending up?
P: Huh?
R: What did you think would happen afterwards? Where did you see yourself ending up?
P: I did not think that there would be consequences. But now I so regret it all.
R: It is only from in here that you appreciate the gravity of your deed?
P: Mh-hm

R: Are you saying that you had not even considered that you would need to have a funeral for him?
P: I had not considered such matters at all.
R: What then happened after you had choked him?
P: I left him on the spot and walked away.
R: You did what?
P: I left him; I walked away.
R: Was it in the house?
P: No, it was not inside a house, it was out on the farm.
R: On a farm?
P: Yes
R: And you just left him right there on the spot?
P: Mh-hm
R: And then?
P: I left
R: Mh-hm
P: Then my mom realized that the child was missing. So she asked about his whereabouts.
R: Okay
P: Then she called the police
R: Your mother is the one who called the police?
P: Mh-hm
R: And at this point you began to realize the meaning of your action?
P: Mh-hm
R: But initially, as you walked away from your child, you thought that you are leaving your problem behind?
P: Mh-hm
R:[*Phone rings in the background*]Not even entertaining the implications that would ensue once he was found?
P: I entertained no such thoughts.
R: Did you think they might not find him because of the size of the farm?
P: Mh-hm
R: Did you perhaps attempt to hide the body?
P: Yes, I had hid him.
R: Had you dug a grave for his body?
P: No
R: Oh, so you had not buried him?
P: No
R: Alright. And now, when you look back, what do you think you could have done differently?
P: I think I should have at least taken him to a place of safety.
R: Mh-hm
P: Or to other places of that sort.
R: Were you aware of such places then?
P: No, I was not aware of them.
R: You did not know of their existence?

P: Yes
R: Is that perhaps why you felt helpless?
P: Mh-hm
R: Now, what sort of advice do you have for someone in a situation that is similar to the one you were in? Especially young ladies, what can you say to them?
P: I'd say that if they do not want their kids, they should not kill them but rather take them to places of safety or put them up for adoption.
R: But, as you said, you only became aware of these choices when it was too late, right?
P: Mh-hm
R: Okay, what else do I wish to ask you? Or what might you wish to ask me, or that you wish I had asked you? Anything that you think might prove helpful at all?
P: Nothing
R: Alright, perhaps let me ask about your boyfriend. Were you upset that he left you? What are your views about relationships? Have your views changed now as compared to earlier regarding youth and relationships?
P: The youth?
R: Yes
P: I am not sure what to say. Youth should know that once you fall pregnant, the man leaves you.
R: Oh!
P: So I think they must protect themselves, and refuse...
R: And refuse what?
P: To have unprotected sex
R: Uh, okay. Now, you were sentenced to how many years?
P: 10 years
R: 10 years, I see. And are there programs in here that you participate in?
P: Yes
R: Are they helpful?
P: Yes, they are helpful, they include church-attendance as well as schooling.
R: Really, wow, that's wonderful. It means you can complete your schooling?
P: Yes I was a school-goer.
R: Your last grade?
P: Grade eleven.
R: You were in Grade eleven. Wow, you were almost done with school, weren't you?
P: Mh-hm
R: So, as you said, you stopped when you fell pregnant.
P: Yes
R: And in here, what is your study level?
P: In here we start at ABET 1, ABET 2, etc.
R: And you are at which level?
P: Level 4
R: Already at Level 4! So they started you at Level 3?
P: I was at Level 3 but they moved me up to Level 4.
R: And that is because you had already come near the end of your high school studies?
P: Mh-hm

R: Okay. Thank you very much for your time. My encouragement to you is to continue with your studies. You should even pursue university-level studies. What has happened cannot be changed. As you know, our God forgives. So this cannot be the end of your life. Use this time in here in order to devise a better future for yourself...

P: Uh-huh

R: So make something out of your life, and let your experience serve as a platform to enable you to make a difference in other peoples' lives, okay?

P: Mh-hm

R: I really wish to thank you for your time my sister.

P: Yes

R: Thanks dear.

PARTICIPANT 4- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (LP)

Researcher (R): Alright, my name is Nthabiseng, from the University of Limpopo, as mentioned to you previously.

Participant (P): Yes

R: I have with me a letter. It comes from both my professor and me. It explains what this research is about. It also informs you of your right to agree or to refuse to participate in this study...

P: Yes

R: ...and so forth. But I truly wish to thank you for agreeing to participate in our study.

P: Yes

R: This research is intended to help us find out the nature of the challenges facing us in the so-called non-western society, and in rural areas.

P: Yes

R: Much of the research that has been undertaken regarding women who have killed their children...

P: Yes

R: ...has been carried out in western societies. As a result we do not know if similar challenges obtain among us non-westerners.

P: Yes

R: What are the things that lead people to decide to take the lives of their own children? That is what we seek to find out. Once we understand such factors, we can then put measures in place to help prevent the recurrence of such strange behaviour.

P: Yes

R: Is that not so?

P: Yes, it is.

R: Well then, I have this consent form indicating your willingness to participate in this study.

P: Yes

R: If you may just write your names over here, sign over here, and then write today's date here.

P: (*Silence as she writes, only hear a pen write and background people talking at a distance, in the corridor.*)Do I sign right here?

R: Yep

P: Huh?

R: 03.Thanks. Well, this is your copy; I am not sure whether they will place it in your file or you may keep it with your person. Okay, no problem. What I need to know now is your age.

P: 22

R: You are 22, right? When were you incarcerated?

P: 2010

R: 2010.Alright.Do you have any children?

P: No

R: Your deceased child, how old was it?

P: One year two months.

R: Okay. Was it a boy or a girl?

P: Boy

R: Alright.[Are you] married [or] single?

P: Single

R: Okay. So, did the child die in 2010 [*the same year you were imprisoned*]?

P: No. [*He died in*] 2009.

R: 2009.I see. So tell me, according to you, how did you end up here under the supervision of correctional services?

P: Yes... You mean for me to end up here?

R: Yes. What happened exactly?

P: Well, what happened is this. Shortly after I had had my child....

R: Mh-hm

P: ...My maternal uncle started to hate me. One time he found me eating, and proceeded to grab my food and throw it away. At the time I was living with my uncle and my grandmother; and my grandmother was simply too afraid of my uncle.

R: Uh-huh

P: My grandmother could never bring herself to the point of going against my uncle's wishes or instructions.

R: I see

P: My uncle and I used to get along very well indeed. But everything changed in 2008 when I gave birth to my baby. We once were very close. But once I had the child in 2008, he started to hate me. He even ordered that I go live with my man. When I told him that I can't live with my man since he is married, he said he doesn't want to hear of it. In fact, he then said I should go live with my father instead. I told him that that would be impossible because I do not get along at all with my father. He persisted that I must find another place to live so long as I would be out of the house by 12 November 2009. I eventually left, and went to live with my sister in law. But she too soon expressed her fear of my uncle. So I went and told my uncle's wife. She similarly stated her fear of my uncle. So I left right away, and began to ask myself why they should all hate me only because I have had a child. I then thought that maybe if I took this child's life they will love me again. But I was wrong because that made them to hate me even more.

R: Ah, okay. But how, then, did you take the child's life?

P: I wrapped a towel around her face and sat on it.

R: You mean you sat on his face?

P: Yes

R: Where did all this take place?

P: Not far from my home, under a massive tree, along the road

R: What?

P: A tree

R: Oh, a tree.

P: Yes, a tree. I just got there and sat down under it.

R: And you sat on him?

P: Yes

R: And you knew beforehand that if you wrapped and sat on his face he would eventually die?

P: Yes

R: Okay, but then the child's father was not helping with the child's maintenance?
P: Uh-uh [No]
R: Is he a married man?
P: Yes. He has a wife, even though they are not [legally] married.
R: Oh, and he wanted nothing to do with the child?
P: Mh-hm
R: Okay. But don't you have parents?
P: I do have a father, but we do not get along because of his wife.
R: I see. And do you not have a mother?
P: No
R: I see. What then did you do once the child was lifeless?
P: I then went to the clinic. When I got there, they examined the child and found that he is deceased.
R: You walked to the clinic with the dead child in your arms?
P: [*Speaking very fast*] Yes. When I arrived at the clinic they told me the child is late. So I took him home with me. When I got home, my grandmother reminded me that my uncle told me never to return. (*Phone rings at the background*)
R: What were your exact words when you arrived at the clinic?
P: I told them the child had been crying and suddenly stopped, so I brought him for examination. Indeed their examination of the child revealed that he was dead. They said he'd been dead for some time. [*Abruptly resuming the earlier story*] My granny said, "Your uncle said you must never come back here." I said, "I am only here to give you the child." Granny held the child, and then screamed, "Oh no, what have you done to him?" I said, "Nothing."
R: Mh-hm
P: My granny then proceeded to curse my uncle, "Do you see what your hatred of the child has achieved? Now my granddaughter has murdered her own child."
R: Those were your granny's words?
P: Yes
R: Oh, and then what happened next?
P: My uncle then told granny to call the police. My granny refused, wanting to first hear what exactly had earlier transpired. She asked me to sleep with the child; I did. Then the following day, granny got up and left saying she is going to see a witchdoctor about what had happened, since I was not spilling the beans. [*Speaking very fast*] My uncle then called my brother, who was not living with us; he too fears my uncle. He told my brother, "Refilwe [*name changed*] had a child, but now that child has passed away. But we do not know what has taken the child's life." When my brother asked where granny was, he was told she has gone to see a doctor. My brother then hastened to try and stop her, saying "It is obvious that my uncle hated Refilwe because of the child and so Refilwe killed it. There is no point going to consult a witchdoctor about what exactly happened. What is clear is that she killed him because of my uncle." My uncle then began to hate him as well.
R: Mh-hm
P: Then my brother said [*to me*], "As for me, I do not hate you. But I will call the police so that they may arrest you. What you have done is a sin, even though you had a valid reason for doing it."

R: Uh, in your view, why did your uncle start hating you after you had the child?

P: (Avoiding eye contact)Ay, I do not know. All I know is that we got along very well before the child came.

R: Uh, don't you think he had sexual feelings toward you?

P: Well, I do not know that; all I know is that things changed after I had the child. After I conceived, he told me that because the child is by an outsider, I should not return home after giving birth to it.

R: Er, had he never tried to sleep with you before?

P: (responds instantly) Uh-uh. He once beat me up in 2010. I then left home and went to live with some young man. While living with this young man, I had to go to court on 30 June. There my older uncle's wife told me to my face

R: Oh! Did he beat you again afterwards?

P: Yes, my older uncle's wife told the magistrate, "We have a real problem regarding this child. She lives in fear of her uncle. He still beats her up regularly." The magistrate then said, "I am ordering that you go and fetch your clothes [*and return home*]. The police and social workers will check up on you daily. Should they not find you at home, your uncle will be arrested on suspicion of continuing the abuse."

R: Uh-huh

P: He did subsequently beat me up. I then went to see a social worker. The social worker told my uncle that she has every reason to launch a criminal case against him because his abuse borders on lust. He apologized immediately, promising never to beat me up ever again. The social worker then said, "Because she lives in the same house with you, I am giving you two months, by December you should be out of the house."

R: Mh-hm

P: Indeed when they came to check in December, he left.

R: Alright. Now, did things deteriorate after the death of the child?

P: Yes, things got worse because after I was arrested, I was offered bail. I then called and informed my aunt. When I got out on bail, my uncle was not at home. Then my granny called him to inform him that I am back home. Then he started fuming, saying: "I am going to kill you all. Why did you bail out a criminal? Don't you fear that she will kill you too?" My granny replied, "I have nowhere to take her, she is my youngest child. I have nowhere else to take her. Better you stay away from home, for she cannot leave my house." [*Refilwe imitates her uncle,*] "This child angers me because all she does here is to squander your [*pension*] money." My uncle is unemployed. So he accuses me of exploiting my granny's money while he gets to see none of it. But my granny stood firm and promised to call the police on my uncle should he lay a hand on me.

R: Uh-huh, and according to you, was your uncle abusing you?

P: Yes

R: By the way, what did you say happened in order for you to get arrested? Did your family call the police?

P: Yes, my brother called the police. On arrival, the police asked me about what I had done. I kept quiet. They kept trying to talk to me, but I just kept silent. They eventually called one female officer. She pleaded with me, "I am begging you my sister, please tell me, what have you done?" That is when I explained everything to her. She then said, "Your motive is understandable. I have also heard ever since I got here about how your uncle has been abusing you." She also asked my uncle, "Are you after this girl?" "No,"

he said. "Then why do you persecute her?" "I do it because she squanders my mother's money."

R: Ah, alright. Now, what can you say this whole experience that you have been through has meant to you? How do you feel about everything now?

P: Ay, for now, well, er...

R: Huh?

P: In connection with what precisely?

R: I mean, do you regret what you did, or have you come to terms with it? Do you feel like, "What's done is done"? How do you feel now?

P: Well, it's just that, you see, sometimes I say to myself, "I shouldn't have done it." But other times, I tell myself, "Well, it's just like spilled water, it can't be reversed."

R: Yes

P: But at times I do feel remorseful.

R: Oh!

P: In fact, some time back, they even had to get me a priest because I could not sleep.

R: Were you seeing [*visions of*] your child?

P: Yes, it felt as though they were calling me [*over to the other side*]. But of late I am alright.

R: Okay. So when you look at your life now, is it better now that you are incarcerated?

P: Yes, I feel safe in here. So I do feel that my life is much better indeed.

R: Yes

P: Indeed, I feel safer in here.

R: [*silence*]I see. It might be then that you do not much regret what happened since in here you are presently at peace?

P: At present I definitely feel at ease. On the outside, many people used to warn me that my uncle was eventually going to kill me.

R: Based on how he treated you?

P: Yes

R: Oh, alright. How long is your sentence?

P: Twelve years.

R: Ah, and you are happy about the way things are turning out for overall?

P: Oh yes, in here I feel much better indeed.

R: And in which activities are you presently involved?

P: Presently I attend school.

R: And you are at which level?

P: Four

R: On the outside, were you attending school?

P: Yes

R: Which grade were you in?

P: I left while in Grade 9.

R: Grade 9?

P: Yes

R: Were you in Grade 9 when you were arrested? How old were you when you fell pregnant then?

P: [*takes a long time*]Seven....

R: Seventeen?

P: I was about seventeen or sixteen years old.

R: And you were in Grade 9. Did you fail some grades?

P: I simply stopped going to school.

R: Alright, suppose we were to produce a program for the benefit of others who may find themselves in similar situations, what would you want to say to them? What do you think they might find helpful? Give us the sort of things that could be done to help prevent similar abuses from occurring, as well as to prevent victims of such abuse from finding incarceration preferable to their own homes.

P: [*speaking softly*] Well, I do not know.

R: It's okay if you do not know. Thank you very much for your time. I am confident that our chat will help us to understand better the causes of such abuses.

P: Yes

R: I appreciate so much the time you have given me my sister.

P: Yes

R: Our interview is over now.

P: Okay

R: Alright. May God be with you. And do study hard, so that when you leave this place one day, you will feel quite empowered and not needing to go live in the same house as your uncle again.

P: Definitely, when I get out of here, I will not return back there. I want to leave this place with my [*matriculation*] certificate in my hand. I no longer wish to be anyone's burden. I have my own hands, and do not need to be depending on others. Seriously!

R: [*small giggle*] Very well then, thanks again my sister.

P: Yes

R: Do let them [*i.e. prison staff*] know that we are done.

PARTICIPANT 5 - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (GAUTENG PROVINCE-GP)

Researcher (R): Alright, okay. My name is Nthabiseng. I am here to sit [and chat] with you... I am Nthabiseng from the University of Limpopo, ma'am. [In broken Zulu] I would like to... I wish to thank you for...

Participant (P): Yes

R: Your time, er...

P:[Interrupts] Feel free to speak Sotho, I understand it well

R: Okay. [I thank you] also for your willingness to assist us. I have with me two sets of forms. The first concerns you giving us consent to conduct this interview. Basically, that you have no issues with this process.

P: Mh-hm

R: Neh?

P: Uh-huh

R: And the other is a letter written to assure you that this interview is confidential. It clarifies that all you will be doing is share with us your experience in your own words and from your own perspective. Such information as you can provide may help us should we wish to initiate interventions in future. So feel free to tell us all you can that led to you ending up here.

P: Things that led to what happened?

R: Yes, such things. I'll leave the letter with you then, it comes from both my professor and me, and it contains what I just explained. Alright?

P: Mh-hm.

R: I am not sure whether you are allowed to keep it or the authorities will keep it in your file. It is essentially just confirmation of your participation in this study.

P: Mh-hm

[quietness... but noisy background from the corridor outside interview room]

R: So, did you say you come from Gauteng?

P: [can't hear]

R: What can one say, okay!

Today is the thirteenth. If you may, please go ahead and relate your experience. So far as you understand, how did you end up here inside a correctional facility? You may sign here, and write today's date over here. [Papers rattling] Write your name over here, and finally your signature....

P: Why do you require my name?

R: Well, it is to indicate your consent regarding your participation in this Master's project.

P:

R: Your details will not be used anywhere. It is also to protect us in case you should claim in future that you never agreed to this interview.

P: Mh-hm

R: So this form indicates your consent, this other one assures you of our commitment to your privacy.

P: mhm! Silence.... [hesitant - not too comfortable with writing her name]

R: It is also to assure you that this audiotape will not be distributed to anyone else.

P: Mh-hm

R: Today's date over here, 13th.

P:Thirteen?

R: 13-03-2013. Indication that you consented to have your information treated confidentially such that if in future you should come across it elsewhere you can have every right....

P: But I do not want this to be made public

R: Exactly, you do not want this to be made public. That is precisely why I wish to express my sincere gratitude for your participation. The information you provide just might help us to assist others who find themselves in a similar predicament.

P: Mh-hm

R: Okay then, you may go ahead and relate how you ended up here, so far as you know.

P: Er, for me to end up here?

R: Yes, here under correctional services

P: I ended up in here because I killed my child.

R: Okay

P: But it not something that I had planned. I was simply overtaken by events, and found myself having done so. You see, I was asleep. It was on the..., no, I can't remember the date anymore. I used to have this problem: I would hear my name being called, and I would respond. In the morning, I would tell my husband about how in my sleep I keep hearing my name being called out, but I do not know the person that is calling me. He asked me, "Did you respond?" I said, "Yes I did respond." He then told me that I should not have responded because once you respond then they have you under their spell. I did not understand what he meant. One day, it happened again while I slept. It happened like this, "Wake up, wake up, it's 4am and you are running late!" Then I jumped out of bed, thinking to myself, "I must quickly make a fire and prepare hot water so the children can bath." As I jumped out of bed, I grabbed my skirt, put it on and dashed out of the bedroom. Walking along the passage, I felt my hair entangling....

R: Er, what do you mean by entangling hair?

P: Well, it's like sensing that there is something creepy out there.

R: So you were frightened?

P: You feel your hair standing on its end, but when you look around you see nothing. Thereafter, I felt as though something cold was crawling about my feet. Then I started feeling so inexplicably strong. While still startled about what was going on, I then started hearing voices. They said, "Take a bathing bucket and add [hot] water into it. Then take the child and place it inside the bucket, and then go ahead and stab the child. You know, it all happened very quickly. [Office phone rings in the background.] It's amazing that I was apparently awake, supposedly aware of what was going on. There was nothing out of the ordinary for me to see nearby. Had someone else come by, they might have stopped me from going ahead with the deed. Do you follow what I am saying? [Pause] There was not even time for me to pray. Everything was just happening so fast. I killed my child, you know. I then began to feel very distressed; what cruelty. As all this was happening, it felt as though I was high upon a mountain. I kept wondering how it was that I was on top of a mountain. Up on the mountain with me I saw two small monkeys facing each other and laughing at me. When they were done laughing at me, I felt a gust of air. The air-breeze, the voices I was hearing, it all felt as eerie as the inside an uninhabited house feels.

R: Huh?

P: The voice that kept calling me sounded just like when someone calls you from some distance. And I could tell that it is woman's voice, and not a man's.

R: Mh-hm

P: As this person is directing me to do this and the other thing, and the monkeys are busy laughing at me, I was asking myself, "What exactly is going on here?" The wind eventually subsided. As it subsided, then I started holding my arms so as to warm them because I suddenly felt a chill. That is when it dawned on me that I am outside. I was actually standing outside the house but inside my yard. As I looked about, I saw my child in the bucket that is full of water. I am now terrified. I am now disorientated. I then emptied the bucket. I took the child, thinking to myself, I cannot let whoever made me do this to my child come and find it still lying here. I bathed the child, wiping it clean, and covered it with a new blanket. I went to fetch another garment, in order to cover the child. But then I thought, they are going to come for this child, so why dress it. I then returned the garment back inside the house where I had fetched it. What is going? Why did I kill this child? I sat down and thought to myself, "What am I going to tell my husband? How am I going to explain this?" Now reluctant to go back inside the house, I took a broom and did as though I was sweeping the yard. But it is not quite I who is sweeping. I am terrified. I do not know what I have done to the child. And it is my only girl-child.

R: Huh?

P: What must I do now? It is now time for the other children to get up. I went inside and told them to heat up the water for bathing. "Take your baths, but leave some warm water for your sister." "But she is not in the house", they said. I was afraid to inform them. I did not know who to tell first, my mother or my husband. In the end, the children went out to look for their sister. They came back weeping, asking "What is going on?" I was unable to answer them. I could not manage anything anymore. Do you understand?

R: Mh-hm

P: Then my firstborn child said, "But mom, your voice was so different it was sounding like a man's voice." "Really, my voice had changed?" I asked. "Yes," he said, "but now your voice sounds normal." I thought to myself, "My voice was usual? Oh no! What will I do? My God, what should I do?" I remained silent. Soon the place was flooded with the police. I am still silent, but now that I am seeing the whole incident playing itself out in my mind like a video, over and again. They wanted to know what was going on. One of the men asked if they can take photos, I told them to go ahead. It didn't occur to me that he may have been a journalist. The story made the newspapers. But I certainly never gave interviews to any newspaper. Yet I was arrested after the newspapers reported the story. At the police station I was asked for a statement. Out of fear that the community might want to kill me, I said nothing. You see, I am not a violent person. In my entire life I have been involved in fights twice, and that was in school. Ever since I got married in 1988, I have never been involved in a spat with any of my neighbours. So now why must I come to be treated in this manner?

R: Huh?

P: Well, I gave birth to the child. At the end of the day, I killed that very child. Never before had it occurred to me that I would become the murderer of the very children I had

given birth to. [Pauses] Then I told myself that if there is a person who is manipulating me to do this, then [beginning to cry] God will deal with him/her. [Voice breaking] I have no means of sorting such a person out, let alone knowing who it is; but God knows everything. I was not even afraid of the police. I decided to give them my statement, after all this was my child we are talking about.

R: Uh-huh

P: That is why I am here. My trial lasted a whole year. I did not even get bail, because the investigating officer said that I was a flight risk. He said that I would run away.

R: Oh, was the child still an infant?

P: No, she was twelve years old. Understand?

R: But the CI...

P: Oh, the CID, he said I would run away. "Why would I run away? This was my child. You came and found me at home; I did not run away after the incident! Why would I run away now?"

R: Uh

P: I won't flee.

R: What do you call him again?

P: CID

R: C.I.D, I see now. What does it stand for?

P: It refers to the police person handling your case.

R: Okay

P: He said they won't agree to my bail, because I would either run away or commit suicide. I didn't try to kill myself after this thing happened, and the thought has never entered my mind since. But my heart is sore. Why? Because of my dead child; she was my only daughter. My other five children are all boys. The deceased was my only daughter.

R: Uh-huh

P: But, at the end of the day, I am not a murderer. Think about it, why would I raise so many children if I am a murderer? Why would I want to kill a child? What have I done? What have they made me do? All this happened on that day, since then I no longer hear those voices. Now, when this child appears in my dreams, she speaks to me first of all. Do you follow?

R: Mh-hm

P: Still, I do not understand why. Why did such a thing occur? I wondered, when I was first arrested and came here, I did not think that I was going to remain sane.

R: Huh?

P: I could not even talk about the incident. It used to be too hurtful to talk about. Just to think of how terribly she died. Do you understand?

R: Mh-hm

P: That is what hurts me the most, it is actually killing me inside. We were once on a life-skills excursion in Pretoria. They asked us about what we thought were the benefits of the crimes we had committed. For me, the benefit is pain.

R: Huh?

P: All I feel is pain. Nothing else matters. Only pain. My child deserved to live.

R: Yes

P: As to what exactly happened, I still do not understand. I do not know. I have no clue.

R: Uh-huh

P: I brought up all my children [background noise]. So how is it that I killed one of them? Why?

R: So, in your view, someone else made you do it?

P: Maybe something was done to me, maybe. But I do not know.

R: Mh-hm

P: But the way I was affected by that incident, I could hardly cope. When they locked the doors, I would pull the blanket over my head and weep incessantly.

R: Uh, when they locked you up here?

P: [No] When I was still locked up in Pretoria.

R: Okay

P: I would weep, and weep until I felt better. I did not feel like discussing the case with anyone. I could not stand anyone who wished to ask me about it. When I eventually transferred over here, to the female section of the central prison, I started coping better. I could now even talk to other people. In the end, when I went to CMC, there were people doing interviews, asking us about our cases. I could now talk freely about it. Some started saying to me, "You know, the way you used to be, I never thought that you would one day be able to talk. But here you are now, strong and able to answer our questions." They then told me that I must first forgive myself. I do not know about that. To start by forgiving myself.

R: Mh-hm!

P: [sniffs]

R: If you recall, when did the incident take place?

P: 2010

R: 20..

P: 2009

R: And how old was the child?

P: 12 years!

R: A girl?

P: Mh-hm

R: Okay, and if you recall, how was your family life before this incident occurred?

P: In my home, things were alright, but not that perfect because we used to struggle.

Well, we had a business, he used to install electricity. This led to the collapse of the coal business.

R: Okay

P: Then I went away for sangoma initiation rites. On my return, the business had totally collapsed.

R: Uh-huh

P: On my return, we started selling chickens.

R: Uh-huh

P: My husband and I, we sold chickens and timber in order to be able to provide for ourselves and our family.

R: Chickens, and what else?

P: And wood, in order to survive as a family.

R: And you qualified as a sangoma in which year?

P: 2008

R: 2008 neh?
P: Yes, that is when I returned home.
R: Was becoming a sangoma another business opportunity?
P: No, it is... er... what is it again?
R: You were called?
P: [*simultaneously*]It's a calling
R: Oh, okay.
P: Yes
R: So you qualified as a sangoma in 2008, and the incident took place in 2009?
P: Yes
R: And in the period between you becoming a sangoma and the incident of the child's death, nothing else was amiss?
P: No, nothing.
R: And you only started hearing voices in 2009?
P: Yes, in 2009, almost a year after I had returned home.
R: And how old are you now, ma'am?
P: I am about 53 years old.
R: This year?
P: Yes, I am turning 53 this year
R: So you were arrested shortly after the incident?
P: Yes
R: In 2009?
P: Yes
R: Alright, if you may recall, when the incident was taking place, what was your emotional state? By saying you killed her, are you implying that you inflicted physical harm on her?
P: Well, it is like this, have you ever heard someone telling you to repeatedly stab someone else?
R: As in stabbing her several times?
P: Yes, that is why I say she suffered pain.
R: Do you remember her crying?
P: I heard the crying, but I was hearing it from afar.
R: I see. And now, when you look back at that experience, what can you tell us? Given what happened, and where you find yourself presently, what can you say? What ought not to have happened, and what are your thoughts about what happened, now that you have been incarcerated since 2009?
P: Well, I do not understand what you mean
R: I mean, what might you do differently, if you had the opportunity to go back in time? What are your thoughts now about what happened?
P: You see, I wish I had had the ability to stop myself committing the act
R: Mh-hm!
P: I often wish there had been someone else with me who would have seen what was happening and could then stop me before it was too late. Then I would not have ended up here. And my child might still be alive.
R: So the children's father was not around when the incident took place?
P: He was fast asleep

R: Was he so sound asleep that he did not hear you get up?
P: Yes
R: And he heard none of what happened?
P: Nothing at all
R: And now, how do you feel, do you perhaps regret what happened? Do you wish someone had interrupted the incident?
P: Yes, I am remorseful
R: Mh-hm
P: I keep wondering why this had to happen to me!
R: You regret that it happened
P: If only I had been able to anticipate what was about to happen...
R: Mh-hm!
P: Maybe then I would not have done it. Maybe I could have prevented this incident from ever taking place. But it did happen, and I do not understand why it had to happen to my one and only [girl] child. I loved this child very much. I had even named her after my grandmother. And I had to lose here so quickly?
R: And what happened after you were arrested? Were you able to attend the funeral?
P: No, my husband forbade me
R: Is he still angry with you?
P: No
R: Oh, does he ever come to visit you?
P: Yes he does, we even do exchange phone calls
R: Okay, is he the one looking after the children now?
P: Yes, he is looking after the rest of the children
R: How long is your sentence?
P: 20
R: Oh, and you have already served 5 more or less?
P: No, only 2.
R: Just 2? Okay
P: It will be 3 years in September.
R: Well, alright ma'am. Thank you very much for sharing your story with me. In conclusion, perhaps you may have some advice for us regarding the sorts of programs which we could initiate in order to assist others in similar situations. I am asking even though I am aware that, as you say, you were not necessarily conscious of what you were doing.
P: Yes, well, I just felt so powerful, like I could carry just about anything. As for the voices, they took control of me rather at lightening speed.
R: Mh-hm. So, at the moment, you still have no idea what exactly took the life of your child.
P: Well, I can't say much at the moment. You see, my husband did go in search for answers
R: Mh-hm!
P: Even my relatives, on my mother's side, they also undertook their own investigations.
R: Who or what did they consult?
P: To the witch doctors
R: [simultaneously] Sangomas?

P: Yes, I believe that is what sangomas are called in English.

R: Yes

P: They went looking for answers, but what they brought hardly satisfies me

R: What did they say?

P: My husband says that they claimed that there were three of us [involved in the killing of the child]. But I could not see the other two people. Yet they were there. They were with me. It is only that I could not see them. Do you understand? Therefore, I have no idea as to their identity. I did ask regarding their identity....

R: Mh-hm!

P:No one seems to know it. But when I was dreaming from here in prison, I saw three people.

R: Okay

P:I see three women. But when I get to them, my ancestors just disappear into thin air. Then I wake up. I still do not understand what this dreams, understand?

R: You see three women and the child?

P: No. I only see dreams from after the incident, from when I am already in prison.

R: But do you think that that dream has anything to do with the incident?

P: I do not understand what it means, and I see these women on their knees, and I do not understand why.

R: What about their attire, can you see what they have on?

P: They are wearing white, sleeveless vests.

R: But now you no longer come under the spell of dreams?

P: No, there is nothing bothering me.

R: Mh-hm!

P: All there is is only that I do miss my child.

R: Oh, you miss her?

P: Yes, I sometimes do miss her. But I no longer have horrible dreams, ever.

R: And are there programs in which they have engaged you here in prison, and how is it going?

P: How do you mean programs?

R: Well, I heard you refer to life skills for instance

P: There is anger management, life skills, HIV, TB...

R: Mh-hm!

P: And what else by the way? Oh and things like the Alpha course from churches.

R: I see. Are they helpful?

P: Yes, the life-skills ones

R: Are they useful?

P: Very much. They help you forget about all your many troubles.

R: Many? Oh okay. Thank you once again. I am thankful for your time and for your sharing your story with us. It makes sense. I now understand what happened. I understand that you too do not understand what exactly is responsible for you ending up...

P: To end up committing this...

R: Yes, it is all clear ma'am.

P: I do not know. But before I underwent initiation as a sangoma, I used to struggle a lot. Then I was advised to undergo initiation. I did not really want, I feared it because I

had seen others struggling. But I was the one struggling now. The truck would go out to collect the coal, on its return, the balance of the money intended to buy other stuff, would just get misused. Nothing was coming right anymore. I was no longer at ease. Do you see what I am getting at?

R: Mh-hm!

P: Thing is, I had asked them to let be for a while so that my children could grow up some more, then I would go for initiation. Understand?

R: Who are you are referring to?

P: The ancestors of course. I wanted my children to first learn to distinguish right and wrong, good and....

R: and evil...

P: Mh-hm. I told them that I would do the ritual, but once the children were sufficiently grown up. But it kept coming on so strong. I ended up going to perform the ritual earlier than I wanted to. Do you see?

R: And since you have undergone the initiation, are you at peace, are things better, what is your post-initiation experience?

P: I underwent the ritual, but I still lack peace in my life.

R: Mh-hm!

P: I do not understand why. I do not understand why after appeasing the ancestors by undergoing initiation, I still ended up here in prison.

R: It sounds like things are worse than before?

P: Do you also see it? It is as if something was done to me, or I did something [to aggravate matters]. It no longer makes sense.

R: Where do you see God fitting in in all of this?

P: I do pray, that is for sure. That I am a sangoma does not mean I no longer pray. I still bow down and pray, and weep and tell God that I am not proud of what I have done.

R: Mh-hm!

P: I just do not know what has gone wrong.

R: I am referring to your lack of peace. Perhaps undergoing the initiation does not help. Perhaps running to God and asking for help might...

P: I do pray, there is no problem there. When I pray, or talk to my children and the rest of my family, I feel fine, I feel edified within.

R: Truly

P: You see, I have told them to give me time to forgive myself first, it has taken me a while to deal with this matter. But now I am alright, because I can even talk about it. Initially I could not even talk....

R: I hear you ma'am.

P: If you asked me such things as you did today, I would just get up and go to my place instead of responding to your questions.

R: Well, once again thank you for sharing your story. I trust that God will help you. It is only that he does like when we mix him up with traditional practices. But otherwise it is only God who heals us, who gives us hope.

P: Yes

R: And he often uses us wherever we find ourselves. It may well be that in here, some will find a mother in you. So just be open to God and say, use even me, despite

everything I want you to use me. I want to be your child, I want to serve you, just the way I am.

P: Of course, just as I used to attend the Apostolic Zionist church on the outside.

R: Thank you ma'am, our interview is over. May God be with you.

P: And you too

R: Thank you ma'am

PARTICIPANT 6 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (GP)

Researcher (R): Okay, as mentioned earlier, my name is Nthabiseng. I come from University of Limpopo, and I am busy with a research project regarding mothers who have taken the lives of their own children. We are trying to find out what could be the reasons behind such actions? Also, we seek to know how common a phenomenon it may be in our country. The only studies that have been done on this subject up to now were done in countries outside our continent. And the reasons that they have found include finances, early child birth, feeling of helplessness in regard to the child's upbringing, and so forth. So, those are the reasons which have been unearthed in Western societies. Hence we wish to discover the challenges or causes that may be at play within our own society in the cases of women who have committed such an act. Our study is confidential; in other words, we shall not divulge the information you share with us in a manner that may personally implicate you. Our focus lies strongly on the numbers of incidents as well as the reasons why this is happening. We shall be focusing on three provinces in our study, namely, Limpopo, Gauteng, and KZN.

Participant (P): Mh-hm

R: Okay, if we may start with your age

P: 25

R: Twenty-five years old, okay. And for how long have you been in here?

P: For 3 years

R: For 3 years, since which year?

P: Since 2010

R: How old was your child in 2010?

P: There were two of them that got killed

R: Two? Two of your own children?

P: Mh-hm

R: Okay, two children, and how old were they?

P: Two and one year old respectively

R: A two-year old plus a one-year old; did they die in the same incident?

P: Yes

R: You...you...you....

P: Yes

R: At the same time. And one was two while the other was one year old.

P: [Nods]

R: Okay, was it a boy and/or a girl?

P: Both were girls

R: Two girls, alright. Now I'd like you to just tell me your story. Tell it the way you remember it, and describe the events that led to you ending up here.

P: Mh-hm

R: Starting on the day of the incident, share your thoughts and your feelings, everything. Just go ahead and talk to me.

P: (With voice stronger and reasonably louder, she begins to speak...)Okay, er, first of all, I had both of my children when I was very young. I had my first born at the age of 17 and my second born at the age of 19, that's right. And thereafter, I couldn't cope; it was

too much for me because I only lived with my father. I didn't have a mother, so, um...With my second born I was diagnosed with HIV, and the child also was diagnosed to be HIV+. We were both placed on [ARV] treatment. So it was very hard for me to see my child on treatment, and I kept asking myself so many questions. Why me? Why my child? Also, I didn't disclose [this HIV+ status] to anyone; I kept it to myself. Uh-huh. Now I had both children with the same man. So, after the second baby, my boyfriend started acting up, he was not taking care of the children. And he was cheating on me. And, you know, he was abusive to me, like emotionally; he was abusing me emotionally. I suffered a lot, and from then on until now, I'm still suffering from low self-esteem after what he did to me. And then I had financial problems because he was not taking care of the children. So I had to be on my own and see what to do; but I didn't know where to go, where to start. I had long dropped out of school, and I was not working; my father also was not employed. So I didn't know how to go about making ends meet. As for killing my children, I didn't plan it. I was only planning to kill myself because I was, well, I am actually a suicidal person. I have attempted suicide both before and after I had had children. So I was planning to kill myself. But when the time came, I started wondering what will happen to my children? Who will look after them? Where will they go? So then I decided to kill even my children. But, unfortunately, my children died on the spot and as for me, I was taken to the hospital, and I survived. I was in the ICU for two weeks and afterward I was taken to the psychiatric ward. On the day, at the time that I was doing it, I was desperate. I was feeling like it's all over; my life is finished, I have nothing to look forward to in this life. No job, no education, and no one else beside me. I saw myself as someone who is useless and I was also blaming myself for making children that I can't look after; I can't take care of them and so, yes...

R: Okay, what I forgot to do, please excuse me, was to give you a consent form[paper rattling]. Well, it's a form that says you agreed to this interview ,okay? You just sign over here. Okay.... So I hear your story my sister, but then I also have a letter here explaining that all this is very confidential and private. Okay?[I handed over the letter to her and also allowed her to sign the consent form.] So, when you look at things now, where is your dad.

P: Oh yes, my dad is supportive

R: Mh-hm! He is supportive even now, well okay

P: Yes he is. So, I can't...

R: Here you write your names, neh? And here it's your signature, and the date over here, okay? [Pause] And the boyfriend, how is he now?

P: He is okay, er, he is fine but...

R: You are no longer involved with him?

P: Yes

R: Okay

P: What is today's date?

R: 13th. At what age did you leave school?

P: At the age of 17 when I had my first child.

R: Okay, and in what grade were you then?

P: Grade 11

R: Eleven, Okay. And you had no one to talk to, anyone who could advice you?

P: Yes, I had no one. Well, the thing is, I'm a rather reserved person, hardly opening up to others. Uh, so, but it's much better now because there's a psychologist in here for me to talk to

R: So, in general, you keep to yourself?

P: Yes

R: Alright. Now when you look back at what happened, do you think there is anything that you could have done differently?

P: Yes

R: Okay, what might that be?

P: Yes, well, for instance I could have taken my children to a home because there are so many homes out there.... [Laughter in the background of the interview room, coming from the corridor]. Even in Soweto, I am from Soweto, I could have just taken my children to a home and then, you know, gone out to look for a job or tried to start a business. There are so many things that I could have done. But I don't know why at the time I only thought of doing what I did. I simply didn't apply my mind. [Noise level increases in the background...inmates speaking quite loudly]. There are so many things that I could have done.

R: Did you know about these alternatives at the time?

P: No, I didn't know about them until afterwards

R: Well, that just might be the reason why you chose death, simply because you didn't realize the options you had

P: [softly] Yes

R: Okay then, now how did you go about killing the children?

P: Well, I used rat-poison. I took it, and mixed it with sour milk. I then drank the mixture, and proceeded to give it to the kids as well. Afterward, I took them to my bedroom, put them down on my bed and then lay down next to them. And I don't know what happened thereafter [implying that she passed out].

R: And you only regained consciousness in hospital?

P: Yes, that is where I came to

R: And this was two weeks later?

P: Yes

R: Uh-huh! What is it that you think we could do, if we wanted to initiate programmes, in order to assist other people who may be in the sort of situation that led to you ending up here?

P: Well, I think you can teach, like, especially young mothers, but even the elder mothers, [what to do] when they first realize that they cannot support their kids. [That is important] because most of the time that is what the problem is, financial means. And [what to do] when the husband is not helping you...

R: Are you married?

P: No

R: Oh, so you mean 'partner' more than 'husband'?

P: Yes, an unsupportive partner. Or maybe, you are obsessed with your boyfriend and you decide to kill yourself and everything. [Teach them that] Maybe that they can, they must go and find help, like maybe professional help. They can see psychologists, social workers and speak out and tell them what they are going through and that they don't know what to do or where to go. That's how maybe they can get help.

R: Alright then, and now, how do you feel? What are your thoughts about what happened?

P: Well, I have forgiven myself. I have. I have, and that's why I can talk about it. But I won't forget it. It's a scar, I have the scar. The wound has healed but I still have the scar in my heart. And it hurts me, especially now when, I don't know, but I feel like I'm obsessing over children, because every time (begins to smile) when I see a child, I go crazy and everything, but...

R: You mean that you love them, and you just want to hug them?

P: I love them, I just want to be next to them, all the time. And hmm, I am, er, most of the time, I regret what happened quite a lot. I regret doing what I did because I know that I could have done something better than what I did. It's wrong, and I don't justify it, and I don't justify myself. But I want to move on with my life because I need to, but what I did is something that I won't forget.

R: Okay, when you look back at your life before the whole incident, how was it? Do you remember your lifestyle before this whole thing happened?

P: Well, yes. My life was miserable then because I used to care a lot about what people say about me and I was ashamed of having two kids at that age. Furthermore, I used to blame myself, I saw myself as this stupid and irresponsible person, you know.

And....[pause]. I hated myself. But now I'm better. Yes...

R: Okay

P: Now I could care less what others think of me

R: And you do know that you are special?

P: And I know I'm special

R: And you know that God loves you, and that you are beautiful, [giggles] you're very beautiful

P: Yes

R: Okay, okay, um! What are your hopes for your future? In fact, how long do you still have to be here?

P: [sounding a bit sad]I still have four years left of my sentence.

R: I see. For how long were you initially sentenced?

P: Fifteen

R: Fifteen years

P: Yes, I ended up getting fifteen years because I pleaded guilty and cooperated fully with the police.

R: But it seems to have been reduced even further. When did you start serving your sentence?

P: I started in 2010, but I will be released in 2018on parole.

R: And you would have served how many years then?

P: I am only going to serve a total of seven [and a half] years, which is half of my 15 year sentence.

R: Wow, that is not so far to go at all

P: Yes

R: Time does fly indeed. So, what are your plans for the future?

P: Well okay, right now I'm trying to organize money. I'm in the process of applying for a bursary, because I want to study. I would like to become a motivational speaker, so I can talk to women, you know, and encourage them. You know, to let them know, like,

that I've been close to God; my coming to prison made me closer to God. I want to go out there and tell them that it's not the end of the world; that it's not over until God says it's over with your life; also that God will make a way. I know from personal experience that when you are in a situation like I was in, you think that it's all over, there is no other way. But God is there, He is closer than people realize, and He will make a way for them. So, yes....

R: Yeah! Oh, I believe that He is with you and He is making a way for you as well. Especially when you hear that already 15 years is cut into half, wow. He is already making a way for you. And I believe you are going to be changing the world with your story. And I do encourage you to carry on being positive. The world needs you, it needs you. I do hope we meet again. I feel honoured to have met you. And I do hope that we do meet again someday.

P: Okay

R: You see, I'm also in the same line of work. I would like to motivate you as well. But then I do, do that as well. As people, we do meet different challenges in life, but I'm glad you have forgiven yourself, and you are rooted in Christ. Continue being prayerful, pray for other people, pray for other inmates, you have seen that it can happen to anybody...

P: [she echoes] Anybody

R: Indeed. And never let your past hold you back. How does that saying go again, "Turn your mess into a message"? That is my encouragement to you.

P: Thank you

R: Thank you very much for your time, okay?

P: Okay

R: Okay, bye then

P: [she stands up, opens the door and leaves the room] Bye

PARTICIPANT 7 - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (GP)

Researcher (R): Okay, I am Nthabiseng Malope, from the University of Limpopo.

Participant (P): Yes

R: Have you heard about the University of Limpopo?

P: Yes I have. It is in Limpopo.

R: I am busy with a Master's research seeking to understand better things that lead mothers to the predicament in which you found yourself.

P: Yes

R: Such that a person ends up committing such a thing.

P: Yes

R: Similar studies have been carried overseas

P: I see

R: And they found financial and teenage-pregnancy issues to be ranking very high as reasons why mothers lose hope and end up taking the lives of their own children.

P: Yes ma'am

R: Hence we wish to establish what the challenges may be for us in non-western societies, challenges that lead to the same strange behaviour among mothers.

P: Yes ma'am

R: So I would like us to converse around such matters. But first, here is a letter for you, perhaps they will keep it in your file. It explains what I have just told you, namely that we are recording this conversation and that what you share with me will remain confidential. Your experience will most likely assist us should we launch programmes aimed at prevention of similar occurrences. So feel free and share with me how you ended up here.

P: When we were growing up, my mother was unwanted [by her in-laws].

R: Pardon the interruption, this noise is disturbing me. Can you speak slower? Your Sotho is rather deep. Is English out of the question?

P: Yes, I can't speak English.

R: Alright, go on.

P: My parents used to live together. Then my father got a truck-driving job.

R: Selling drugs?

P: No, driving trucks.

R: Okay

P: We lived at my dad's home with his parents. But he would be gone long periods of time [because of truck-driving], and his father would always complain about groceries. We ended finding our own site in the same area but away from my grandparents' house. We kept struggling to make ends meet, and often went back to his parents to ask for food. Some of the neighbours also usually came to our rescue. Then one lady found my mom a job in Benoni for two years. I did not even have an Identity Document at the time. My mother would send money to me to pay municipal rates. I am the eldest child you see. But after a while mom no longer sent any money.

R: Mh-hm

P: There are three children at home. I am the first-born, and I was looking after the other three siblings. When my mother had deposited the money, she would phone one

of the ladies in the village so she can notify me. Then I would go buy groceries. That is how we managed to buy the site where we are living. My father's whereabouts remained unknown. We kept asking his parents for help here and there; and they were of course unwilling. My mother then worked as a domestic for two years in Benoni. At that time, things were going on well, we were even attending school. But then one day she called, she was ill, her legs were swollen, she had to come back home.

R: Who?

P: My mother. We would leave her in the house when we went to school. But we would neither shut nor lock the door, so she can go outside when she needed to. My grandmother and aunts did not even come to see her. During school breaks we would come check up on her, whether she has bathed. We would make her food, and then wash up and return to school. This went on until she passed away. When she passed away, they went in search for my father whom we had not seen for years. He was eventually located in Bethlehem. There my father was living with another wife; and my mother had no idea about all this.

R: Mh-hm

P: One day, a boy by the name Teboho came by. He claimed to have come from Heilbron. He had been asking around, looking for the home of his father, Lekhisa Petrus Tsotetsi. We asked for more information concerning his mother. He told us that his mother is the one who informed him about his real father who used to send them money. Now his step-father has kicked him out of his house. We then told him to go to our grandparents' house. In 2009, Teboho came to the funeral of one of my siblings. He came with the new family that had taken him in. After the funeral they held a meeting. But we already knew who Teboho was, yet we waited to hear from them the big announcement. They called my father, but he fled. They introduced Teboho to my father's sisters. My father never returned until after everyone had returned to their respective homes following the funeral. My father could no longer look us in the eye. I had my baby in January 2010. When my mother passed on in 2010 my sister was this tall – so I returned to work. At the end of the month, my grandfather sent some money and asked us if we are aware that we have his son. I then asked to speak to his son about it since he was still alive. So in December 2010 I took leave from work, and stayed with my friend until I could have the baby. I went to Frankfort Hospital but they told me to go to Kroonstad. I then went to Kroonstad Hospital. People would come in and have their babies, but I just lay there not delivering.

R: But you were pregnant?

P: Yes I was. Then they told me to abstain from food and drink; they took me in for an operation and thereafter into ICU. That is how I had my child. After I came to, I then asked about the child's whereabouts. They asked if I wanted to see it. I said yes. Then they asked about the child's father, and I proceeded to give them his details. Later on I telephoned my father's sister. She asked what child it was, and I told her it's a girl. Then she asked if I will be returning to Kroonstad. I told her I did not know since I was still being treated for my swollen legs. When I was eventually discharged, I returned to my mom's younger sister's place in Frankfort. The baby was still very small. But my dad's sister asked that we bring the child to my dad's home to present her to the family. My grandfather was very happy to see the child. We stayed a while; my younger sister was still in school. But she had to drop out because there was no money. My grandfather

had instructed her to go look for a job. Can you imagine a child born in 1988 having to drop out of school in order to look for work? I couldn't take it, so I went to stay in shack that had a bad water leakage.

R: Mh-hm

P: When in 2010 I took the child for baptism at church my grandfather caused a scene; he claimed that the child must be baptized at her father's home-church. So the church refused to baptize my baby. One of my grannies tried to intervene. But when the baptismal certificates came out, my child's one was not among them. I notified grandfather's children of his cruel prevention of my child's baptism, by claiming that my church dues were not up to date. But I was unemployed at the time! They felt he was mad. But I just kept my peace. And last year he suffered a stroke.

R: You father?

P: No, my grandfather. I was at home at the time. As for my father, he is not well. He suffers from boils. They came the one time, asking me to come show him the baby. He cannot even sit down; he is covered in sores all over. I did not say much. I did as they asked and then returned home. My father's sister reassured me that there is no bad blood between them and me, whatever bad blood there may be is between me and my father. He suffered a stroke last year. At the time I was busy cleaning my shack. My father's sister then called me to come right away. I said I'll come the following day. She insisted I come right away. I didn't want to go. They found him alone and helpless – unable to move or speak. My father's sister is a school teacher. The following day I placed the baby on my back and went to see him. I found no one there. I knocked frantically hoping that he had not died in there all alone. I even asked the neighbours; they told me your aunt came by yesterday. I confirmed that I'd spoken to her the previous day when she had come with her husband but I had decided not to come at the time. One of the neighbours gave me the key so I can open and see what was going on inside the house. I immediately called my aunt and told her I am at the house. She informed that she had taken my grandfather with her, and she would return him home on Friday. Just stay there and look after the house till then, she added. On his return, he could no longer walk. But he was happy to see me. Then my child began to have chest problems. The shack I used to live in is in the middle of a swamp, but my child displayed no discomfort there. So I looked after my grandfather, cooking for him in the evening and then returning to my home. My aunt asked me to come stay with them. I refused on the grounds of how my grandfather treated us. But my child began to fall ill while I was staying there at my grandfather's. The floor is tiled with ceramic tiles, the roof leaks, there is no coal stove and the house is not properly sealed from wind. The beds got wet. I took the child to hospital, and she became well.

R: Mh-hm

P: When I arrived back from the hospital, my grandfather said, "You are my genuine grandchild. Among all my so-called grandchildren, you are the real one." After all these years he is only now acknowledging me as his authentic grandchild! Then I made fire to keep my baby warm; they never make fire over there. "My best grandchild, I have just returned from a meeting. Your father says sites are getting repossessed." I became unruly, "Why do you talk to my father about the site for which he has never paid a cent?" My grandfather went and grabbed a sjambok. I quickly grabbed my baby and went outside the house. People started staring in wonder, including my dad's younger

brother. They were all wondering what is going on now. Soon as he learned that it is about the site, my uncle then joined in and pointed out to my grandfather that he should have addressed the matter sternly with my dad since he is still alive. My uncle stood firm. At that point my aunt arrived with groceries; she was coming from Sasolburg. She was happy to see us and even asked about the child's health. I told her the child has recovered well from the illness she had. She said she cannot stay, she had only brought groceries. As soon as she left, the fighting resumed – but when my aunt was around, my grandfather was amiable. So my uncle took the child and stood with it outside. I then took the child and stood out there as well, in silence, in full view of stunned neighbours. It was getting dark. In the morning, I woke up long before my uncle and my grandfather could get up, put my child on my back, covered her with blankets and set off. It was rather cold at the time. Now there are several sewer dams I had to cross. My child was only two-and-a-half years old and still suckling. When I got to the first such dam, I check around inside the abandoned structure around it. There was no one there. So I took the child down and breastfed her. Then set off again towards the next dam. To cross the second dam, I decided to remove the child from my back and carry her in my arms along with all the blankets I had with me to keep her warm. That is where I lost track of the child.

R: Did you mean to kill the child along with yourself?

P: Yes, the dams are pretty deep. So I dunk myself and the child. When I resurfaced, the child had already died. “What do I do now?” I thought, “Do I carry her on my back and go into the township?” I then left her and went away, shaking, shivering, it was snowing. When I arrived, my uncle asked, “Where have you been?” I lied and said, “I had taken the child to my friend so-and-so.” He became suspicious and persisted, “Lieketseng, where is the child?” I told him I took her to my friend because I have some place to go today. But I could see he was not convinced. Then I took my clothes and went back to my home. People kept asking where I was going with so much stuff. When I got to the shack I started cleaning it and removing the water that leaked in. my siblings asked me where the baby was. I couldn't tell them the truth, so I said I'd left her at my grandfather's.

R: Mh-hm

P: On Monday morning the municipality's speaker announced that a child has been found in one of their dams. He gave a description of the clothes the child was wearing. The community was then requested to go to the police station with any possible information to assist the investigation. At the time, my conscience is screaming loud, I am very frightened, and people keep asking me where my child is. And they also kept saying, “But Lieketseng is a good person, that cannot be her child which was found.” A bit later that day, the CID police arrived, carrying photos of the dead child, my uncle alongside them. They came inside, and greeted.

R: Mh-hm

P: They asked my uncle if he recognized the child. He said no. then they asked me. I asked to take a closer look. I was shivering from fear. I had earlier said my child was with my friend. They persisted, “Where is the child lady?” I claimed, “I left her with my friend so-and-so.” “Take us there” they said. My uncle keeps on looking at me accusingly; as for me I am petrified. I went with the CID police in their car. They took me to the police and locked me up right away, saying “This is the child's mother.” I was

initially arrested in Frankfort, but was later transferred to Kroonstad. They informed me I would appear in court the following day. Then they took me to hospital to check with the nurses if I am the one who had given birth there in 2010. They kept asking where the child was, and I eventually said it is the very one whose photo they had who had committed suicide. The nursing sisters were shocked, saying "What a beautiful baby it was!" The doctors then checked me up for possible injuries incurred while the incident was taking place. Or perhaps I was beaten and forced into committing that act. They also checked if I were pregnant. They found no evidence of all such things.

R: I see, but in your view, what made you to commit this act. Pardon me in case I am asking you to repeat yourself.

P: I think the final straw was when my grandfather rejected me as his grandchild and often beat me up in public. So I thought it best to take mine and the child's lives.

R: So you decided to kill the child and yourself?

P: Yes

R: I understand. And now, in retrospect, what do you think you could have done differently?

P: You mean now after I was arrested?

R: Uh, you were arrested last year, weren't you?

P: Yes, I was arrested in July last year. I was sentenced on 26 February to life imprisonment.

R: You got a life sentence?

P: Yes, life...

R: I see [*sigh*]. So what might you have done differently?

P: At the moment I regret very much what I have done.

R: And how do you think we might help others so that they do not end up where you are?

P: They should do what I should have done when faced with similar domestic problems, namely, take the child to social workers.

R: Were you not aware of the existence of social workers at the time of the incident?

P: No ma'am, I did not think of them.

R: Did you know of their existence or did you merely not think of involving them?

P: I was aware of them, but my anger prevented me from thinking logically.

R: Oh, yes.

P: I was aware that they are there to help people who have problems.

R: Alright then, in terms of the future, what do you think? Where do you see your life headed? How do you feel?

P: I feel much better, ma'am. From the time the trial began, I have been feeling a lot better. I adopted a calm attitude towards life since that time.

R: What helps you to cope, are there perhaps programs in which you take part?

P: The more I talk about it, the more I get edified. I did not have a problem talking about it from quite early on.

R: Okay

P: People would say "But a child of that age, how could you do that Lieketseng?" I would think to myself, "They have no idea of the problems I faced."

R: Mh-hm

P: I never concealed anything. I started talking to inmates about this from the very beginning.

R: Mh-hm

P: I was free, up until I was sentenced.

R: Yes

P: Yes ma'am

R: Alright then. Thanks for sharing with me. It is evident that family problems are a big factor in these matters. Difficult domestic situations are often the cause.

P: Yes ma'am

R: Do you have another child perhaps?

P: No. That was my only child.

R: I mean your siblings

P: There are two left. The third one passed on in 2009.

R: Two boys?

P: Yes ma'am, the third is the step-brother I referred to earlier.

R: So he'd be the third sibling left?

P: Yes, my father had 5 children if you include him

R: Oh, so all in all there were five.

P: He showed up recently after my mother's death. So we cannot welcome him, we do not know anything about him.

R: Mh-hm

P: He is turning 6 this year.

R: Mh-hm

P: He too has quit school. He is also a drop out

R: Oh? But in here you do attend school?

P: Not yet.

R: I see. But they will enrol in some programmes?

P: They will check a suitable programme for me.

R: Okay

P: Yes ma'am

R: Oh well, no problem, you will attend school again. God is there and will make a way, all you need to do is believe in God.

P: Thank you too, Nthabiseng.

R: By the way how old are you?

P: 35

R: And your child was how old?

P: Two-and-a-half.

R: Very good. Thank you, neh?

P: Yes ma'am.

R: Thanks

PARTICIPANT 8 - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KWAZULU NATAL-KZN)

Researcher (R): All right, as I said, my name is Nthabiseng and I am from Limpopo, the University of Limpopo. We are busy with a research. Did they explain that to you?

Participant (P): Yes.

R: Yes. We just want to find out a little bit about...mhm...the experience that you've had. And we want to find out what causes such things ... ee ...a woman to end up taking the life of her child. Is it because of problems that she faces? We want to understand all the reasons. I have brought consent forms with me and am going to ask you to sign that you agree to do this interview with us, so that in future you don't come back and say that you didn't." [*smiling*].It's for my protection.

P: Okay.

R: Ja. These are confidential things that we don't share with other people.

P: Yes.

R: It's for the study. We use numbers and not names, ja. So, if you can just help me by signing this, I will be really grateful, and then we will take it from there. You write your name here, and then your signature and the date. [*Rattling of papers as she begins to sign; some talk is heard in the background, in the corridor*]. I want to thank you very much for agreeing to participate in the research. I think it will help us a lot, and maybe help other women as well. Thank you [*silence follows*]. Dankie [*as she hands back the form*]. And then I also have a letter for you. This explains a little bit about the study. I don't know whether they will keep it in their files here [*referring to the centre*], or you keep it yourself, but it's your letter.

P: Yes.

R: It's up to you what you want to do with it. It's...from my supervisor and me, neh? So we thank you for showing interest and taking part in this research. The letter also explains that we use an audio tape and sometimes an interpreter. Also we want to investigate and understand motives for...for ... for committing such a... thing. So if you could please explain, in your own words, your understanding of how you ended up here, right from the beginning. Just talk freely, neh? That's what I expect you to do.It's not necessary for me to ask you questions the whole time. So, please go ahead.

P: Ee... I don't know where to start...

R: Okay, maybe I can start with a few questions. What's your age?

P: I'm 25 years old [*spoken softly*]

R: 25 okay...erm, how long have you been here?

P: Erm, one year five months.

R: And how long are you going to be here?

P: Twenty years.

R: Okay ... [*writes a few notes; a small noise in the corridor*]. Where do you live ...your home?

P: Ladysmith.

R: Okay, and ...erm, do you have children?

P: Yes, I've got only one.

R: One child. Okay, and is ... is it a boy or girl?

P: Boy.

R: Okay, and the one that passed on?

P: A boy.

R: A boy. How old was he?

P: Oh, let me start here.

R: Okay.

P: I had two boys then. One was two years old; the other was ten months old.

R: Ten months.

P: Yes, and I was staying with my...my father, my aunt, at home and my brother and my grandmother. And at home, my aunt has her house and my father has his house but they share the same yard.

R: Okay.

P: But although we ...we ...lived in different houses we cooked ...we used to cook...

R: Together?

P: Yes. *we used to cook together*. Then, then one day eh...my brother came from the gym at 6 o'clock. Then when he came, eish, he said to me – my name is Martina [*changed name*] at home, they call me Martina. And he said to me eh...where are the cattle? I want to plug the water and bath. And I told him that the cattle were with my father because he was going to fetch his pension the next day, and was going to leave early in the morning. He didn't want me to wake up, *he said* he didn't want me to wake up because he was going to leave early, early in the morning. And because I had very small children, he didn't want to disturb my children. Then my brother shouted, "NOW JUST GO AND TAKE THE KETTLE. I'M TALKING TO YOU, JUST TAKE THE KETTLE. And I said to him, "No, take it yourself 'cause if you don't return it, my father will wake you up you in the morning, not me. And he shouted, "YOU ARE SO STUBBORN, YOU ARE SO STUBBORN." And I just shut my mouth. At home at that particular time, I was...my...my small child was on my back. And my brother started to beat me and he said, "you're stubborn." He hit me. He hit me. He hit me. And I ran away. And while he hit me, he hit me...my aunt was there in the same room. She just sat like this [*she demonstrates*] when he hit me. And then I ran to my father...to my father's house. And then I told my father that my brother, Themba [*changed name*] had hit me. And my father said, "Just go and call him." And I ... I had to go back and tell him that daddy was calling him. And he shouted, "NO, I DON'T WANT TO GO TO HIM. I DON'T WANT TO GO TO HIM." And I returned to my father and said, "Dad, Themba says he doesn't want to come", and my father told me to return to the house. [*Noise increases and then stops in the corridor*]...and I went back [*swallows deeply*] and I when I went back he began to hit me again. He hit me; he hit me ... and I ran away again. When I'd run away, I went to my father and told him that Themba had hit me again and asked him "What must I do?" And he said ...and he said "I don't know. What must I say because he doesn't want to come to me?" Huh! [*takes a deep breath and then continues*]. And I went...I ...I went out of my house, of my father's house.

R: *You can speak Zulu* if you want.

P: When I'd left ...I thought I'd call the police. Because I had a protection order against my brother from ... I think it was 2007. And I called the police, and I told them that he...he had hit me twice. And ... and the police said they were coming and I waited and waited. And my brother went to my room 'cause he wanted to continue beating me. He went to my sleeping room, to take out the key. He put it in his pocket. Now I couldn't lock myself and my children in the room. And he said, "Ja, I've taken the key and see

where you are going to sleep because if you sleep there, I'll get inside and do what I want to do to you. I *sat outside ... I sat outside...*and that day it was windy[*swallows hard*].I had a small baby on my back. And it was windy, mhm [*clears throat*] and I waited and waited. And then I called the police again. "Where are you?" And they said, "Hey sisi, we are coming; just wait." And I waited and waited and waited ...and then, while I was waiting, into my mind came the thought to kill my child and myself [*voice begins to break and she becomes tearful*] ... and I take my, my elder son...[*swallows, and tears are dropping down*] ...

R: Mhm!

P: ...and my, my father's gun[*I hand over a tissue*]...I took it, and went to the room...where I [*tearfully*] slept. Huh [*exhales loudly*]. I went inside and wrote a letter, a suicide letter. And after that I shot my sons[*breathes hard because of crying; speaks much slower and softer*], and when I took the gun to myself, there were no bullets left. And then I decided to take pills, tablets. I overdosed myself [*sniffs*]...then my father came and he asked me why I had done this...and I told him: "Actually my father, I was tired because you never helped me and my brother hit me, with my baby on my back, and that is why I killed them...because he hit me with the baby on..." Maybe I would have killed myself only if it had been only me he hit and left the baby alone and left the child...but because he also hit my child [*voice fades in tears*]...I decided to kill them [*sniffs loudly and then continues*] ...that is why I'm here.[*silence*]. Huuh! [*breathes heavily*].

R: I'm very sorry dear. It sounds as if it's still hard for you to talk about it, neh?

P: Huh! [*exhales*]

R: Do they have counselling sessions here? Do you attend them?

P: [*shakes head*]

R: They don't have any?

P: Yes. [*meaning no, very softly*].

R: The social workers don't assist you?

P: I've never spoken to any social worker. Huh!

R: Do they offer help ...or ...or don't you know about help?

P: I don't know about it.

R: Okay, I will have to talk to them afterwards, because after this if you are not coping, they are supposed to assist you, neh? – or the psychologist. Are there psychologists here?

P: Yes. Huh!

R: Okay, it must be very difficult talking about it. It all happened last year?

P: No, it happened in 2009.

R: 2009.

P: No, it was 2010.[*sniffs*]

R: Okay, then...then you were...then what happened after that?

P: ... erm...the father of my children ...

R: Mhm?

P: He forgave me, because he knew that I loved my children, and he knew that my fa...my brother was abusive to me [*sniffs*]. He was always hitting me. And he knew well that [*sniffs*]I had a protection order regarding him. Huh! [*breathes heavily; silence*]

follows] and he, he told the magistrate that he mustn't arrest me because he knew me [*sniffs*].

R: That was the father?

P: yes, the father of my children.

R: Okay, when you look back now...wha...what do you feel you could have done differently?

P: What?

R: How do you feel, what do you think you could have done differently when you look back at what you have been talking about?

P: [*continues to speak softly, sounding weak*]. I feel so sorry...

R: Mhm!

P: ...about what...and I'm shy...about what I did.

R: What's "shy" in your language? You want to say what?

P: *I'm embarrassed.*

R: Okay, okay [*silence for a while*] ...embarrassed that you did that?

P: Yes.

R: All right. What do you think you could have done differently? *What would you have done* differently if you had another opportunity? What are your thoughts?

P: If?...[*she doesn't seem to understand the question*]

R: About what happened? Okay, you feel sorry, neh? So do you feel you could have done anything differently? Or do you feel that you had no choice?

P: When I did the thing?

R: Mhm!

P: Yes.

R: You had no choice? Do you feel that you had no choice?

P: No, I don't feel like that now.

R: Mhm!

P: I still had some choice because [*sniffs*]...if...I ...if ...if on that day [*sniffs loudly*] maybe I'd waited, maybe the police would have come ...

R: Mhm?

P:...and sorted things out.

R: Mhm!

P: Or before I killed my children, I should have called my aunt...

R: Mhm.

P: But on that day, I did not have ee ... airtime. I sent a call to my aunt and my aunt replied late, when I'd already killed my sons and I had overdosed myself...but if I was...if I were, *I had waited.*

R: Mhm.

P: *all this wouldn't have happened ... and if, maybe if I'd tried the neighbours ... if I'd tried to run away, maybe things wouldn't have turned out this way.*

R: Mhm.

P: I was thinking *maybe* if my mother was still alive, this would not have happened. My mother died in 2009, and I was very close to her. She was my friend; she was my every thing.

R: Mhm.

P: [*sniff*] She passed away nearly in front of my eyes, .but because of God ...

R: Mhm?

P: God took her to the hospital and she died in the hospital. And *I was very hurt by that. I suffered from stress after that. Because, sniff, at home, as I said I was staying with my dad and my dad had had a stroke. He was ill. My grandmother has sugar-diabetes. She is an old person. She is ninety something. She was sick, had sugar, and I used to put Pampers on her. [Still sounding very tearful]. I had to be responsible for all of this. I had to cook; sniff, I had to do everything]. Check if they took their pills. I did everything at home. Then [sniffs and wipes tears] after that, before killing my children.*

Maybe...maybe one week before [sniffs] my room where I used to stay with my children, that was full of...of our clothes, milk, Pampers was burned...my children burned the house, my room.

R: By mistake? The children burned it?

P: Yes.

R: By mistake?

P: Yes. By mistake.

R: Mhmmm!

P: They burned it and during that time, we were ... we did not have clothes to wear. I had, I had milk, I had milk for them but I had no Pampers. Their father said he would buy Pampers, when he was paid.

R: Mhm!

P: So, actually, I was very stressed. That was why I decided to kill the children [sniffs; silence follows].

R: So, you didn't think that it would get better at that time?

P: Actually, I felt that I was useless in the world [meaning at that time]. I had no clothes. I had no ID. I had no certificates even though I've got matric...

R: You have matric?

P: Yes, but I've got no certificate now.

R: Why? – because it was burned?

P: Yes.

R: Noooo sisi, you know those papers can be replaced.

P: And my mother's death certificate was burned.

R: Mhm!

P: ...as well as her ID...most of our things were there and they were burned...

R: Mhm!

P: So eish...I was just thinking my mother had just passed away, she was the one who used to buy me clothes [sniffs].

R: Mhm!

P: And now who is going to start buying clothes for me, because my father...my father is sick, and he doesn't have money...[sniff].

R: When you say that, do you mean when you get out of jail or do you mean now also?

P: Now?

R: You're telling me about the thoughts that were going through your mind at that time?

P: Yes.

R: Mhm! [silence]. Okay.

P: [Big sniff].

R: Then you decided if you took their lives and you took your own life it would be better?

P: Yes, I wanted to kill myself and my children. Not only my children.

R: Mhm...mhm...mhm...

P: I even wrote a suicide letter.

R: yes, yes, okay, I think I...I...hear your story. I understand what ... what you are saying.

P: [*sniff*]

R: But how do you feel now about your way forward? Do you still feel suicidal? Do you feel God can help you? How do you feel?

P: Now, I don't think of suicide. And now I've got a baby.

R: You have a baby?

P: Yes.

R: Now I've get out with a baby [*sniff*]And then you fell pregnant?

P: Yes. With the same father.

R: Oh!

P: And now he says, my family members [*his*] say they will take care of me.

R: Mhm!

P: And even now, they are taking care of me.

R: So, the father is still supporting you?

P: Yes, he supports me, because he really needs me, 'cause he is now alone at home. He doesn't have anyone to cook for him.

R: You were staying with him also?

P: I was staying with him, and now he is alone.

R: And the baby?

P: No, the baby is with my aunt. My aunt took her.

R: How old is the baby now?

P: One year.

R: Mhm! So they come to visit you?

P: No, since I've been here in Durban, they have not come. But the time I was in New Castle they came to see me every weekend.

R: Mhm! When were you brought here? When did you come?

P: August.[*and it was now March 2013*]

R: Mhm![*silence*].Alright, so I'm sure you miss them, neh?

P: Yes.

R: Mhm!

P: I miss them [*almost whispering*].

R: But I'm very glad that they support you and still show love for you.

P: Yes...

R: Mhm...okay sisi [*exhaling*]. And you know God and you trust in God isn't it?

P: Yes

R: He is our helper, at all times.

P: I always pray.

R: Mhm, and pray for other people too. You can use this time to build yourself. There are schools here and also, neh... ja, I encourage you to have courage and to trust in God and say, "Father I didn't expect to find myself in this situation but I trust you and thank you for loving me".

P: [*sniffs*]

R: ... and erm, God can use you, anywhere, wherever you are, and erm ...he's a forgiving God, a loving God, and he loves us just the way we are... ja. I'm sorry about your experience and I'm humbled and also grateful that you didn't mind sharing it with me. I thank you very much. Ja, it's a sad story but it will remain confidential.

P: Yes.

R: You didn't mean to, it was the situation that made you decide to do that thing. But do you have hope for a way forward in your life?

P: Yes.

R: Mhm! Okay, thank you so much, and I will suggest to the social worker that you need some therapy 'cause it still disturbs you, neh?

P: Yes.

R: Are you able to sleep though?

P: Yes, I'm able to sleep.

R: Mhm, okay, thank you very much. I think our interview has come to an end. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

P: No, nothing.

R: Thank you very much. Will you be okay from now?

P: yes.

R: What are you going to do when you get out of here? What were you doing before?

P: Working in a kitchen.

R: Oh. Okay...do you enjoy that?

P: Yes.

R: Did you choose kitchen work?

P: Yes.

R: You don't like beautiful things? *[giggles]*

P: No, I like them, but the beautiful things came late, when I've go to the kitchen.

R: Mhm!

P: *[sniffs]*

R: Maybe you will do it some other time, neh?

P: Yes.

R: Ag, thank you very much. I can see somebody waiting for me. *[referring to the next person, she was the first one for the day, looking very pretty hair plaited and all]*.

PARTICIPANT 9- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): All right, my name is Nthabiseng, neh?

Participant (P): Mhm!

R: I am from the University of Limpopo where we are researching, because we wish to understand, mothers ... the motives of mothers that have taken the lives of their children.

P: Mhm!

R: [*background noise in the corridor*]. We want to know about the problems, the reasons that cause mothers to commit this deed. Ee, whether the problems are the same as those in Western countries, such as the USA.

P: Mhm!

R: As not enough study has been done, it isn't known what programmes to carry out to help other mothers avoid such drastic actions.

P: Mhm!

R: First, thank you for agreeing to participate. I have letters for you from my supervisor and me, neh.

P: Mhm!

R: Thank you very much...for ...for ...for agreeing to take part in this research, and to confirm what I was telling you about, that it's confidential and you can decide whether you want to take part or not, neh? So, thank you very much, it really means a lot to us. And then, I'm going to give you a form that...okay, this is your letter.

Pt: Mhm!

R: This is a form that we call a consent form. It's just to show that you agreed to do the interview.

P: Mhm!

R: Okay, so you can go ahead and talk to me freely, telling me the circumstances that resulted in your incarceration here [*correctional centre*].

P: Mhm!

R: What happened in your life that resulted in your being here in this correctional centre? You are free to start telling me.

P: Ee ... I was pregnant...I was 3 months pregnant ...I was pregnant, ja. And then when I told my boyfriend that I was pregnant, he denied that the baby was his. And I decided to leave him because he denied this. After this, I found another boyfriend and I didn't tell that boyfriend that I was pregnant [*she has a chubby body that may have hidden her pregnancy*]. Ee, we fell in love and we visited each other. Time passed – I was 9 months then – but he didn't realise that I was pregnant.

R: Okay.

P: Ja. I just told my friends and my neighbours and my family didn't know that I was pregnant 'cause I ... I live with my two brothers ... ee, and then my time to deliver came. When I delivered I was at my boyfriend's house, and because of...he promised me that he would marry me. That thing happened at his house. He woke up in the morning and went to gym. After he left, I felt the pain. I called my friend to come and help me. My friend...my friend came but she didn't arrive early enough. And when my friend came later, my child was down the toilet. What do you call this thing?

R: A cord.

P: Ja. It was inside me. Ee ... then I pushed it so that it could come out. The child was down. I told my friend that it must go. I didn't want Simpiwe [*changed name*] to know that I was pregnant. I didn't want him to see that I had delivered in his home. I didn't want him to know that. I decided to kill my child and put it in the bin. Then... [*sighs*], I didn't have the strength to leave. I was lying down when he came back and my friend was still there. She didn't leave. And [*sighs*] he came and asked me what had happened, and my friend explained to her [*meaning him*], that I had called her; that I had delivered. [*She is staring into space the whole time she narrates her story*]. Oh she...he was so surprised 'cause he didn't know that I was pregnant. Then he was the one who called the police and I ended up here in prison.

R: Mhm!

P: And I was sentenced to 20 years.

R: When was that? In which year?

P: 2011

R: Mhm!

P: December 2. I got ... they caught me [*arrested me*] on 2 December 2011. Ee, February 2012. Then I was granted free bail.

R: Mhm!

P: After that, I attended ... I attended the court... then I was [*sighs while speaking*] sentenced in June last year.

R: Mhm!

P: June 25.

R: So when you consider it, what was your motive? Why did you want to ... the child to die?

P: Ee, I was, didn't want my boyfriend to know that I was pregnant.

R: Mhm!

P: And, just that.

R: How did you kill the child?

P: I just put him in a towel. Then I wrapped him and put him in a plastic bag.

R: Mhm! So you didn't strangle or anything?

P: No.

R: You just put him in a plastic bag and he died 'cause he didn't have air?

P: Ja.

R: Mhm! Okay... [*I sigh*]. Now that all this has happened, how do you feel about everything? What are your thoughts?

P: After the thing happened and I came here, I regretted everything a lot.

R: Mhm!

P: And I was... hai... I was so sad.

R: Mhm!

P: Then I told my family about VOD.

R: What?

P: VOD, Victim Offender Dialogue.

R: Mhm!

P: Ja! The process that encourages forgiveness.

R: You do it with family?

P: Ja. Then the correctional centre, the VOD organisation, they called my family.

R: Mhm!
P: And I apologised to them.
R: Mhm!
P: On the fourth of this month.
R: How did they take it?
P: They accepted my apology.
R: Mhm!
P: And they accepted my apology and they gave me some advice, in future that ...
R: Mhm!
P:... in future if you face another problem like this...
R: Mhm!
P: ... you must tell the man that you are pregnant. He must accept you or leave you, instead of killing the child.
R: What did you think?
P: Huh?
R: What did you think about that advice?
P: I ta ... I take it...and in future, I'm gonna do it like that.
R: Mhm! Okay! So when you look back, do you regret anything? Ee... Do you miss your child? How do you feel, when it comes to your child?
P: Sometimes [sighs]'cause we were, there were two friends ... we were pregnant at the same time...
R: Mhm!
P:...when I see their children, it's so painful to me. Ja.
R: Mhm, Mhm, Mhm!
P: It's so painful [*still staring into space and not looking my direction*].
R: Mhm!
P: And I even cry sometimes when I think about that.
R: Mhm! That you should have kept the baby?
P: Ja.
R: Mhm! And then, when you...when you regret, is it 'cause they caught you? Do you think you would have...erm...had the same problem, if you hadn't been caught?
P: No, I ... I regret what I did.
R: Mhm.
P: What I did...not because they caught me and brought me here, because there is nothing bad here.
R: Mhm!
P: There is nothing here that I ... I can say that I regret.
R: Oh.
P: For being here, no, but I regret what I did.
R: Mhm.
P: For killing the child ... the innocent child.
R: Mhm! Erm, do you feel that you don't have anybody to talk to ekhaya or what about your problem?
P: I talked to...
R: Your situation?
P: I talked to my family about my situation.

R: Before?

P: Oh, before?

R: Ja!

P: No, I didn't talk to anyone before, no.

R: You didn't think they would support you, or you just thought, ag it will work this idea? What were you thinking?

P: I thought that they wouldn't support me, because they were boys. Maybe if they...they were girls, maybe they would have supported me, ja.

R: You don't have a mother?

P: No, I don't have a mother. My mom passed away.

R: You also don't have a father?

P: Yes.

R: So, it's just brothers?

P: Ja, my brothers.

R: Mhm! So, you didn't feel that you had anybody to talk to?

P: Ja.

R: But now...how are you...how are you doing? How are you feeling, now that it has all happened and this is the situation now?

P: It's better now... I can say that...it's better than before.

R: Okay.

P: I can cope now. Ee...last time I was so stressed.

R: Mhm!

P: I was not doing things right...now it's better.

R: What's made it better?

P: The first thing was the VOD programme. The VOD programme makes it better than before.

R: Mhm!

P: And... I had to forgive myself first, so that I could ...so that *they* could forgive me. And go to church, to ask for forgiveness, ja.

R: Mhm. [*silence*]. Do you still have support from your family, friends? [*feeling and sounding tired*]

P: My family...supports me. People that don't support me, they are my friends.

R: They don't?

P: They don't come...they ...

R: Where do you live?

P: Here in Durban.

R: So you are Zulu, you live ...

P: Ahhh, I'm a Xhosa.

R: Mhm!

P: I was born in the Eastern Cape; then I grew up here in Durban.

R: Mhm. What do you think ... erm, what are your plans for your future? You don't have any other children neh?

P: I have a child.

R: Where?

P: There at home. It's with my grandma, in the Eastern Cape.

R: Is it an older child?

P: Yes, it's older than ... this one would have been.
R: The small one [*I say at the same time*]. Okay. So it's in the Eastern Cape?
P: Ja.
R: Mhm ... okay ...so what are your plans now that you think you're okay? How old are you?
P: 25
R: 25...okay. So, you think, erm ... what are your plans? What are your desires or your plans, about your future?
P: My plans? When I come out of this place?
R: Mhm.
P: I want to change my life...and be a mother to my child. My child...give my child support...and respect my brothers...and my elder aunt and my gran.
Researcher: Mhm! Did you not ... did you not give ...them respect?
P: Yes, I did not respect them. I was doing my own thing in my own time.
R: Mhm...Do you think it's part of the reason why you ended up being here?
P: Ja.
R: So you think you did not listen?
P: Ja.
R: Mhm...
P: Maybe if I had been a good listener...
R: Okay.
P: I was ... I will try not to get pregnant, maybe.
R: Mhm! At what age did you have the other one?
P: I was ...
R: The first one?
P: I was 21.
R: 21?
P: 20, 21.
R: Mhm! 21 and 23.The baby now?
P: Ja.
R: All right, ausi...I think we have covered everything unless you have something else to tell me. Often when I ask you a question you have something else to say, you remember something. What level of study had you reached? Were you in school?
P: I was doing grade 10.
R: Mhm! So you hadn't left school. You were going everyday? Even when you were pregnant?
P: Yes, I was going to school.
R: Mhm.
P: When I came here, I continued learning.
R: Okay...mhm! Thank you very much, erm, for your time and for allowing me to interview you.
P: Mhm.
R: How do you feel now, that you have had this interview? Did it disturb you or are you okay?
P: No, it doesn't disturb me.
R: You are okay?

P: Ja, I am fine.

R: Oh, good. All right sisi, I appreciate your time neh.

P: Okay [*gets up and leaves*].

PARTICIPANT 10 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): Well, as earlier indicated, my name is Nthabiseng, from the University of Limpopo. We are involved in a study seeking to better understand the reasons why mothers take the lives of their own children. Also, we want to find out whether the reasons are the same all over the world or they do differ according to regions.

Participant (P): Mh-hm

R: Whether the challenges being faced by such mothers are comparable...

P: Or not?

R: Indeed. We have already conducted interviews in Limpopo and Gauteng, and we are now here in KZN.

P: Mh-hm

R: I really wish to thank you for agreeing to this interview and for granting me some of your time. The information you share with me will be treated confidentially. Only I as the researcher will know your details.

P: Mh-hm

R: So I'd like you to go ahead and share your experience with me. By the way, you can't speak English, can you?

P: No, I can't.

R: That's alright; you can go ahead and share in Zulu. Where I do not understand I shall interrupt you and seek clarity. How did you end up here?

P: Mh-hm

R: How was your life before you ended up in here?

P: Okay

R: You may go ahead and talk.

P: Okay. Well, the reason I am here is because I killed my child.

R: Okay

P: How did it come about? Well, my mother was married to my father. There came a time when she decided to return to her home. So she took us along with her. We stayed with her until she passed away in 2004. Because she had returned home with kids, there were often tensions between herself, her brother and his wife. So after she left us in 2004, we continued to live at her parents' home amidst the tension. I am her eldest, and I have two younger brothers. I had a child in the very same year of 2004. While my mother lay ill, I went to visit my father to ask him to take us back. My father appeared uninterested, plus his new wife – the step mother – does not really like us. So we stayed on at my mother's; life was tough. We would go to school hungry, and come back to find nothing still to eat. We survived on neighbours' generosity. I fell pregnant in those very tough conditions. Then one of the neighbours took me in that state. After a while, they then began to ask frightening questions like: "What will you do if the child died while living here [i.e. not with relatives]?" Then I said to the neighbor, "It seems best that I go. Clearly you will have problems if anything were to go wrong." So I left and went to live with my mother's sisters. We were no longer welcome at my mother's home. I was 19 years old at the time that all this was happening.

R: Mh-hm

P: We were evicted from my grandparents' place because it was being said who would bury us and where would they bury us if any of us passed away. They would not take

responsibility for people whose father was still alive and had turned his back on them. I persevered with my child under these horrible conditions. When the child turned 2, I could not take it anymore. I could neither feed nor clothe the child. I too had nothing to eat. Then I felt it was cruel to bring up my child under these conditions. It would be better if I struggled by myself and did not have an extra person to worry about. So I went to the river. When I got there, I grabbed the child and threw it in the river. But then I quickly retrieved it and laid it down next to me. Then I sat there crying, and eventually returned back where I lived. One day, I told the people that I was at a loss regarding what to do with my child since I cannot look after it. "The child's father returned and does not assist with its upbringing. So I do not know what to do anymore. I think I will just throw it away; I will let it die because my life is just too horrible."

Indeed on 07 January 2010, I went and threw the child into the river. On my way back, I ran into my cousin. So I told her what had happened. My cousin did not demand any explanation on account of her being younger than me. I tried to sleep, but couldn't. So I returned to the scene of the crime and searched all over for my child. But I could not find it. Then I sat down and wept. Then it dawned on me that now that I have committed this thing, I will be going to jail. So I decided to go to my father's. On the way people would ask me where the child was, even my father did ask, I only some of them that I have gotten rid of the child. When they asked me for the exact place where I threw away the child, I would not tell them. So I got to my father's place. He was living with my step-mom. He too asked me, "Where is the child?" I told him I had discarded the child. When he wanted to know where, I then asked him to accompany me to the police. "What for?" he asked. So I can report that I have thrown my child into the river. My father then barred me from going there because he said I was heartless. Then I begged him in that case to at least call the police over. He called and told them I had asked him to tell them I am waiting for them at his house. The police delayed, but I was determined to wait until they came. Eventually, they did come and I was arrested. In my mind, I was trying to solve a problem but not I landed myself in another problem. It was ironic because I sincerely thought that I was solving a problem when I did what I did. I had thought it better to suffer by myself, and to go hungry alone rather than to watch my child cry of hunger when I have no idea what to feed it.

R: I'm sorry my dear. It must be difficult to talk about it, neh? But do you have access in here to a social worker or someone to talk to?

P: Yes, I do talk to social workers.

R: Okay

P: All I meant to do was to stop my child's suffering. It seemed better that I suffer alone. However, in the process I created another problem.

R: I understand my sister. So, when were you arrested?

P: I was arrested in February 2010, and sentenced on 06 July 2010.

R: Did they find the child's body?

P: The child was found, and has been buried.

R: By that time you were already in prison?

P: Yes

R: And what makes you cry so much now when you think about the incident, is it regret perhaps?

P: I cry because of I feel bad, it is as though I am reliving the pain of those days.

R: Mh-hm. But how do you feel now, now that this thing has happened?
P: Well, I actually feel sorry for what I did.
R: Okay
P: I feel remorse. Ever since it happened, I have been remorseful. But it has happened and it can't be undone.
R: Mh-hm
P: Yet, I am presently working on forgiving myself.
R: Okay, that is quite important too, to forgive oneself.
P: Yes, it is important especially since I am so regretful.
R: Mh-hm
P: At the time, it had not occurred to me to consult social workers.
R: You hadn't thought of it.
P: I had not thought of it. But now I know that when one has problems, there are social workers there to help.
R: Indeed. And how do you find your life to be at the moment?
P: Well, I'd say my life is fine now. But initially just after I was arrested...
R: Mh-hm
P: And during the trial, there was this lady who was the court interpreter. She gave me her phone numbers and told me to call her if I needed anything.
R: Mh-hm
P: She was the only one who would visit me. She would even buy me my basic necessities.
R: Who is she?
P: She is my sister.
R: Okay
P: But as I say now things are fine.
R: Would you say your life is better now?
P: Yes
R: Mh-hm. So, even though you regret what you did, you still feel that the quality of your life has improved. It is because you get food in here?
P: I will say that my life is better now...
R: Mh-hm
P: Also because I have come across people who are immensely helpful to me.
R: Okay. For how long were you sentenced?
P: 12 years.
R: And you have already served 2 of those years?
P: Three! It will be three years in July.
R: Uh-huh. And in your mind how does your future look like?
P: I see progress. I see improvement.
R: Do you feel you will be up to life's challenges when you have finished your sentence?
P: Yes. I feel I will be able to rebuild my life and make something of it.
R: Has the child's father ever offered any support?
P: Never. After all, he contributed nothing towards the child's welfare even before the incident.
R: I see. Are you studying in here?

P: Yes I am.
R: And before incarceration, were you also studying?
P: No, I was not.
R: Mh-hm
P: I quit school in 2007.
R: Was it because of school fees or something else?
P: I had school fees. But I had no one to mind my child while I was in school.
R: Oh. And the child was born in 2006?
P: No, July 2007. So I left school in June 2007.
R: Okay.
P: I gave birth in July.
R: I see. Alright my sister. I understand. Your story is quite interesting. And I am glad that you are optimistic about your future.
P: Indeed. I am going to be able to live a real life. I am really okay now.
R: Mhhhm
P: Of course I remain regretful of the way I tried to solve my problem.
R: Mh-hm
P: But I can see my way now, and I have learnt so much since. Now I can say I am equipped to live a productive life.
R: And you do know that we have a father in God? He forgives us and hears our prayers. So what we ought to do is bring our problems to the Lord.
P: Oh yes, even as we speak I know very well that you cannot solve a problem by means of another problem.
R: Mh-hm
P: I realize that the decision I took then to deal with my problem was the wrong one. I should have consulted social workers or at the very least my younger brother, so much younger though he is.
R: I understand you quite clearly. And after our interview, do you suppose that you will be fine or will you need a social worker or a psychologist to talk to?
P: I'll be just fine.
R: Sure you'll be fine?
P: I will be alright. All I need is to eventually be able to talk about this matter without bursting into tears.
R: Mh-hm
P: That is my remaining wish.
R: You want to get to the point where the past no longer hurts so much?
P: Yes
R: But tears are also good because they indicate that you are still human and not heartless.
P: Yes
R: Your wounds will heal eventually.
P: Yes
R: Crying also shows that what happened was not something you meant to do, am I right?
P: Yes
R: Okay then. Thank you very much my sister, I appreciate you giving me your time.

P: Okay

R: Alright. May God bless and be with you, okay?

P: Okay

PARTICIPANT11- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): Alright, my name is Nthabiseng. I am with the University of Limpopo. You do know where Limpopo is?

Participant (P): Yes

R: Okay then. As I believe you were informed, we are researching the reasons and circumstances behind mothers taking their own children's lives. Many studies have been conducted in western societies but not here in South Africa. So we are interested in seeing if the reasons observed elsewhere compare to our own, and whether there are things that can be done to prevent or drastically reduce recurrence of this phenomenon.

P: Mhhm

R: So thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. I have this form which confirms your consent; just so there is a record should a query arise in future. Your name goes here, your signature over here, and today's date here. Can you perhaps speak English?

P: Not that much

R: Not very well? I see. You may speak in Zulu, and I will interrupt you where I feel lost. Just to further reassure you, our conversation is private and confidential. I'm the only one who knows your identity; others will only know your story by number, as in Participant 12. You may go ahead and tell me about your experience. What events led to you ending up in here, as far as you can recall?

P: So you mean I can jump right into it?

R: Yes please, go right ahead.

P: I fell pregnant in 2008. I was still in school. Then I got ill; I had high cholesterol. I was admitted at the hospital, and while there I gave birth. It was a baby boy, and my mother and elder sister took him home after he was discharged. I remained in hospital since I was still unwell. The extent of my sickness was such that the doctors thought. So they offered to look after the child. I was eventually discharged and could go home. Then sometime in March 2009, I was still not well enough, and my mother had a stall in Durban where she was selling...

R: What was mom doing?

P: She sells fruit and vegetables. She had gone to sell that day, leaving my elder sister with meat home. Then my sister asked if I were okay with looking after the kids – hers and mine. I said yes I don't have a problem, she can go out. They were still babies the both of them; mine was 4 months old while my sister's was 2-3 months old. All I asked was for her to prepare the kids' milk bottles. This entire side of mine was shaking so I could not use it to hold a baby. I could only give the child its bottle so it can suckle until it fell asleep. So my sister went out. I think.... I will say 'I think' because they tell me the child suffocated. I think it was choked by the milk bottle, but I do not know for sure what happened. Under normal circumstances, the child would wake up crying and that would get my attention even if I were fast asleep. Then I would wake up and give it the bottle to feed on, and I'd go back to sleep. If I should wake up and find the child fast asleep, I would then remove the bottle, replace its cap, and go back to sleep. I did this until evening when my sister came back home. When she got home, she asked me about my child's whereabouts. My child's name was Mlu [*not real name*]. I replied there he is sleeping over there. When she got to him, she then asked "Hey Zodwa [*not real name*],

what have you done to this child?" I replied, "I have done nothing to the child, he is just asleep." She then said, "You have killed the child." She immediately took her child and went to the neighbour's house. Next thing I saw was the police van coming for me. They say I was quiet at the police station, so I was eventually sentenced last year in January. That is because early on in the trial, in 2009, I would find myself unable to speak in court. I do not know what it was that prevented me to speak. So my mom was requested to go and attend to my inability to talk first before the trial could proceed. In 2010, I felt like I am myself again. So I requested from my mom that I should return to school. So I went back to school. But in the middle of that year, around June, they then sent me to Fort Napier for psychiatric tests. I left as we were starting to write mid-years at schools. I stayed at Fort Napier an entire month. When I came back the June exams were practically over. So I just accepted that I missed out on that part of my school year. About the same time, the teachers went on strike, and my father passed away as well. It became clear that I too needed to go hawking, so I quit school. In 2011, I fell pregnant again. In October of that year, during a court session, I can't recall the exact date, but I noticed there were witnesses involved in my case. So I inquired regarding the witnesses who were my sister and our neighbour, "What are they going to testify to? Were they present when this death occurred?" They said that their testimony concerns my not being well at the time of the incident.

R: That you were unwell?

P: Yes, I was sick at the time of the incident. So I gave their involvement my approval and was indeed hopeful that there are some people on my side. But in court when my sister was asked if I were unwell at the time of the incident, she told them I was quite well indeed. "And what did your sister tell you about the child's death?" she was asked further. She replied, "She said 'I killed the child by pressing my hand against its mouth and nostrils because it would wouldn't stop crying'." The prosecutor, "Those are your sister's words?" She said "Yes they are." The neighbour also confirmed my sister's testimony.

R: They claimed that that is what you told them?

P: Yes, exactly.

R: And you do not remember telling them?

P: I do not recall telling them that at any time.

R: I see.

P: When my turn came, I stated categorically that I did not know at all where they got their story from. They then said that my sister has no reason to lie unless there were something over which we were at loggerheads. But I said, and I was telling the truth, "No, there is nothing about which my sister and I are fighting." So I was asked to produce any reason why she would lie. I failed to do so. And I was incarcerated. The sentencing was yet to take place. I was told that I would be seeing a social worker in here as I awaited sentencing. One social worker from Chatsworth started seeing me. She asked where I would stay if I were given a suspended sentence. I said I'd stay at home with my mother. She asked why I would not stay with the father of my baby seeing that I was pregnant. I told her that I could not at my age live alone with a man; I'd rather live with my mother. She conceded. Then she said that because of my case, she does not see how I will be allowed to raise this other child I was carrying. I stated that I was innocent of the charges laid against me since I had not murdered my child. But she

indicated that she cannot see how I could be allowed to raise another child. So as soon as the baby I was carrying was born, s/he would be taken by social workers. I refused and said that there is no way I would give my baby over to them. Then she asked if the one who had died had not been my baby. I said yes he was. There was another person from correctional service who had indicated that I could get a suspended sentence if I agreed to some conditions. Back in court, the social worker changed her tune. She stated that I said if I were given a suspended sentence, I would become a fugitive. I didn't know how to object to what she was saying because I believed that only lawyers were allowed to speak in court. So I was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment, with 5 years suspended. This took place in January last year.

R: Five years in hospital?

P: No, suspended.

R: Ah, suspended. Pardon me. Last year in January?

P: Uh-huh

R: I see. And psychologists' tests, what did they yield?

P: I never received word about them.

R: They didn't inform you about them?

P: As for the Fort Napier ones, they declared me sane.

R: They said you are well, okay. Now when you think back, what do you think you could have done differently or where did things go wrong for you?

P: I think I erred in letting the child face up while drinking from the bottle rather than making him lie on his side.

R: Oh, okay.

P: That is what I think I did wrong.

R: But your sister and neighbour say you placed something on the child's face?

P: Yes, they say I covered his mouth and nose with my hand, because my intention was to kill the baby.

R: Why?

P: They claim that, I said the baby was crying incessantly.

R: But you do not remember any of that?

P: Not at all.

R: Is it possible that you said it when you were not yourself?

P: I cannot confirm that. All I know is that even when I look at some of the statements I wrote at the police station, I wonder if it were really me who wrote such. They are contradictory.

R: Mhmm

P: Truly speaking I was not well at that time.

R: When you look back, neh?

P: Yes, when I look at the contradictions I said. And my mom would confirm that she was with me when I gave some of those statements which I now find incredible. But my mind would draw blanks.

R: So you were not mentally fit at the time?

P: (she utters at the same time). No, I wasn't.

R: And you even got epileptic fits?

P: Yes.

R: You got them sometimes?

P: Yes, sometimes I would fit.
R: Do you still get them?
P: No, not anymore.
R: Do you think you are cured of them?
P: Well, I do not know.
R: Were you ever on treatment?
P: Yes, but I stopped it around that time.
R: Mhmm
P: I think that I stopped taking treatment in 2010
R: Mhmm
P: Yes
R: So you have been here about 2 years?
P: No, one year.
R: One year.
P: But I came here, 2011 October.
R: Yet the psychologists found nothing wrong with you?
P: Yes they find nothing wrong. But they conducted their tests in 2010. I was already much better by then.
R: Mhmm
P: And I did tell them....
R: And you gave your statements in?
P: In 2009.
R: Oh, so you were okay by 2010.
P: I even told the court at the time that I am fine, and there was no need for psychiatric investigations. I was told that the tests will determine if I were myself when the incident occurred. So I even expected that I would be placed under some machine that would bring back to my mind the events of that year. And they had also taken photos of the baby in order to check what happened. So I was also still waiting for those results.
R: So they simply don't believe the bottle is responsible for the child's death?
P: Not at all, but the doctor who examined him concluded that it was lack of oxygen.
R: So it is possible that you did it but just can't remember?
P: Maybe.
R: Possible only because your state of mind then was suspect?
P: Yes I was not well.
R: Oh well, now that you are yourself, how do you feel when you look back, what are your thoughts?
P: Err, what can I say...
R: Mhmm
P: In all honesty, I am still upset with my sister for what she did to me in court.
R: You are what?
P: I'm still angry with her.
R: Okay
P: For what she did in Court.
R: What she did, okay.
P: Because I had no beef with her.
R: Mhmm

P: So why, how could she do that to me?
R: You feel like she was lied in court?
P: She was lying. For instance, when asked in court if she knew my baby's father, she said she didn't.
R: And she knows him?
P: She knows him very well. She even had chats with him. They even used to discuss me when they were together. I don't know if they still do at the moment because I am not with him anymore. But he was like a friend. So when she claimed not to know him, and also claimed that I was not sick at the time of the incident, I was shocked, I wondered, "What the heck is going on here?"
R: And you still don't understand why she...
P: No I don't understand. I think I will understand the day she tells me what I did to her. Only then, maybe, will I understand.
R: I understand.
P: Or perhaps if she came to apologize for what she did to me. But for now I don't understand. You see?
R: Does she come to visit you in here?
P: No, she doesn't.
R: Do you have parents?
P: Yes I do, my mom.
R: Alright, and where is she?
P: She stays in Chatsworth.
R: Where?
P: Chatsworth
R: And are you also from Chatsworth?
P: Yes
R: Were you staying with her?
P: I was staying with her.
R: So at the time of the incident she was away at work?
P: Yes
R: Mhmm
P: And at the moment she lives with my new baby. I was pregnant during the trial.
R: Oh, you were pregnant?
P: Yes
R: Oh, the same father?
P: No
R: I see. Did you love that baby?
P: Which one?
R: The one that died.
P: I loved him, but I don't know him. I don't remember him.
R: And the father? Did you love the father?
P:(Starts laughing, meaning she used to).Yes I did
R: Okay. And does mom come to see you?
P: She does come, sometimes. But at the moment she says she is struggling to raise the money required.
R: Money?

P: Yes
R: Okay. How old are you now?
P: I'm 19.
R: So were you not a minor when you were imprisoned? Were you already 18?
P: No, I was 17.
R: 17? I see. Were you at school?
P: Yes
R: But you dropped out when you fell pregnant and fell ill?
P: Yes
R: So you quit school?
P: Yes I did, I was sick you see.
R: Mhmm
P: I was in Grade 9 in 2008.
R: Mhmm
P: That is when I left school.
R: Mhmm
P: And I went back to school in 2010.
R: I see. But how was your life before all this happened?
P: It was good, I don't want to lie.
R: Mhmm
P: It was good even my parents were treating me nicely.
R: They didn't mind that you had had a baby? That didn't bother them?
P: No I didn't have a baby then, when my life was....
R: Oh, before the baby came your life was enjoyable?
P: Yes, very much so.
R: And problems emerged after the baby came?
P: I was sick at that time, I don't want to lie, but my mother liked the baby.
R: She liked the baby?
P: Yes, she treated him like he was her very own child.
R: Mhmm
P: She did so much for the baby.
R: I see. And what does your mother say about what your sister did to you?
P: She had said we would talk about it when the case was over. And it is not over now because I am in here.
R: Okay. And how do you see your future unfolding? Are you perhaps studying in here?
P: Yes I am.
R: How does your future look to you?
P: Well, I see it – what can I say – I see it turning out alright.
R: Bright neh?
P: Yes I see it being bright. Even though I do not as yet know what sort of work I will do, but I do know that I will get a job when I get out of here. At the moment I am in Grade 12.
R: You are in Grade 12 at present? Wow!
P: As well as a Chef's Assistant course.
R: Wow! That's wonderful.
P: Mhmm

R: And all that makes you hopeful of a bright future?
P: So, so hopeful!
R: Oh! And your child, do you miss the child? How do you feel about it?
P: I miss her very much, but I understand that if they say they struggling to raise enough money to come see me.
R: They?
P: Yes, they are struggling financially.
R: Oh, you mean the new baby. I meant the one that died, how do you feel about that one?
P: I miss him. But the problem is I do not really know him.
R: You can't remember him?
P: Yes, I can't remember him.
R: He was about 2 or 3 months old by the way?
P: He was 4 months old.
R: At 4 months he was still very young. So you can't even remember his face?
P: I can't even remember the face, and that is the problem. And, you see, when chatting with inmates, sometimes they I am stupid because I even don't know my baby. All I say is, "Yes, I don't know my baby, but I did not do what they say I did to him."
R: But do you remember giving birth to him?
P: I don't remember anything.
R: But do you remember being pregnant?
P: Yes
R: Oh, okay.
P: I remember that.
R: So the problem came...
P: When I delivered
R: From delivery onwards?
P: Yes.
R: It sounds like it may have been a psychological issue you had, a mental problem of some kind. Perhaps it was something they call postnatal depression. Do you think you were depressed after giving birth?
P: Maybe
R: You are not sure? You think it's the epilepsy?
P: I am not sure. Yes I think it is.
R: Did epilepsy also come after the child was born?
P: No. Before... No, it started when I was pregnant.
R: So it started while you were pregnant? Okay my sister, I understand. What you had was a medical condition. P: Mhmm
R: Okay then. I'm happy that you opened up to me about your Story, alright?
P: Mhmm
R: Thank you very much
P: Mhmm
R: I'm sorry that you find yourself in this situation, But I am also happy to see that you are hopeful about the future. You are studying
P: Yes

R: You receive some support even while you are in here. As for the father of the new baby, is he supportive?

P: We parted ways already.

R: I see. And is the new child 2 already?

P: Which one?

R: The new one.

P: No, she is 1 year old.

R: No problem then my sister. Thank you very much for your time neh?

P: Mhmm

R: God bless you. You know God is the source of everything, you must always pray, you must always put your life in His hands. He can use you wherever you are. So you must always avail yourself to God, okay?

P: Mhmm

R: Do you believe in God?

P: Well...

R: What do you believe in then? In the ancestors perhaps?

P: I do not believe in anything.

R: In nothing? Well, I want to challenge you to believe in God. Just start praying. Don't they give you Bibles in here?

P: Yes they do.

R: Try reading it, you will find many stories of people who went through challenges similar to yours. You will see that God intervenes when we bring our challenges to him. We need no burden ourselves. We only say, "Father, I give you this problem, help me with it." Then you will see, he will give you peace that surpasses understanding, and love, the love that you need. That we all need.

P: Mhmm

R: Just try it at some point. Okay, bless you, thank you so much neh?

P: (softly spoken) Thanks

R: Bye

PARTICIPANT 12 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): You are here to assist us in our research into what makes women kill their own children.

Participant (P): Mh-hm

R: Many studies have been done overseas, but none here so far. As a result we do not know whether the challenges and causes are comparable. That is why we are investigating this matter.

P: Mh-hm

R: Thereafter we can perhaps help with designing necessary changes that will prevent more of this tragedy occurring. Do you understand English?

P: Yes

R: Can you speak it as well?

P: No

R: I'll mix Zulu and English, because some Zulu words are hard for me.

P: Yes

R: Alright. This letter comes from my supervisor and me. I am not sure whether you have to give it to your social worker for safekeeping.

P: Mh-hm

R: It is just to thank you for your participation as well as to assure you that the information exchanged between you and us will be treated confidentially. Future references to this interview will not reflect your particulars. We give each participant a number by which we refer to them in the write up.

P: Mh-hm

R: As in P number 13. Okay?

P: Ah, okay

R: Yes, in that manner.

P: Mh-hm

R: You get to keep a copy of the confidentiality form. Now, there is another form though. This one relates to your consent to participate in this interview; it is you declaring that you are participating of your own free will.

P: [smiles]

R: Alright, now, you write your name over here, and sign over here.

P: Okay, my full name?

R: Actually, it doesn't really matter; in fact it is up to you whether you write your full name or just first name. Okay then. By the way my name is Nthabiseng, from the University of Limpopo. Do you know Limpopo?

P: Well, I only hear about it, but I have never been.

R: What have you heard about Limpopo?

P: I hear about it for instance when as inmates we are mixed with others in order to sing, or play netball. I participate in quite a few activities in here, including school.

R: Wow, it is good that you keep active!

P: Yes, it is important.

R: So you do relate well with those from other provinces?

P: Oh yes, during sports or at choir sessions.

R: I see. So it is not so bad in here then?

P: Sometimes it gets boring when there is nothing to do.

R: Alright, I understand. Now I would like you to feel free to tell me...

P: Mh-hm

R: To tell me all that took place, as far as you remember, which led to you ending up in here.

P: Okay

R: Yes

P: Can I start?

R: Yes please

P: But I would like to tell it in Zulu.

R: That's perfectly fine, go ahead.

P: I am in here for supposedly killing my child. I was convicted for a crime which I have not committed. But I am the one who was arrested... Okay, let me go back a few steps. I had visited with my boyfriend. When I told him I was leaving, he followed me. He had earlier told me that the child was unwell, but I could not find anything wrong with the child. So he came after me, and took the child away from me. He told me to proceed to town to collect the child's grant payment. I did. He had told me to come for the child later. In the afternoon when I came back straight from the town, he claimed that I had never left the child with him. Then he screamed and shouted at me. So they asked me where I had taken the child. I retorted, "How do you ask the child from me when he's the one who took it from me in the first place?" I then decided to go back to my home; his people came with. When we got to my home they called the police and claimed that I had lost the child. The child had had strengthening rituals performed on it a month or so earlier.

R: You mean the traditional cultural rituals?

P: So when the police arrived, they found the community busy placing me in a 'dam'. They covered my head with plastics and demanded the truth about what had happened to the child. I told them that I had not killed my child; I love my child. This was my child they were talking about. I had given birth to that child at the age of sixteen. But the community came alongside the police and claimed that in fact I used to visit *inyangas* (traditional doctors). Indeed after I'd taken the child for that strengthening ritual, I started losing my mind from time to time. I do not know that they gave me but I would sometimes not know where I had left the child. But this time I felt it deep inside of me that I had not killed my child. So I was arrested and held at the Ndumo Police Station. While I was there, my boyfriend came to see me and threatened to kill me if I ever told the truth. So out of fear, I ended up saying that I was the one who had killed the child while knowing full well that I did no such thing. This hurts me a lot because I am incarcerated now for something I did not do. I was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, which I am serving since 2008. I am in here and the father of my child is out there living his life. During the trial, when I was staying at my granny's place, my granny would regularly send me to the shops. Then he used to come there and harass me about walking freely whilst I had killed his son. I asked how on earth I had killed the child. So he advised me to lie and say that I gave the child to a man I met in the taxi on the day I had gone to the town to collect the child's welfare grant. But the taxi driver confirmed that I had taken his taxi but I was all by myself; I had no child with me. And from when it

was born, I loved my child very much. Alright. Then he said if I should ever state that the child was with him he would kill me. So I stayed in police cells while the police kept looking everywhere for the child's body but could not find it. In the end it was the father's child who pointed them to the child's body. It seems the people who killed the child told him that he would be guided to the body by the barking of dogs on a certain day. So they found the stiff body of the child, with his tongue and penis having been cut off. Now how on earth could I mutilate my baby like that, particularly since I had already been in police cells for a while by then? But because of my stupidity and fear of my boyfriend's threats, and because my mother is a timid person – my father had long left us to fend for ourselves – so they knew that they could do as they please because we had no one to fight on our behalf. So my mother just kept quiet throughout this whole ordeal.

R: Mhmm

P: So in the end I was imprisoned for killing my child. I too in the end stated out of fear that I had done it, but I had done no such thing. This thing hurts me very much...

R: Mhmm

P: Because now they are talking about carrying out a VOD. Now how can I undergo a VOD when I have not killed my child? This is very traumatic to me. It hurts so badly because I am in here for a crime I have not committed while the child's father is a free man. When I had been released from police cells, I went out with another boyfriend. He impregnated me. So I was pregnant when I started my sentence. But I gave birth and the child lives with my mother. It shows how much I love children. If I didn't, I would not have tolerated another pregnancy and childbirth. I thought this other child will fill the gap left by my dead son but that's impossible; I'm hurting because I did not kill my son.

R: Mhmm. So according to you, who is the culprit?

P: I beg your pardon?

R: Who do you suspect killed your child?

P: The only person who knows the truth of what happened is the child's father. But he won't reveal it because he succeeded in intimidating me. After what he did, he informed the community that we – him and me – will have another child. It hurt me further to hear him promising people that we will have another child while I was busy trying to deal with the reality of being accused of murder. What did he mean by that, if he is innocent? Then he had the audacity to tell me to say the person who killed the child was not a stranger to it. Didn't he mean by that the very people who must have promised him money for the child's body parts? He used to be desperate for money because of unemployment. He had gone as far as Johannesburg and Pongola and found no work. Then he told me that a certain Martin and a Bongani Ndlovu [*names changed*] know something about the child's death; how am I supposed to know those people because the child was with him at the time of its death? But in the end I was arrested because I was the child's parent who was allegedly last seen with the child.

R: Hm! I hear you loud and clear my dear.

P: It's very painful to be in jail for something you did not do. Perhaps it's better if you have committed the crime. I know mistakes happen, but what is most painful to me is the fact I did not kill my child, I had never even hit him with my own hands.

R: Mhmm. So you had left him with his father?

P: Yes, I had left him with his father. He on the other hand had his own plans. I should have suspected when he claimed that the child was ill because I saw nothing wrong

with the child. But he insisted we must take it to the *inyanga*. Perhaps he was sent by his *inyanga* to do all this, because we even had to bring with us a live white chicken to the *inyanga*. I come from Ingwavuma, I am not from Durban. So I do not know anything about Durban. Even if I were released now, I would not know which direction to take because I have sense of orientation about Durban. It's very painful to be punished for something you did not do. My only crime here is that I gave birth to that child.

R: But he fingered you.

P: Yes, claimed I had taken the child with me and that is how I ended up arrested.

R: When were you arrested?

P: I was arrested in 2007, I was 18 years old. I was sentenced in June 2008.

R: You made reference to the time when they took to the dam

P: To the water

R: Who exactly took you there?

P: The community.

R: The community?

P: Yes, you see because it is in a rural area, once word spreads that so and so had lost her child, then the community rises up and demand answers including from counselors. That is how I got arrested. But when they had put me in the water, many members of the community gathered there heard him say they should let me go because we will soon get another child. How can you say such things if you are not implicated in the matter? Wasn't he supposed to just be quiet if he knew nothing about what happened? And he kept insisting that I should point the taxi driver as the culprit. The lawyer who was handling my case is of the same clan as the father of my child. So they had the taxidriver arrested for something he knew nothing about. But he clearly stated that when I got into the taxi I had no child with me.

R: And why did they arrest him?

P: He was arrested because he supposedly knew what happened to the child since I was with him in the taxi. But he pointed out that I was all by myself when I got into the taxi. Another thing I do not understand. I used to live at my boyfriend's home because my mother did not have the means to raise another man's child. And when my boyfriend and I would quarrel, I would take the child with me to my home. But I lived with them so that my boyfriend's mother could look after the child when I was at school. I used to love school, I have always loved studying. But that is how I ended up in here. But my hearts hurts when I think of how I got arrested for a crime I did not commit. Had I at least committed the crime, perhaps I would be able to explain why I did it. It's very sore, it traumatizes me a lot. Now we are told that we must do this so-called VOD, but how can I do that when I did not commit the crime in question. Indeed I confessed to the crime because of the pressure exerted on me. But while in here I began to see clearly that I made a terrible mistake by lying about the whole thing. It hurts me so much.

R: Mhmm. So the child's father had threatened to kill you if...

P: Yes he had said that he would kill me. He also told me that he would give me a share of the money he was going to get from the people to whom he had sold the child's body. But he never gave me a cent, and he has also never come to see me here in jail.

R: He had told you that much?

P: Yes, he eventually confessed. You see, he used to come to my granny's place. So one day he found me alone at my granny's house, and he told me that he was going to

some money from the people who had bought the child and would give me a share. But that was the first and last time he spoke about it, he has never even bothered to come and see me in here.

R: So he doesn't check how you are doing?

P: What hurts even more, is that they say whenever he passes by my home, he mocks at my mother, saying to her, "Your child is in jail". I don't know why he wants to drag my family into this because they have nothing to do with this matter. All he should have done was to tell the truth about his involvement. It would have been better if we were both sentenced as parents of the child.

R: So was he a witness against you?

P: Yes, he used to come to court. He would laugh at me while in court. But I think what pressured me into confessing to something I did not do was the reality that the prosecutor is related to my boyfriend, they have the same surname. So I had no room to manoeuvre and I ended up owning up to the crime.

R: But do you think that the child's father is the one who killed him?

P: Well!

R: Do you not know?

P: I beg your pardon?

R: Do you think he is the one who killed his son?

P: It is him of course. He told me that the people who made him do it promised to pay him. But by then I was just about to be sentenced. So I could not enter new evidence at that stage of the case. I just ended up accepting that if it is my fate to get imprisoned, then I should just accept it. But it's painful to accept something that is eating you inside. Knowing very well that you killed no one, yet....

R: It is painful.

P: Very painful!

R: But how was your relationship prior to the incident?

P: Well, it was not smooth sailing.

R: Mhmm

P: He used to even say that he was not convinced that the child that he was looking after was really his own.

R: Was it not his?

P: So he claimed. But I would tell him that I was with him from when I was merely 16 years old. I had never been with anyone else. My family never saw me with any boys. The only time they knew was when they saw my pregnancy. But everytime we fight he claims the child is not his. But, according to traditional custom, he had his family come to pay the damages for impregnating me outside of marriage. So he accepted that the child was his from the very beginning; he only denies it when we quarrel. But I always pray and tell God....

R: It's the right thing to do....

P: Because I'm here in jail; serving a sentence. I'm here since 2008.

R: So you'll be here till when?

P: I'm supposed to serve only half of the 10 year sentence I got.

R: Okay

P: So in March I will have served half of the sentence. Then I must be profiled and meet the parole board.

R: So you've nearly there, you'll be out soon?

P: Yes, it's quite likely.

R: So how do you see your life unfolding after you leave this place?

P: Well, it's going to be very hard especially whenever I see the child's father considering all that he has done to me.

P: Mhmm

P: It would have been better if on my release I was going to go livesomewhere else where I would not at all run into him. I know that every time I see him I'm going to get very angry. They've taught us about anger management in here but still I suspect the pain and anger I'll experience when seeing won't be bearable.

R: Don't you pray about it and ask God to help you forgive him?

P: I pray always, in the morning when I wake up, and in the evening when I sleep, I ask God to help me with it all.

R: But I'm glad to hear that you were involved in several activities in here.

P: Yes I was. As I said earlier, I had another child shortly after I started serving my sentence, but I have broken up with the father of this second child because he has since impregnated my aunt. I look very much like my aunt. So when my mother told me about that development I asked him why he did that to me. He said he was not going to be able to wait indefinitely for me to finish serving my sentence. You see, people out there do not understand that you only serve half of your sentence inside jail. Even my mother still does not believe that I will be released in March.

R: Mhmm. So he now lives with your aunt?

P: I don't know if they live together, but she has a child by him. So now, I want to live that is free of men, because they all just want to take advantage of you. I just want to live alone, looking after my child and my family. I am confident because while in here I accumulated a few certificates, including one for singing. I am sure I will be able to get employment once I'm out of here.

R: Mhmm

P: I should now be able to stand on my own.

R: That's the spirit, my sister.

P: Once you have tried several relationships and they are not working, then just accept. Tell yourself that you will never again be in a relationship with a man. I often tell others, and they think I'm crazy. They think no woman can manage without a man. But I have no plans for a man in my life. I can't let them keep on using me and moving on to other women. I'm still a child, I was born in 1988.

R: How old are you now?

P: I am 25 years old now.

R: Mhmm! So you have much hope for your life.

P: Yes

R: I'm so happy you are so full of hope. Now about the child who died, how do you feel?

P: Well, I get so hurt every time I think about that. I had that child and looked after him until he was two years old. Then this thing happened to him...

R: So he was a two year old boy?

P: Yes he was. And then I had another child. But I keep feeling the gap left by my son, even in my sleep when I am dreaming...

R: You hear the cry? Why is he crying?

P: Err, I beg your pardon?

R: You said you can hear him crying

P: No, not crying. What I mean is that I think about him often. He was my first child, I had him when I was still very young, and I loved him very much. I struggled to bring him up, with the little support his unemployed father could muster.

R: Mhmm

P: That is why my life is so sad.

R: Did you say you dream about him?

P: No. I just have dreams of me with him, holding him, spending time together. That is why I am struggling so much with being incarcerated because I did not harm him in anyway. It would be so much easier for me to cope if I had committed the crime in question, but I did not and this is what makes it hard for me to accept my present state.

R: Indeed, your experience is very unfortunate.

P: Furthermore, even in here, no one believes me. They are convinced that I am as guilty as all the other mothers who did kill their children. But since I come from uMhlabuyalingana, a place known for rampant use of muti, some believe but others do not believe in my involvement in the death of my child.

R: Okay then, I understand you my sister.

P: But still, it hurts me so much I don't want to lie. But God knows the truth of what happened.

R: Indeed, you just trust in the Lord. You will eventually see that those who benefited briefly from hurting you will in the long run be exposed for the liars that they are.

P: Okay

R: Thank you very much my sister for your time and sharing your story with me. It is informative because your case involves a muti-killing which has been pinned on you. Are muti-killings common in your area?

P: Excuse me?

R: Are there many cases like yours? How common is it for children to be killed for muti?

P: There are many reasons why women kill their children. In some instances, because of fallouts between a man and his woman, usually because the man has been cheating, the woman decides to hurt the man by killing his child. But in the end she is the one who gets hurt the most and ends up in prison. You might not have been in your best mind at the time, but once you have committed the crime, a tough jail sentence awaits. There are people in here whose sentences are scary, for example three life sentences. One might tell you I did not commit the crime but I got a life sentence. Then I turn around and say thank you Lord for my shorter sentence even though it is for a crime I did not commit.

R: Okay, thank you very much for participating in our study. May God be with you. I am also very glad that you believe in God. And just don't worry about other people's opinions out there once you leave this place. Just make the most of your life and they will notice how some good has come out of your experience.

P: Yes, I've also changed a lot since I have been in here.

R: You are a much stronger person now.... And your life can have a positive influence of many others

P: Yes, I am quite strong.

R: Thank you my sister. Bless you.

PARTICIPANT 13 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): You may go ahead, yes please, I would appreciate that. [*The Participant had just indicated that she could do the interview in English rather than in Zulu*]. That will also save me the effort of translating and interpreting.

Participant (P): Yes

R: The reason we don't use an interpreter is because it looks like...

P: Like we are shy? Well, that is not it really. We have even been talking among ourselves out there [referring to the other Ps that are waiting in a queue outside the interview room]. So, it's not that we are shy, after all the entire prison knows the nature of our cases. The reason simply is this: although our cases may be the same [*namely, murder of own children*], but each took place under unique circumstances. Yes, I did kill my child....

R: And you had special circumstances?

P: Well, I didn't have any reason. It just happened. You will hear all about it when I am telling you the story.

R: Okay

P: I didn't have any reason which, I could say, required that I punish my child; I am speaking about the manner in which we black people discipline our children. I was coming back home, returning from the nearby market. When I got home, my child was ... [*pause*]. She was like 7 at that time. Seven years old, and she was a beautiful girl, [*begins to smile and look up*]. She was intelligent....

R: Ah, like her mother? [*smiling*]

P: Well, yes. She was playing in the rain. Then I took a stick, just a small stick, and I hit her about three times. I must have reacted that way because she was having a cold. She had been coughing and sneezing. So, I was like, "Why are you playing in the rain?" She had even removed the jersey and the shoes. So I was punishing her for that indiscretion. I was not really PUNISHING [*stresses the word*] her. I was just, as a mother, letting her know that what she was doin' was wrong. Just a little bit of discipline you know....

R: Mhmm

P: Then it just happened. She ran away. She ran to hide in the other room where my friend was. Then she went and sat behind my friend. The next thing I heard, she was gasping like someone who is short of air. And that was it! [*silence*].

R: So even you were shocked?

P: Yes, and if I may tell you the truth, I love my a... I love my child. Even now, I miss her. Because what happened to me that day, I will never get through it. I will never ever, ever get over it. We are mothers, you know, you can't just leave your child playing in the rain. Do you understand the situation that you just can't leave your child playing in the rain? You need to show her that she is doing something wrong by playing in the rain while she is coughing. You know, so it just happened. I miss her. And I still love her. Even when I dream of her, luckily, the unfortunate events of that day do not feature in my dreams. I don't know why. But I think it's because I am a Zulu person.

R: Huh?

P: I don't believe in ancestors. After this thing had taken place, and I was at the police station... [*takes a deep breath*], I felt like dying because I love my daughter you know...

And she was the one who had said to me, “You know mama, I’m tired of being alone. I think you need to have another child.” You know, that is why I had another child. My second child is like a gift to me, because my first born asked for her. I knew that I was pregnant with the second one, who will be turning 3 shortly, even though pregnancy tests kept giving me a negative result. I would take them, they would yield negative results. But in the end I gave birth to her. She was very close to her sister. You could never separate them.

R: You mean the second one arrived while the first was still alive?

P: Yes, they were both alive at the same time. And at the time I felt like a real mother. I used to watch them playing together on the bed. And when I’d be carrying the one, the one would also want to be carried too; when one was in front, the other would be on the back [*mood lifting*]. The older one was tall like her mother if you can imagine a younger version of me.

R: Uh-huh

P: She would stand in front of me and say, “Now that you have another child, you think that I am no longer your child?” She’d say things like that and I would... I love my children. Even my father knows it. And that’s one of the reasons why, when all these things happened, he was like “Oh my God, I can’t bail you out, because I don’t know how you are going to face this whole situation.” He then said to me, “The very first day when I went to court, and the magistrate said to me, ‘Give me one reason why I should grant you bail.’ Then I told him ‘I would like to go and bury my child.’ She didn’t even argue that. She just said ‘Okay, it’s one thousand’.” But my family, knowing the relationship that I have with my daughters, they knew that I couldn’t stand seeing her there in the coffin, I don’t know. Even now I can’t imagine, it’s more hurtful now. Cause I never saw her for the last time. I didn’t even say my goodbyes [*voice starts cracking*]. So sometimes that’s, it’s hurtful, because I didn’t mean to do it.

R: How long ago was it?

P: 2011

R: That’s not so long ago

P: No, it’s not

R: So it’s all still very fresh in your mind?

P: Yes, it is. But you know...

R: Huh?

P: When you do put your trust in God, it helps. It does, I’m telling you...

R: Mh-hm

P: Today is not like tomorrow, and tomorrow not at all like the following day. But in my heart she’s always there, she is always there, and she must be alive. Because on the 21st, and this is why this hurts me so much, on the 21st of this month, March, she is going to be turning 9 years old. And you can just imagine what she is going to ask me for her birthday. I used to try by all means to buy her cakes and presents. So I just wonder, thinking about the list she was going to give me. She was like that, and so it’s hard...

R: It sounds pretty hard

P: But I’ve made peace...

R: Okay

P: Like, on the other side, because I do believe that, whatever happens, God has a purpose for us, so even before, when we would not go to church, she would come to me and say, “Mama, why are we not going to church today?” Then I would say, “You know, I don’t feel good my child.” Then she would say “Do you know that our grandpa God is going to punish us?” She was just like that. Because I would say to her that God is my father, so to her...

R: Grandpa

P: She was special like that, and that’s what keeps me going

R: Alright, what great memories of her that you have!

P: I have good memories of her because it wasn’t my intention [to kill her]. Even the social worker who handled my case went to [check with] my neighbours, my church, and the schools [my girl had attended]. My girl had just got 93% in school. She was a brilliant child. You know, on the other hand, I do believe that God felt like – not sure how to put this – she mustn’t be mine for a long time.

R: She was just too brilliant

P: She was indeed very brilliant, and quite special too. She was something else...

R: Different?

P: She was different. Because, in some ways, even the neighbours would say, “Why is your child acting quite unlike her peers?”

R: Mh-hm

P: I was proud. I was a proud mother. Even at school, the teacher would ask for me, and we would sit; she would ask me about my child, especially about how I related to her regarding discipline. I would say, “I just talk to her. I don’t even hit her! I only talk to her! I tell her, ‘That is wrong my child, a child doesn’t do this. Even when you are an adult you don’t do this’.”

R: Why did they ask you that?

P: Well, they do ask when a child is hyperactive in school

R: Oh, was she hyperactive?

P: Yes, she was clever. You know, she would come home eager to engage her books? She was working through the syllabus way ahead of the class. She would insist on doing activities that were not yet prescribed as if they were homework. She would say, “Mommy, we were given homework. And this homework, I think this is how it’s supposed to be done like this” Can you believe it, at seven years? She was like that!

R: I see

P: And I was like, oh my God, even the awards she got. At the age of seven, by comparison, I didn’t even know anything...

R: Mh-hm

P: But, as for my girl, she was trying by all means to always be learning things. For instance, her father’s telephone number is 031071515, she simply memorized it. She knows it by heart. She could sing my cell number as well. If you were to go to my home now, you’d see it on the wall. She took a stone and wrote, “My mother’s telephone number [is] 0722...; my father’s number....”

R: Okay. Now, don’t you think it’s going to be a problem for you when you return home, your memories of her I mean?

P: Yes

R: So you feel it is going to be tough for you after you come out, feeling that she is supposed to be there, or have you accepted that she is gone?

P: Oh, no. If I may tell you the truth, my sister is going to give birth on 29 June. My daughter was born on 29 March. And one of the days, when my sister came to visit...

R: Uh-huh

P: She is yet to give birth, you know...

R: Mhmm

P: Yet I felt a connection with her unborn child; that was my daughter coming to visit me here.

R: I think so....

P: Honestly speaking, in my mind, she is still alive.

R: I hear you loud and clear

P: Do you really?

R: Yes indeed. Sometimes you talk about her as though she is still alive and well.

P: In my mind, she is still alive. You know what? When I first came here, I couldn't eat, I couldn't do anything. When she would be coming back from school, wearing those white uniforms, you know from Indian schools, she would throw the bag over there and come to me and hug me tightly [*she gesticulates*]. And when I would tell her that I can't breathe, she would squeeze me even tighter [*she giggles*]. I would tell her that I can't breathe and she would laugh at me. Then she would go to her sister, and kiss her until she was full of saliva

R: Mh-hm

P: That's just how she was, a very loving child

R: I see. So, um, why do you think you ended up here? What was it about your case that they may have missed?

P: Well, I don't deserve to be here

R: Yes, but what were their findings?

P: Well, here is how I ended up being charged for murder. first of all, my friend who was there when the incident happened, she advised me...

R: Mhmm

P: She clearly said it out fear, as for me I did not appreciate exactly the gravity of the situation and possible ramifications...

R: Yes

P: I didn't anticipate that the child was going to die. I don't think anyone foresaw that. So, my friend said to me as we were on our way taking the child to the clinic, "We mustn't say that we hit this child because the nurses will scold you for that." That, I think, was where we went wrong.

R: Very wrong

P: Yes

R: Altering the story at the beginning made it hard for them to believe anything else that came after that...

P: Anything! But, even though the social worker still gathered relevant information, it was still hard for the magistrate. She even ordered the post-mortem be performed, I think two or three times if I'm not mistaken. That was because she wanted to find out what else I might have lied about? For instance, she wanted to check whether the child had been constantly abused. But I'm not that kind of person. I love my kids, all I'd do is

only to sit her down and talk to her. In the end they could not find such evidence, even from the pupils that the social worker interviewed nothing of the sort came forth.

R: They said that she was not abused

P: Not at all! They could not find evidence for abuse even in her head.

R: So they found no such evidence

P: None whatsoever

R: And what did they find instead?

P: Nothing. The magistrate admitted that much to me.

R: So they don't know what killed the child?

P: No, they don't

R: Could it have been flu perhaps?

P: Well, the death certificate has "unnatural causes" as the reason for the death. That must be because they were convinced they'd find evidence of abuse. More than that I do not know...

R: But there wasn't any such evidence to be found?

P: No, it wasn't there.

R: Mh-hm

P: So they kept on postponing the date for sentencing, hoping to come across such evidence.

R: I see.

P: But the results were that there had been no abuse.

R: So you still have not been sentenced? Do you know how long you have to be in here?

P: I was sentenced.

R: Okay

P: But it had been hard for them to get to that point

R: Prior to the sentencing...

P: Yes it was, [that is why] she only gave me five years...

R: Only five years?

P: Yes, in the end I was sentenced for culpable homicide, and not for murder.

R: What does that mean? Please excuse my ignorance

P: That means I had not planned to kill my child.

R: That much they were able to establish?

P: Yes they did.

R: Yet they still thought it necessary to incarcerate you?

P: Yes, well, that's the thing...

R: The part you can't understand?

P: For sure, that's what I don't understand, really

R: Now how many years have you already served?

P: I only started last year.

R: I've heard other prisoners say their sentences have been cut in half, do you think you also likely to get that?

P: Yes they do indeed. It's like this: you serve half of your sentence inside, and the other half outside of jail.

R: Uh-huh

P: And last year we received amnesty. However, they apply it to the entire sentence, so I will only be going home this November.

R: Oh, and how old are you?

P: I'm turning 32 this year.

R: 32. And was the child's father supportive throughout this ordeal?

P: Not at all, I won't lie to you.

R: I see

P: He was not even around when this thing happened. But that was no problem since whenever he wanted to see the child, I would allow him to spend time with the child.

R: Does it mean you are no longer involved in a relationship with him?

P: No. We were never involved.

R: So the other child is not his?

P: Yes, it is not his.

R: And you are broken up with the other father now?

P: No, he is with daddy.

R: Does he believe your story?

P: Well, more or less, you know.

R: He knows your heart for sure.

P: He knows me well enough. Even my father knows me pretty well, that is why he thought I wasn't going to be able to cope and I might end up doing something odd. Because he knows how I feel about my child.

R: Uh-huh

P: And here I sit thinking, If only I had been there [at the funeral]

R: I just need closure

P: Yes, I wish I had been there

R: Because you were also surprised by what was going on?

P: Yes, yes, yes. And, well, there are a lot of questions, you know, when it comes to my kids. I wish the government could seriously investigate these cases because, honestly, I don't deserve to be here. I have another child who is going to be turning 3 years soon. I had to leave her on the outside, yet she still needs me, she still needs my love, my care, you know. Even when the social worker was hoping that because that magistrate was also a woman, she would release me. But, can you just imagine? The magistrate ordered that I am not allowed to be around her. How come? She just said, "You are going to Westville!" And can you just imagine that when I was sentenced, my child was only one year and several months old; she only turned two last year. And in here, you only see your child through a glass like this. When she turned two, I begged them to bring her to see me. She kept going like 'Mama, mama, mama' from behind the glass. Oh how I cried. Only now that I am left with six months am I allowed to hold her. And she will tell me all her stories, and feed me the foodstuffs they bring along during their visits.

R: Do you have a mom?

P: No, my mother passed away in 2000.

R: Mh-hm

P: But I have a father who is very supportive.

R: Are you an only child?

P: No, there are two of us.

R: The sibling is older or younger than you?
P: I'm the older one.
R: Okay
P: My sibling is 27.
R: He or she?
P: She. And, though she was here yesterday, I can't lie to you, she is very very sick.
R: Sick?
P: Yes, and that's my other challenge at the moment. I was actually wishing it were possible that they could relieve her of the kids so she could be admitted to hospital. That's how sick she is. But I know it's such a long process...
R: Give it a try, it just might be possible.
P: I did try it once before, that is why I know it is a cumbersome process. At the time she had neglected the home, and even left the child alone.
R: So your child stays with her?
P: Yes, my child stays with her. And I once tried relieving her of the responsibility.
R: Where is dad?
P: My father lives at home also. We stay all together. Then they said they need to find her father. The baby's father is unemployed and lives in Port Shepstone. So, if he takes the child, how will he survive...
R: The baby's father?
P: Yes, the baby's father. He is all by himself, an orphan.
R: And he is unemployed too?
P: Yes, he is unemployed on top of everything else. So it's hard for me to add such a matter on his plate, because according to the social worker he would be the next responsible person to take on the responsibility of looking after the child. That is why I chose not to go ahead and file that issue, because I know exactly what is happening.
R: Oh, so you didn't inform the authorities?
P: I told them that he is unemployed.
R: But, I mean, you didn't tell them where he is?
P: I did. And he was willing to take over responsibility of the child. But when the process was ongoing, my sister came back home and resumed looking after the child. So then I cancelled the transfer process.
R: You don't want the child to go live with the father?
P: I do, it's not that I don't want. But it is I who cannot afford to go live with the father because my sister is sick and my father is diabetic. Moreover, my sister's condition is not helping my father's health at all.
R: Does the father come visit you?
P: The child's father? Yes he does.
R: Don't you think you should just resume the process again, given the situation at your home?
P: Well, the thing is, I've only seven months left in here. So, I'm simply holding my breath; come November, I'm out of here.
R: Okay.
P: Yes, I'm only holding my breath
R: Is this process really cumbersome?
P: I don't know why but yes it seems to be

R: For you?

P: Not just for me, because he can take...

R: Then when you get out you can go and take her, isn't it? Or do you think he will be like, "No, you can't take her anymore"?

P: No, I can. In fact, that is what I want to do now; I have been thinking of doing that, you know. The thing though is that he is not employed.

R: Your problem is that he is not working?

P: Yes, that's my problem

R: At your home, what does the child eat? How is the child provided for? Who is working?

P: My child is being taken care of by my father from the government grant and all. Of course in addition, my father does have a job.

R: Mh-hm

P: Because my father works, then I know that she is in good hands at my home. That is my point.

R: And the father won't support?

P: When the child is not in his care? No, he won't.

R: Okay

P: I'm serious; he will only buy things for her if she is staying with us at home.

R: No, then don't worry. I think what's left now is for you not to worry too much. It doesn't sound that bad. You are only worried because people are sick, and you fear that they might die. Those are mere thoughts; it doesn't necessarily mean that they will become a reality. So take it easy, and continue – if you believe in prayer – trusting God.

P: I do, even yesterday...

R: Uh-huh, just don't worry

P: It felt like someone was telling me to pray. And then I just prayed. My roommate was a bit uncomfortable about it; she initially thought I was talking to her. But I kept quiet and continued praying, because it was like someone was telling me to pray. This was prompted by the state I saw my sister in...

R: She wasn't in a nice state, neh?

P: No, it was bad. It was really, really terrible. And mind you, I've been their pillar of their strength at home.

R: Okay

P: Ever since my mother passed away, they have struggled to stand on their own. Even my father, he is now like my child. Whenever he takes ill, I'm the one who takes care of him. I'm the one who sees to the fridge when it is empty. My father gets paid on the 25th, and I used to work as a security guard but was no longer employed, I then took my money and bought a sewing machine. I now sell second hand clothing, sewing – that is how I support myself out there.

R: Mh-hm

P: Then I think to myself: I'm in here while out there my father is sick out of worrying about my sick sister who also worries about the children and therefore avoid getting admitted to hospital – she confided that much to me just yesterday. She said, "If I get admitted, who is going to look after the children?" But she needs the hospital. You know when you see that a person is weak, she needs to be taken care of, she needs somebody who is going to cook porridge in the morning for her, that's how she is. Even

to come here yesterday was a struggle for her. While we were in the middle of our conversation, she said, "You know what, I feel like vomiting and my tummy is threatening to run." So I was like, "Oh my God!"

R: The situation is not good, hey?

P: No, absolutely, it's not good.

R: Uh-huh

P: And I'm stuck in here, and when I think of the worst happening, oh my God.

R: But do ask your man to sometimes go and check on them.

P: He lives quite far, in Port Shepstone

R: Yes

P: And he does not work, he can't afford to travel that distance regularly.

R: Too far, I see. But I think then you should lean on prayer. And what about dad, does he come to visit?

P: Yes he does.

R: Alright then my sister. All I forgot is to get us to sign the consent form, just to show that you participated.

P: I don't know whether you got the information that you were looking for [*she giggles*]. I'm babbling so much.

R: I'm also hoping I will get much mileage out of it. But thank you so much for being open...

P: If you still have other questions, I would love to like...

R: to talk, well...

P: Yes, if you've got them. Perhaps I didn't get straight to the point of what you wanted you know, so if there is anything at all.

R: But you did. You started off by saying what happened, which is good. The only questions I would ask are: "How do you feel now? What do you think you could have done or could have happened differently?" But you just put on the table all the other problems as well. We shifted away from the situation itself. Do you have other things on the table that you concerned about?

P: Okay

R: And if we were to shift back, I would want to know... But you see, you told me that it was an accidental...

P: Yes

R: Occurrence, you know. So for me to ask you questions like how do you feel and what do you think could have been done differently, what would you say in response?

P: I am a mother, when a child is doing wrong, I used to punish her, but not that I was ANGRY [*stresses the word*]. One of the questions I used to get is "Were you angry?" Because, for instance, they think I hit her against the wall.

R: But the postmortem found no such evidence?

P: None

R: Still, were you angry?

P: No

R: Mh-hm

P: I'm not that kind of person, I'm not.

R: Uh-huh, okay

P: I don't get ANGRY [*stresses the word*], towards a child for that matter? Even when you are an adult like this, and you can see that we are disagreeing about something, I would rather leave you, than to argue because I know that I will get angry. It's just not like me to act in anger.

R: Okay

P: Could you please remind me of today's date?

R: 18th

P: Eighteenth [*signing the consent form*]. Okay [*silence*]

R: And pre-meditated means you thought about it?

P: No, for some offenders it's premeditated, because they were in a situation, then they planned what to do. With me it just happened. But on top of that I think the magistrate was too harsh in giving me five years!

R: I think I have covered almost everything....

P: Most of everything

R: I hope so. Thank you very much

P: I've not been of much help, have I?

R: You sure have been very much of help. Yours was accidental, that is basically it. It's different from what we are looking for in general.

PARTICIPANT14- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): My name is Nthabiseng.

Participant (P): Yes

R: I am from the University of Limpopo. Do you know where Limpopo is? Have you ever heard about it?

P: Yes, I do hear about it sometimes, though not a lot.

R: I see. And who are you?

P: I am Zodwa Mnguni [*not her real name*]

R: Great stuff Zodwa. Now I am recording our chat so that I can be able to reduce it to writing later on when I am back in the comfort of my home or school. Do you understand English?

P: A little.

R: I see. Well, you may speak in isiZulu if you cannot manage English.

P: Thanks

R: Alright. Where do you come from?

P: I am from a village in Pietermaritzburg called Sweetwaters.

R: Okay dear. I have with me what is called 'consent forms', which I will need you sign. They basically give assurance that you agreed to this interview of your own will.

P: May I ask something: will this interview be aired on radio?

R: Not at all. The forms are for my records and protection. I will give you a letter meant to assure you that what you share with me today will be treated privately and confidentially. So if you suspect I have broadcast our interview anywhere, you should feel free to report me and I will most likely end up in jail myself.

P: Okay

R: In the research report we use codes to represent various participants, as in P11 or P12. So no one else can trace the contents back to you except for me.

P: Which date must I write?

R: 18 March. And your name goes here.

P: Both name and surname?

R: Whichever you are comfortable with; either or both is up to you.

P: One name?

R: Anything my sister; write absolutely anything that will be sufficient proof that you consented to this interview. Our research hopes to find ways whereby we can assist people who have had experiences that are similar to yours. The idea is to find out what causes women to end up in that situation, and then to explore what can be done to prevent future occurrences.

P: Mhmm

R: Many such studies have been conducted overseas, but here in Africa or even South Africa there are hardly any investigations into why women end up taking the children's lives.

P: Yes

R: So we are really only interested in the causes, as well as possible interventions. Therefore I am going to ask you to just talk freely about what you think led to you ending up in here.

P: Okay. Let me start like this. I grew up in a normal family; my mom and dad are married.

R: Okay

P: I grew up staying with my mom's elder sister in Estcourt. When she died I then had to come live with my own parents. Everything was alright, they took good care of me. Things started to change in 1999 when I was only fourteen years old. My mother never used to beat me up if I had done something wrong. But in 1999 she began to report me to my brother who would then thrash me. He so got into the habit of hitting me that 16 November 1999 he went to the extent of shooting me. I have had to live with a gun wound from the tender age of 14. Then I began to ask my mother why it was that I was disciplined by my brother and not by my parent; she turned a deaf ear to my question. So I lived under this oppression where my mother paid no attention to my concerns. My brother handed himself over to the police for shooting me; I was in hospital.

R: He shot you on your neck?

P: No, he shot me in the head. I was operated on, and during the operation, some nerve was affected such that I lost the use of my arm and leg. When I was discharged from hospital, I began enquiring into how I ended up in hospital. They told me of how my brother had shot me and so on. Then I slowly began to regain my memory. Then my mother took me to the prosecutor to sign some documents. I did not know or ask what they were for; it is only afterwards I learnt that it was to drop any charges against my brother. My mother asked me to forgive my brother. That I did because after all I do not have an evil heart. But in forgiving him, I did not fully appreciate the extent to which the matter had affected me psychologically. A few years later, I was either 19 or 20, still crippled and living on a disability grant, my mother kicked me out of the house. Even though I was receiving a disability grant because I had no use of limbs on one side of my body, I did not want to be pitied. I liked to do things for myself. Now, when I would be cooking for instance, and I ask my mother to peel potatoes or grate the cabbage for me, she would demand that I pay her for helping me. These many little things kept eating at my heart. I could not understand how my own mother could do such things to me, her own flesh and blood. So I began to entertain doubts whether she was my biological mother. On the other hand, my father liked me very much; his only problem was the bottle. So most of the time he was oblivious to what was going around the home.

So in 2004 I had my first child, a girl. I did my best to look after my child. Even though I had use of only one arm, I happily cooked and washed her clothes. Should either my clothing or my baby's clothes find their way into my mother's laundry as she went to do her washing by the river, she would subsequently demand payment in return. This hurt me badly. Even when I talked to my brothers about, they could not assure me that they too had received such treatment from mom. In other words, I knew a different mother from the one they knew. My child and my sister's were born around the same time. Mine was born in 2004; my sister's the following year in 2005. Then I had another child in 2006. So, when I would go to town for instance, I'd buy things for all three children. But my mother always bought things only for my sister's child. She openly discriminated me, and all these things hurt me deeply. Furthermore, I had no way to express how her behaviour was affecting me; so it ate me quietly. Then my child's father passed on in 2007. So I continued to raise my kids all by myself. I could not even risk leaving my kids

in my mother's charge if I needed to go to town for instance, because she would not prepare any meals for them or care at all about their state. So I used to leave them with our neighbor. But I continued to be the best daughter and parent that I could be; I did not retaliate against the discrimination that my mother was showing me.

Then in 2009 I met another young man and started a relationship with him. I told him everything about my life, and he seemed to understand. Later on in that same year, somewhere around July or so, he then presented himself at my home and paid *lobola* for me. Then I lived happily with him for a long while. By this time I had already told myself that I have no mother; in my eyes I only had a father even though he was a drunk.

R: Mhmm

P: Still in 2009, my girl and boy were 5 and 3 years old respectively, I caught my man raping my daughter. This is further pain for my heart because I have no one else to talk to about it seeing that my mother was not a mother to me at all. So I kept about it even though it was killing me. But as I shouted in shock at discovering the rape of my daughter, one of the girls from the neighbourhood apparently heard me and ran to report the matter at my home. But they did not bother to talk to me about it. Had they come and talked to me I might have been able to calm down. They only came some time later that year to fetch me and the kids. Then they asked my daughter if the young man had indeed raped her. The child confirmed. Then my mother, instead of talking to the family in private, she went ahead and called the entire neighbourhood and informed them just to spite me. That hurt me even further. Then I went to the police station to report how my daughter was raped as well why I came to live with this man because of the situation at home with my mother. He was arrested. But in court nobody paid us any attention – no doctor came to examine the child. So around 3pm I returned home. Then I began to feel helpless as it was clear that nothing was going my way. The only way out for me and my kids then appeared to be death. And maybe on the day that my mother sees the three graves of my kids and me, maybe then she will begin to love me. I did not realize then that it was the wrong decision I was making. It just felt like the only avenue available to me at the time.

So I took a weapon and went out to execute this decision. The kids were asleep so I first hung myself. I was starving, having been kicked out of my mother's house and being no longer able to go to my in-laws for any assistance. But I went to my man's home, in the outside room where we were staying, and I dished up for the kids because they were complaining of hunger. When they had finished eating, I then decided that there was no better time for me and my kids to exit this life. So I hung myself having taken pills. Then it occurred to me that the kids' father had died, and their grandmother does not love them, so I should kill them first and me thereafter. After all, I thought, having killed the kids would give me all the guts I needed to kill myself too. So I started by killing the girl, and proceeded to lay her on the bed while she still had some life in her. Then I came to boy and killed him too. And then it was my turn, so I took an axe and intended to sever my neck on the place where I had been operated on. I kept trying, even as you can see the scars, but I could not succeed. So eventually, when realizing that I was failing, I then took my cellphone with me – its battery was exhausted – and went to withdraw my disability grant. My intention was to go drown myself into the river near Howick called Noggaza which was home to a big snake. As I left, my brother

somehow spotted me and figured out that something was not right. I explained to him that I was tired of this life and my mother's rejection so he should let me go. But he stopped me from getting into the taxi, and managed to put me in the ward councilor's car. The councilor interviewed me about what was happening and then he called the local newspaper called *Isolezwe*. When those journalists arrived, they did not interview me. So I went to the police station; the police asked me what had happened and arrested me soon as I had finished telling them the story.

R: Mhhm

P: But now I regret what I did. If only I had known or understood what was happening to me, which I do now since I have been taught while in here about bottling things up and the anger that builds up from not talking about hurts. I should have talked to practically anyone about the hurt that my mother was inflicting on me. So I wish that others who find themselves in a situation similar to mine would try seeing social workers. That is the best way to deal with the matter.

R: I hear you my sister. Your story really is sad my dear.

P: Am I done?

R: We are almost done. But how do you feel at the moment? Will you perhaps need to talk to a social worker?

P: I have found and interacted with social workers since I have been incarcerated.

R: I mean now after our emotional chat, you won't need a counselor to talk to?

P: No!

R: So you will be alright?

P: Yes I will

R: Okay. Ehm, your mother, how is she? Does she come to see you?

P: She came only once to visit me.

R: Mhhm. What are her views about what happened?

P: We have never discussed this matter. She only came by.

R: Mhhm. But as for you, how do you feel?

P: About what happened?

R: Mhhm

P: What can I say...It is not easy. I wish I could get over it sooner, but it is still going to take me a long time...

R: Sorry my dear. It still hurts a lot neh?

P: [*cries catching breath even louder and nods*]

R: Sorry

P: I'll be fine, even though it will take a long time for me to get there.

R: Mhhm, yes. And when were you imprisoned?

P: I was imprisoned in 2009, but was sentenced in 2010.

R: It hurts you as though it has only just happened?

P: No

R: Do you get to undergo counseling sessions sometimes?

P: Yes I do. It's just that sometimes when talking about this matter, tears just roll

R: Of course! You should cry, and let it all out. But what exactly incites the tears? Is it the incident or...

P: It's the mental picture...

R: The picture of what you did?

P: Yes. But I will be fine.
R: Yes dear. And do you miss the kids?
P: I loved them very much.
R: You really did love them neh? It's only that you thought you were solving the problem by doing what you did?
P: I regret that very much.
R: Okay
P:[*silence as she tries to calm herself down*]
R: I am sure they knew that, and God too knows that you loved them. What did you use to kill them?
P: An axe.
R: What is an *imbazo*?
P: The tool used to chop wood.
R: And you attempted to use it on yourself too?
P: Yes
R: Okay. Does your brother come to see you?
P: Well, I have three brothers. The one who crippled me, the eldest, came only once. The other one does come regularly....
R: Why was nothing done to your eldest brother for what he did to you?
P: he was arrested but was never convicted.
R: By the way you said you signed some forms for his freedom?
P: Yes.
R: I see. And your father, does he come?
P: No, my father only sends me money or the things I ask for through my siblings.
R: Okay. And overall, how do you feel? How much longer are you still going to be in here?
P: I was sentenced to 10 years; 5 suspended. I have been in here 3 years already, which means I am now left with 2 before I can return home.
R: How do you see you life unfolding after you get out of here?
P: I am going to try hard to make it because I did a course while in here which I have found very helpful.
R: Mhmm
P: I am also going to try to talk my issues through with my parents in a calm manner.
R: Do you see yourself returning to your parents' house?
P: I am forced to return to them because no one else will take custody of me. But I should eventually try to get an RDP house or a house that I can rent. But initially I am forced to go live with them when I get out of here.
R: Okay. What do social workers say about you going back home? or have you not discussed the matter with them?
P: No, I have not yet discussed the issues of living arrangements with them.
R: I suppose there is still time for you to discuss it with them as the time draws nearer.
P: Yes I will. It is my wish to be away from home also because seeing the children's graves is going to torment me. They were buried in the yard at home. Not just the graves, but seeing my mother as well as the man I used to live with will also be torture to me.
R: I see. Are you enrolled for any studies in here?

P: I used to study, but I cannot any more.

R: So you do not think it is a good idea to try to resume studies so that when you get out of here you will have some qualification that will help you make a success of your life.

P: It is not easy because as I have sustained a head injury my head gets hot sometimes which makes it impossible for me to focus on intellectual work.

R: Alright my dear. Thank you very much once again for your time. It is such a sad story.

P: Yes

R: I wish I could say something to make it better. But all I know is that God can heal, if you just start praying about it saying "Father, I accept my past, but as for my future, can you change my future for me" in Jesus name. Trust God in everything. We all have our different problems, but we go to God, we trust him and we see him help us. I believe he can help you also. Okay! Do you believe in God?

P: I do, very much so.

R: Alright my sister, may God bless you. Thanks again.

PARTICIPANT15- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): Alright, ehm, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in our study. Do you understand me?

Participant (P): I can follow what you are saying.

R: Okay then. Our research is private in the sense that we won't broadcast your details. In the write up I will only refer to you as Participant 1 or Participant 2, and so forth. Our main concern is information concerning the reasons and circumstances behind mothers taking the lives of their own children. In the end hopefully we can devise appropriate interventions so as to prevent or minimize future occurrences. Similar studies have been conducted overseas but here in South Africa we do not yet know whether the causes are comparable.

P: I see.

R: So thanks for consenting to this interview. I will need you to confirm that by signing this consent form. I shall keep it as a record to that effect. Otherwise you can be assured of the confidentiality of the information you are going to share with me. It has taken me a while to be able to set this up because I had to assure Correctional Services that I can guarantee the confidentiality of the interviewees as well as eventually make the study results available to them for the benefit of their programmes.

P: Mhmm

R: So please sign the form. If you do not sign it then it means you have been forced to be here and you do not really want to take part.

P: How do I go about it?

R: All you do is write your name, today's date and append a signature. Then I shall give a letter from the university I come from which expresses our gratitude for your willingness to participate. This one you can keep, or perhaps have the social worker keep it in your file.

P: Okay

R: So you sign here, and write your name over here. You do know how to write don't you?

P: Yes I do.

R: How old are you?

P: I am thirteen years old.

R: Oh, and when were you incarcerated?

P: In 2011

R: And you are only 13 now?

P: Yes I am.

R: Mhmm, okay. And today's date is the 18th.

P: Yes

R: Thank you. I too have to sign on the consent form. Alright then. Will you please tell me your story as far as you can remember it, all the events that led to you ending up in here?

P: Actually, my story is so long that I doubt that I shall be able to tell it all in this short time.

R: We'll give it our best shot. Let's see, I also seem to have sufficient battery power in my recorder.

P: Okay

R: But focus on details that have a bearing on why you are here, okay?

P: Mhmm

R: Yes

P: Well, I used to live with my granny.

R: Do you not speak English, or perhaps you can mix it with Zulu?

P: No I do not speak English well.

R: Okay

P: I grew up at my granny's. I have actually never met my mother.

R: Okay

P: Neither do I know my father. All that my granny told me was that my mother left one day claiming to be going to work, and she never returned. As for my father, even my granny herself does not know who he is. So I stayed only with my granny from the time my mother left, which was when I was about 2 or 3 years old. Then my granny, on the 10th [day or month] of 2000 er....

R: 2003?

P: Yes, 2003, my granny died.

R: Mhmm, she died?

P: Yes, she passed away. Then I went to live with one of my neighbours, as though A were her child. They treated me like their own, and I participated in all the family customs. After awhile, then, the father of the house started complaining about having to look after another family's child. I ignored his comments, but then the mother of the house intimated to me how serious the matter was. Then they called their son, and instructed that I would have to live with him as his wife. I kept quiet. Then we went to get tested. The following day, after they had left for church, their son and I slept with me.

R: What do you mean by getting tested?

P: Whether or not you are still a virgin.

R: Oh okay, so they examined you?

P: Yes

R: Okay

P: The test came back positive for my virginity and the mother was pleased. So the thing took place on Saturday. And on Sunday as they went to church they instructed to remain behind and keep guard of the house since burglaries are common in the area. Then the young man of the house came to the house together with his maternal uncle. I was watching reruns of a local TV soap opera. So I barely responded to their chit-chat. The one stood by the door and asked if I was aware of what the father of the house had said about me. At the same time the other man came with a cloth and proceeded to gag my mouth. So, the first one raped me. When he was done, he went and stood guard at the door while the second one came and also raped me. Thereafter they left. When the youngest boy of the house eventually came by, he noticed that I was not myself. Then I told him who had just raped me. So he confirmed that he saw two men leave the house and he had recognized them as his mother's brothers. When the mother of the house came, I told her about the incident. She dismissed it as a lie. The young boy wanted to call the police, but the mother refused. The police were eventually called. The young man slept two nights at police holding cells. He appeared in court and was released on bail. I continued to stay with that family, unaware of the fact that I had conceived a baby

from the rape. They continued to ill-treat me. For instance, sometimes they would not dish up for me; I would go to bed on an empty stomach. They used to make me shepherd their cattle and goats. I was the one who dished up for their dogs. In fact, I was the one responsible for all the unpleasant chores. Whenever I needed to go for checkups, I had to catch lifts because no one would give me taxi fare. The clinic is quite some distance away. When the time came for me to deliver, I asked them for only the baby's clothes as well as for them to fetch me from hospital since I have no one else to count on. Then I had the baby in hospital. The mother of the house came to see me; she held the baby and commented that it indeed looked like her brother. Then I asked how the child could look like her brother if he did not rape me? I was discharged and returned back to the same home. The father of the child never bothered to come and check up on the baby. The baby had only one towel napkin. Then the daughter of the family also fell pregnant and had a child whose father remained unknown. Both babies continued to suffer as no one was prepared to provide for them. Eventually they kicked me out of their home. I went to stay at another place where things were even worse. They expected me to go fetch wood from the forest as well as to shepherd their cattle and goats with the baby on my back, rain or sunshine. They also did not give me food and yet I was breastfeeding. That is when I decided to kill this child so I can at least suffer alone.

R: So what did you do to the child?

P: I choked it.

R: Huh?

P: I strangled it.

R: What is "*ukukinya*"?

P: To cut off the air supply at the throat.

R: Oh! And how old was the child then?

P: 6 months old.

R: You felt like you had no one to help you?

P: There was indeed no one who was prepared to help me.

R: Mhmm

P: Even in here, I am suffering all by myself.

R: Mhmm

P: I do not get any visitors.

R: Even now you do not get visitors?

P: No, none at all.

R: And you've been here since 2011.

P: Yes since December 2011.

R: Your blood relatives have basically died out.

P: Yes, I do not have anyone to call my family. But I have now accepted that I am in jail because I did commit a crime.

R: Mhmm

P: I was imprisoned, because I was not supposed to do what I did.

R: Mhmm. Your story is so sad.

P: Oh, I have already accepted things as they are and I feel much better.

R: Things are better now neh?

P: I'm much better now I can even talk about it. When I first came here I could not even talk. I would cry all the time. I literally lived in the social worker's office.

R: It's much better indeed.

P: Very much so indeed.

R: Okay my dear. I'm glad you are much better. But I am now so affected that I am going to have to ask us to stop right here. By the way, how much longer do you still have to be in here?

P: Until 2015. I was sentenced to 10 years, 3 suspended.

R: Okay dear, thank you very much my strong sister.

P: Yes

PARTICIPANT 16- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): My name is Nthabiseng.

Participant (P): My name is Thabisile?

R: Nthabiseng.

P: Yes

R: I come from the University of Limpopo in Limpopo. Do you know where it is?

P: I have heard about it.

R: Good. We are conducting a study into the circumstances that lead mothers to end up taking the lives of their own children.

P: The causes behind such?

R: Yes

P: I see.

R: Therefore I am happy that you have agreed to take part in our study.

P: Yes

R: Your participation will help elucidate things that go on at such a time, which in turn will help us design interventions for the future.

P: Yes madam.

R: In case other women find themselves in circumstances similar to the ones that led to you ending up here.

P: Yes

R: Now I have to ask you to fill out the consent form. All you need to write are your name and today's date.

P: No problem.

R: Are you comfortable with that?

P: Yes. My name goes here?

R: Yes, just your name here.

P: Mhmm

R: Your signature here and today's date over here. Your privacy is assured in this study. In other words, your personal details will not be divulged elsewhere. I just need your name in order to protect me in case one day you claim that you did not give your consent for this interview.

P: I understand. And over here?

R: You append your signature there. And today's date is the 18th.

P: 18th?

R: Yes. 18th, 3rd Month, 2013

P: 2013

R: Okay my sister. Just go ahead and relate your story.

P: Yes

R: I also have something, what do you call it?

P: A saying?

R: A letter! It comes from us as a University basically just to thank you for agreeing to be part of this study process. I believe it will be kept safe in your file.

P: Yes madam.

R: Yes

P: Well, madam, for me to end up killing my child...

R: Mhmm

P: It stemmed from being ill-treated at home. I am had lost both my parents and was now living with my step mother.

R: Okay

P: This step mother of mine was cruel. She discriminated against me. So I chose to return to my child's father, although we were no longer together.

R: Okay

P: In fact, what I intended was to get reconciled with him. But when I got there the man told me off, and accused me of only turning to him because I was mere skin and bones. "Moreover," he continued, "you are one-eyed, so what good can you be to me?" So I got really riled. I then unwrapped my head covering, tied the baby to a tree, and strangled it. Why I did it, I cannot say.

R: You were feeling frustrated perhaps? Maybe even helpless?

P: And so my child passed away, leaving this world through an act of my own hands. *[An official opens door and announces that there is one more participant waiting to be interviewed. I acknowledge her announcement affirmatively.]*

P: So the child died in that manner. I was arrested and eventually sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.

R: In your view, what do you think ultimately drove you to commit this act?

P: It has to be the child's father seeing that he was my last hope.

R: Mhmm

P: Considering the situation back at home, I was hoping that he would gladly take over the care of his child and its mother.

R: Mhmm

P: But then he showed no interested in looking after his own child. So I got mad and ended up killing the very child that was supposed to facilitate our reconciliation.

R: Mhmm

P: Yes

R: I see. What exactly were they doing to you back at home?

P: Back home, my step mother blatantly discriminated against me. She always let me know that I was not her child. It was quite irritating. As it is, even since I have been in here, she has never bothered to come and see how I am doing. She could care less whether I even have a mere panty to wear.

R: So where do you get one?

P: A panty you mean?

R: Yes

P: The officials here in prison sometimes just bring me some. That is how I happen to have any at all.

R: You mean there are no standard prison-issued ones?

P: They have run out.

R: I see. So your life was not pleasant prior to the incident?

P: Yes, there was no peaceful existence.

R: And now, how do you see it?

P: Now my life is pleasant. In fact I feel free and at ease.

R: Okay

P: I really do feel free now, much more so than when I was on the outside.

R: Mhmm
P: Yes
R: But how do you feel about the child?
P: The child?
R: Yes, the one whose life you took?
P: I am remorseful.
R: Mhmm
P: I regret very much what I did. But then it is not as if my regret will bring the child back to life. But I definitely am sorry about it.
R: But at present are you able to lead a normal life, as in studying perhaps?
P: Yes I am studying.
R: Mhmm
P: I even used to work at the workshop. But in the end I chose to quit so that I can focus on my studies. I cannot afford to waste this opportunity to study.
R: How do you see your future unfolding once you leave this place?
P: When I get out of here?
R: Mhmm
P: My wish is that when I get released someone decent could legally adopt me.
R: Mhmm
P: Because my relatives were relieved to be rid of me when I was sentenced.
R: Oh no
P: They even stated it in writing that they do not want [custody of] me.
R: Your mother said that?
P: I am referring to my step mother. My mother is no more.
R: Okay
P: She was openly grateful to be rid of me.
R: Okay. And your father?
P: My father also is no more. This incident took place long after my birth parents had passed on.
R: Alright
P: From this earth.
R: I see. That is why you were living with your step mother?
P: Yes. The very one who openly expressed gratitude when I was sentenced.
R: How old are you?
P: I am 23.
R: Don't you think you could be able to live on your own after you get out of here?
P: I could but where would I be staying, ma'am?
R: I suppose the social workers could help arrange a place for you when you get out.
P: Ahh
R: You have to start discussing your problem with them so that they can explore various possibilities for you.
P: I see
R: Alright? Okay my sister. Thank you very much for your time. you related your story so well.
P: I was not even able to attend my child's funeral you know.
R: You couldn't attend it.

P: I was already incarcerated. The prosecutor made it clear that I could not be allowed to attend since the community just might skin me alive right in front of the police.

R: When did it all happen?

P: It was in 2007.

R: How old was the child then?

P: It was two years old.

R: Was it a boy or a girl?

P: A boy?

R: Or a girl?

P: It was a girl.

R: Oh, and do you miss her at all?

P: I do miss her.

R: And you do not have other kids?

P: There is another child. But the magistrate instructed that it be handed over to its father's family. Unfortunately its father passed away while I was still in the police holding cells, before I was sentenced.

R: Is s/he younger than the one who passed on?

P: Yes s/he is. But even that one, they never bring him/her so I can see how s/he is developing. I have no idea as it is if she is alive or well. They never come to see me.

R: Where do you come from?

P: My hometown is Hibberdene.

R: Where exactly is that?

P: It is near Port Shepstone. No one ever comes to see me.

R: Mhmm

P: So I do not know if the child is growing up well, or indeed if it is still alive.

R: I see. So when are you due to get out?

P: I am supposed to finish at least 6 years inside since I was sentenced to 12 years.

R: I see. How many years are left?

P: Per my count, this is my fifth year now.

R: Only one more to go! You are about to be free!

P: I will get out.

R: Are you looking forward to being released?

P: Oh yes, very much so.

R: I ask because you said your life is much better in here.

P: Yes, it is much better than what I had on the outside where I lived like a restless animal.

R: I see. And now you are much older, and have learned skills in here which should help you become somebody once you are out there.

P: Indeed ma'am.

R: Try not to rely on others to look after you. You cannot completely trust anyone. People have selfish agendas out there. So it is important to build oneself up and become self-reliant.

P: Mhmm

R: Also ask God to help you.

P: Mhmm

R: I am confident that you will make it.

P: Yes I will

R: Indeed

P: With God's help, I will be alright.

R: Well then, thank you my sister.

P: Pleasure. And my name is MpumeleloNsibande [*not real name*].

R: Thank you very much Sis Mpumi.

P: So I lost my child in that manner.

R: Okay

P: She left in those mysterious circumstances that even I do not fully understand what was going on.

R: Yes dear. Thanks. You may ask the next participant to come in.

P:Do I take this letter with me?

R: Yes

P: Okay, thanks

R: Thank you too. God bless you.

PARTICIPANT 17 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (KZN)

Researcher (R): We are going to do an interview. Its part of a research project. We are trying to find out... Oh, actually, my name is Nthabiseng.

Participant (P): Yes

R: I am from the University of Limpopo. I am visiting different provinces, doing research regarding mothers who have taken... By the way, do you understand English at all?

P: No, I don't know any English

R: You do, or you don't?

P: No, I don't.

R: We're researching mothers who have taken the lives of their children. Please help me out with my poor spoken Zulu...

P: Ha-ha!

R: We just want to find out what leads to such incidents. Having figured things out, then to see how we can help others prevent this from recurring. We wish to see if South African causes are unique or the same as those which have been unearthed in overseas studies. What sorts of problems lead mothers to end up taking their own children's lives?

P: Uh-huh

R: Yes! So, are you comfortable with being a part of this study? The interviews are private, so no one else will get to know the details of what so-and-so did. We label different Participants via numbers. I am the only one who knows your names because you have to give me your consent using your real particulars. But at the end of the day, the record only shows a number, not your names. All I require is that you tell me what happened and what you think led to such an occurrence.

P: Uh-huh

R: So do you feel up to it?

P: Well, I feel okay with it

R: You are really happy to talk about it?

P: Yes

R: Well then, thank you very much. Your story will assist us greatly in our work. Now, this letter explains what I have just told you. So you can keep it or pass it on to the social worker in charge of your file.

P: Yes

R: This one we must both sign. It is confirmation that you took part in this study.

P: Yes

R: Alright, a copy for your file, another for mine. All it says is that you do not object to taking part in this study.

P: Okay, so I pass it on to the social worker.

R: Yes, she will file it in your records.

P: Mh-hm

R: So, your name goes here, and you sign here.

P: Okay, just my name?

R: You can add your surname as well if you want; it's entirely up to you. Wow, we are both left-handed...

P: [giggles]

R: Where do you come from?
P: From Newcastle
R: Alright
P: Yes
R: And when did you arrive here?
P: 2010
R: I see, about three years now?
P: Yes
R: And when will you be released?
P: 2016
R: Ah, three more years to go. Today's date is 18-03-2013. Thanks. Well, perhaps you could just go ahead and tell me what happened that led to you ending up jepe; just your story as you remember it.
P: Mh-hm. Well, I was arrested over my two-year-old child.
R: Okay
P: Well, I dropped the child on the bare floor.
R: Okay, was it by mistake?
P: Yes
R: Do go ahead and narrate the events of that day as it unfolded....
P: I can't recall much because I have this mental illness that must have taken over
R: Okay
P: I must have dropped the child while in that state.
R: Alright. But when you came to, and realized what had happened, what then did you do?
P: Well, I put the child to bed. Then later when I wanted to breastfeed him, I realized she was lifeless. My brother noticed it when he returned from work. Then he asked me, "What have you done to the child?" I then said, "I happen to have dropped it on the floor."
R: Mhmm
P: Then he said, "Oh my sister, this signal the return of your illness?"
R: Ok, and then he called the police, or what happened?
P: Yew they then called the police
R: Uh-huh
P: They came, and took me away.
R: Didn't they take you to the hospital?
P: No
R: I see. Alright, thank you my sister. I think what you have shared is helpful enough.
P: Yes
R: Thank you very much. And how do you feel now, three years later? When you look back, what comes to mind?
P: Well, I feel much better, especially since I am on treatment.
R: Okay
P: Because I stay in hospital,
R: Okay
P: I do adhere to my treatment.
R: Well, thanks again. So there is a hospital here within the correctional centre?

P: Yes

R: I see, once again, thanks a lot my sister.

P: Yes

R: Thanks

P: [leaves interview room.]