An Institutional Legacy.

Experiences of women whose mothers were institutionalised under the British Child Migrant Scheme in Australia.

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University 2018
Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution.

Signature
Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank my two wonderful supervisors Dr Libby Lee-Hammond and Dr Sandra Hesterman for their guidance and support over the course of this study…which has been a really long time!

To the wonderful women who shared their stories with me, thank you, I am in awe of you all.
Abstract

This study investigates the experiences of eight participants whose mothers had been institutionalised as children in Australia. In particular, I have focussed on the daughters of Child Migrants, migrant children who had been brought to Australia and placed into institutional care under the British Child Migration Scheme, in the years immediately preceding and proceeding the Second World War.

In 2001, the Australian government handed down the findings of the inquiry into the Child Migrants who had been sent out to Australia under the British/Australian child migration arrangements. The report, The Lost Innocents: Righting the Record, Report on Child Migration, (Australian Government, 2001) acknowledged that many of the Child Migrants who had been placed into the care of the Australian government had been subjected to a harsh and at times, brutal existence in Australian institutions. The investigation recognised that for some, it had been a positive experience. In 2004, another government report: The Forgotten Australians, (Australian Government, 2004) investigated the experiences of children who, for a variety of reasons, had been placed in out-of-home care in Australia during the 20th Century. This inquiry also found that institutional life for many of these children had been difficult and that their experiences had had negative impacts on their lives. In 2005, Murray and Rock in their report; Legacy of Growing Up In Care in 20th Century Australia, concluded that many of the hundreds of thousands of children who had been placed into the care of government authorities throughout 20th Century Australia, had been damaged both physically and emotionally by their incarceration.

It is clear from the aforementioned investigations, that the lives of those in institutional care in Australia have been profoundly influenced by their institutional experiences. What is not so clear, is the impact of their experiences on the next generation. Whilst many of the submissions provided to the government inquiries included stories about
the overwhelming regret of not being able to parent well and the fear that they had damaged their own children, investigations about children of Care-Leavers, particularly children of British Child Migrants, are minimal. This qualitative study makes an original contribution to the literature on the generational impact of institutionalisation and furthers the narrative of the British Child Migrant. Findings from the study are reported through portraits of the eight participant’s education, working lives, religious and sporting involvement as well as their family relationships and networks.
Glossary

**Child Migration**: refers to the practice of sending orphaned and/or underprivileged children, between the ages of four and fourteen, from the United Kingdom to Australia. The practice of sending children to Australia from England began in 1788 with the arrival of the first boatload of child convicts (Holden, 1999) but in this study the time line of Child Migration refers to the interwar years of WW 1 and WW 2 and the post war years of 1948-55 (Child Migrant Trust, 2010).

**British Child Migrant/ Child Migrant**: a child sent to Australia under the British Child Migrant Scheme. The children who were sent out during these years were not necessarily orphans but children who had been placed in care for a variety of reasons. Many of the children had come from single parent families, were illegitimate, or from very poor families who simply couldn't look after them (Coldrey, 1993; Gill, 1998; Humphries, 1994).

**Care-Leavers**: children who were placed into institutional and other forms of out-of-home care (care). This includes; Child Migrants, children who were sent to Australia under the British Child Migrant Scheme up until 1970, Forgotten Australians, people who spent a period of time as children in children's homes, orphanages and government reserves and private accommodation up until 1989 (Care Leaver Network of Australia, 2014).

‘**Aunties**’: these are the women who were in the orphanage with the mothers of the participants. The ‘Aunties’ are not necessarily blood relatives but are considered part of their mother’s family.

‘**The Girls**’: The collective name used by the ‘Aunties’ when referring to the women from the orphanage.

**NI**: Narrative Inquiry
UK: United Kingdom
WA: Western Australia
WW1: World War 1
WW2: World War 2
Years 11 & 12: The last two years of secondary school in Australia, equivalent to 4th and 5th year high school when most of the participants this study attended high school.
PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
CPR: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
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Chapter 1

1.0 Aim

The aim of this study is to explore through interviews, documents and artefacts, the narratives of a group of women whose mothers were British Child Migrants, (also known as Care-Leavers) institutionalised in orphanages in Western Australia. This investigation seeks to find out how their mothers’ incarceration in a ‘Total Institution’ (Goffman, 1961) impacted upon the lives of the participants. In particular, I investigate how their mother’s institutionalisation impacted upon the participant’s acquisition of social capital, their educational achievements and their identities. To understand their experiences, I have posed two questions.

1. What are the life experiences of women whose mothers was institutionalised in an Australian orphanage?

2. How did growing up with a mother who had been institutionalised in her childhood, impact on their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, education and identity?

Narratives of children of British Child Migrants and other Care-Leavers, appear to be largely absent from current literature and indeed, the influence of parental institutionalisation upon female children in Australia is relatively unexplored. This study will add specifically to the knowledge and literature on the generational influences of institutionalisation and add more broadly to the body of knowledge on the generational legacy of the British Child Migrant Scheme.

1.1 Background

This study stemmed from my personal interest in the subject. My mother was among the first group of British Child Migrants who arrived in Perth, Western Australia in September 1947 on the SS Asturias. On her arrival she was placed into St John’s orphanage under the care of the Catholic Church, where she remained until she was
eighteen. Throughout my childhood, I had listened to my mother and her fellow Child Migrants, the ‘Aunties’, tell their stories about life in the orphanage. As a small child, listening to the laughter and humour that accompanied these stories, I had conjured up an image of a fun-filled place where children were free to run around barefoot, play games and who all slept together in a great big bedroom. This vision was reinforced on my yearly visit to the orphanage for the annual fete in September. Dressed in my finery, I would be paraded before the nuns who had looked after my mother and then I would be set free to explore the stalls and the playground and meet up with the children of the ‘Aunties’, whom I knew as my cousins. My other contact with the orphanage was when I would accompany my mother there to play bingo on a regular basis. This was always a pleasurable experience for me, especially if I was lucky enough to have a win, but it was also an opportunity for my mother to visit with ‘The Girls’ from the orphanage. This regular contact with the orphanage was simply a normal part of my life and the positive experiences that I enjoyed there on my visits never gave me reason to think that the orphanage might be anything but a nice place in which to grow up. In the 1990s, however, I began to hear stories about the ill treatment of children in Australian orphanages and a particular group of which I became aware of was that of the British Child Migrants.

In 1987, Margaret Humphreys, a social worker from Nottingham England brought to the world’s attention the story of how the English and Australian governments, had arranged for thousands of children to be shipped out to Australia to help repopulate the country after WW2. Initial disbelief in both the UK and Australia soon gave way, as stories about the abusive treatment of children in the orphanages began to trickle into the public arena. Then, as if society had granted permission, the floodgates opened, and thousands of former Child Migrants and Care-Leavers began to
speak up and tell the stories of their lives in the institutions they had been sent to on arrival in Australia. As the narrative of the Child Migrants began to be explored in an open and public manner, I had the dawning realisation that my mother had been one of those children. It also became clear that the orphanage my mother had been sent to had not been the happy place I had envisioned. Although my mother had died by this time, I was still in contact with my ‘Aunties’ and turned to them for more information. I recalled the conversation with one of the ‘Aunties’ when I rang her to confirm that they had in fact been Child Migrants. On asking; “Were you all child migrants?” my straight-talking ‘Auntie’ answered “Of course we bloody were, what did you think we were?” On reflection, I should have been able to piece it together much earlier than I did, after all, the signs had been there; The Welsh national anthem, the Irish songs at all the gatherings and the talk of ‘going back’, should have given me an inkling.

Once I had established that this was the case I became curious about my mother’s life and the circumstances that led to her being sent out to Australia. I duly contacted the relevant Catholic authorities and arranged a meeting to try and access her records. At the meeting, I was told that all records of the Child Migrants had unfortunately been burned in a catastrophic fire and that I would be unable to find any records pertaining to my mother’s time at the orphanage. Fortunately, the government authorities were able to provide me with some official documents about her arrival in Australia and I began to piece together my mother’s story.

As I familiarised myself with the available information about the Child Migrants, themes of abuse within the institutions and cover-ups of the harsh and at times, brutal conditions that the children had been raised in became commonplace. I also realised that there appeared to be a good many fires in which precious records had been destroyed. It was however, the stories of the horrific sexual, emotional and physical
abuse by the Christian Brothers at Bindoon Boy’s Home in Western Australia (McClellan, 2014; Broken Rites Australia, 2018) that led me to wonder what may have happened to mother and my ‘Aunties’ during their time at the girl’s orphanage. This in turn motivated me to undertake a study in which I documented the stories of some of the women from St John’s orphanage in Perth (Western Australia), and gave them a voice in the Child Migrant narrative (Parker, 2013).

The ‘Aunties’ had been only too happy to speak out about their time at St John’s, their stories and experiences providing a first-hand account of life inside the orphanage. Their stories described an existence in which they remembered their lives being filled with hardship, sadness and brutality with intermittent bright spots. One of their saddest experiences for many of the women, however, was when they left the orphanage. The ‘Aunties’ recalled being released from the orphanage when they were about sixteen years of age. They explained that once a job had been organised for them by the Catholic Welfare society, they would leave the confines of the orphanage and were sent to live in the homes of Catholic families. Most of the women recalled that their lack of knowledge about the processes and systems of the outside world resulted in a variety of challenges for the women. Some recalled being exploited and abused by the families they were sent to, while others entered into unsuitable relationships because they were fearful of being alone. One ‘Auntie’ joined the convent simply because she was too fearful to leave the security of the orphanage. After hearing their stories and their trials on leaving the orphanage, I wondered how their experiences may have affected their children. It was this thought that has led me to conduct this study.

1.2 Significance of the study

In this study I collect and examine information about the lived experience of eight women whose mothers had been institutionalised in orphanages in Western Australia.
At the time of writing, this study appears to be the first to focus on the second generation of British Child Migrants. The study is significant because it builds an understanding of the impact that institutionalisation may have upon second generation family members, specifically in this case, the daughters of female British Child Migrant Care-Leavers. The study investigates how the experiences of institutionalised mothers, may have shaped their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, their sense of identity and the impact it may have had upon the educational, economic and social choices of the women.

Information gleaned from this study adds to the knowledge of social capital, in particular, the influence of primary and reference groups in the formation of an individual’s self-perception, and the need for an individual to access a variety of social networks, experiences and interactions, in order to acquire adequate and relevant social understanding and social skills (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Moody & Paxton, 2009; Rainie & Wellman 2012).

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of ten chapters. The current chapter provides an explanation of the aims and significance of the research and locates it in its historical context. Chapter two presents a critical review of relevant literature consulted over the course of the research. Chapter three provides an explanation of the theoretical framework and discussion of the methodology and research design used in the study. Chapter four provides a portraiture of the participants and their mothers. In chapters five to seven, I present the findings of the study and in chapter eight I present the analysis of the findings. In chapter nine I present my conclusion of the study, its limitations and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In 2014, when this study commenced, literature searches for studies or information on the intergenerational effects on British Child Migrants generated only one reference, this being: the personal submissions of a handful of children of British Child Migrants who had given evidence to the Senate enquiry into the Forgotten Australians (Australian Government, 2004). In 2018 another search of the academic databases has not yet yielded any further literature that reports on intergenerational issues pertaining to British Child Migrants.

This chapter reviews literature on the relevant areas of my study. In order to situate the study in a historical and social context, I present literature pertaining to the issue of child migration in Australia through the British Child Migrant (BCM) scheme. I then investigate the literature on the intergenerational transmission of trauma, and theories of social capital, and identity.

2.1 Child Migrants

In researching the literature on the British Child Migrant scheme, I have drawn upon the seminal writings of Bean and Melville (1989), Coldrey (1993), Gill (1998), Hill (2007) and Humphreys (1994). These particular authors are influential writers on the subject and have been significant forces in bringing the experiences of Child Migrants to the forefront of Australia’s consciousness. After the initial publications of texts from the aforementioned authors in the 1990s, subsequent literature published about Child Migrants appear to be mainly situated in the personal memoirs, government reports, particularly from the findings of the Senate investigations into the treatment of children in care in Australia, and some academic research (Australian Government, 2001; Budd, 2010; Hawkins, 2014). Information has also been gleaned from the Child Migrants themselves who, through their personal submissions to Senate inquiries provided an insight into the incarceration and
institutionalisation of children in government care in 20th century Australia. Literature which focusses on discussions of social, economic and political determinants of child migration to and in Australia (Constantine, 2002; Lynch 2016; Sherrington, 2012) has also been investigated.

The volume of literature reviewed in this part of the thesis provides a balanced insight between individual experiences as well as the historical and political background of the British Child Migrant scheme under which the mothers of the participants in this study, were sent to Australia. It also affords an in-depth understanding of the social and personal issues surrounding the individuals who were directly affected by the British Custody of Children Act 1891, that allowed the British Government to provide funds for private organisations’ migrant programmes, and the Australian (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 which granted control of unaccompanied child migrants in Australia to the Minister of Immigration (Coldrey & NAA 1999). What has been missing from the literature, however, is in-depth research of the effects of the child migrant’s institutionalisation upon their own children.

2.1.1 A Brief History of Child Migration in Australia

Non-Indigenous Australia has had a long history of child migration. Since the arrival of the British settlers in 1788 with their first group of convict children, government authorities in both England and Australia supported the practice of sending children to Australia almost unabated until the early 1970s. It should be noted that Child migration was suspended during WW1 and while there was no Catholic migration in the 1920s (Coldrey, 1999) youth migration, those children over 14 years of age, did recommence at this time with youth migrants being sent to Australia through the Fairbridge society and the Barnardos organisation (Coldrey, 1999; Constantine, 2002; Sherrington, 2012).

In Western Australia, where this study took place, child migrants have been arriving since 1834, when the Children’s Friends Society, based in London, sent seventy-
one children to the Swan River settlement, now Western Australia, and ended in the early 1970s (Rosser, 2002; Wagner, 1982). While early shipments of children prior to the second World War was done in to forge a stronger empire, to provide labour for the colonies and to rescue children from the grinding poverty that many endured, the post war migration focussed more on the need to repopulate Australia, provide a future labour force and to increase religious populations, particularly in the Catholic church (Child Migrant Trust, 2016; Coldrey, 1999; Gill, 1998; Rosser, 2002 Sherrington, 2012).

2.1.2 Post War Child Migrants

Coldrey (1999) says that the ‘last phase’ of Child migration was in the post war era of WW2 when children were sent from the UK and Malta. This is the era that the seven out of the eight mothers in this study were sent out to Australia.

In the years following WW2 the Australian government’s message was to ‘*Populate or Perish*’ (National Library of Australia, [NLA] 2018). While the Australian government looked to Europe and the United Kingdom for potential migrants to help repopulate Australia, one group of immigrants, that of children, were actively sought out by the Australian government. ‘*The child, the best immigrant*’ became the government’s mantra, as children were considered malleable, cheap and would assimilate easily into the Australian way of life. It was considered by the Chifley government of 1945 that healthy white children from the United Kingdom could provide a labour force for the immediate and long-term future of Australia, this being a viable and inexpensive way to repopulate the diminished population of the country (Coldrey, 1999; Gill, 1998; Zubrzycki, 1995).

There is some dispute as to the number of BCMs who came to Australia during the post WW2 era. Lynch (2016) states that more than 3170 children were sent from the UK. Coldrey, (1999) estimates the number to be between 3500 and 4000. The Child Migrant Trust (2010) estimated the number of children sent to Australia during this period to be anywhere
between 7000 and 10 000 with Gill (1998) suggesting that this number may be much higher. Due to the lack of methodical record keeping by many of the institutions responsible for the BCMs and the difficulty of government to keep tabs on the many non-government organisations at the time, the exact number of children to arrive in Australia in the post war years is debateable (Australian Government, 2001; Constantine, 2002).

There is general agreement in the child migrant literature that the Child Migrant Scheme was considered necessary for Australia’s economic and social future and that the policy had bipartisan support as well as widespread public support (Coldrey, 1999; Gill, 1998).

Figure 1: The British Child Migrant scheme was popular among the Australian Community (Alliance for Forgotten Australians, 2011).
Figure 2. British child migrants on board one of the many ships that made the journey from the UK to Australia during the inter-war and post WW2 years
Figure 3. The female children who arrived on the Asturias in 1947 stand for a group photo at Fremantle Harbour in Western Australia. The girls in this photo were sent to St John’s in Perth (Alliance for Forgotten Australians, 2011).

Because the notion of child migration was well ingrained in Australia’s history, there was little opposition to such a scheme. In fact, it was touted by the government as the saviour to Australia’s population issues and embraced by most parts of the community (Gill, 1998).

One of the few voices of opposition at the time came from John Pittard, Director of the Child Welfare Department in Victoria. According to records from the Australian Archives (A446, 1960/66717), Pittard opposed the policy of bringing 50,000 child
migrants to Australia. He saw many practical problems in its implementation and cited cases where British child migrants, such as those who arrived in Australia under the pre-WW2 Fairbridge farm school scheme, later bitterly resented the fact that they had been sent to Australia in a more or less compulsory manner. However, his opposition to the plan was ignored, as the government, with support from the opposition and the major welfare organisations, implemented the policy and began the task of transporting the children to Australia.

It was not only Pittard who had concerns. The British government had received the Curtis report in 1946 which recommended a ‘best practice’ model of care for all children in care. It recommended trying to keep children with their natural parents or family members if possible. If this could not be achieved then institutional care should be carried out in small group homes where children could be looked after by married couples in neighbourhoods. The less palatable option was the barrack institutions where children slept in large dormitories and ate in large dining areas, a model which most of the BCMs were sent to live in Australia. Australia lagged behind in implementing the recommendations of the Curtis Report and it wasn’t until the 1970s that Australia did away with large institutions altogether (Rosser, 2002). The Moss report (1953) and the Ross Report (1956) both identified a variety of concerns and recommended reforms to the institutional care of BCMs in Australia; a major concern being that of the isolation of children from their community (Constantine, 2001).

On arrival in Australia, the children were placed in to the care of a variety of institutions that included the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, Dr Barnardo’s Homes and the Fairbridge Society. Proportionately, it appears that the majority of children were, placed in the care of the Catholic Church during this period (Coldrey, 1999; Coldrey, 1993; Lynch, 2016).
For those children who were sent to many of the Catholic orphanages and other privately run institutions, their existence within the walls of the homes was total, that is, they never left the orphanage grounds for any length of time that would provide them the opportunity to have meaningful experiences outside the institutions (Ross Report, 1956; Parker, 2013; Penglase, 2007). The Ross report (1956) cited the isolation of many of the institutions and reported that children within many of those institutions had no interactions with the world outside and identified a lack of freedom of thought and actions within the homes (Constantine, 2002).

Children who were cared for by the Barnardos Homes or the Salvation Army, usually attended the local government school during the day, and although many of them remembered their experiences as humiliating because of the stigma of being an ‘orphanage child’, the experience of going to school outside the institution provided a basic understanding and interaction of life in the outside world (Budd, 2010; Hill, 2007; Parker, 2013).

As was the historical custom of child welfare in Australia at the time, responsibility for the care of the Child Migrants fell primarily to the religious and voluntary organisations (Fogarty, 2008; Rosser, 2002). The Australian government did, however, contribute to capital expenditure and both Commonwealth and State governments provided funds for the ongoing running costs of the homes. The governments of the United Kingdom and Malta also contributed financially to the institutions (Coldrey, 1993).

The children brought to Australia had, for the most part, come from institutions in the United Kingdom (Child Migrant Trust, 2017). As attested in the writings of Gill, (1998) Hill, (2007) and Humphreys (1994), the children were given little choice in the matter and in some cases were sent here without their family’s knowledge (Child Migrant Trust, 2017). Others, though, were sent to Australia with the written permission of family relatives (Hill, 2007).
However, the conditions and opportunities articulated to the children and families did not materialise when they arrived in Australia. A former Child Migrant explains;

I was told I would ride on horseback to school and pick fruit from the trees. We were going to enjoy life. We lived in constant fear of being flogged or molested. We had no dignity or self-esteem. I would cry my eyes out at night and wonder what I had ever done to deserve such treatment when I had committed no crime. We were told we were the sons of whores, the lowest form of humanity (Costa, as quoted in Rhodes, 2015).

Many former Child Migrants remember the promise of loving families, good food and freedom in their new country but the reality of the situation on arrival, was that the children were sent to large institutions where they remained until they were old enough to be sent to work (Bean & Melville, 1989; Budd, 2010; Gill, 1988; Hawkins & Briggs, 1997; Penglase, 2007).

It is now a common but recent understanding of the Australian public that a great deal of abuse took place within the confines of Australian institutions in 20th century Australia. Since 1994, when Margaret Humphreys first brought the plight of these children to the attention of the Australian public, in her book Empty Cradles (1994), the story of the Child Migrant has continued to emerge. As these stories come to light it has become clear that those experiences have had far-reaching effects on the former child migrants. What is not clear is the lasting legacy of their experiences on their families and on Australian society in general.

Sherrington (2012) argues that to engage effectively with the narrative of the BCM we must understand how the narrative of loss which has permeated the contemporary child migrant story as opposed to the historical narrative of rescue and regeneration, is part of the
changing contexts of the BCM narrative. This study, the first to explore the impact of institutionalisation of BCM upon their children begins the next part of the story, *The narrative of intergenerational impact.*

2.2 Total Institution

This study focuses on eight participants whose mothers were placed in a total institution, so it is necessary to define the term total institution. In his text *Asylums*, Goffman (1961) asserts the main aim of the institution is to provide for the needs of large groups of people who are subjected to bureaucratic control. He proposes that ‘total institutionalism’ is found when all aspects of life are conducted in the same place under one authority. Daily activities are in the immediate company of others, all phases of the day are scheduled and enforced activities are designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution (Goffman, 1961). This concept, according to Goffman, usually excludes orphanages because of the ability of the children to become socialised through a cultural osmosis, but it is within this very framework of total institutionalisation, that thousands of Australian and migrant children were incarcerated (Australian Government, 2001; Bean & Melville 1989; Penglase, 2007).

While there have been criticisms of Goffman’s study of asylums, they appear to have been more about his portrayal of mental institutions and the role that institutions have in the lives of the mentally ill and not about the definition of what a Total Institution constitutes (Weinstein, 1994). In this study, the definition of a Total Institutionalism is used as it reflects the conditions under which the mothers of the participants lived.

In 21st century Australia, the term ‘institution’ appears to be used pejoratively to describe the places of government care into which children were placed in Australia in the 20th century. Investigations into the lives of children who were placed into the care of the state and religious agencies during this time period have found that for many of them, life in the institutions was an existence of brutality and sadness (Australian Government, 2001).
It is clear from the writings of Hill (2007), Penglase (2007) and reports such as *No Child Should Grow Up Like This: Identifying Long Term Outcomes of Forgotten Australians, Child Migrants and the Stolen Generations.* (Fernandez, Blunden, McNamara, Kovacs, & Cornefert, 2016), that institutional life for large proportion of children was a traumatic experience. It is the submissions from Care-Leavers to the Australian Senate inquiry; *The Investigation into Children in Institutional Care* which was made accessible to the public through the *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children* (Australian Government, 2004), however, that have been significant in understanding the short and long-term effects of the experiences endured in care facilities in 20th century Australia.

*The Investigation into Children in Institutional Care* inquiry heard hundreds of stories of abuse and neglect of children in the government sanctioned institutions and it is clear that the very institutions that were supposed to care for them failed miserably. In their submissions to the Senate inquiry the Care-Leavers spoke of the lifelong negative and destructive effect that institutional life had upon their own lives and voiced their regrets and concerns about the negative effects their experiences had upon their own families. Having few positive adult role models or nurturing relationships as children, many of the Care-Leavers found the challenge of family life overwhelming and continue to struggle with familial relationships and parenting. The following quotes highlight some of these struggles:

> I find I have immense problems with parenting. Not only am I utterly bereft of experience from which to guide my parenting, I find it difficult to give my children affection, nurturing and positive reinforcement of the people they are becoming. (Sub 28, Australian Government, 2004, p. 149)
The other thing I want to say is that institutionalisation has a multigenerational effect. My mother was institutionalised with the Sisters of Mercy. My father was in one of those institutions where they worked on a farm, and he was horrendously abused. My daughter is the first in three generations to stay with her mum. It has been a constant struggle for me, and she will have effects and does have effects. She is 21, and I am beginning to see the effects of having a parent like me. (Sub 341, Australian Government, 2004 p. 152)

I don’t know how to show my family, especially my own children how I feel about them. I can’t put my arms around them and tell them I love them and most of my married life I can’t stand being touched. (Sub 107 Australian Government, 2004p.148)

One of the most disturbing aspects of this inquiry is the impact on the ability to successfully parent and raise families. The denial of role models, and the experience of a loving, nurturing family life has resulted in many Care-Leavers being ineffective parents. (Sub 285, Australian Government, 2004 p. 148)

Submissions from children of Care-Leavers also contributed their thoughts and experiences of the impact on their own lives.

Growing up as a child is hard enough as it is but when you have a parent that has been exposed to so much evil, torture, both physical
and mental abuse your life is that much harder.” (Sub 261, Australian Government, 2004 p. 151)

Because she herself hadn’t been allowed to develop through constant abuse by the nuns that she was “The bastard scum of the earth” and only fit for domestic labour, so we too were discouraged from rising above our station. (Sub 195, Australian Government, 2004 p. 152)

It is clear from the quotes above, that for many Care-Leavers the emotional and physical damage sustained in institutions has impacted negatively on the next generation. It is estimated that around 250,000 children were institutionalised in 20th century Australia and as a result, it is possible that at least two and half million Australian’s lives have been touched by institutionalised children (Murray & Rock, 2003). This number is also suggested by the (Australian Government, 2004) in the Forgotten Australians report, but it goes further in suggesting that "It is highly likely that every Australian either was, is related to, works with or knows someone who experienced childhood in an institution or out-of-home care environment” (p. xv). Of the quarter of a million children who were institutionalised during this period approximately 7000 of these children were British Child Migrants.

The ripple effect on the subsequent generations is only just being acknowledged through inquiries such as the Australian Government (2004) enquiry and more recently the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [RCIRCSA] (2017) which identified the generational impact of institutional abuse.

In addition to affecting the victim, child sexual abuse has ripple effects that reach a wider network of people, including the victim’s
family, carers and friends…These ripple effects can be long-lasting, even affecting future generations. (RCIRCSA, 2017 p. 10)

The narratives of the second generation in this study will add to the knowledge and understanding of the generational effects of institutionalisation.

2.3 Generational Transmission Trauma

It is clear from the literature above, that the children who were sent to Australia under the BCM scheme experienced some measure of trauma as a result of being brought to Australian institutions. In this study, I investigate how the traumatic events and experiences of eight female British Child Migrants impacted on the lives of their daughters.

The concept of transference of trauma from one generation to the next was first identified in the 1960s. Intergenerational trauma is the theory that trauma can be directly or indirectly passed down from one generation to another (Danieli, 1981; Dass-Brailsford, 2007; deMendelsshon 2008; Lev–Wiesel 2007). Sometimes called secondary, generational or transgenerational trauma, it can be the result of any number of traumatic experiences (Doucet & Rovers, 2010). The first systematic study of the transmission of trauma can be traced to Danieli, (1981) in her seminal work with the survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. She found that for a variety of reasons survivors had never spoken of their personal trauma of the Holocaust and as result of that silence the withheld trauma was sometimes transferred to the children. Since her ground-breaking work there has been a considerable amount of literature written on the transmission of generational trauma. Central to that research is how the trauma is transferred to the next generation and how it is construed by that generation (de Mendelssohn 2008; Doucet & Rovers, 2010).

Extensive amounts of literature on the intergenerational transmission of trauma and the effect that trauma has upon the individual, has been located in the psycho-analysis discipline and the effect that trauma has upon the individual. While this is important in the
context of understanding the individual’s experiences, psycho-analysis does not necessarily consider the sociocultural dimensions of trauma. Conversely, sociology has not necessarily dealt with the individual idea of the ‘self’, which is moulded by social experiences (Prager, 2003). To understand how a parent’s trauma influences their children, Prager, (2003) suggests that the disciplines of sociology and psychology need to come together as a single discourse in order to study the topic. A more integrative approach is needed in the study of intergenerational transmission of trauma and that the use of psychodynamic, sociocultural, family system, and biological factors are necessary in the research of generational transmission of trauma (Kellerman, 2001).

How trauma is transmitted from one generation to the next can be found in the works of Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson, (2010) and Kellerman, (2001) but central to their perspectives is that trauma can be transferred both subconsciously and consciously. It is also generally agreed that if traumatic experiences were talked about, repetition of the trauma would be less severe or may disappear, however this might not be possible for everyone because the horror of trauma at times cannot be articulated (de Mendelsshon, 2008; Levine-Wiesal, 2007). The analysis of the transmission of trauma in this study has been conducted through the examination of the participant’s social and individual contexts, thus bringing together the two aspects recommended by Prager (2003) in a unique study.

2.4 Historical Trauma

In recent times, some academic research has focused on the historical transmission of trauma upon the wellbeing of whole groups of people and cultures. Historical trauma is defined as the subjective experiencing and remembering of events in the mind of an individual or the life of a community, passed from adults to children in cyclic processes (Atkinson et.al., 2010 p. 138). For historical trauma to be present the trauma must be experienced by a group of people over multiple generations and it must result in the current
generation experiencing affects of traumatic events of the past (Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014). Historical trauma can be present on multiple levels including the individual, the family and the community (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Historical trauma in Australia is often associated with the trauma inflicted upon Indigenous peoples through colonisation and the subsequent loss of culture. The associated loss of land, the forcible removal of children from families and policies that outlawed the use of languages and ceremonies have been identified as being significant factors in explaining the deeply entrenched cycles of trauma in Indigenous Australian communities (Atkinson, 2002; Atkinson, et al., 2010; Elias, Mignone, Hall, Hong, Hart, & Sareen, 2012; McLeod & Thomson, 2009; Menzies, 2005; Muid, 2004). Similarly, research into the generational effects of genocide, citing the experiences of people in Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia, have also identified the generational effects of trauma upon the second and third generations (de Mendelssohn, 2008; Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008; Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014; Weingarten, 2004). These findings of these studies have been used to examine the extent of historical trauma that has been passed down to the second generation of Child Migrants.

The research into intergenerational trauma with respect to groups of people and cultures is a relatively new area of research but much of the literature has demonstrated that the impact of trauma of one generation, may be passed down to the next. A study by Elias et al., (2012) investigated to what extent, if any, the traumatic experiences of Indigenous groups of North America who had been institutionalised in the Indian residential school system of Canada, had impacted on the next generations. After researching the members of four generations who went through the school, the researchers concluded that there were indirect and direct generational effects that could be linked to the historical trauma of the residents. The separation of children from their families and culture had resulted in the loss of the necessary cultural and social capital needed in the world outside the college and this
separation interrupted the transmission of Indigenous knowledge to subsequent generations. As a result, many of the residents of these schools suffered from a variety of emotional and social problems (Elias, et al., 2012; Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014).

A similar study on homeless Aboriginal Peoples of North America, *Orphans within our family: Intergenerational trauma and homeless Aboriginal men* (Menzies, 2005) found similar generational trauma amongst Aboriginal families, he explains: *The cumulative impact of trauma experienced by both children and their parents as a result of Canada’s residential school policy continues to have consequences for subsequent generations of children.* (Menzies, 2005 p 71)

Elias et al., (2012) were careful to point out that their study of the residential school system was the first study of its’ kind to be conducted in this particular area of research, but their results appear similar to those undertaken in Australia. In her ‘traumagram’, which examined six generations of Australian Aboriginal Peoples, Atkinson, (2002) was able to link unresolved trauma, the result of government interventions and policy, and its negative impact upon subsequent generations. This is backed up in the work of Atkinson, et al., (2010) which suggests that some Indigenous communities in Australia suffer from “*dysfunctional community syndrome*”, (p. 135), a result of generational trauma.

The impact of generational trauma is also evident in an Australian investigation by the Human Rights Commission into the impacts of the Stolen Generations (forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families) whose findings were reported in the "*Bringing them Home - The Report*" (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997) as illustrated in the following statement:

> There's things in my life that I haven't dealt with and I've passed them on to my children. Gone to pieces. Anxiety attacks. I've passed this on to my kids. I know for a fact if you go and knock at their door they
run and hide. I look at my son today who had to be taken away because he was going to commit suicide because he can't handle it; he just can't take any more of the anxiety attacks that he and Karen have. I have passed that on to my kids because I haven't dealt with it. How do you deal with it? How do you sit down and go through all those years of abuse? Somehow I'm passing down negativity to my kids (Confidential evidence 284, South Australia. *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997*).

I have six children. My kids have been through what I went through. They've been placed. The psychological effects that it had on me as a young child also affected me as a mother with my children. I've put my children in Bomaderry Children's Home when they were little. History repeating itself. (Confidential evidence 284, South Australia. *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997*).

The quotes above reflect the trauma of institutional life on the individual Care-Leavers and reflects the deep angst and guilt they harbour about the negative impact of their trauma on the lives of their children.

In their research on children of holocaust survivors Weiss and Weiss, (2000) used the term “Memory Candles” (p. 373) to describe children who carry their parent’s trauma of being a holocaust survivor. In studies of children of survivors, the transmission of trauma can manifest itself in anxiety, emotional attachment issues and inhibition of feelings (Rosenthal, 2011). In their study of female child survivors of the holocaust and their daughters, Sagi-Schwartz, Van IJzendoorn, Grossmann, Joels, Grossmann, Scharf, Alkalay (2003) found that the mothers had been able to protect their daughters from the trauma by never speaking of
their experiences. This silence blocked the transmission of their individual trauma to the next generation. Lijtmaer (2017), in her study on how the memories of one generation can impact on the next, argued that remaining silent about trauma can impact negatively on the children of survivors and suggested that sharing the trauma with children can help them develop a greater resilience, and to deal more effectively with situations and events that may cause anxiety and fear. In this study, the participants had only glimpses into their mothers’ institutional experiences and this proved to have both positive and negative impacts on the participants.

There have been hundreds of papers written on the generational trauma of holocaust survivors and it appears a myriad of reasons have been suggested for how it is transmitted or if indeed it is transmitted (Kellerman, 2013; Sagi-Schwartz et al., 2003; Van Ijzendoorn, 2005) and trying to establish a connection between or across generations can be problematic. Traumatic experiences are located in the social and historical context of the individual’s life and memory but remembering those traumas in a present-day context may lead to different meanings and understandings of the trauma (Lev-Wiesel, 2007).

The literature on the transmission of historical trauma is becoming more extensive, but what is missing from the current literature is research on the generational effects that institutions such as orphanages and government care facilities, have had upon the second generation, the children of those who were institutionalised. In the case of my study there is no known research on the second generation of British Child Migrants in Australia other than a handful of submissions provided to the Australian government from children of Care-Leavers (Australian Government, 2001). While the process of the transmission of trauma remains the focus of much research, it is clear from the literature that trauma experienced by an individual or group can contribute to a child’s sense of self and their generational identity. The understanding of traumatic events and experiences by the participants in this study has
been explained from their historical and social position as the children of British Child Migrants.

In the context of this study, the topic of the British Child Migrant is reasonably fresh in the minds of the Australian public and for many children of these people it may be the first time their parents have been able to articulate their experiences and may be the first time the children can examine their own experiences in light of this information. What is clear though, is that the profound sense of trauma of many child migrants has now become part of the Australian narrative and the impact upon the second generation is yet to be understood.

2.5 Social Capital Theory

The application of social capital theory in this study, will be used in the examination of the social networks that the participants in this study have had available to them. I investigated how the interactions and relationships within those networks impacted on the personal, social and professional aspects of the participant’s lives. The decision to use social capital as a theoretical framework in this study can be found in an earlier study that I completed in 2013. In that study of female BCMs, in which I interviewed them about their lives in an Australian institution, one of the major themes that had emerged was the lack of social capital that the women had had on leaving the institution. Hence, life outside the institution had been challenging, frightening and alien to many of the participants and impacted negatively on their economic and social interactions (Parker, 2013). In this subsequent study I explore whether the lack of social capital that many Care Leavers have identified as a negative aspect in their lives (Australian Government, 2004; Parker, 2013; Penglase, 2007) has impacted on the next generation. I wanted to examine the impact of different social and community networks on the participants lives and to see how these networks impacted on the participant’s social, economic and educational outcomes.
Social capital refers to the resources that are vested in an individual through the relationships of a myriad of networks and results in a range of social outcomes (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Héauberer, 2011). Theorists identify two categories of social capital: 1) bridging and 2) bonding (Putnam, 2000; Rainie & Wellman 2012). Bonding social capital describes the groups of people who have shared values, resources and demography. These groups are made up of family, close friends and neighbours (Claridge, 2018). Bridging social capital is capital that derives from relationships that link people from various and differing walks of life, through shared interests or goals. Bonding social capital occurs within exclusive groups and is often associated with survival as opposed to development. Bridging social capital enables people to acquire social capital to move between groups (Pelling, & High, 2005).

Table 1 Characteristics of Bridging and Bonding SC. Adapted from What is bonding social capital. Claridge (2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bonding Social Capital</th>
<th>Bridging Social capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the group/family/village</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed networks</td>
<td>Open networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong ties</td>
<td>Weak Ties</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I have employed the concept of social capital to inform the data analysis in this study because it provides a framework with which to examine how the social world is produced and reproduced through institutional and relational structures. The framework allows for the exploration of the individual within those structures and offers an understanding of how structural networks contribute to the construction of identity, social development and
educational achievement. It also provides an insight into how individuals can access different networks and relationships in order to overcome factors that may lead to inequality within the wider society (Field, 2016). The application of the concept of social capital, specifically the ideas of Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) inform the analysis of data gathered from the participants in this study. The findings contribute to the discussion of the acquisition, accumulation and transmission of social capital through social and relationship networks.

2.5.1. Historical Lens of Social Capital

The term ‘social capital’, was first explored by Hanifan in 1916, however it did not become part of a wider academic discourse until the influential writings of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam in the 1970s and 1980s (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 2000; Farr, 2004; Ferragina, & Arrigoni, 2017; Field, 2016; Tzanakis, 2013).

Bourdieu (1980; 1986) locates his concept of social capital in the understanding of the reproduction of inequality, while Coleman’s concept is located in the “structure of relations between actors and among actors” (Coleman, 1988, p. 98). Both Coleman and Bourdieu agree that social capital benefits society. Their theories on the nature of social capital differ in the way each sees the formation of social capital. For example, Coleman views social capital as structural and family centred as opposed to Bourdieu’s more institutionally focused ideas (Hèauberer, 2011; Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016). Coleman posits that social capital is not just valuable for the elite social hierarchies as suggested by Bourdieu but has value in all communities including those who are poor and marginalised (Gauntlet, 2011). Central to both perspectives however, is the notion that relations are important, and they matter, as they provide networks and interactions in which social capital is learned.

In the Forms of Capital (1986), Bourdieu uses social capital to explain the inequalities in society. He argues that social capital inculcates and maintains the power and position of the elite classes through the exclusion of other groups. He explains that; “Social capital is the
'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986, p. 249).

Hence, the exchange of resources within that network not only provides capital for the individual but also works to ensure useful support when necessary, thus, relationships within these structures create a stable and supportive environment for its members (Bourdieu, 1986).

The networks to which people belong, are maintained and reproduced through societal institutions such as marriage and schools and through these symbolic institutions, networks are reinforced to maintain social hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, the networks we are born into, while providing and reinforcing the social capital necessary to negotiate one’s own class, excludes the possibility of breaking out of that class or allowing others in.

Bourdieu’s theory of social capital can be seen as a circulatory theory in that privileged individuals maintain their positions through connections and networks with other privileged people (Field, 2016). He explains that the obligations that are reinforced through symbolic actions in the social network to which one belongs, can provide opportunities for the conversion of economic capital into cultural capital, an important factor in the acquisition of social capital. Cultural capital is the product of the time and effort that is invested in individuals by their primary and reference groups. When one has attained the necessary cultural capital, they can then reinvest that capital into their family and networks, thus inculcating them with the necessary social attributes needed to succeed in family, the school and society. Cultural competence provides its holders, conventional, constant, and legally guaranteed value with respect to culture thus, economic capital can be transferred into cultural capital through the purchase of skills and knowledge. This, in turn, will result in the acquisition and accumulation of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).
Bourdieu’s theory appears to be pessimistic in as much as it concludes that the continual reproduction and maintenance of social hierarchies through institutional constructs such as marriage, religion and schools for example, reinforces the social capital of each group and thereby excludes those wanting to move up in the social hierarchy. However gloomy this idea may be, the concept that institutional symbolism reproduces social networks is necessary in the examination of societal networks and their role in the lives of the participants in this study.

Unlike Bourdieu, Coleman (1990) does not necessarily see social capital just for the benefit of elites. He suggests that social capital should be defined by its function, that being, any interaction between the individual and the collective through networks of relationships. Of social capital he says; “It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure’ (Coleman 1990, p302).

Coleman’s concept of social capital posits that groups who enjoy similar social capital are more likely to enjoy better health, education and a more positive social and economic outlook (Field, 2016). To illustrate his point Coleman (1988) uses the example of childcare within a community. He maintains that in a close-knit community an individual may call upon a neighbour for childcare, which people in less trusting suburbs may not. This, he concludes, is an example of how social networks, not just elite networks, provide a positive structure for their inhabitants. In this concept, both the individual and the collective benefit from this action. He also singles out the importance of social capital in the acquisition of human capital, which he describes as self-identity, confidence, expression and emotional intelligence. The actions of the individual within the relationships of a network allow, through interaction with other members of the network, a reinforcement of those actions, resulting in the acquisition of the necessary capital needed to succeed both as an individual
and as part of the network. For people within the group, life is good and the individual within a network has access to a stable and supportive environment. Community networks are a significant feature for some of the participants in this study and Coleman’s theory provides the framework from which to analyse the participant’s experiences.

2.5.2 Accessing New Networks

In both Bourdieu and Coleman’s view, an individual wanting to leave one group in order to move to another, may experience some difficulties or barriers to the move. The benefits an individual obtains through relationships and their position in society is determined by the amount of capital they have, so if one leaves the group he/she has no social capital in another and they will be excluded from the new group. This is illustrated in Bourdieu’s (1990) notion of Habitus in which he suggests that people exist within a ‘field’ and where in that field they exist is a result of the capital they bring with them. He contends that the cognitive system one internalises over their lifetime, or ‘habitus’, is structured by the social world and the social world is structured by habitus. When our habitus does not match one’s field one has to figure out how to act within the new field and this can have implications for social dominance, which can be invisible to the person and embedded and reinforced through language, images and symbolic meaning. In other words, the entry into a new network of relationships may, in fact, result in an unequal relationship for the new arrival in which inequality is reproduced, sanctioned and reinforced by the new group. This idea of exclusion is, Bourdieu suggests, the way in which societal hierarchies are maintained. This however, may be too negative because it does not take into consideration that the individual within the group is able to have agency in their own lives (Gauntlett, 2011).

The cycle of habitus can be broken through the appropriation of social capital as the individual moves from one habitus to the next. In their study on the upward mobility of a small group of high achieving immigrant children in Europe, Crul, Schneider, Keskiner, &
Lelie (2017) identified what they call the *multiplier effect* (p. 331). They found that children of low-educated migrants found pathways to success in both the workforce and the education system by acquiring new social and cultural capital as they moved through different networks and then using this capital to go forward in their careers. In this study, all the participants have accessed a variety of networks and have appropriated a wealth of social capital that has enabled them to access new skills and knowledge.

2.5.3 Criticisms of Social Capital

In recent times, the definition of social capital has come under criticism from social theorists for being too general a concept. One criticism of the theory contends that the concept of social capital is not representative of an all-encompassing theory because it cannot be empirically tested (Héauberer, 2011). Similar arguments assert that the concept of social capital as a network of relationships that have obligations within communities, means that it can apply to many social issues, and as a result, it has a wide-ranging application which makes it difficult to measure in a way that is agreeable to all (Field, 2016). Social capital has also been described as a ‘buzz word’ in research because people who use the term do so to explain or analyse any social interaction (Fine, 2010). Other suggestions however, declare that the application and measurement of social capital is dependent on how it is being applied to social phenomenon (Portes, 2000).

While the definition of social capital is wide and encompassing, at the centre of the theory is that the transmission of capital occurs through relationships and social networks (Engbers, Thompson, & Slaper, 2017; Patulny, Siminski, & Mendolia, 2015).

2.5.4 Transmission of Social Capital

Social capital can be acquired on three levels; the macro level; the networks that the individual is a part of on a national level, the meso level; which refers to the organisations and communities to which the individual belongs, and the micro level; which is made up of
the individual’s close ties with their family and friends (Halpern, 2005). These levels occur within a structural context which in turn dictate the social capital that is available to the individual (Engbers, Thompson, & Slaper, 2017; Smith, 2017). In this study, acquisition of social capital on all three levels are examined. The following figure is adapted from What is bonding social capital (Claridge, 2018).

Figure 4. Social Capital is acquired on micro, meso and macro levels.

While outside influences and structural factors are vitally important in acquiring social capital, it is the generational transmission of knowledge on how to gain entrance into their social network, that is transmitted to children from their parents. This is done through the child’s natural development and the adolescents’ emulation of their parent’s actions within their social networks (Weiss, 2012). Using the results from the USA National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health from the years 1994-1995, and involving over 20 000 students, Weiss (2012), found that there was significant evidence to suggest that adolescents, appear to be most influenced by the transmission of social capital from parent to child. This is relevant in this study, which investigates the intergenerational transmission of
social capital, specifically looking at how the social capital acquired by the mothers of the participants influenced their daughter’s lives.

2.5.5 Social Capital of Child Migrants

It is clear from investigations into the effects of institutionalisation on children in 20th Century Australia, that for many Care-Leavers, their time in state care excluded them from acquiring the social capital necessary for life on the outside of the institution. In the *Forgotten Australians* (2004) submissions by Care-Leavers recalled that they were unprepared for the outside world.

When I left the home I felt the stigma of being raised as a state ward, I felt lost and isolated. I didn’t admit to being a state ward for many years and would avoid questions relating to my family and make up a story to ‘appear normal’. (Sub 33, Australian Government, 2004, p. 146)

I left Hillside uneducated and illiterate. I had few social skills and felt I was a social misfit. The attitudes and lessons I learnt as a ward of the state handicapped me for life (unknown, Australian Government, 2004, p. 157).

The lack of social capital, and the stigma of identifying as an orphan or as a ward of the state, resulted in many Care-Leavers having little self-worth and feeling disconnected from society. These factors made life outside the institution just as challenging as life inside the institution.
The mothers of the participants in this study, had spent their formative years, at St John’s orphanage and at St Jude’s orphanage both cloistered environments in which the children were schooled and socialised with the same group of people, day in and day out, for a significant period of the lives. Prior to coming to Australia, all the mothers had been in orphanages presumably in similar situations.

In 2013, I completed eight interviews with former residents of St John’s orphanage, where seven of the mothers in this study attended, and those former residents explained how their lack of social capital meant that they were ill-prepared for the world outside the orphanage gates.

They just gave us a suitcase and the priest said- (you had to go and see the priest before we left) and he said, ‘Whatever you do, do not let a man put his hands under your clothes”. And I thought “Why would he say a thing like that?” My god did I find out! (Parker, 2013 p. 83)

I felt I was safer in the orphanage, than being out in the world. I was shit scared. If it wasn’t for Emily (another CM) I would have been buggered. (Parker, 2013 p. 80)

Oh yes that’s right, and then I didn’t have the guts that the other girls had, you know to go out and I was terrified, I mean the nuns were always saying how bad the world was, the men and all the rest of it you know. I was absolutely terrified and I thought the only way I’m going to be safe is if I enter the convent and that’s why I entered. (Parker, 2013 p. 84)

The experiences of the mothers of the participants in this study cannot be known in
detail but based on reports (Australian Government, 2004; Penglase, 2007; Wright, 2017), it is fair to assume that the insularity of their social interactions within their respective institutions, like thousands of other Care-Leavers, resulted in limited opportunities to build relationships and networks beyond the orphanage gates. This was also a consistent theme in the data of my master’s study in which participants explained the challenging and stressful experience of having to interact socially and emotionally with people from outside the institution on their release (Parker, 2013).

The accumulation of social capital that one would normally have acquired through a variety of different social networks, such as family and neighbourhood were severely limited for the children who were institutionalised and as a result, the lack of adequate social capital in their lives, profoundly influenced the manner in which many of them negotiated the outside world (Penglase, 2007).

It is unclear as to how this lack of social capital has impacted the second generation. The present study provides some hitherto unavailable insight into that impact.

2.5.6 Social Capital and Education

The concept of social capital has been acknowledged in a number of international studies as an important factor in contributing to an understanding of the levels of educational achievement of children (Ciabattari, 2007; Dika & Singh, 2002; Lee & Bowen, 2006; McClung & Gayle, 2013; Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016; Thirutnurthy, Kirylo, & Ciabattari, 2010). Influential in many of these studies are the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and Coleman, who, developed their ideas of social capital in their efforts to explore educational outcomes (Dika & Singh, 2002; Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016).

In Coleman’s study of the educational achievements of minority groups in the USA, he concluded that the social capital that is transmitted through family and social networks are influential in children’ educational success of the individual. The parent/child relationships
and the relationships of parents with other adults provide are a rich source of social capital that can contribute to the educational success of a child’s education. Social capital in these networks is acquired through the obligations and expectations within the relationships/networks, the exchange of information between other parents about schools and educational issues, and through the social norms that sanction behaviour. The social capital acquired through these family networks and the close relationships formed within these networks provide a system referred to as intergenerational closure (Coleman, 1988; Kao & Rutherford, 2007).

What can be generally agreed upon is that intergenerational closure can have a positive effect of accessing the educational and school systems in a positive way. Parents who have dominant social capital are more likely to interact confidently with the school and with the education system, whereas parents of non-dominant groups or those who have low levels of education, may be reluctant to become involved in the education process or school owing to their lack of confidence in communicating with a system which they don't understand, or because of their own negative educational experiences (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010; Graaf, Graaf, & Kraaykamp, 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006; von Otter & Stenberg, 2015).

The lack of intergenerational closure in lower socioeconomic classes however, does not necessarily translate into lower educational outcomes. Studies by Lareau, (2000), Lin, (2001) McNamara, Horvat, Weininger and Lareau, (2003) and Weiss (2012;) argued that for poorer and working-class families, intergenerational closure was more likely to be with networks not involved with schools or organised children’s activities such as those frequented by middle class children. These groups and their activities (i.e. sporting teams) however, were able to make available to the individual, relationships that provided access to networks that contributed to the accumulation of social capital.
Family networks and intergenerational closure can provide necessary social capital to access school systems and there appears to be general agreement that there is a positive link between the accumulation of dominant social capital and educational achievement (Héauberer, 2011; Pfeffer, 2008; Rogosic & Baranovic 2016). There are however, studies that suggest the social capital of parents or their educational achievement might not necessarily be as central to a positive educational outcome as first thought. Research on the effects of parental involvement in school have concluded that parental involvement could be positive, negative or have no real effect on the school performance (Croll, 2004; Weiss, 2012; Vorhaus, 2014). Other studies have concluded that both parents have equal influence on their child’s achievements while others have determined that a father’s schooling has a positive impact upon children’s education, and a mother’s education has a negative effect (Schneebaum, Rumplmaier, & Altzinger, 2016; Tverborgvik, Clausen, Thorsted, Mikkelsen, & Lynge, 2013).

A large-scale Swedish study of twins, by Amin & Lundborg & Rooth (2015), identified a mother’s education being as equally as important as the father’s education for children’s schooling and in particular they suggest that a mother’s education impacts more on the length of time their daughters stay in formal education.

Drawing upon data from twenty countries, Pfeffer, (2008) found that there was a strong link between parental education and the educational outcomes of their children but determined that the stratification of those countries (in which the studies took place) educational systems also greatly influenced a child’s educational outcomes, as the entrenched systems by their very nature promoted inequality within a hierarchal system.

In their study on parental influence on the educational outcomes of children in West Germany, Minello & Blossfeld (2017) concluded that both parents have positive effects on their children albeit in different ways. Daughters of mothers with a tertiary education were
more likely to attend university as opposed to daughters whose fathers only had a tertiary degree. Their study found that while daughters were encouraged to complete secondary studies, sons were encouraged to complete a tertiary education. They concluded that as a result of parents encouraging their daughters to complete secondary studies, a flow on effect of more women entering into tertiary education has been identified (Minello & Blossfeld, 2017).

In their study on the relationship of parental involvement and children’s educational achievements, Kim and Hill, (2015) found that both parents have a different impact on their children’s education. They argue that while mothers are usually involved in the day-to-day-aspects of education, fathers’ ability to provide children with a greater awareness and experience of life outside the home is equally helpful in the education achievements of children. What is clear, however, is that there are a multitude of variables that contribute to a child’s education and their ability to negotiate the education system.

Using the 2011 *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) survey, Ranasinghe (2015) studied the transmission of education of cohorts between 1942 and 1991. The survey had examined the same group of 17,000 Australians over the course of their lifetime in regard to their household and family relationships, and issues such as health, education, employment and income. Ranasinghe (2015) concluded that the improved education funding and wider accessibility to Australian’s educational institutions had resulted in a marked increase in the intergenerational educational mobility of Australians during this period.

She posits that the post war policies in the expansion of education had led to an increase in both participation and educational mobility of individual Australians and this was particularly evident in the education of girls in Australia. Another finding by Ranasinghe was evidence in the HILDA survey that a daughter’s education ‘highly correlated with their
parents (p. 21) more so than sons. In this study, I examined the impact of educational policies and parental influences on the participants’ educational outcomes.

2.5.7 Australian Education System

Seven out of the eight participants are Baby Boomers (children who were born in the post WW2 years). The Baby Boomers were born into a prosperous economic era and are considered to be the generation that has enjoyed life-long advantages such as full employment, home ownership and good incomes (Kendig, O’laughlin, Huessian & Cannon 2017). They were born and grew up in a time of progressive societal changes which were challenging the conservative values that had underpinned Australia’s political and social systems (Ahn & Miller, 2002; Robinson & Ustinoff, 2012). The factors led to societal changes and in particular, the way in which education was delivered to Australian children.

Examination of the participant’s educational achievements will be viewed through both a historical and contemporary lens. The participants in the study were educated in the 1960s and 1970s, an era when Australia’s education system was undergoing rapid changes in how it provided education to the majority of the population (Ahn & Miller, 2002; Barcan, 2010; Sherington & Campbell, 2004). In the 1970s the Australian government undertook a programme which funded schools on a needs basis enhancing the quality of education available to students (Cahill & Gray). This included funding for Catholic schools which were struggling at this time as they were low fee paying schools and which participants in this study attended.

Catholic schools were underpinned by religious teachings (O’Donoghue & Burley 2008) and there was some resistance to providing state aid to non-government schools but the pressure on the Menzies’ government to provide an education for the increased school numbers, as a result of the population explosion on the post WW2 years, mitigated those protests and funding was instituted for the non-government sector (Wilkinson, 2013).
This was an era when post compulsory education was made available to all students through a comprehensive school system. A comprehensive school, as defined by Campbell, (2014) met two criteria. First the school “admits all children of a certain age range especially from its local community or neighbourhood” and second, “the school provides a curriculum suiting the range of their interests and abilities” (Campbell, 2014, p. 1). The 1969 Dettman report concluded that the significance of the secondary education was instrumental in the intellectual development of children. It advised that secondary education not be used to prepare for external examinations to tertiary institutions but provide opportunities for a broad education. This led to a restructuring of how secondary schooling and post compulsory education was provided the public of Western Australia and to which the participants of this study were beneficiaries.

Historically, post compulsory education was completed in specialised schools and were only available to those who met the selection criteria of the institutions, thus excluding a significant percentage of the population, particularly those in the lower socio-economic classes. This had implications for future employment opportunities as those people wishing to access economic mobility were unable to compete against those who had received the educational advantages of secondary schooling. To counteract this perceived inequality, comprehensive schools were created. Their aims were to provide a broad range of subjects that were available to all pupils of different academic abilities (Campbell, 2014; Tully, 1999). Before 1964 there had been no public funding for secondary schools and the payment of fees excluded many students from lower socio-economic backgrounds attending school but during the 1960s and 1970s fees were abolished and student numbers increased (Ranasinghe, 2015).
The participants in this study were beneficiaries of the progressive educational policies of the 1960s and 1970s and provided them with economic opportunities and educational mobility.

2.5.8 Social Capital in Sport

Beyond the family unit, important networks are accessed by individuals from which they can accumulate and enhance their social capital. Membership of sports clubs and teams offer individuals exposure to new and varied networks that one might not be exposed to in their day-to-day lives.

Studies about social capital derived through the involvement in sport have found some traction in literature (Brown, 2017; Tonts, 2005; Zakus, Skinner, & Edwards, 2009). Although there are limited studies in this area, many of the articles draw on Putnam’s (2000) study *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community* in which he studied the decline of social capital in the USA, in order to examine issues of bridging and bonding social capital and how individuals benefit from membership of sporting groups.

Sporting clubs and teams and their associated activities are able to provide the individual with access to important networks through which social capital may be acquired (Tonts, 2005). Relationships and interactions within these networks can result in positive benefits in areas such as health and education as well as strengthening community ties. These networks can foster relationships that provide opportunities for individuals to be exposed to other people who have different educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2010; Nicholson and Hoye 2008; Zakus et al., 2009).

In her study on second generation migrant girls in Norway, Walseth, (2008) concluded that being part of a sporting club provided the girls with some bonding social capital and limited bridging social capital but like Tonts (2005) the study also indicated that
the social capital in sporting clubs can exclude participants. In Tonts’ (2005) study of sporting clubs in the rural towns of Western Australia, he cautioned that there is a ‘darker side’ to sporting clubs which has its roots in the differences of socio-economic groups and ethnicity. These differences were also noted in the work of Dempsey (1990) who observed segregation between blue and white-collar workers who belonged to the same football club in rural Victoria. In his study on social capital in sporting clubs, Brown (2017) termed the phrase, ‘negative social capital’ to describe the relationships which can be used to harm other people.

In this study, sporting groups and associations were very much a part of the participants’ life and a rich source of social capital. I examined those affiliations and explored the positive and negative impacts on the individual participants.

2.5.9 Religious Capital

There is an abundance of studies that conclude religion is a significant source of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Friesen 2013; Park & Sharma, 2016; Putnam 2000). In the United States of America, from where a substantial amount of literature on the topic has emanated from, it is considered that religion generates more social capital that any other institution (Smidt, 2003). The religious environment provides a space in which people can access regular contact and reinforce their social relationships; the shared values providing a sense of place and connectedness for people (Friesen, 2013; Park & Sharma, 2016, Putnam, 2000). Other studies indicate that the social capital in religious communities is minimal.

Using data from the 2001 Norwegian Citizenship survey, a study on the formation of social capital through church attendance and involvement in a religious volunteer organisation, concluded that the acquisition of social capital is probably no more than one might access in other areas of their lives (Strømsnes, 2008). In a Chinese study on religion, social capital and social status, researchers drew upon the national representative data from
23 000 people via the *Chinese General Social Surveys* of 2010-2012. They concluded that religious affiliation did not provide social capital, but the act of praying did contribute to an individual’s well-being (Chen, & Williams, 2016). Similar observations were made in an Australian study: *The contribution of religion to social capital in the context of a global neighbourhood.* In this study Hughes (2015) concluded that religion might contribute to some local social capital between individuals, but it does not necessarily contribute to social capital on a national scale.

The debate on the acquisition of social capital in religion continues, but what is agreed by researchers is that membership and participation in a religious community does have positive implications for an individual in areas such as emotional and physical health, economics and education (Ahrenfeldt, Möller, Andersen-Ranberg Vitved, Lindahl-Jacobsen, & Hvidt, 2017; Ebstyn King & Furrow, 2004; Fan, 2006).

In their study on religion and health in Europe, Ahrenfeldt et, al, (2017) examined over 10 000 adults aged fifty years and older across ten countries in the northern, western and southern regions of Europe. Their study concluded that while social support and friendship contributed to the individual’s well-being, religious participants also experienced greater happiness, less divorce and were also less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. They had more satisfaction in their lives and an optimistic outlook. In their study of the effects of religious affiliation, Ebstyn King and Furrow, (2004) reported that youths who belonged to a religious environment benefitted from the non-familial relationships and broadened their intergenerational support which lead to greater social capital. The interconnectedness and community participation result in *‘feelings of trust’*, (p.11) which not only improves social capital but has a positive effect on health outcomes (Holt, Clark, Wang, Williams, & Schulz, 2015).
Over the last decade, some researchers have questioned how social capital in religion is studied. Instead of viewing religion as an area, where social capital is gathered, some theorists argue that religious capital is its own entity. “Religious capital differs from religion in that religious capital relates to the effects of religious belief and practice” (Barker, 2008 p. 2). Religious capital “consists of the degree of mastery of, and attachment to, a particular religious culture” (Starke & Finke, 2000 p120) and this involves having the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully and confidently in the community (Maselko, Hughes & Cheney, 2011). Religious Capital is acquired when an individual has a sound knowledge of their religion and its’ practices and they have strong emotional ties to their religious community. The higher the levels of knowledge and participation, the stronger social networks that can be accessed (Barker, 2008). Religious capital is strengthened through rituals, prayers and religious experiences and these increase over time and is also conducive to the moral and educational development of children (Fan, 2005).

Religious capital, however, is narrow in its application of building broader capital, as the religious capital that is acquired is unique to each community and not transferrable to other religions. This in turn can create groups that become isolated and issues within that community can be magnified leading to conflict. (Finke, 2003; Kunitz , 2004).

Religion and religiosity have impacted significantly on the lives of some of the participants in this study and have provided rich relationships and networks. It is therefore necessary to analyse the acquisition of social capital through the lens of religion.

2.5.10 Discussion

Social capital is essentially concerned with how people interact with one another (Dekker and Uslaner 2001). Through these interactions, individuals or groups are able to access social and economic resources which are important in the development of the cognitive and social skills of children. Educational studies have identified that these resources
can be acquired from relationships both inside and outside the family (Coleman, 1990; Dika & Singh, 2002; Field, 2016; von Otter and Stenberg, 2013; Vorhaus, 2014).

High levels of social capital especially benefit the development of children and it is clear that those who have access to the dominant social capital are more likely to be able to negotiate the mainstream educational systems with confidence (Héauberer, 2011).

In their study on the transmission of social and human capital from parent to child, von Otter & Stenberg (2015) concluded that social capital can play a positive role in children’s educational achievement and concurred with Coleman (1988) that positive social capital was enhanced in families that had positive parent/child relationships. Similar to Coleman’s notion of closure, von Otter & Stenberg (2015) also suggest that positive family networks, together with parental activities within the school environment are important factors for children’s educational achievement. They also suggest that although human capital (self-esteem, confidence etc.) might be absent in a family, social capital available from other networks is helpful.

By applying both Bourdieu’s and Coleman’s concepts of social capital to the investigation of the educational experiences of the participants in this study, outcomes and achievements can be analysed on both a macro, meso and micro level. Examination of the impact and influence of the participant’s inherited social capital, her family and social networks (including sport and religion) and her educational experiences will add to the ongoing discussions of the role that social capital plays in the educational achievements and outcomes of the individual.

2.6 Identity theory

The decision to use identity theory to help make sense of the data was chosen to highlight the importance of identity within society and the role it plays in the acquisition of social and economic networks (Burkes & Stets, 2009; Burke & Stryker, 2000; Stets &
Burke, 2014). Many BCMs have spoken about their loss of identity on arrival in Australia, the negative identity of being an orphan and the subsequent stigma it attracted, and the trauma of not being able to identify as being part of a family (Australian Government, 2004). I wanted to investigate how the participants in this study were impacted by their mother’s identity as an orphan and a child migrant, and to explore the participant’s multiple identities in terms of their social roles and their sense of self.

The concept of identity was originally found in the writings of Tausk in 1919 and then expanded on by Freud in 1926 (Sessler, 2011). While these studies were based in psychoanalytical discourse, it was in the writing of George Mead in 1934 in which he theorised that “Society shapes self shapes social behaviour” (p. 285) that the sociological roots of identity theory took place (Burke & Stets, 2009; Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002).

Identity Theory began with the exploration of the origins of the varying identities in people's self-structure and why it sometimes changes (Burke & Stets, 2009). This in turn led to theories which sought to explain how people’s internalisation of expected behaviours were acted out and how we come to acquire our personal identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Dominant in the contemporary theories of identity are the works of Stryker and Burke (2000) and Burke and Stets (2009). Stryker’s theory of identity is borne from his development of structural symbolic interactionism and focuses upon the influences that social structures have upon one’s identity and behaviour, while Burke’s work centres on the internal dynamics within the self that influence behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009). Stryker’s work however, does not take into account the notion of the ‘internal dynamics of self-processes’ (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 285) while Burke's work does not give countenance to the ‘external structures effect on internal processes’ (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 285). Both theories however, complement each other, in that
social structures influence identity and in return, the process of self-verification reinforces the social structures.

Identity theory ‘Seeks to explain the specific meanings that individuals have for the multiple identities they claim’ (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 3). It can refer to the cultures to which people belong, the common identification of groups in society, and endeavours to explain the meanings attached to the roles that people play in different groups. It explores how an individual’s many identities relate to one another for that person and also attempts to identify how the different identities influence one’s behaviours and thoughts. It also examines how an individual’s identity ties them to the wider society (Burkes & Stets, 2009; Burke & Stryker, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2014).

At the core of an identity is the categorisation of the ‘self’ as an occupant of a role and the incorporation into the self, of the meanings and expectation associated with that role and its performance. The “self” is reflexive and as such, can classify or categorise itself in relation to other social categories. In general, one’s identities are composed of the self-views that emerge from the reflexive activity of self-categorisation or identification in terms of membership in particular groups or roles (Burke & Tully 1977; Burke & Stets, 2009).

It is however, important to remember that identities are formed and developed within a particular social and historical-cultural context and are profoundly influenced by our primary and secondary reference groups and the network of relationships within these groups. Cooley, 1901 (quoted in Burkes & Stets, 2009 p.3 ) contends that an ‘individual and society are two sides of the same coin ’ and that a person’s nature will depend upon the society in which they live.

2.6.1 Identity & Sense of Self

The social capital gained from family relationships, that is family and relatives who live
in the same house, provide the individual with the necessary skills and resources to interact effectively within their habitus. It is within this network that a child begins to develop their identity and the sense of self that a child has, is dependent upon the social capital of her/his family (Coleman, 1998; Kiani, Hojatkhah, & Torabi-Nami, 2016). A child’s sense of self, however, does not stop at the immediate family. The primary group, (family) and other reference groups in a child’s life are the environments where their self-perception is formed and validated and where values and rules are usually acquired (Ritzer, 2007). It is during these formative stages of a child’s development that individuals are shaped by their identification with prime caregivers and teachers in particular, and it is the interaction within and between these relationships that enables children to acquire and refine essential skills needed to interact and participate successfully within society (Ritzer, 2007).

The continuous process of an individual’s socialisation through the use of symbols, language and interactions, leads to the endorsement of societal norms, which then become an individual’s core values and reflect those values that have been propagated by the social group to whom one belongs. (Sarantakos, 2005).

2.6.2 Siblings and Identity

Siblings can be a significant and long-lasting relationship in the lives of the individual. The relationship constructed between siblings and within a sibling group impacts on the formation of identity and contributes to the sense of self of the individual (Davies, 2014). In her qualitative studies of siblings that explored the construction of young people’s sense of self, Davies (2014) concluded that while parents have the central role in their child’s identity formation, the role of siblings and how they compare themselves with each other is an also an important aspect of forming a sense of self. The relationships between siblings is part of an intricate connection of relationships in the lives of families and contributes to identity formation. This sentiment is also reflected in Milevsky (2016) who suggested that
siblings provide emotional and social support for each other and this affects the development of siblings in a variety of areas in their lives such as education and social skills. These relationships can be both positive and negative (Milevsky, 2016). In this study, all the participants had siblings and while their relationships varied between their siblings, they were influential and significant relationships within the participants’ lives.

2.6.3 Impact of Institutionalisation on Identity

It is one of the aims of this study to explore issues pertaining to identity with the participants of the study. Many BCMs who were institutionalised in Australia under the British Child Migrant scheme, cited the lack of a credible identity as an enduring legacy of their incarceration in the orphanages to which they were sent, and in the wider community when they left (Australian Government, 2001). It appears from the literature that the collective and individual experiences of being a child migrant were negative. On an individual level, they were often told they were unwanted, unloved and would amount to nothing, while their collective identity as child migrants and orphans held no meaningful status in society. Former Child Migrants explained the shame they had felt about their status as a child migrant, but it was their lack of an individual identity that held the greatest sadness for many. Former British Child Migrants I interviewed recalled feeling that they had been just a number with no identity.

I was made number 95 from the day I got there ‘til the day I left. So I was number 14 in England for as long as I can remember and I was number 95 out here. (Parker, 2013 p. 105)

Others had their name changed on arrival at the institution while others only found out their birth names years after their release.
I was always called Kathleen always, yet my family in Wales always referred to me as Teresa. They always knew me as Teresa. I think my mother must have changed my name or the nuns changed it when I was first put in the convent. (Parker, 2013 p 105)

Many Australian Care-Leavers have also spoken of their shame at being identified as a ‘home child’ or an ‘orphan’ and how they spent their lives trying to hide the fact that they were in care as the following examples highlight.

When I left the home I felt the stigma of being raised as a state ward, I felt lost and isolated. I didn't admit to being a state ward for many years and would avoid questions relating to my family and make up a story to appear normal. (Sub 33, Australian Government, 2004, p. 146)

It has taken me 50 years to be able to say I am a former state ward. From age 15 I did everything in my power to hide my past. I carried (still do) such guilt & shame I was told nearly every day of my life I was worthless, unlovable, I believed it. (Sub 258, Australian Government, 2004, p. 158)

Having an identity that was perceived as worthless made life in the wider community very difficult for many Care-Leavers. The social capital from which their identity had been formed and developed was based upon the social capital they had accumulated from the networks and relationships within a total institution (Australian Government, 2001; Parker, 2013; Penglase, 2007). A vast number of Care-Leavers have made submissions to the Senate
investigations and Royal Commission citing their sense of worthlessness and their concern that this image of themselves has had an adverse effect upon their children.

To achieve an understanding of the role that social capital and generational transmission play in the development and formation of identity, this study will draw upon the literature of identity and social identity theory, and from the theories of generational transmission of trauma and social capital.

2.6.4 A Social Identity

The idea that structures create people and people create structures (Bourdieu 1986; Ritzer, 2007) can be seen in the ideas of social identity theory. Social identity theory aims to explore how human action is not necessarily confined to explanation from a psychological approach but should be examined in relation to the structures of the social world (Burke & Stets 2009; Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). It provides insight into intergroup relations and conflict and attempts to explain why an individual identifies with a specific group and how in turn the group affects the individual. It also allows for the examination of the consequences of having group identification.

Social identity is a person’s knowledge that he or she is linked to society through the membership of a social category or group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg & Abrams, 1993). ‘It is a set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person’ (Burke & Stets 2009, p.3). An individual may lay claim to belonging to a particular group through specific roles within that group but may also identify as an individual through personal characteristic traits (Burke & Stets 2009).

Through our similarities and differences with others, we can define who we are and how we are connected to other people. Our social identity also provides us with the rules of how we should act in social situations. Having a social identity enables individuals to both
locate themselves in the social order and navigate effectively within that social order (Brewer, 1991, Burke & Stets, 2009). Certain expectations are attached to the position one holds in a social network and these expectations help to regulate group behaviour and reinforce both the actions of the individual and the group (Burkes & Stets 2000).

A social group is a set of individuals who hold common social identification or view themselves as a member of the same social category. These groups not only provide a social identity for the person, but they enable the individual to maintain their own unique qualities that set them apart from other members of the group (Abrams & Hogg 1990; Burke & Stets 2009). Belonging to a group such as a sporting, family or social group is important for people’s self-esteem and their sense of pride (Tajfel, 1982). Bourdieu (1990) makes similar assertions about the role of social groups in the creation and maintenance of the individual’s social and personal identity. In his theory of habitus, Bourdieu explains that it is in the embodied social structures of age groups, genders and social classes that the divisions of the class structure are reflected. Habitus varies depending on the nature of one’s position in the world and people don't have the same habitus but those who occupy the same position in society tend to have similar habitus. While these internalised systems or structures enable people to perceive, appreciate and understand the social world, they also provide the opportunity for people to produce their own practices and perceive and evaluate them. Although these external structures are internalised and can constrain thought and action it does not necessarily determine them since people are capable of reflection and can therefore shape their actions and interactions (Burke & Stets 2009; Ritzer, 2007).

The process and formation of a social identity depends upon self-categorisation and social comparison. Once we are a part of a group, the similarities we share with like-minded members, accentuates the similarities of the group and reinforces its’ beliefs and structure. This is good for an individual’s self-image and in turn reinforces the status of the group. The
group may then become the ‘in-group’ and can further enhance their status through
discrimination of other groups who are not the in-group. As a result of this social comparison
though, perceived differences of the out-group may become over emphasised and the
selective dimensions of the in-group may be enhanced. This can be good for the ‘self’ but can
result in discrimination of the other groups (Field, 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The participants in this study have multiple identities within the myriad of roles they
have had and in which they currently occupy. The interaction and feedback with and from the
others within the confines of those roles have all contributed to their sense of self and
identity. The institutionalisation of the mothers of the participants impacted negatively on the
mother’s identity at various stages in their lives and in some cases this impact was felt by
some of the participants.

In this chapter I have examined the themes of Child Migrants, total institution, the
historical and intergenerational transmission of trauma, social capital and identity and
education. In the next chapter I present the research methodology that underpins this study.

**Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

3.0 Introduction

This study investigates how a mothers’ incarceration in a ‘Total Institution’
(Goffman, 1961) may have impacted upon the lives of their daughter, with particular focus
upon the daughter’s social capital, her educational experiences and notions of identity. The
study focuses upon a group of women born in the post-WW2 era in Western Australia, to
mothers who had been institutionalised as children, in Australian orphanages under the
British Child Migrant Scheme.

In this chapter, I have four objectives. First, I present the research questions and
explain the use of a qualitative methodology to answer them. Second, I situate the study
in an ontological and epistemological paradigm. Third, I discuss the use of the narrative interview and portraiture methods in the collection, presentation and analysis of data. The fourth objective is to provide the details of the study, which include; guiding questions, selection and introduction of participants and the collection and analysis of data.

3.1 Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of women whose mothers was institutionalised in an Australian orphanage?

2. How did growing up with a mother who had been institutionalised in her childhood, impact on their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, education and identity?

3.2 Qualitative Research

I have designed this study within a qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research allows for social inquiry and enables the researcher to understand and interpret the reasons for social action; the way people construct and make meaning of their lives, and it allows a view into the social context of the social actions (Cresswell, 2013; Sarantakos, 2005). Qualitative research also enables the participants in the study to give an account of their experiences in their own voice and to be active co-creators of the research, thus empowering them in the research process (Klenke, 2016).

People’s awareness of their world is constructed through the meanings they ascribe to the interactions they experience. Interpreting those meanings develops the ‘self’, which is the agency through which individuals experience themselves in relation to others (Elliot, 2008). Those experiences and interactions are shaped by a variety of cultural, historical and social influences. Qualitative methodology assumes that there are multiple realities and that the world is experienced subjectively and is in need of interpreting rather than measuring (Merriam, 1998).
Qualitative methodology also allows for flexibility in design and this makes it possible to be open and reflexive (Creswell, 2013; Sarantakos, 2005). This was important in the study, as it enabled me to be responsive to changes and focus on subjects and issues discovered during the conduct of the research. The inductive approach used in qualitative research also allows for a focus on the specific situations of participants and emphasised words rather than numbers (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005). There are a variety of methodological approaches in the qualitative paradigm but the assumption that underlines all these approaches is the notion that reality is subjective, and that researchers and participants co-create knowledge (Klenke, 2016; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).

Given the various methodological approaches, I have selected a methodology situated within a constructivist paradigm. This provides a framework in which the theoretical and methodological approach allows both the researcher and the participants to explore and examine their realities from their own perspectives and express these realities.

Table 2 The Connection Between Epistemology, Theoretical Perspectives, Methodology and Research Methods Utilised in the Study. Adapted from (Crotty, 1998)

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<th>Epistemology</th>
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<td>Constructivism</td>
<td>Interpretivism Symbolic Interactionism</td>
<td>Portraiture Narrative Inquiry</td>
<td>Interviews Documents Artefacts</td>
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3.3 Epistemology - Constructivism

Epistemology is the philosophical theory of the existence of knowledge. As researchers, we seek to identify different types of knowledge, its sources and its limits (Gray, 2004; Crotty, 1998). The epistemological view of constructivism posits that meaning and truth are created by an individual’s interaction within the world. Each person constructs their own meaning of the world and as a result of their interactions, the same event, incident or experience will be different, but valid for each individual (Gray, 2004). In constructivism, the researcher makes known his or her personal history as well as his or her cultural background to position herself or himself within the research. This is done in order for the researcher to be able to examine how their interpretations of the data may be impacted by their own experiences (Creswell, 2013). This is important in this study as I am a daughter of a British Child Migrants myself.

3.4 Theoretical Perspective Interpretivism

Social research is guided by a theoretical perspective and is a way of “Making sense of the world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). In this study, I used the theories of interpretivism and symbolic interactionism to investigate the realities of the participants’ experiences. I also drew upon aspects of grounded theory in the analysis of data.

Interpretivism looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of social life in which individuals are viewed as actors in the social environment, and not as individuals who are acted upon, by external and social structures (Crotty, 1998; O’Reilly, 2012). Interpretivist theory considers that knowledge is a social development in which meaning is derived and modified from social interactions. As a result of those interactive processes, the individual is able to act upon these meanings in their social encounters (Gray, 2004).
Another interpretivist perspective that builds on constructivism is symbolic interaction. The basic assumptions of Symbolic interactionism are:

- that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them;
- that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction; and
- that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p 2).

Symbolic interactionism theory was primarily influenced by the writings of Mead (1936) and elaborated on by Blumer (1962). It considers that people learn about their environment through symbolic interaction with others; and that through the sharing of language, objects or actions, people communicate or represent something to others, and through this, individuals are socialised (Charon, 2007; Ritzer, 2007). Symbolic interaction asserts that people become human through social interaction, especially in the early years of life.

The process of socialisation typically begins in the primary group, usually the family group. In contemporary society this is rapidly followed and complemented by socialisation within a formal educational framework and other secondary groups and influences such as peer groups, teachers and the media. It is during these formative stages of a child’s development that individuals are shaped by their identification with prime caregivers and teachers in particular. It is the interaction within and between these groups that enable children to acquire and refine essential skills needed to interact and participate successfully within society (Ritzer, 2007; Sarantakos, 2005).
At the heart of symbolic interaction is the concept of ‘self’ (Goffman, 1959, Blumer, 1962). Goffman, (1959) argued that the socially constructed ‘self’ is actively involved in defining and managing social situations. He posited that when we display our ‘self’ we not only reveal information about ourselves, but we also control the information about who and what we are. These displays also reveal to others what they can expect from us in certain circumstances. Our identities, then, are negotiated during social interaction. These interactions between individuals, and the presentation of ‘self’ within those interactions, establish meaning and make judgement about class and social status. Meanings are derived through continuous interpretive processes, which follow from social interaction. People don't just internalise the meanings from the interactions, they can modify those interactions by the way they internalise them (Blumer, 1969).

3.5 Methodology

A methodological structure provides a framework in which the researcher can purposefully plan for the study. In the context of the methodological approach chosen, questions are formed and methods for collection and analysis are determined (Schwandt, 2007).

In this qualitative study I selected Portraiture Methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis 1997) and Narrative Inquiry methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to gather, analyse and present data. Both methodologies complement each other as both require that the voice of the actor be heard in an in-depth manner while acknowledging and valuing the voice of the researcher. It also allows the reader to be a part of the interpretative process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cope, Jones & Hendricks, 2015; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis 1997).

3.5.1 Portraiture Methodology

The story of the British Child Migrant has, for the most part, been a narrative that has
been anchored in the sadness and hardship of those whose were part of the British Child Migrant scheme. Having personal links to that narrative, I had encountered the many successful and positive aspects of the story and wanted to engage in research that would look for what was good and positive in the story of the British Child Migrant. To do this I used Portraiture.

Portraiture theory first was first used by Lawrence-Lightfoot in her study *The good high school: Portraits of character and culture* (1983) in which she examined the goodness in schools. It was the text *Art and Science of Portraiture*, by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997), however, that first mapped out the theory and methodology of portraiture and introduced a research method that ‘blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics and subtlety of the human experience and organisational life’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. xv).

Instead of focusing on, or identifying negative aspects of a story, factors that are inevitably present, Portraiture allowed me to look at those negative aspects as part of the story, and not the foundation of the story. It allowed the opportunity to “absorb a different reality than one who is on a mission to discover the sources of failure” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 9). The researcher, according to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (1997) sees the actors as the bearers of knowledge and a rich resource of their own experiences. Starting from this perspective enabled me to begin my research inquiry from a foundation that’s asked, what is happening here, what is working here and what is healthy here (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997). This is not to say that the negative attributes are absent or not examined, rather it is to assume that the strengths, well-being and productivity of the participants are infused with imperfections that must also be revealed (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997).

Portraiture allows the researcher to become part of the story. This is important because
as a daughter of a BCM my knowledge and experiences within the extended BCM family would impact upon my research. In Portraiture, the researcher is more evident and visible, but this kind of connection is welcomed and acknowledged as part of the process of the building of the portrait. In the process of building the portraiture the researcher enters into the lives of the participants and engages in discourse and we leave an imprint (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997).

Portraiture methodology is a blending of qualitative methodologies that enables the researcher to “(re) present the participant through the subjective, empathetic, and critical lens of the researcher” (Dixson, Chapman, & Hill, 2005, p. 17). Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davies, (1997), argue that it is a methodology that is effectively ensconced into broader qualitative research and provides an alternative to positivist social science research methods that focus on “Pathology and disease rather than health and resilience” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davies, p. 8). Social research has traditionally been inclined to focus upon negative factors of environments, but portraiture seeks to concentrate upon the positive aspects within periods of adversity (Cope, Jones & Hendricks, 2015; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997).

Underlying the portraiture methodology is a ‘search for goodness’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davies 1997, p. 140). They explain that it is easier to find and document the failures and shortcomings of people and organisations as opposed to finding the areas and reasons why people succeed. Portraiture methodology “Is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davies 1997, p. 9).

Portraiture however, is not without its critics and as a relatively nascent qualitative methodology, it has come under some academic scrutiny (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003;
English, 2000; Hackmann, 2002), but the most outspoken opponent of the methodology as a whole is English, (2000) who concluded that portraiture could not be a scientific methodology because the replication of studies for verification would not be possible by people who were less talented at writing than Lawrence-Lightfoot. Bloom and Erlandson, (2003) rejected English’s criticism suggesting that English did not really understand or had misunderstood Lawrence-Lightfoot’s work arguing that ‘Portraiture work is not intended to be generalised or replicated’ (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 887). English (2000) also challenged the role of the researcher in the study, arguing that she holds a concealed imbalance of power over the reader and does not allow the reader to access alternative interpretations. In response to this claim, Bloom and Erlandson (2003) while acknowledging the power of the researcher, argue that the reader also has power as she can simply walk away. They go on to explain that the “Purpose is to communicate a meaning that can have an effect on the understandings, attitudes, and actions of its viewers (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 887).

In the essay Using portraiture methodology in educational leadership research, Hackmann (2002) was critical of English’s (2000) criticisms. In his commentary, Hackmann contends that the use of portraiture methodology in documenting the voices of insiders is a positive attribute of the methodology, as it provides a platform for voices that may not be heard in other forms of research ( Hackmann, 2002).

The use of Portraiture methodology in this study is appropriate, relevant and necessary in the interpretation of the data collected. Up until now the voice of the BCM has, for the most part, been anchored in the negative aspects of the lives of BCMs. Their voices have only been heard through systems and investigations that have either been looking for those negatives in order to make a case for recompense for the suffering of those who were in care, or from the agencies and departments who have been caring for those affected by their
time in care. The focus on these stories, while critical in the understanding of the impact of the BCM scheme, have drowned out discussion and investigation of the positive aspects of the BCM narrative. The use of Portraiture in this study continues the narrative looking for and reporting on the positive outcomes.

3.5.2 Voices of Portraiture

This study aims to give voice to the participants who shared their stories with me. The constructed portraits are created and shaped through the dialogue between the researcher and the participant, and while each woman’s voice is central to her portrait, the voice of the researcher also pervades the study (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davies, 1997). Portraiture allows participants voices to be heard from six different perspectives, making for a rich and in-depth understanding of the participant’s stories.

There are six distinct ‘voices’ to be heard in portraiture methodology are:

1) The voice as witness,

2) The interpretative voice

3) The voice of preoccupation,

4) The voice of dialogue

5) The voice discerning other voices and

Figure 5. The Voices of Portraiture which allow the participants’ stories to be heard from multiple perspectives

The voice as witness is that of the researcher who observes and gathers information about the individual and expresses the stance of that person. The interpretive voice is the one that can hear the interpretations of what the researcher has witnessed. The voice of preoccupation refers to the academic framework in which the study is grounded, while the voice of dialogue, is where we hear the voices of the researcher and participant in conversation, or as Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davies (1997) explains, it is “capturing the dance of dialogue” (p. 103). The discerning voice is how we listen for voice; that is, the sound and intonation of the voice of the participant. Finally, the autobiographical voice, is the one that reflects the cultural and ideological history of the portraitist.

The multiple voices in portraiture remind both the researcher and the reader, that each story can be heard from multiple perspectives. The interplay of these voices echoes the ‘intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and ethical currents’ that eddy through the story (Lightfoot-Lawrence & Hoffman Davis, p. 191).

As the researcher’s voice is everywhere in the research process, it must therefore, be continually evaluated throughout the study and in the construction of the portrait. The researcher’s voice must be controlled, restrained and anchored in an academic framework.
(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davies, 1997). This is an important component of both the constructive and reflective processes in creating the participants’ portraits and ensures that the researcher’s voice does not dominate their voice.

In this study I set the framework, asked the questions, gathered the data and created the portraits. Although my voice was everywhere, I created the portraits through a systematic collection of data, continued examination and evaluation of my own biases and a disciplined approach in interviewing the participants. Importantly, there was also meaningful dialogue with my supervisors about each portrait throughout the study. These processes ensured that the participants’ voices were at the heart of the study.

The methods employed in portraiture allow for the individual’s story to be brought to light for the reader as they are heard and ‘seen’ by the reader. In the reading of the portraits the reader becomes an active participant in the narrative. The written portraits continue the story of the British Child Migrant. The experiences of the children of the BCMs allows an exploration and examination of the narrative and the search for the positive aspects of this story in Australia’s social history.

3.5.3 Narrative Inquiry

The second and complementary methodology that I have employed is Narrative Inquiry the study of ‘experience understood narratively’ (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 436).

Narrative inquiry is a methodology which came to contemporary prominence in the 1990s when Connelly and Clandinin (1990) first used it in educational research. Anchored in the concept that ‘life is education’ (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007, p. 22) it became an approach in which the lived experience could be studied. Since then, Narrative Inquiry has been used in a wide range of research areas (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016).

At the core of the Narrative Inquiry is the assumption by researchers that the ‘story’ is the most fundamental element in the study of human experience. It is a methodology which
allows for a rich researcher/participant association that encourages an in-depth understanding over a period of time, place and social contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As humans, we all have stories that tell about our experiences in the world. (Clandinin, 2007). To elicit those stories and their meanings, a Narrative Inquiry approach allows the qualitative researcher to examine and investigate the stories of the participants (Hickson, 2016). The framework of Narrative Inquiry provides the researcher with a variety of research methods to choose from with which to do their research. These different approaches however, share a common element, and that is storytelling (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016). Storytelling is used to understand human experiences through the individual’s personal stories. It enables individuals to access past experiences and provides a richer understanding of the past-present relationship (McLeod & Thompson, 2009). Through the telling of stories people are able to make sense of the past and explore reasons for behavioural practice in the present.

The qualitative research method of interviewing is a process which allows the researcher to collect people’s stories (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). It is a process in which respondents are interviewed face-to face, in a setting that affords the individual the opportunity to communicate personal stories using themes, events and language, in a way that has meaning for that individual (Che, Yeh & Wu, 2006; Taylor, Bogdan & Devault, 2015). For this study, I have used the narrative interview, in order to generate an in-depth and detailed story of the participant, reconstructing their experiences in relationship to other individuals and to a social environment (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

3.5.4 Narrative Interviews and the Individual.

The structure of narrative interviews provides a format that affords the interviewee the opportunity to communicate personal stories and places the participants’ voice at the centre of the research. They, as the primary storytellers, tell their stories in their words, a process which can be an empowering tool for the individual (Elliot, 2005; Seidman, 1998). For the
researcher, the narrative interview, semi-structured in its nature, provides the opportunity to investigate the lives of these participants and to gain insight into how they interpret their life experiences, in both a present and historical context.

In this study, the participants belong to an exclusive social group, that of the children of British Child Migrants and by interviewing individuals of this group, I had the opportunity to gather important insights into members of a small social group that is unique in its composition.

The use of narrative inquiry allows members of social groups to tell stories with words and meanings specific to them and constitutes an assessment of events that preserve a particular perspective of the informants’ world (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Reismann, 2008; Seidman, 1998). In this study, this is the world of the daughters of institutionalised women. The telling and sharing of their histories provides a richer understanding and a collective insight into the experiences of the children of former Female British Child Migrants in particular, and in general, the experiences of women whose mothers have been in institutionalised care.

A life story however, cannot be told without constant reference to the historical time in which the participants’ lives have unfolded and the individual stories of the participants need to be articulated in a narrative context and examined alongside other source material including that of artefacts, documents, interviews and photos.

3.5.5 My Role as Researcher.

In this study, I use narrative interviews to elicit the participants stories. If the voices of the participants are to be heard and the story of the BCMS continued, narrative interviews is a fitting technique for gathering data. Narrative interviewing is a complex process that involves the researcher having in-depth knowledge of the topic ahead of the interview in order to be
creative and disciplined in the interviews and to be able to take up threads in the conversation and gain deeper insights (Wengraf, 2001).

The narrative interview process has been described by Wengraf, 2001 as a “high-preparation, high-risk, high-gain, and high-analysis operation” p. 9). As a researcher using the narrative interview technique, I am fortunate enough to have conducted similar interviews in an earlier master’s study and had an appreciation of what the process entailed. I was, however, very aware that no two interviews are the same and that one must be reflexive, listening for the articulated text and subtext that underpin narrative interviews and be ready and willing to ask subsequent unplanned follow up clarifying questions (Riessmann, 2008).

3.6 Methods

I approached the collection of data using two methods. First, I used narrative interview methods that allowed me to conduct semi-structured interviews that provided the participants the opportunity to tell their own stories in their own words. These interviews were conducted face to face for six of the interviews and due to geographical and personal circumstances an additional method of the electronic interviews via email and Skype was used to collect data. Second, through the examination of documents, and archival materials, I was able to further investigate historical and social issues surrounding the participants lives, in order to answer the research questions.

3.6.1 Conducting the Interviews

Six of the eight interviews were conducted face-to-face with the other two being conducted over the internet, one through Skype and the other through email. The use of online interviews is sometimes called e-interviews and it is increasingly common for researchers to use mixed interviewing methods (Deakin & Wakefield; 2014; Hanna, 2012) While there are copious amounts of literature on the use of face-to-face interviewing,
(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Wengraf, 2008), there is limited research into the use of multi-method interviewing and specifically, the use of synchronous electronic interviews is even less researched (Deakin & Wakefield; 2014; Hanna, 2012). While phone interviews have been used for many years and have provided a sound alternative to face-to-face interviewing, the use of Skype is becoming increasingly used by researchers as a reliable interviewing method (Holt, 2010). Email interviewing is also gaining traction as an effective method due to its effectiveness in being able to reach large groups and international participants (Fritz & Vandermause, 2018). Email interviewing is also very cost effective and does not require transcription process of audio-recorded interviewing thus making it time effective also (Meho, 2006).

There are some limitations to E interviewing. Fritz & Vandermause, (2018) in their email study of older adults about Smart Home technology, listed some disadvantages of the email interview. They found that more time is required when typing as opposed to speaking, response times were often delayed due to slow typing skills and this became time consuming. They also identified that the interviewer did not have the opportunity to be reflexive in their responses to answers and neither the interviewer nor the interviewee was able to respond to visual clues.

In a study of people’s experience in using Skype in their daily lives, Adams-Hutcheson & Longhurst, (2017) carried out interviews using Skype and face-to-face interviews. They concluded that people were more comfortable interacting face-to-face due to the bodily proximity of the interviewee and interviewer and the daily activities that continued around them as they were interviewed. Using Skype was still an effective tool for interviewing and they determined that people are still getting used to how they should act in front of a screen.
Before any questions are asked or ethics forms signed, it is necessary that the interviewer establish a sense of trust and a good rapport with the participants. A positive connection between the researcher and the participant can result in a rich source of information (Roulston, 2010). An effective researcher will approach their interviews with an understanding that this is the interviewee’s story and as such, the interview should be guided by the participant. It is important for the interviewer to be able to let the story flow without interruptions and although the use of open-ended questions is used to prompt discussions, the interviewer should remain an effective listener leaving particular questions or observations until the interviewee has finished talking (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Wingref, 2001).

The use of closed questions should also be considered by the interviewer to clarify a clear understanding of the answers provided by the interviewee (Roulston, 2010). It is also considered important that interviewers have emotional attentiveness and engagement with the participant as this will allow for a free flow of the conversation (Reissmann, 2008).

The most effective questions for narrative interviews invite the interviewee to talk about specific times and situations, such as births, marriages or graduations, rather than asking about the respondent’s life over a long period of time. The narrator is thus empowered, as not only do they recall their history, but they also assert their own interpretation of history (Holloway & Jefferson, 2000). Although questions should be thoroughly prepared and open-ended in their nature, subsequent questions that may arise during the interview cannot be planned for and must be improvised, a skill that can be prepared for through in-depth preparation of content and theory (Wingref, 2001). For the researcher, there is always the temptation to ask questions that focus on their own research, however, the very nature of the narrative interview creates possibilities for the interviewee to take their story down many roads and the interviewer must be prepared to follow (Reissmann, 2008).
3.7 Ethics

Ethical clearance for this study has been obtained from Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee. Permit 2015/163. Before interviewing any of the participants I provided them with electronic copies of both the information letter and consent form. Some participants returned signed electronic consent forms, while others signed hard copies on the day of the interview. At the beginning of each interview, however, the consent forms were revisited and discussed together. It was made very clear to the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were also informed that to ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms would be used for them and anyone else referred to in the interview. Once this was clarified, the consent forms were signed, and a copy was given to the respondent and I kept one for my records (see Appendix 1).

3.8 Participants

Data was obtained from eight female respondents. All the participants had mothers who were in orphanages in Perth Western Australia during the post WW2 years with the exception of one woman whose mother was sent to Western Australia just prior to the war. All their mothers arrived in Australia under the British Child Migrant Scheme.

Finding participants for this study presented some challenges. As the daughter of a female child migrant I am a member of the ‘orphanage family’ myself, and I had many existing contacts with Child Migrants and their families, and I was confident that I would be able to utilise those connections to locate participants for the study. In the event that this was not so, I also placed advertisements in newsletters and on the Facebook pages and websites of the Child Migrant support agencies.
My proposal for the participants to take part in the study was initially met with a positive response from twenty women. Some of them I approached personally or through a second party, mostly their parents, and the others had contacted me after seeing my advertisement. I made contact with all the women and the initial reaction to my request to participate in the interviews, was in all cases, met with an affirmative answer. Information letters and permission slips were sent to the potential candidates and meetings arranged. Although permission had been granted and signed, and in some cases, dates set for the interview, many of the women, for reasons unknown to me, decided against participating in the interviews. As per the ethics approval (Appendix 1) the participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without question.

Eight women decided to take part in the study. Six of the participants were known to me via the orphanage ‘Auntie’ network: a network made up of former female British Child Migrants who had been in the same orphanage as my mother. The ‘Aunties’ had put me in contact with their own children, or the children of other former Child Migrants. Although I had known of the six participants at the time, I had only been in regular contact with two participants.

Initial contact with the six participants was made through email, in which I outlined the aim of the study and made an offer to send more information. All six took up the offer and arrangements were made to meet for the interview. Of the two remaining participants, one contacted me after seeing my advertisement and the other I met at a luncheon for British Child Migrants and following a conversation about my research, she agreed to be a part of the study.

3.8.1 Researcher/Participant Relationship

The term ‘insider researcher’, in qualitative research that uses interview methods, is used to describe the relationships that a researcher and a participant has prior to a research
study. ‘Insider research’ is a term used to describe the research that is conducted when you are part of the community, identify with the group you are researching or share the same bond with the people you are interviewing (Asselin, 2003; McConnell-Henry, James, Chapman, Francis, 2009; McDermind, Peters, Jackson & Daly, 2014).

Knowing the participants and having prior intimate knowledge of the group that you are studying can be a positive factor for researchers. When the researcher and a participant know each other before they are interviewed a rapport already exists and this can result in the interview proceeding quickly, being more open and is likely to provide rich data (McConnell-Henry et., al, 2009).

Conversely, the researcher should also be aware of the potential negative factors. Problems such as bias may happen and this in turn can put the validity of the study at risk. In studies that involve work places and colleagues, issues of perceived or real power imbalance must also be considered (McDermind et al., 2014). When recruiting the participants there should be no coercion, it should be completely voluntary and the participant should be aware of any risks (McDermind et., al, 2014).

I am a member of the BCM community and I had known two of the participants for some years. In this study, I adopted strategies that would ensure that issues of power and bias were constantly reflected on and had limited impact in the analysis and interpretation of data. At the start of the research all participants in this study were made fully aware that they could leave the study at any time and that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study and in the written report (see Ethics 3.8 this chapter). I also managed potential issues of bias through continual personal reflection during the transcribing, analysis and writing process. Dialogue with my supervisors during these processes was also part of my strategies and was instrumental in ensuring balance in the study.
3.8.2 Introduction to Participants

Of the eight women who agreed to participate in the study six lived in Western Australia, one in Canberra and one in the United Kingdom.

Layla is the oldest of four children and her mother was at an orphanage in Perth Western Australia. Her mother was amongst the first shipment of children who arrived in Perth in September 1947. Layla is a mother, grandmother and a successful business woman.

Jane is the eldest of three children and her mother was amongst the first shipment of children sent out to Australia in 1947 from England and placed into St John’s orphanage in Perth WA. Jane, a mother of five, lives in the United Kingdom where she runs a successful business.

May is the youngest of six children and her mother arrived in Australia in 1947 from Ireland and sent to St John’s orphanage in Perth WA. Her mother was also on the first ship to arrive in Perth after the recommencement of the British Child Migrant Scheme. May works as a teacher in four birth children, two step children and two foster children.

Rebecca is the oldest of three children. Her mother was a child migrant brought out to Australia from England in one of the last groups of children to be sent out before WW2. On her arrival, her mother was sent to a farm school in country Western Australia. Rebecca has a master’s degree and runs her own health practice in Perth. She has two children and two grandchildren.

Mary is the oldest child in a family of five. Her mother was sent out to Australia from Wales in 1947 and was sent to St John’s orphanage in Perth Western Australia and later to the Home of the Good Shepherd. Mary works as a senior public servant in Canberra , Australia. She has two children.
Twinney is the oldest of five children. Her mother was an Irish child migrant who was sent to St John’s Orphanage in Perth Western Australia in 1947. Twinney runs a successful family business in Perth and has two children.

Julie is the third child in a family of four. Her mother was sent out to Australia in 1947 from Wales and was sent to St John’s orphanage in Perth Western Australia. Julie is a student and a mother of one daughter.

Ruby is the middle of three children and the only daughter. Her mother arrived in 1947 from Ireland and was sent to St John’s orphanage in Perth Western Australia. Ruby runs a home business and is a mother of two.

3.8.3 Preparing for the Interviews

The narrative interview method was specifically chosen to allow the participants to take the interview in directions they considered important and meaningful. It was necessary however, to situate the interview in some context so a framework roughly divided into broad themes was provided as a starting point for the participants during the interview process.

1. The participants’ relationship with their mothers throughout their lives
2. The primary years of school.
3. Secondary education/ Tertiary Education.

3.8.4 Setting up the Interviews

All interviews were arranged around times and places convenient for the participants. This resulted in the individual interviews taking place in private residences, public meeting places and through e-interviews. All interviews were conducted between the respondent and me without interruption or input from family members who were sometimes present. In one of the interviews a young child was
present but made no contribution to the discussion and did not distract her mother. In another interview a family member was present at the location of the interview but remained some distance from interview and were not involved in any way.

My intention was to conduct one interview with each participant and to follow up with either another visit, phone calls or emails. Subsequent communication was done with all participants with most communications being conducted via emails. There were some follow up conversations with participants over coffee, through Skype, and over the phone and while these interviews were not always recorded, the subsequent conversations provided deeper insight into the participants’ stories.

The initial interviews with six of the face-to-face participants and the Skype participant took approximately two hours. This provided opportune time for the participants to provide a rich overview of their life’s experiences and to provide detailed accounts of some particular events. The E-Interviews with one of the participants could not be timed but the quantity of emails exceeded twenty over an eighteen-month period (This included follow up questions, from myself) and varied in their length and detail.

Because narrative interviewing allows for the participants to lead the interview in their own way, follow up interviews and communications were necessary to ensure that I had the correct chronological order of dates and events of the women’s experiences. In the course of those follow up communications the conversations often provided a deeper insight into the events and experiences that had been previously discussed thus, it enriched the data and provided added information in the analysis of the data. On occasions, new data was elicited and this also added to the richness of the participants portraits and the understanding of the experiences within a macro, meso and micro context (chapter 9)
Six of the eight participants completed a face-to-face interview. One of these participants who was keen to participate but lived in the eastern states of Australia, chose to do her interview over Skype and the remaining participant chose to conduct her conversation with me via email correspondence over the course of approximately 18 months. Although I suggested a Skype interview the participant appeared to find writing a more comfortable means of communication and over the time we were able to build up a strong rapport.

With both the Skype and email interviews there were a number of variables such as time differences, technical issues and being able to find a mutually convenient time to log on for an interview. This led me to commence initial communications with both participants with a questionnaire which they were able to complete in their own time and send it back when convenient (Appendix 2). The answers provided me with a general overview of key topics such as education, family, social issues, religion and work. This knowledge enabled me to make better use of the time available during the Skype interview and with the E-mail correspondence I was able to engage in a deeper and more relevant conversation as a result of the responses I received.

At this particular stage of the study, I had already completed four in-depth interviews with participants, had begun the process of initial coding. I felt confident in compiling a questionnaire that would cover the major issues that had been identified in the interviews already conducted. When a sufficient understanding of the topic has been accrued, it is feasible for the researcher to be able to prepare questions that are meaningful to the study (Rowley, 2014). In designing the questionnaire, I wanted to ensure that the questions were clear and explicit and as a result I decided on a series of closed questions in plain language (Rowley, 2014). Only the participants who used E-interviews were given the questionnaire.

As a researcher, I was naturally apprehensive about conducting personal interviews in which sensitive and personal information would be discussed. To ask the
participants to share their life's experiences with me, a complete stranger in some cases, came with great responsibility on my part. However, my job was made easier as some of the participants knew me and were relaxed about the interview, while the others who did not know me knew that my mother, like theirs, had been a child migrant and this shared sense of history was an enabling factor throughout the interview process.

3.8.5 Guiding Questions

Narrative Interview techniques allow for open ended questions to be asked, and in preparation for the interviews, I prepared a series of questions that allowed for the exploration of a variety of topics/issues to be discussed.

• What do you remember most about growing up?
• How do you remember your school days and overall education?
• What was it like being in your family?
• Can you tell me about the significant friendships/relationships that you had in your life?
• How do you think your mother’s institutionalisation may have influenced your life experiences?

This approach was used very loosely as the interviews were guided by the participants from the moment I stepped through their door or logged on to Skype. There was no real beginning to most of the interviews; there was just a continuation of the conversation that began when I entered. The flow of conversation was, on occasions, unfortunately interrupted by the logistics of setting up the recorder and the signing of the ethics paperwork that needed to be completed. While this did not appear to impact upon the data, some participants did modify their speech to accommodate what they deemed necessary for a clear recording. This resulted in some stilted speech moments in the beginning but after a few minutes the recorder was forgotten, and the participants returned to a more relaxed natural way of speaking.
At the completion of each recorded interview, the information was downloaded onto my personal computer in password protected folders to be later transcribed by myself. Transcription of the interviews were subsequently entered into NVIVO for coding and analysis.

3.8.6 Collection of data

In the face-to-face interviews I used a small digital recorder and a smart phone. In the event that one device might fail, the second was used simply for back up purpose. Second, the internet was used to conduct e-interviews via Skype and via email and third, some of the participants shared documents and artefacts with me, these included photographs, school reports and personal keep-sakes such as small pieces of art work, personal bibles and jewellery. In all interviews, the interviewing process was guided by the phases of narrative interview which included the *Main Narration, the Questioning and Concluding Talk phase* (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 7).

The narrative interview technique, according to Bauer (1996) asserts that no opinionated or attitudinal questions be asked during the interview. Holstein and Gubrium (1995), however, assert that the interview should be an occasion that displays the interviewer's willingness to share his or her own thoughts. In all the interviews, the participants asked me questions of a personal nature, particularly about my mother and my family. I was willing to share my information, and my willingness to be an active participant in these conversations enabled me to explore sensitive topics in more depth. However, I was still guided by the participants at all times as to where the boundaries of the interview were. In all of the interviews the respondents were forthcoming with information, and sensitive topics such as death, divorce and domestic violence were discussed openly. It should be said that the participants more often than not, dealt with
the stressful topics discussed with laughter and humour. In many cases this reaction allowed me to continue the exploration of sensitive topics without causing undue stress.

3.8.7 Analysis of Data

Qualitative data is analysed to identify concepts, situations and ideas of how people interpret their world; how they cope within their world; how they view their history and identity, and the history and identity of others who share their own experiences and situations (Offerdy & Vickers, 2010).

Drawing on Aurbach and Silverstein's (2003) steps to coding, analysis of data was broken into a series of steps that allowed me to examine the data using a systematic and in-depth approach.

![Figure 6. Steps used in the collection and coding of data. (Adapted from Aurbach & Silverstein, 2003).](image)

Step 1. Collect and listen to data: At the conclusion of each interview, I found it useful to listen to the recorded interview within a couple of hours of the interview ending. This enabled me to focus on the main points in the interview, identify emerging
themes and to take note of the interaction between myself and the participant. It was also a useful tool in examining and reflecting on my interviewing technique.

Step 2. Familiarisation of data and reflection: I proceeded to transcribe each interview, usually a week or two after the interview. This space between listening and writing provided time to reflect on the conversations that had taken place and to then listen and write with objectivity. This was a time-consuming exercise and one interview could take between 5-10 hours to transcribe. It was however an invaluable exercise as the repeated listening and writing focused my analysis on the core of my research. I approached this particular step knowing that the portraits that I would construct began here and I therefore meticulously looked for the ‘richness, complexity and dimensionality’ of the women (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). The repeated listening and writing in the transcribing process are an important stage of analysis as it allows the researcher to cognitively interact with the dialogue (Widodo 2014) and as I listened, read and re-read the interviews, common phrases and themes began to emerge and coding began.

Step 3. Themes and Pattern: The interviews were completed over an eighteen-month period and while themes and patterns presented themselves within the course of the face-to-face interviews, it was not until the transcribing of the interviews and the coding of the transcripts took place that a clear picture of concepts and categories emerged. Once all the transcripts had been completed, I began the process of open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Open coding is the “process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data” (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 61). Codes can be about conditions, interactions, strategies and tactics and can be found in the dialogue, the actions and the setting of the interview (Mason, 2002; Strauss, 1987). Using NVIVO software: I began by breaking down the transcribed interviews into
manageable sections or nodes. In each transcript, I identified and highlighted concepts, key words, comments, topics and events that were common or could be linked in all interviews. Similarities and repeating ideas began to emerge and from them, a set of themes developed.

Step 4. Making connections with patterns and themes: Once all the interviews had been coded I then began to compare the major themes and patterns that had emerged.

Step 5. Analysis of data: Once the patterns and themes were identified I then began to analyse the data in terms of the context of my research questions and theoretical framework.

Table 3 Examples of Initial Categories Identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Um… I wouldn’t say I was a devout Catholic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>I didn’t have books, we were more outdoorsy, playing softball, playing netball and tennis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>I think I have chosen really clever friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of themes such as religion, sport and friends were abundant in all the initial interviews and so identifying categories common to all the participants was a relatively expedient exercise. Through transcribing, reading, rereading the interviews and then composing the portraits of the participants the initial common categories first identified provided insights into how the participation and involvement in such areas as
the church, their sporting and social groups provided opportunities and connections that influenced events and outcomes in their lives. I was then able to identify overarching themes common to all portraits such as the importance of social networks, family influences and educational opportunities.

3.8.8 Document Analysis

Along with other research methods, I used historical and personal documents to help triangulate my findings. Triangulation of data is the collection of data from two or more sources that give the same result and provides confidence in the data (Bowen, 2009; Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, Neville, 2014). The historical and personal documents in this study were accessed from church and government archives and from the participant’s themselves.

Documents are an efficient method of data collection and can provide voice and meaning to a topic (Bowen, 2009). The significance of documents can be found in their historical situation, in their social functions and the interpretations of topics associated with them (Bowen, 2009; Wharton, 2006.). The usual starting points for document analysis are the evaluation of the document’s authenticity, credibility, and representativeness of the topic being investigated (Scott, 1990). The documents used in a study can take a variety of forms, this may include agendas, journals and scrapbooks (Bowen, 2009).

The use of visual images is also an important stimulus in qualitative interviews as it is possible to elicit forgotten memories, events and experiences (Harper, 2002). In this study, documents have been in the form of school reports, photo albums, media articles and diary entries. Sources used in this study were accessed from the individual participants and also consisted of artefacts such as photographs, sporting memorabilia and art work. These documents and artefacts provided an opportunity to discover a deeper insight into the stories of the participants and were a point of departure for explanations and discussions about the
documents and their meanings. In order to protect the identity of the participants, most of the documents that the participants shared with me have not been included in the thesis as they contained identifying images or names of the participants.

3.9 Researcher’s Reflexivity

It is an assumption in qualitative research that the researcher impacts on the findings of their study. The story of the researcher is therefore necessary for the reader to understand how the researcher is positioned within the context of the work (Dodgson, 2019). Throughout this study, I have informed the reader of my position as a daughter of a child migrant and my personal motivation for the study. I have not provided a narrative of my personal story but I have made it clear throughout the research process and the thesis, particularly in chapter 4, of my relationships and interactions with the participants in the study and of my experiences with BCMs. Because of my position it was necessary to ensure that my voice, bias and background did not become an overpowering narrative in the construction of meaning and knowledge in and from the research. This was achieved through the use of reflexive strategies.

Reflexivity is ‘The process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher’s positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Reflexivity ensures rigour within one’s work, gives credibility to the findings of the research and gives a deeper understanding of the research (Dodgeson, 2019; Tech & Lek, 2018).

The practice of reflexivity can be a demanding process but it is important in qualitative research as it identifies and describes the context of the intersecting connections between the participant and the researcher. The researcher must look at their
unconscious bias because our *unconscious cognitive errors* can lead us to find what fits with our beliefs and reflexivity can help address this problem (Buetow, 2019 p. 9).

When I began this research I knew that as a daughter of a BCM and being brought up amongst the orphanage family that my experiences and understandings would have the potential to influence the way in which I framed my research questions, my data collection and the data analysis. Knowing this, self-awareness and self-reflection was a critical strategy throughout all phases of the study.

Personal characteristics that affect the positioning of the researcher (Berger, 2013) included my personal experiences, biases, beliefs, political and theoretical standpoints as well as my emotional responses and these all needed to be critically evaluated throughout the study. Having acknowledged and understood how my personal traits help create and construct knowledge, I was keenly aware of the importance of continual examination and reflection of those biases in order to maintain a good separation between myself and the participants.

3.9.1 Reflexive Strategies

Strategies for maintaining reflexivity include having peer support, keeping a journal that encourages self-supervision as well as having ongoing contact and repeat interviews with the participants (Berger, 2013). In this study, I used reflection notes at the end of each interview. This was a strategy that enabled me to go back and examine my initial reactions, thoughts and ideas after I had typed and transcribed the interviews. This was a useful process as I was able to use those written reflections to compare and contrast my thoughts and observations with both the transcribed interviews and to the initial coded categories and ensuing themes. It also ensured that my voice was not overpowering the participant’s story.
The second reflexive strategy that I used was peer support. This was achieved with the support of my supervisors who advised and guided me on my construction of portraits, meaning-making and analysis.

Third, the opportunity for follow up communications both in person and via phone and email also ensured that the participants remained the centre of the story and that the data was continually being enriched.

The personal positions that I brought to the study affected the research in three ways. First, it affected access to the participants or the ‘field’ (Berger, 2013). The participants in this study were willing to share their time and stories with me because of my position of BCM daughter. In each interview there was an immediate bond between me and the participant through our shared sense of history (chapter 4).

Second, my gender and age contributed to the openness of the women to talk about sensitive and personal issues. Being of a similar age and a female, we shared many of life’s milestones such children, marriage and career. This shared understanding, allowed for conversations of comparisons and contrasts of our experiences.

Third, my own background affected how I gathered, analysed and made meaning of the data. For example, being the daughter of a BCM and having already completed a study on BCMs I had a deep understanding of the trauma, and challenges that many of BCMs had endured throughout their lives. I was careful that these experiences and knowledge informed my study but was not a factor in the construction of the participant’s narratives. When constructing knowledge and making meaning of the data I practiced self- reflection about how I was interpreting the data, making sure it was not my voice but those of the participants that were heard in the categories, themes and in the analysis of the study.
3.10 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has established that a qualitative study was chosen as it was considered the best way to investigate the experiences of a group of women whose mothers had been institutionalised in Australian orphanages in the post war years of WW2. Data was triangulated through the use of interviews, document analysis and artefacts. Analysis of interviews drew upon qualitative coding practices and presented using portraiture methodology and report writing methods. The strengths of using qualitative methods allowed the respondents to tell their own stories from their own interpretations and their lived experiences. It also permitted the consideration of historical and societal structures in the analysis of data. The next chapter draws upon the data to create a portrait of the participants.
Table 4 Profiles of the Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Layla</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Tertiary Post Graduate</td>
<td>Business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Secondary (Year 12)</td>
<td>Business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Tertiary Post Graduate</td>
<td>Primary School Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Tertiary Post Graduate</td>
<td>Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Senior Public Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twinney</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Secondary (Year 12)</td>
<td>Business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Tertiary Post Graduate</td>
<td>Semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Tertiary Post Graduate</td>
<td>Business owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present portraits of the eight participants who participated in the study. The portraits provide an understanding of the participants’ personal backgrounds, an insight into their mother’s story and the participants lived experiences in a historical and social context. In portraiture methodology, it is important for the researcher to situate the narrative of each woman within the physical framework of the interview or action, as it provides a reference point for the reader in which to situate the portrait in a time and place. This is important because the context of time and place becomes a resource for interpreting and making meaning of the story. This allows the reader, in their role as witness, to connect more fully with the participant (Lemberger-Truelove, 2016; Lightfoot-Lawrence & Hoffman Davis, 1997).
While the mother’s stories are woven into the participants’ portraits, I begin the chapter by providing a brief overview of all the mothers. The stories of the mothers have been constructed using information that the participants had provided in their interviews. I had interviewed one of the participant’s mothers in my 2013 study and while I have used some general information from that study such as descriptions of the institution and information the staff who worked there, her mother’s story has been constructed from the daughter’s data.

As previously mentioned, the mothers in this study, were British Child Migrants, sent to Australia from the United Kingdom between the years 1939 and 1947. With the exception of Rebecca’s mother who arrived during the inter-war years, the others arrived in 1947 in the first shipment of Child Migrants to arrive in Australia. Precise numbers of Female Child Migrants sent to Australia during the post-WW2 period are unknown, but it is thought that there were around 1300 girls sent to Australia and of this number three hundred were sent to Western Australia (Child Migrant Trust, 2010). Of those three hundred girls, fifty-four were sent to St John’s Orphanage in Perth (Graham-Taylor, 1994). Amongst those fifty-four, were seven of the mothers in this study.

The rationale for the post-war migration programme was to help repopulate the country after WW2 and it was under this scheme that seven of the mothers arrived in Perth. This particular child migration programme differed to the program that Rebecca’s mother had been involved in. During the inter-war years, when her mother had arrived, the rationale for child migration was on the training of young girls and boys in rural farm work. Run by a Foundation for orphaned children, the scheme focused on teaching the girls domestic skills while the boys were taught farming skills (Australian Government, 2001). It was to an institution run by this organisation that Rebecca’s mother had been sent.
On arrival in Australia, all the mothers were in their early teens and all had spent the majority of their lives in orphanages in the United Kingdom. According to the participants in the study, six of the mothers had received a basic education and had left school at the age of fourteen, whilst two of the mothers had been provided with the opportunity to complete their secondary education to the equivalent of Year 11. Five of the mothers were employed in the retail or hospitality industries, two were nursing assistants and one a public servant. Between the eight mothers, they had a total of thirty-three children.

Only Mary’s mother is still alive, now in their 80s. The stories of the mothers are however, incomplete, as the details of much of their lives have been lost in the fog of history. Most of the mothers had only shared snippets of their stories with their daughters and for the most part, those stories did not provide a great deal of detail.
Figure 7. Seven out of the eight mothers arrived in Australia in September 1947 aboard the SS Asturias. This was the first shipment of children to arrive after WW2. This picture was taken after the ship had docked and the children and been through customs.
4.1 Participant 1

Portrait of Twinney

Figure 8. Twinney’s Maternal Relations.

I was put in contact with Twinney through a mutual friend and we had arranged to meet each other at her home in the hilly outskirts of Perth. Although our mothers had been very good friends and we had both met each other’s mothers, we had not met each other, but were fully aware of each other’s existence. When Twinney answered the door I immediately recognised her mother’s features in her face and she too saw my mother in me. I was warmly welcomed; the kettle was boiled, and we sat down for a good chat.

Twinney is 58 years of age and the oldest of five children, two girls and three boys. She is married with two children and runs a successful family company which she has been managing for the past thirty years.

We began our conversation with Twinney talking about her early years in country Western Australia. She was born in what is now quite a large town on the south coast of Western Australia, where she lived with her parents and her four siblings. It was here that she attended school until Year 10, at which point she was sent to boarding school in Perth. Twinney laughingly explained her sudden departure to finish school in the city

I had a boyfriend and that’s why I got sent to boarding school. I think mum thought that there was a strong possibility that sex could happen, so it was off to boarding to school.
Before her exile to the city, Twinney had attended the local Catholic school which, from all accounts was an unremarkable time in her life. Having learned to read and write before starting Year 1, Twinney had found school quite easy-going and coasted along without having to stretch herself too much. She recalls no formidable or horrible memories of school in the country other than a few minor hiccups such as being caned by the teacher for talking too much. She also mentions that because she attended a Catholic school and wore a uniform, she would often be teased by the children from the local government school. This was all taken in her stride, but it was different story when she was sent to boarding school. Ironically, she recalls her experience of boarding at a Catholic girl’s school as “Like being in hell”. The religious dogma of the college bordered on fundamentalism and she remembers having to pray at least five times a day, attend mass at least twice a week, as well as attending other religious celebrations and ceremonies. Twinney successfully completed her two years at the school and on finishing her exams she immediately found work in the banking sector.

During the first few years after school, Twinney became involved with a young man and the two became engaged at a young age. Twinney, however, ended the relationship when without consultation, her fiancé decided to join the army as he felt it would be good for their future. As there had been no discussion about this between them, Twinney decided that their relationship was not what she wanted, and they went their separate ways.

As time moved on, Twinney met her first husband and the two of them embarked upon an adventure to the eastern states of Australia, much to her mother’s chagrin because the two were not yet married. After a couple of years of being together, they did eventually get married but it was not a union that was particularly supported by her parents. It was her mother who actively discouraged the marriage and on her wedding day, her mother had said “It’s only a wedding you can still change your mind.” One of the ‘Aunties’ had also provided her with some sage advice on her wedding day, sounding a warning to Twinney that her
future husband might be violent towards her and that if he hit her once, he would hit her again. Twinney did not understand the warnings and the marriage went ahead but she left him only nine months later due to his violent abuse.

I hadn’t been married very long and he actually hit me and the next time he hit me it was harder, so I got out pretty quick. And I kind of thought about what Auntie Anne had said. I thought, “He won’t hit me a second time”, but he did. Didn’t matter what I did I was still going to be hit so I bailed after 9 months.

When the abuse started, Twinney and her husband had been living in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. She was working in the bank and enjoying the social aspects of the town but his violence toward her was unacceptable and when a friend offered her a safe haven she jumped at the opportunity and left her husband. Her parents travelled north to try and help save the marriage but Twinney was determined not to return to the relationship. She was however, keen to stay in the Pilbara as she enjoyed her job and she had made a good network of friends. When she felt ready, Twinney began a relationship with another man to whom she has been married to for thirty years. Early on in this relationship however, Twinney fell pregnant with their first child but she was not prepared to stay with her partner at this stage in their relationship and she decided to return home to live with her parents. She gave birth to her son and after completing her maternity leave she returned to the workforce on a part-time basis to support herself and her child. She does not say too much about her husband’s whereabouts at this time but the two did reunite a few years down the track, married, had another child and remain in a happy and loving relationship.
It is clear that Twinney’s parents have been supportive of their daughter throughout her life, but it appears that there was some tension between Twinney and her mother in her teenage years along religious lines. Her mother, Brigid, was a staunch Catholic and the family were all brought up in the faith, attending church every Sunday and receiving the sacraments of reconciliation, communion and confirmation. Twinney’s astute observation as a young person that the church was a patriarchal institution in which females, particularly the nuns who taught her, were powerless within the organisation, did not sit well with Twinney. In particular, she found the sermons of the priests a negative experience and felt that there was nothing positive to be gained in going to church. Her mother’s insistence that she attend mass and prayer was described by Twinney as a stifling experience for her. As a young woman at a time of societal change, her attitude toward the church put her at odds with her mother’s beliefs and it appears to have driven a wedge between the two at the time.

Although she was immersed in Catholicism from day one, Twinney explained that she was never comfortable with religion and while she hadn’t fully rejected the idea of religion, she did not practice any herself.

Our conversation turned to the wider family and Twinney tells me that theirs was a happy and tight-knit family. She put much of that down to the fact that her mother wanted her own large family because she had been without one. She explained that her mother Brigid, did in fact have a brother and sister in Ireland but distance and time had meant that they had had little communication with each other after Brigid had been sent to Australia. She was however, reunited with the two in later life and remained in contact with them.

Brigid had been separated from her siblings when she was placed into an orphanage in Ireland when she was about 7 years old. After her mother had died and her father had been unable to take care of her and her siblings, she was placed into the care of the Catholic church. From all accounts, she was happy in the Irish orphanage and had received a good
education. It appears that the decision to send her to Australia had been made by the nuns at the orphanage who were her legal guardians at the time. Aged 13 years and 9 months, Brigid was at first, considered too old to be sent out under the scheme, but the nuns at the orphanage decided to sign the forms and the authorities agreed to take her even though she would be 14 by the time she arrived. Had the decision been made a few weeks later, Brigid would probably have remained in Ireland.

On her arrival in Australia, she was placed into St John’s orphanage where she remained until she left to work as a nurse’s aide. She married in her early twenties and soon had her brood of children. As the oldest child, Twinney recalled that she would sometimes observe a sadness in her mother. It wasn’t all the time, but Twinney thinks that her mother may have found being a young mother of five difficult and she didn’t appear to have a lot of energy to spend with the children when they were young.

I remember her (mum) saying that she was sent out here to populate Australia and she did!

Brigid’s married life began in a small country town in the south of Western Australia, and although she kept in contact with many of ‘The Girls’ from the orphanage, it wasn’t until the family relocated to Perth that Brigid’s connection with the orphanage girls, who Twinney collectively called the ‘Aunties’ became more of a focus in her life. Twinney recalled the gatherings of the ‘Aunties’ as fun and describes them as an important part of her mother’s life. It was clear to Twinney that being with ‘The Girls’ was a time in which friendships were reinforced and the special connection the women had with each other was strengthened.
Twinney had only understood that her mother had been a part of the BCM scheme when she was in her thirties. Like many of the participants the study she recalled that it wasn’t until the story of the BCMs came into the public sphere that it began to impact on her thinking. She describes how she felt when she reflected on the story.

I thought well, they’ve all made quite successful lives for women in a lot of ways. In their own way they have all been very resilient women.

Twinney herself, is a resilient person and has faced many challenges in her life and when I ask how she had overcome her negative experiences she simply replied. “I have just got on with it”. She puts a lot of her ability to cope with difficult situations, down to having brothers. Having so many boys around, there was always a physical element to their games and it was in this environment that Twinney acquired both a mental and physical resilience.

I learnt how to hold my own from early on because if I didn’t I was going to get, you know whacked! There was no ‘BEING A GIRL’ in our household at all.

Twinney is resilient, articulate and humorous as she shares her stories. She is generous with her time and has been kind enough to share some very sensitive topics with me. Relationship troubles, the responsibilities of running a business and raising two children has meant that Twinney has experienced a plethora of roles and challenges in her life but these appear to be consigned to the past and she credits her mother’s mantra of “You just pick yourself up and keep moving forward.” as the core of her resilient nature.
Significant themes that have been identified in Twinney’s narrative, include the personal relationships she has experienced, her connections with family and her paid and unpaid work. Key issues of identity, resilience and a sense of belonging are woven throughout her story and are further explored through Chapters 5-9.

4.2 Participant 2

Portrait of Ruby

*Figure 9. Ruby’s Maternal Relations.*

I first met Ruby at a celebratory luncheon in honour of the British Child Migrants. It had been 70 years since the SS Asturias had arrived at Fremantle with its first batch of children from the United Kingdom and to celebrate the arrival, a lunch had been organised to remember the occasion. Attending the luncheon were those who were on that first ship, as well as those who had arrived after that date. As one might expect, many of those first arrivals had passed away, so an invitation had also been extended to their children to mark the occasion. And so, I found myself at lunch surrounded by the ‘Aunties’ and enjoying a wonderful meal. Like most Child Migrant social occasions, there were speeches and toasts and photos and of course there was the singing. Wherever there are Female Child Migrants together, there is singing. They sing the songs of their orphanage days, the words coming easily as do the harmonies. The ‘Welsh Girls’ uphold their reputation as the best singers and while the ‘Irish’ and the ‘English Girls’ complain about having to sing the Welsh national anthem, they all come together and entertain the crowd and take a trip down memory lane reinforcing they bond and their sense of belonging. The end of the singing signals that it is time for Child Migrants to reacquaint themselves with long lost friends and reminisce about
the old days. Knowing that it was now ‘Auntie’ time but not wanting to leave the warmth of the orphanage family, the sons and daughters of those passed, are drawn together over photo displays and the conversations about each other’s mothers begin.

It was here that I met Ruby. Ruby’s mother, like mine, had been on the SS Asturias when it had docked in September 1947 at Fremantle and both girls had been sent to St John’s orphanage in Perth. Both our mothers too, had passed away many years ago.

After identifying our place in the Child Migrant family tree, we examined photos and shared stories about our mothers and ourselves. Although our mothers had been on the same boat and had been sent to the same orphanage we had never met. We are the same age and I wondered out loud how it had been that our paths had never crossed. Ruby explained that her mother had never wanted anything to do with the orphanage once she had left and that she had only stayed in contact with a couple of the orphanage girls. It was during our conversation that I mentioned that I was doing a study on the daughters of British Child Migrants and asked Ruby if she might be interested in being a participant. We exchanged numbers and a couple of days later Ruby contacted me and we organised a time and day to meet.

As we both lived in opposite directions of the Perth city it was agreed that we would meet at a halfway point at a park near the city. The plan to conduct the interview amongst the old Morten Bay fig trees in one of Perth’s oldest parks, was thwarted by a threatening sky and we abandoned our outdoor interview to take refuge in a local café. It was clear that the interview could not be done in the café as the space did not allow for privacy but fortunately, the owner provided us with access to a small room at the back of the premises in which to conduct the interview. With our tea ordered we made ourselves comfortable and surrounded by the comforting smells of freshly baked croissants and roasted coffee permeating the air the interview began with Ruby providing me with her mother’s story.
Ruby’s mother Lily was born in Tipperary in Ireland to a young unwed mother. This was a time when being born out of wedlock in Catholic Ireland brought great shame upon the family and for the most part, those babies were placed into homes, where hopefully, they might be adopted out to a good family. In Lily’s case, her mother was fortunate enough to be able to remain at the abbey where she had given birth to the child, working in the laundry for her and her baby’s keep. This arrangement lasted for three years at which time both mother and daughter were sent to Cardiff in Wales to another Catholic institution with similar arrangements in terms of work.

When Mum was around 3 years of age, her mother and herself with four other local mothers and their babies were transferred to Nazareth House in Cardiff. I am wondering if they were spared from being separated from their children as Mum's uncle was a Priest. The mothers were employed at the hospital in Cardiff and they would visit their children on the weekends.

Within a couple of months of being in Cardiff, Lily’s mother was called back to Ireland to care for her father, as her own mother had died. It is unclear whether Lily’s mother ever saw her child again or if she had agreed to her daughter being sent to Australia. Whatever the situation, Ruby believes it must have been a heartbreaking separation for them both and Lily and her mother were never to see each other again.

In 1947, Lily arrived in Australia with the first batch of children sent out under the child migrant program. Like many of the others, she was sent to St John’s orphanage where she remained until she was sixteen. The story of her mother’s life at St John’s is unclear as
Lily did not share many details with her family about her life there. Ruby explained that Lily never really wanted to look back and while on occasions her mother had mentioned a few of the names of the girls in the orphanage, only snippets of information about her childhood were shared over the years. The fragments of information that were shared however, all pointed to a rather unhappy existence for Lily. Ruby recalls that her mother appeared to have had a fear of nuns due to a rather violent punishment that was meted out to her.

She told me the nuns were very cruel and they (the children) were often hungry. The one story Mum did tell me, was that when she was around 10 or 11 years old, her and a friend were so hungry, they stole a tin of condensed milk and were caught. She (Lily) was beaten so badly that she wet herself during the beating! After the incident, they had to complete 12 months of night duty changing all the wet beds of the babies, toddlers and children for punishment.

Although Ruby had noted her mother’s anxiety toward nuns, she described her mother as being a very resilient and brave person who was very protective her family and never one to shy away from conflict. She goes on to suggest that this may have been a survival skill learnt in the orphanage where the children had to learn to be tough.

Lily’s life at the orphanage did afford her an education and on leaving school at the age of fourteen, which was normal at this time, it appears that she had left with good literacy skills. Ruby thinks that at age sixteen her mother enrolled in either a nursing or nursing assistance course at a local hospital but her story in those years before marriage is not known to Ruby.
It was only a few years after leaving the orphanage that Lily married. She and her husband began a family and three children were born at regular intervals. Lily was never in paid employment after her marriage but was very involved with her children’s lives.

It does appear, however, that Lily’s experiences in the orphanage did impact upon her negatively and although for the most part this was not evident in her day-to-day life, there were times when she experienced bouts of depression.

Occasionally she would also get angry. Mum had a real temper if she got angry, the Fs would be flying around. I remember she had some depression and she had a good GP and she was on some medication, but those older medications aren't like the current ones. Yeah, I mean she was very grounded at times, for what she’d been through.

While Ruby recalls a happy childhood with caring and devoted parents, cracks in her parent’s marriage began to appear and the couple divorced when Lily was 41. Sadly, she passed away in early fifties from cancer. Her death was a devastating blow for Ruby, but she has been determined to find out more about her mother’s life and with the help of newly found relations in Ireland, she is piecing together Lily’s story. Ruby tells me that she is currently following the investigation by the Northern Ireland government into the removal of children to Australia under the British Child Migrant Scheme and hopes that the inquiry will provide her with some more information about her mother’s story.

Ruby herself, was born in Perth Western Australia in the 1960s and grew up in the suburbs of Perth. Growing up with her parents and two brothers, she describes an early idyllic life with her parents wanting to provide every opportunity they could for their children.
She attended the local government primary school which was around the corner from her house and then it was off to the local secondary high school. Of her education, Ruby explained that she had loved school and that it was a place where she had made life-long friends. Her parents had encouraged all of their children to fulfil their potential as learners and as individuals and all three children achieved well at school.

After the completion of her schooling, Ruby chose a career in nursing and began her training at a city hospital. She then went on to study and work as a midwife and it was during this period of her life that she met and married her husband Brett and had two children over the next few years. In 1991, Brett’s job as a teacher, saw the family move to a country town north of Perth. It was a small community with limited employment opportunities for Ruby, so in order to keep her mind stimulated she became an active member of the community, volunteering at the school where she taught sewing and organised first-aid courses for the local residents.

Sadly, Brett unexpectedly died in 1994 and Ruby returned to Perth to be with her family and to begin her life without him. On her return to the city, she moved into a house not far from her brother and found work as a nurse at the local medical centre.

Ruby worked at the clinic for a few years, but after one of her sons began to experience some mental health problems she chose to give up her paid employment in order to support him throughout his high school years. She explained that he had been very traumatised by losing his dad and she now knows that he was suffering PTSD as a result of witnessing her giving CPR to her husband when he collapsed and died. Her other son was diagnosed with ADHD at age 18 and struggled during this time. Ruby sought help from professionals and with her unconditional love and support, she has seen her sons grow into young men of whom she is very proud. She conceded that it has been hard work but advises,
“*I just think you have to just keep calm and just go with the flow, otherwise you end up with these stressful, angry, anxious kids.*”

In 1999, Ruby met and married and her second husband Charlie who has been a solid supporter of both her and her sons. Unfortunately, Charlie has recently been diagnosed with a terminal muscle wasting disease and as his condition has deteriorated in recent months, Ruby made the decision to quit her job as a child health nurse to look after him. This decision, however, has inspired Ruby to start a business from home making children’s clothes and accessories.

When Ruby arrived for the interview she had presented me with the most beautiful white roses. It was a lovely gesture and totally unexpected, but she explained that she was just grateful that someone was telling the story of the lives of the Child Migrants and their families. This act reflected the beautiful person that is Ruby. She is generous, funny, smart and has a deep sense of goodness that she shares around with her friends and family. Her narrative reflected the important themes of family, relationships, resilience and identity and her story echoed a need to explore her sense of belonging in her mother’s narrative and that of her mother’s extended family.

4.3 Participant 3

Portrait of May

![May's Maternal Relations](image)

*Figure 10. May’s Maternal Relations.*

May is the daughter of Faith, a child migrant who was sent to Australia from Ireland in 1947. Faith and my mother had arrived in Australia together and had been close friends throughout their lifetime. Over the years, I had on occasions met with Faith at
Child Migrant gatherings or at the funeral of an ‘Auntie’ but throughout these years I had only ever met Faith’s children once, and that being some forty years ago. In 2012, Faith agreed to be involved in a study that I had undertaken about Child Migrants and after the completion of the study I remained in contact with her and her husband mostly via Facebook. Sadly, Faith passed away, but I remained in contact with her husband Peter. It was this connection that enabled me to contact his daughter May. After explaining the study that I was about undertake, Peter contacted May and asked her permission to pass on her contact details to me and after a few emails over the course of a week it was agreed that we would meet for an interview.

May and I decided that due to her position as a primary teacher we would meet during the school holidays at May’s home. I had met May when she was about 6 years old and although I heard about her now and again through the ‘Auntie’ telegraph, I had not seen her in over forty years.

The morning of the interview turned out to be a sunny and warm spring day and having found her house in the long, quiet, leafy street in the outskirts Perth, I took some moments to take in the beauty of the flowering native trees that were in full bloom at the time. The warmth and colour of the day turned out to be much like May herself.

My knock on the door was answered by May and although we had not seen one another for four decades we both immediately recognised our mothers in each other. There were exclamations of shared surprise at the instant recognition of whom we had belonged to and this could be heard in words of “Oh yeh, you do look like her,” and “Oh I see your mum in you”. I was duly ushered into a large kitchen where three of the eight children who live there, were involved in various activities. There was a relaxed homely feel to the scene and I was introduced to them all. My arrival and subsequent introduction were taken in their stride.
and they carried on with their activities. May put the kettle on and we settled down on the large comfortable lounge for a good chat.

May is a primary school teacher at the local Catholic school. She explained that she was an intelligent child who could read and write at an early age and there was an expectation from both parents that she would attend university. Her formal education began at the local Catholic school but due to some financial challenges it was decided that both her and her brother should go to the local government school. There had been plans to send her to an inner city, all girls Catholic college, for her secondary schooling but as she had made a good-friends in the area, it was agreed that she would attend the local high school with them. At the completion of Year 12 May attended university where she completed her teaching degree. She is proud that she was the first in the family to graduate from university but stresses that her older siblings had all held good jobs. She explained that when her four brothers and one sister had left school, university degrees were not as necessary to obtain good positions and it was a time when a person could work their way up in a company or government department through experience and diligence. By the time May had completed school, teaching and nursing courses were university based and as she had always wanted to be a teacher she pursued her degree.

Her mother was very proud of her youngest daughter graduating as a teacher but according to May, her mother was even prouder when she was employed in a Catholic school. May is however, quick to point out that her mother was proud of all her children and would talk about their achievements whenever she could. May tells me that she is guilty of doing the same to her children.

It is clear from the way May speaks about her mother that the two of them shared a very close relationship. May explained that she thinks that her relationship was very different to the rest of her siblings because she was the youngest child and her mother had been more
relaxed with her parenting of May, than she was with the older siblings. She thinks that because her mother had no parenting role model in her life, that she was possibly very nervous with her first few children but by the time she had had her sixth child she was a much more confident and easy-going. Of Faith she says,

Mum used to always say that she was quite strict with the older ones but by the time she came to me she just realised that love was the most important thing. Even at her eulogy my brother wrote, we all wondered how she was such a magnificent mother without having a role model of a mother.

May explained that she thinks that her mother’s lack of a motherly role model meant that she drew heavily upon the morals of the church on which to base her parenting. As a result, religion played a very big part in the family’s lives. May told me that her mother was a devout Catholic whose faith was unshakeable. “We used to say that she had a direct line to God” and recalls that a favourite outing with her mum when she was younger, was to go to the city for the mass at the cathedral followed by a vanilla slice and a coke.

Of her mother’s devoutness, May explained that rather than fight the religious dogma of the nuns who cared for her, Faith had embraced it as a way of life and drew heavily upon the teachings of the church to guide her in life. Her religious education had begun in Belfast when, as a young child of 8 years, she had been placed in an orphanage in the care of the Sisters of Mercy. Faith’s mother had died, and her father was unable to look after her due to illness and so her brother made the decision to put into care. She would remain in the orphanage for the next six years of her life, but she received a good education and from all accounts was grateful to the sisters who looked after her. At age 12, Faith was shipped off to
Australia under the BCM scheme and she arrived in September 1947 in the first shipment of children from the UK.

Like most of the mothers in this study, Faith was sent to St John’s orphanage but after being there for only a year, she was sent to a small country school east of Perth, where she was fortunate enough to be able to complete her junior certificate. After completing her exams, Faith once again took up residence at St John’s orphanage while she completed a government sponsored foundation course in nursing. After successfully completing the course she relocated to a country town north of the Perth, where she commenced her nursing assistant training.

After completing her training, Faith met her husband Peter and after marrying, they had six children together. It is unclear how Faith and Peter met, but they were happily married for fifty years. Throughout her later life, Faith had battled with serious heart problems and although she came close to death on a couple of occasions, medical intervention and her faith helped her overcome her illnesses. Faith was also treated for breast cancer and although she was in remission for a few years it returned. She chose not to have any treatment and died aged 80 years. May explained;

When the cancer returned, she didn’t take the chemo pills because she just said, “It was God’s will.” She’d led a wonderful life and whatever God had in store for her was her journey. So, it is kind of comforting in a way that she had such amazing faith and she had the most peaceful passing ever known to man. She died on dad’s chest in her sleep.
Faith’s devoutness to her religion was evident in all facets of her life. She attended mass twice a week, would regularly pray the rosary, and make novenas, devotional prayers that would be said for either nine successive days or weeks. The family was brought up in the Catholic faith and although Peter, her husband, was not a Catholic himself, he supported her faith attending church with her every week for most of their married life. He eventually converted to Catholicism at age 50.

May continues to practice Catholicism and while she does not share that same degree of devoutness as her mother did, her faith is strong, and she is a regular church goer and she is raising her children as Catholics. She does mention, however, that she thinks her mother may have been disappointed that none of her kids were as devout as she was.

May explained that while Faith found great comfort in her religion, the values of Catholicism on which she based her parenting, were often at odds with the world in which her children were growing up. She explained that her mother was very strict when it came to relationships with the opposite sex and while her mum was much stricter on the older children, particularly her older sister, she herself was not allowed to have sex before she was married. May explained that this factor influenced her decision to marry at age 20. The values system that she had grown up with, meant that in order to move on to the next stage of adulthood, she needed to get married. In hindsight, May realises that she was probably too young to marry or simply didn’t choose the right partner and as a result, the marriage didn’t last. May does not elaborate any more on her first marriage but there is no sign of animosity in her reference to it. It appears that it was an event in her life and she has moved on and is happily married to her second husband.

I asked May about her memories of her family life growing up and she explained that her house was always filled with people. Because May had a large immediate family and her
father had lots of sisters, she says that she always had family around and never felt like there was anything missing in terms of her mother having no immediate family around her.

Her mother had no living relations in Australia, but she did have a brother in England whom she visited as often as circumstances permitted. She did however, have her orphanage family, ‘The Girls’ and May had grown up with the knowledge that these women were her family because she had none. May had fond memories of the ‘Aunties’ visiting her mother. Their house was a big and welcoming home outside of the metropolitan area and it was an outing for the women who mostly lived in the suburbs. Her dad also made a great fuss of the women, some of whom would find refuge in their home when their own lives had become too hard. May recalls them singing Irish songs, telling stories and reinforcing the special bond they had with each other. She said that the women were always laughing, and she loved coming home from school to find the ‘Aunties’ sitting around having a wonderful time with each other.

The ‘Aunties’ were not the only ones who found refuge in their home and over the years her parents had provided accommodation for the friends of their children who had found themselves without a place to live and they were all looked after until they were back on their feet. Christmas was also a time at which her mother ensured that anyone down on their luck would be welcomed at their table.

My mum always said, ‘That if you don’t have a stranger at your table at Christmas then you are not really sharing the Christmas spirit.

May continues this tradition of providing a safe haven for people. Two young relatives who were unable to stay with their parents because of chronic alcoholism faced life in an institution before May stepped in to care for them. One of her mother’s mantras was
‘you have to make the best of a bad situation’ and May says that is what they as a family are doing.

May and Faith had a very close relationship with each other, and May puts this down to the fact that she was able to have a great deal of time together when she was in her teens. Because of the large gap between the fifth and sixth child, by the time May was a teenager, her other siblings had left home and her father spent a long time working away. This had just left May and Faith at home together and this enabled them to develop a very close relationship.

After the breakdown of her first marriage May had to return to work on a part-time basis and Faith and Peter stepped in to look after the children who were toddlers at the time. May describes her mother as her rock during this period. She would return home from work to find the ironing done, a meal cooked and the children happy and contented.

With the support of her parents, she was able to continue working and after some years met and married her husband Jim. At age 38, May discovered to her surprise and delight that she was pregnant. Faith was thrilled with the prospect of a new grandchild and May recalled her saying,

“I hope it is a girl” and when she was she said, “Oh it’s going to be just like it was for me.” She said, “You were like my friend.”

May tells me that she was always very proud of her mother and when I ask her to elaborate on this she tells me that her mother had been a positive person and even though she had had hardship throughout her life she always saw the positive aspect in it. She never spoke badly of anyone and she never judged anyone, and she was always looking out for other people. May tells me that she thinks her mother had viewed her life in both the orphanages as
a positive experience. She had been grateful for the life that the nuns had given her. May says that being immersed in such a positive environment has made her the positive person that she is today.

It is clear that the family unit is the central focus of May’s life. The security and love and happiness she experienced while growing up in a large family has now been replicated in her own nuclear and extended family. May is one of the most positive and genuine women I have met, with an unbridled enthusiasm and zest for life. This does not mean that her life has been without its problems and upsets, but those experiences do not appear to take up energy and time in her life at the moment.

4.4 Participant 4

Portrait of Mary

Mary is 54 years of age a mother of two and a senior public servant in Canberra. As she resides on the other side of the country our interview was conducted via Skype. I had met Mary some 45 years earlier but had had no contact with her since then. Her mother, however, was a friend of mine on social media and through her I was able to make contact with Mary. Having left a message about the study and my email address should she be interested in being a participant, Mary contacted me soon after and we arranged a time and date to talk. Mary had signed all the necessary ethics documents and had emailed them to me before the Skype took place so as soon as permission was granted, I began recording with Mary directing the conversation.

Figure 11. Mary’s Maternal Relations.

Mary's mother Delma was born in the 1930s in Wales and lives in Canberra Australia. She arrived in Australia in 1947 under the Child Migration Scheme and placed in St John's Catholic Orphanage. Delma's mother died when Delma was 7 years of age.
After reacquainting ourselves with each other and determining our positions in our family structures we chatted about siblings and parents. I had strong memories of Mary’s mother and she of mine but we only had vague memories of meeting one another. She recalled a visit to Western Australia and a distant memory of swimming in a pool with me, which was most likely at Auntie Paula’s house, one of our mutual ‘Aunties’. I vaguely recalled the event also, but our strongest shared memory was of playing bingo at St John’s orphanage a favourite pastime of the both the ‘Aunties’ and their children.

Mary’s mother Delma, a twelve-year old orphan from Wales, arrived in Australia in 1947 and was sent to St John’s orphanage in Subiaco. In Wales, Delma had lived with her two sisters at Nazareth house, an orphanage run by the Sisters of Nazareth. Like many siblings in the orphanage, they were separated from each other when Delma was sent to Australia, her sisters being too old at the time to be considered for the BCM scheme. Unlike the other participants’ mothers, Delma only stayed a couple of years at St John’s. A headstrong girl, her rebellious attitude was a problem for the nuns and after two years she was sent to another orphanage in Perth, one for ‘wayward girls’. On leaving that particular home, Delma made her way to the eastern states of Australia where she joined the army.

It was here that she met and married her husband and began a family. Delma and her husband lived for a time in Melbourne and then moved the family to Canberra where she remains today. Like other women during this Baby Boom period, Delma had five children, Mary being the eldest. Unlike the more traditional family models of the 60s and 70s, when most women remained at home as the primary care-giver, Mary’s mother was always employed in paid labour outside the home. For as long as Mary can remember her mother worked in paid labour.
She had a job in the public service in the typing pool. One of her neighbours, who is still there now and still friends with her would look after the kids. So, it was not formal childcare, but Jean, the next-door neighbour, would look after the kids. Mum would be home at three, she worked school hours so that she was home. Yeah, so it was always her and dad going off to work.

I asked Mary if she thought having both parents working was unusual at the time and she says that she just took it for granted that this is what people did. She acknowledged that her father, a high-ranking public servant, was an enlightened man and did not see gender as a barrier to work or educational opportunities and was happy to let her mother “rule the roost.”

Delma, who is now in her 80s, enjoys good health and she and her husband enjoy a fulfilling and busy life. They are regular visitors to Perth where Delma catches up with ‘The Girls’ and she and her husband also travel to Wales, where one of Delma’s sister still lives. I was lucky enough to meet up with Delma in 2017 at a Child Migrant gathering where she regaled me with humorous and not so humorous tales of life in the orphanage.

Mary does not have an intimate knowledge of her mother’s experiences in either of the orphanages and says that her mother rarely talked about her time in either institution. She describes her mother as being a bit defensive about her life in the institutions and explained that it wasn’t until the movie Oranges and Sunshine (2010) a film which tells the story of how Margaret Humphries uncovered the story of the British Child Migrant scheme, that she talked a little more about it. From the limited information that Delma provided, Mary gleaned that in terms of the care and education, the Cardiff orphanage was adequate but the situation at St John’s was harsh and some of the nuns quite cruel.

Although Mary has limited knowledge of her mother’s experience she tells me that she thinks that her mother was quite traumatised by the experience. She explains that the
apology from Kevin Rudd, the then Prime Minister of Australia, to the migrant children in 2009, meant a great deal to her mother who had been in the federal parliament to hear the apology. It was during this speech that Mary became aware that her mother had been allocated a number in the home and was sure that this loss of individual identity had had a negative impact upon her mother but doesn’t suggest how it may have manifested itself.

Mary also noted that when the stories of sexual abuse in Australian institutions had been mentioned in conversation, that her mother was quite adamant that she, herself, was never sexually abused. Mary wondered about the overly defensive reaction to the topic but conceded that she would never ask her directly. She does however, know that her mother’s time at the orphanage did involve a good deal of physical work and religious instruction. She explained that her mother had once told her that when she was in the orphanage in Perth that she had been sent out to holiday with a family, a practice that took place during school holidays, and was treated like a slave, doing housework and other jobs but Mary was unable to say what those other jobs were.

I wonder aloud if Mary has considered the impact upon herself as a result of her mother’s incarceration in an orphanage. She explained that she thought that her mother’s separation from her own family has resulted in Delma wanting to keep her family close to her and she is very much the matriarch. Mary described her mother as being a bit domineering at times but explained that her mother’s propensity to sometimes become too involved with her children’s lives comes from a place of concern and love and this is understood by the family who are very close.

Mary also thought that the lack of affection and physical contact in the orphanage, together with the strict religious teachings that were experienced by her mother, has impacted on Delma’s ability to be cope with demonstrative acts of affection. She explained that when she was growing up her mother was a bit uptight about relationships and sex and that there
was not a great deal of open physical affection between her parents, although it is clear that they have a strong and loving relationship. Mary acknowledged that her mother’s attitude to the issue of relationships heavily influenced her own behaviour.

I would never feel comfortable showing physical affection at home. I remember I was not comfortable showing too much affection with a boyfriend at home, let alone having sex at home, that was just not on at all. Even if I was in my 20s, you just would not be comfortable, and I don't think mum would have been comfortable.

Our conversation turned to education and I asked Mary about her memories of school and her general education. She responded that both her parents, particularly her dad, were big supporters of the public-school system, and so she attended the local primary school, and completed her middle secondary years of education at the local high school. To complete Years 11 and 12, Mary attended a separate senior high school college.

Mary’s parents had always expected that she would attend university and after completing Year 12, she commenced her degree at the Australian National University and studied for a Bachelor of Science majoring in pure mathematics and statistics. She explained that both her parents were ambitious and supportive for their children to have a good education and were progressive in their thinking about women and education. She explained that the first three children in the family were girls and there was always an expectation that they would have a tertiary education.

Her parents were also hands-on with their children’s education and while her father helped with the academic areas of the education such as homework, her mother was a regular
at parent teacher interviews and very interested in being involved with school activities. One of those activities was sport, an important aspect of Mary’s life.

When she was younger Mary played netball, volleyball, softball and did quite a bit of running. She and her sister Karen represented Australia in the world Volleyball Championships in which Australia came second last, but Mary assures me that the two of them had taken it very seriously. Mary’s talent in the sporting arena enabled her to acquire skills and confidence that have served her well in her sporting, working and social life.

Mary is a mother of two sons whom she has chosen to raise on her own. Of the boys’ father, she explains that he is a man who is married to another woman and she has kept his identity a secret. She has no wish to complicate his life and has not told her family or her children who he is. Besides the usual parent/teenage angst, Mary shares a good relationship with her children and they all enjoy a very close relationship with the extended family with the boys having plenty of good male role models in their lives.

A few months after our interview I had the good fortune of being able to meet up in person with Mary on a visit to Canberra. We arranged to meet for dinner and we spent a couple of hours chatting about ourselves and our family and have maintained a conversation over email since the meeting.

Significant themes that were identified in the narrative of Mary included the importance of familial relationships, sport, independence and strong social capital. These issues are further explored through Chapters 5-9.

4.5 Participant 5

Portrait of Julie

Julie daughter of CM Dona

Julie’s mother Dona was born in Wales 1935 and died in 1980. Arrived in Australia in 1947 and sent to St JSt John's orphanage

Dona's mother unknown.
Figure 12. Julie’s Maternal Relations.

I am sitting at my kitchen table preparing for an interview with a childhood friend, Julie. She has opted to do the interview at my home as there are far too many interruptions at her place. Julie is 52 years of age, a mother of one and lives with her partner and daughter in Perth, Western Australia. She is the third child in a family of four children and the youngest girl. She is well educated with a variety of university degrees and is currently studying for a PhD. She is also a Shire Councillor. Julie has been aware of the study for some time and is excited to be a part of it. She needs no invitation to begin her story and over a coffee and pastries, she starts our conversation with a story about a chance encounter she had with a co-worker who had grown up two streets away from where she lived as a child. They had both grown up in the same working-class suburb on the outskirts of Perth and while they had only lived two streets away from each other they had never met as children. He had attended the local primary school and she the local Catholic school and as a result their paths had never crossed but they had had mutual acquaintances. As their conversation progressed, she recognised that despite their close geographical proximity, they had lived in two separate worlds in which their experiences had been totally alien from each other. She realised that she had been fortunate enough to have had a rich educational experience that had exposed her to a much wider variety of social and educational networks than many of the other girls from her neighbourhood.

I too would have been pregnant like many of the girls at 15 and had a tribe of kids by 30 had I not gone to the Catholic school.

She made the point that although they all shared a similar social and economic background, it was her socialisation and education within a religious environment that she
thought has been a significant influence in her life’s choices. She explained that it was within
the church that she learned to listen and think. Her participation in the Catholic ceremonies
had provided her with opportunities to perform tasks such as reading at the mass, interacting
with the clergy and other children and adults within the parish. She also credited her Catholic
school as an environment that provided her with a sense of discipline something that she did
not really have at home.

When I suggested that many Catholic children schooled in Catholicism the 1960s and
70s talk about being frightened and fearful of a vengeful god, she says that as a child she had
a healthy scepticism about the teachings of the church and never fully bought into Catholic
dogma. She specifically recalled rejecting a part of the mass in which the congregation was
expected to say, ‘Lord I am not worthy to receive your soul but only say the word and I shall
be healed.’ but when it came to this part in the mass Julie would always leave out the word
‘not’. She concluded, “I think my sense of self-esteem has always been pretty good.”

Catholicism is not part of Julie’s life now and she identifies as an atheist.

Due to a mix up in grade one enrolments, Julie started school in 1968 aged four years
instead of the usual five years. The decision was taken that if she could keep up with the
class, she would stay on but if it became too much for her she would simply repeat grade one.
As it transpired, Julie was a bright child and remained a year ahead of her age group for the
rest of school life.

I asked Julie to tell me about her memories of primary school and she told me that her
primary years were a bit vague in her mind, but she does have a clear memory of one incident
in which she was asked to help some of the weaker boys with their mathematics. This one
small request from her teacher at the time, impacted in a positive sense in that it gave her a
self-belief that she was clever.
Given that Julie was obviously a bright student and was a year ahead of herself in school, I wondered out loud if she had learned some basic literacy skills at home and what guidance she had had with her school work. She explained that her childhood upbringing had been challenging and briefly touched on issues of domestic violence and alcoholism that had pervaded her home life and which eventually led to the divorce of her parents when she was eleven years of age. As a result of the domestic upheavals within the household, encouragement and interest in Julie’s education had been minimal and Julie has no recollection of her parents taking an interest in her school work or ever making her do homework. She described her home as one with very few books but did recall that her parents brought a set of the encyclopaedia Britannica when she was a bit older.

Julie appeared to have enjoyed her primary years at her local Catholic school but when her older sister began high school, Julie’s parents made the decision to send her to the primary school that was on the same campus of her sister’s new school. Starting at an unfamiliar school in grade seven was a daunting experience but Julie excelled academically and in sport and was soon happily ensconced in her new environment.

I went to a new school in grade 7. When I was in year 8, I was very bright, advanced in all my subjects, it was a small school, so it was easy to shine and there were a lot of migrant children and English was their second language, so I had the advantage over that in a small school. I was a big fish in a small pond.

She explained that her education at private Catholic schools, particularly the all-girls school she attended for secondary education, had provided her with the opportunity to access
a different set of social skills that helped her negotiate the world outside the confines of her working-class neighbourhood. It was during this period of her school life that Julie made relationships with people who were to become very influential in the decisions that she made in terms of work and social interactions. Being a year younger than her peers she was still quite immature, but it was her relationships with the girls and some of their families that she says had a significant impact on her life in that they were good role models and they shared similar values to her at the time. Doing well academically was reinforced within these networks and Julie worked hard to achieve good results. She said that she enjoyed school with the biggest factor being the opportunity to play a variety of sports. A talented sports woman, she represented her school in both netball and tennis.

In Year 12 however, school life became a bit more challenging. Having no role-models at home to look up to and unable to get the educational support she needed from her teachers, Julie began to struggle with the academic rigours of the curriculum. She did however, sit her final exams and completed Year 12 successfully. Her tertiary examination entrance (TEE) results were a little disappointing at the time but it was not really an issue for Julie, as she had already secured employment in the banking sector before exams had begun. Julie had never really considered a job in the financial industry but her best friend in high school had suggested that they sit for the banking exam and she had gone along for the experience. She was surprised to find that she was accepted and began working at the end of the school year. I asked her if she had considered continuing on to university after she had finished school, but she explained that a tertiary education had never been on the radar.

I never knew about university until I left school. I remember when I finished high school, we’d never been for a tour of university, I had never seen the university, I never had a counselling talked about what
I wanted to do afterwards, there was nothing, you were just cast off
adrift. My friends didn’t think of going to university either. It just
wasn’t mentioned at school.

After working for a year at the bank, Julie’s sister encouraged her to apply to study as
a nurse. She was successful in her application and began her three-year training at a Catholic
hospital in the Perth. After she had completed her training, Julie worked in the hospital
theatre for a further two years until she was accepted into a midwifery course in which she
excelled and topped the class.

While working in the midwifery field, Julie observed that her tutors, who had had
twenty years’ hospital experience or more, were heading back to university to do their
nursing conversion course. This was in the 1980s when nursing training had gone from being
hospital-based training to a university degree. Julie realised that if she wanted to advance in
the nursing profession that she would have to convert her nursing qualification to a university
degree. After being accepted into a nursing conversion course, a course that would fast track
qualified nurses over two years, she went on to complete her degree.

At the completion of her studies, Julie decided to take a break from nursing and left
the city to work on a cruise ship in the Kimberley region of West Australia. After she
finished the tourist season, she remained in the region where she worked as a remote area
nurse. This work eventually led Julie to employment in the gas and oil industry. It was while
Julie was working in the industry that she became interested in occupational health and safety
(OHS) and completed a two-year graduate diploma in OHS. It was some years later while
living in the Solomon Islands that she completed her Master’s degree in OHS. She is
currently studying for a PhD.
I asked why she has studied so much, and she told me that studying and improving herself has been a lifelong process. She emphasised that as a child, her family circumstances were not conducive to academic pursuits and that it was the subsequent relationships that she had made outside of the home that influenced her decision to seek further qualifications.

Julie goes on to explain how these relationships impacted upon her secondary and tertiary education. In high school, her best friend Rosy and Rosy’s mother were a significant influence on her high school journey. She had spent a good deal of her after school hours at Rosy’s home where the two girls had studied together, and Julie was treated as one of the family. A similar situation developed for Julie when she enrolled in her nursing training. She and a fellow trainee struck up a friendship one which would also impact upon her academic endeavours. She explained;

My friend came from a very academic background. Her father was a principal and they quoted literature over the dinner table and stuff like that. There were lots of siblings who were also very academic, and they had a huge vocabulary and I learnt a lot from her and her family.

This friendship and subsequent interaction with the family introduced Julie to an academic network that she had not previously accessed and as a result it widened her insight into the possibilities that academia could bring to an individual’s experience.

The influence of friends and workplace relationships continued to impact upon Julie’s pursuit of knowledge. While working in the oil and gas industry, she explained that she and her colleagues studied together and motivated each other while completing academic and workplace courses.
I pointed out to Julie that although people have influenced her decisions about work and study, she must have an inner confidence to keep challenging herself throughout that study. I wondered where that self-belief came from and she told me that one of the most influential parts of her life was her involvement in sport. She was a naturally talented athlete and was capable of being able to play any type of sport successfully. Together with her competitive nature, she achieved a great deal of success and accomplishment in her chosen sports of softball, touch rugby, basketball, netball and tennis. She explained that her ability to achieve ‘on the field’ has significantly influenced what she has done in other avenues in her life.

When we talk about Julie’s mother who arrived in Perth in 1947 from Wales. Julie tells me that it never occurred to her until she was in her thirties that her mother had been an orphan. She was unable to recall her mother ever talking about her life, but she knew that the ‘Aunties’ had all been together in a place called the ‘Orphanage’. Julie has minimal knowledge of her mother’s story and had never really spoken to her about her life. The information she shared with me has only been gleaned over the last decade or so and was mainly through the knowledge of one of her ‘Aunties’. It appeared that Julie’s mother, Dona, arrived from the United Kingdom in 1947 on the SS Asturias, one of the children in the first shipload of Child Migrants to arrive after the war. Dona was placed into St John’s orphanage in Perth, where she remained until the age eighteen, at which time she left to enter the workforce.

When Dona was in her twenties she married and had four children of which Julie was the second youngest. When Julie was eleven, Dona left the family home due to issues of domestic violence and alcohol. With the breakdown of Dona’s relationship with her husband, the separation from her family was further compounded by a court ruling, which ordered that the three older children should remain with their father and the youngest sibling should stay
with his mother. Dona was however, able to find accommodation close to the family home which allowed regular access to her children. Dona died when Julie was about 17 years of age and although her impact on Julie’s life had been minimal since her departure from the family home, she credited Dona with being instrumental in planting the seed of Julie’s life-long passion for sport.

Julie did not really want to talk too much about her mother but tells me that her mother, in her opinion, did not have a great influence upon her life. She conceded that on a subconscious level, her mother’s decision to leave an unhappy marriage may have impacted upon her idea of what a relationship should entail, and she explained that from an early age she was determined to be financially independent and determined that she would not put up with any type of abuse in a relationship. A goal that she has achieved.

Julie is a thinking woman. She has given considerable thought to the significant influences on her academic and professional lives and has been able to successfully articulate the impact of those relationships. She continues to study, currently working on her PhD and is a community leader in the shire in which she lives.

We talk about Julie’s role as a Shire Councillor and she explained that she chose to run for council election because she wanted to be part of the process of what happens in her community. I ask her whether she had had any doubts about her ability to be a community leader as she had had no political experience and while she acknowledged that it had been a steep learning curve, she had certainly been up to the challenge. Julie explained that she has been, and always will be, interested in learning new things, doing little courses here and there and she is always open to new experiences. She also explained the importance of being a role model for her daughter and passing on the importance of gaining a good education.
It opened doors for me. It got me respect, it got me well-paying jobs, so I’ve seen the practical benefits of it.

It is clear that Julie is a well-educated, strong, confident woman who has worked hard to achieve her goals and values education deeply. The significant networks of friends and colleagues that she has encountered over her lifetime this far, have been significantly influential in her ability to negotiate the education system and the wider social environment successfully.

4.6 Participant 6

Portrait of Jane

Figure 13. Jane’s Maternal Relations.

I first met Jane some 50 years ago when we were children. Her mother had been in the same children’s home as mine and our lives had crossed paths on the few occasions when all the ‘Aunties’ were able to get together. The many children who accompanied their mothers to these gatherings would be sent out to play and it was within this sphere that I first met Jane and her sister. I have vague memories of playing with the two girls but unlike some of the other ‘cousins’, whom I saw regularly throughout my life, the two girls disappeared from my little world until a chance meeting with one of the sisters almost half a century later.

It was one of the ‘Aunties’ 80th birthday celebration and as friends and family members reacquainted themselves with each other, a woman sat down near me and I immediately recognised her as the youngest sister. She too recognised me, and I recall, to my horror, that that my first question to her was “What happened to you girls, you just
disappeared?” The words were out of my mouth before I knew it, but the question came from concern and she was gracious in her explanation of where she had been. We spent the next hour or so catching up with on each other’s lives and, as I was only thinking about doing this study at that time, I asked her if and when I did the study, would she be interested in participating? She readily agreed but when the time came she was unable to participate. She was however, kind enough to alert her sister to the study and I was able to make contact with Jane. After providing her with the details of the study she immediately agreed to take part.

Jane lives in the United Kingdom and although I suggested we interview via Skype, she was more comfortable writing and so we communicated through series of emails over a period of about eighteen months. Throughout this period, Jane was generous with both her time and her story.

Jane is the daughter of Hattie a BCM who was sent from the UK to Australia in 1947. Hattie had made the six-week journey with her brother and sister and the three of them were amongst the first arrivals to Australia after the recommencement of the Child Migrant scheme. After docking at Fremantle in WA, Hattie and her sister were separated from their brother and the little family unit became fragmented. The two little girls were placed on a bus bound for St John’s Catholic orphanage in Perth, while their brother, along with many of the other boys on the ship, was herded on to a truck and sent to the notorious Bindoon Boys home in country Western Australia.

Once at the orphanage, Hattie remained there until she was sixteen, six years in total. Jane told me that Hattie did not speak of her time in care and Jane has little knowledge of her mother’s life before or after she arrived in Australia. She does know that at sixteen, Hattie left the confines of the orphanage and found work in the retail and hospitality industry. It was not unusual for the inmates of St John’s to remain boarding at the orphanage while they worked but Hattie had left and found outside accommodation.
It is unknown how Hattie spent the years between leaving the orphanage and marrying in her early twenties and Jane does not say how her parents met. What is clear, however, is that soon after she was married, Hattie fell pregnant with Jane, the first of her three children. It appeared that motherhood and domestic life proved challenging for Hattie and after the birth of her third child she suffered an emotional breakdown and was hospitalised. Unable to cope with three small children and a sick wife, Jane’s father made the decision to place Jane and her siblings into care. Ironically, he placed his children into the charge of the Sisters of Mercy at St John’s orphanage, the same place that their mother had lived. At the time of her placement Jane was nine years of age and she recalled for me the memory of the day.

All I remember is being picked up from school by dad, he started talking to my sister and I about going to live with the nuns and they would look after us, we got into the car and he dropped us at the orphanage. I didn’t see my dad for ten years after that day, he left and went to work in New Guinea.

Years later, Jane would find out that on that day, her mother had had left her youngest child, still a baby, with the neighbour, under the pretence of going shopping. She then proceeded to admitted herself to the hospital, suffering a mental breakdown. When Jane’s mother did not return to pick up the baby, the neighbour alerted Jane’s father who felt he had no option but place the children in care.

Jane recalled life in the orphanage as ok and described it as being more like boarding school than an institution. Her father paid for their tuition and board and they were educated at the local Catholic school, unlike their mother who had never left the confines of the
orphanage. Like her mother before her, she was taught by nuns but on the completion of her primary education she lacked some fundamental reading and writing skills. This made her secondary years tough and she struggled socially and academically.

Everyone knew we were from the children’s home, I struggled in friendship groups, often spending the day alone. I was behind in education due to poor teaching in primary school. I was in a very emotional state throughout my education, unable to concentrate. My teachers found me difficult most of the time and in those days, there wasn’t very much in place to help children like myself.

At the age of 18 years, Jane left the orphanage and although she been educated in a school outside of the orphanage, she says that she was ill-equipped for life outside the walls of the institution. She had few marketable skills with which to find employment but did find work in the retail, hotel and catering industries. Her lack of an adequate social understanding and awareness of wider society however, appeared to be a bigger obstacle for Jane. These first few years out of the orphanage were especially difficult and she suffered from low self-esteem and found it difficult to form relationships with others.

There were few bright spots in Jane’s existence and although she described her early life as a time when she was desperately unhappy, she does recall that one of the ‘Aunties’, Aunty Milly, was a shining light in her life.

My happiest memories are from time spent with my Aunty Milly, who was also from the children’s home, and had married my dad’s
brother. She has been very warm, loving and supported us throughout, she was always very kind.

When Jane was 20 years old she travelled to the UK on holidays where she found work and decided to settle there. It was during this time that she also travelled to South Africa for a holiday with friends and it was here that she found God, which began a life changing journey for her. She explains this life-changing moment:

When I went to South Africa I had no intention of going to church, in fact I went there to catch up with friends and party. The friend I was staying with had, to my amazement, become a Christian. As I was a guest of his family I went to church with them. They didn’t insist I go, but I felt I wanted to. I went along and whilst listening to the first song, started crying, tears of years of pain came flowing out. Something had changed within me and from that day and I have lived my life in faith. Before I left for SA, I remember being out with friends in London celebrating Christmas Eve, instead of going out I had an overwhelming need to go to midnight mass, I think that was the start of feeling the presence of God in my life on a personal level, as no one that night had mentioned God or Church. I went to the midnight service and had a great feeling of peace for the first time in my life but didn’t fully commit to going to church.

Up until that time, Jane tells me that she had not really been too interested in religion and had openly rejected the idea of God. Her experiences in the children’s home had made her question the existence of God and she recalled being openly hostile to suggestions from a couple of people that God loved her.
After her experience in South Africa, however, she gave the idea of faith and religion deeper consideration and on her return to the UK, Jane found a church and began her healing process. She tells me that the rejection that she had felt as a child had made her angry and that this anger had hindered her emotional development. She describes her life before she found God as a time that “had felt like a rope, entwined and full of knots.” Over the next three years, Jane connected with her faith and her religious community and was able to establish and form solid relationships within this community. She attended counselling, and with support and hard-work she was able to free herself of the negative emotions that had burdened her. Towards the end of this period Jane met her future husband. He was one of seven children from a close-knit family and both he and his family, particularly his mother, would have a profound effect on her life.

Jane was in her mid to late twenties when she married her husband who she had met through her church community. After their marriage, they set about starting their family and soon had a brood of five children. As it does for all parents, the rigours of parenthood threw up challenges for Jane. Having been denied any suitable parental role-models to cope with those challenges, she found support and guidance from her mother-in-law Rachel as she explained;

My mother-in-law was from a loving stable home, she taught me that parenting wasn't just about providing food, shelter, clothing. It was communication, building healthy relationships, roles and responsibilities, boundaries, nurturing and love.
Through her relationship with Rachel and being a part of a family that had been the antithesis of her own, Jane was also able to put into perspective the inability of her parents to look after their own children and abandoning their parental responsibilities. She explains;

Rachel had integrity, humility, kindness, compassion and generosity.
My parents had lived in fear, had insecurities, distrust in everyone, harsh punishments, were unreliable and had many arguments.
Realising that they loved me, but didn't understand the role of a parent, helped to break down the feelings of anger I had towards them, and the rejection I felt from being put into the children's home.
I began to realise that my parents had brought me up to the best of their ability. They were parenting through their own hurts and the baggage from their lives. Mum had been brought up in the children's home, so her parenting role model had come from an institution and was void of connection. It was austere, disciplined, and emotion controlled (Authoritarian parenting). My dad came from the opposite end of parenting. Being the youngest, he was loving but spoilt, did not take responsibility as a parent, indulgent, no discipline, (passive parenting.)

It is clear from our communications that Jane’s childhood experiences were traumatic and have been a constant companion throughout her life. These experiences and her subsequent journey have however, been taken by Jane and used as a foundation in her professional life.
Jane is the director of a very successful company that provides parenting training for parents across the UK, as well as providing advocacy services for parents in schools. She explained that her company had grown out of her experiences as special needs teacher and a parent support advisor for schools. She identified that there was a need for parenting courses that allowed for a one-on-one support as opposed to the group parenting courses that were available at the time. With this goal in mind, Jane took a year off from her paid employment and with two of her colleagues, developed an individual parent program which is now in many schools throughout the UK.

Besides being a successful business woman and successful mother, Jane is a much sought-after inspirational guest speaker around the UK. In the early 2000s, Jane took part in a trek to the South Pole where she and a group of women undertook the challenge to complete Shackleton’s unfinished journey to the South Pole. She successfully arrived at the South Pole on the New Year’s Day 2007. Of her life’s journey thus far, Jane reflects:

My parents had lived in fear, had insecurities, distrust in everyone, harsh punishments, were unreliable and had many arguments.
Realising that they loved me, but didn't understand the role of a parent, helped to break down the feelings of anger I had towards them, and the rejection I felt from being put into the children's home.
I know my mum loves my sister and I very much and I have come to see, mainly through education and good role models, the difference in her parenting style. That has helped to separate the emotions and all I have gone through.

Although Hattie was unable to look after her children, which made for a difficult and
challenging life for Jane, and her siblings, Jane had come to understand that Hattie’s abandonment of her children was the result of Hattie’s difficult upbringing. Residing in different countries, Jane and her mother had limited physical contact, but they continued to communicate with each other up until her death in 2018.

I am in contact with mum and have been all along. I believe it was my grandmother, my dad’s mum, who kept the family connected.

Hattie is one of only two mothers in the study who are still alive. She is in poor health but lives independently with the support of her younger daughter. In 2017 I had the pleasure of meeting with Hattie at the 70th anniversary of the first Child Migrants who arrived after the war. She is a quiet, handsome woman who remembered my mother with kindness.

Jane has been generous in sharing her story. She has overcome significant obstacles in her life, but her resilience and strength of character is evident in her commitment to her family, her work and the community. Reflecting on her life from the perspective of middle age, Jane can see that her journey, while painful at times, has brought her to a place in which she is confident in herself, has the love and support of her family and provides a valuable service to society.

Themes of family, religion and intergenerational trauma are all significant factors in Jane’s narrative. These are furthered explored in chapters 5-8.

4.7 Participant 7

Portrait of Layla

Layla daughter of CM Anne

Layla's mother Anne, born 1937 in Wales died 1981. Arrived in Australia in 1949 under the Child Migration Scheme and placed in St John's Orphanage

Maeve, mother of Anne, suffered post natal depression and was sent to an asylum resulting in her children being placed into an orphanage.
Figure 14. Layla’s Maternal Relations.

Layla is fifty-nine years of age and is the oldest daughter in a family of four children. Born into a working-class family, she was raised in a State Housing Commission suburb in Perth, WA. The modest three-bedroom one-bathroom brick veneer home was like many of the others in the street and stood in the centre of the quarter acre block opposite remnant swamp land that Layla recalls being home to tortoises and frogs and the occasional snake. Less than twenty kilometres from the city, this was a new suburb fifty years ago, and was considered to be on the outskirts of Perth.

She grew up in a traditional nuclear family with her mother and father and her three siblings. Her mother was the main carer of the children while the children were young, and her father went to the office each day where he worked in the union movement. As the children grew and went off to school, Layla’s mother returned to the workforce, working at different times in the health and retail sectors.

Layla’s childhood years were very much influenced by Catholicism; the family regularly attended church and the children were schooled in the Catholic education system. Layla, like her siblings, received the sacraments of holy communion and confirmation and her learning, specifically in primary school was steeped in Catholic dogma. The staff was predominantly Sister of Mercy, the students attended mass every Tuesday and catechism was a daily part of the curriculum.

Another significant influence on Layla’s life was sport. Throughout her childhood she participated in a variety of team and individual sporting pursuits and her passion for competitive sport continued into her adult years, but recently injury forced her to take a break.

After completing Year 12 at high school, Layla trained as a nursing aide and then as a nurse, all the while socialising and travelling as many young people do. It was during this
time that Layla also lost her mother Anne who died suddenly aged 46 from a brain haemorrhage. In the early 1980s, Layla met and married the father of her three children and the couple moved to the northern suburbs of Perth. The brand-new suburbs had offered cheap new housing for young families, but they had been situated on the edges of the metropolitan area without effective infrastructure at the time. As a result, the young families in the area experienced a sense of isolation and turned to each other to build a sense of community.

Layla had been a part of that demographic and as a young wife and mother she too had begun the process of establishing a new network of friends and family. She explained how she felt during those first few years:

I think when I moved into the northern suburbs we were quite isolated, and I desperately created my own family around me.

Her life in the suburbs saw her work through many challenges, a major one being the breakdown of her marriage. With responsibility for three children under the age of ten. Layla focussed on providing for her family and furthering her career.

Layla has always worked in the health sector in a variety of roles but at age 55, risked a secure government career in the health services, re-mortgaged her home and started a new business in the health sector in which she is currently working. She is a dynamic woman who is ambitious, motivated and hardworking and while her business and professional life keeps her busy, it is her children, grand-children and her extended family that remain at the core of her life. It also transpired that Layla is the keeper of the family tree and is able to provide a wealth of information about her mother Anne. She preface her story, however, with the information that the understanding that her mother was a BCM was a notion that she only gradually came to understand over the last decade.
She explained that as a child she recalled growing up listening to the stories of the ‘Aunties’ about the orphanage and while she knew that the ‘Aunties’ lived at the orphanage with her mum, she never really understood how or why they had lived there. In her early twenties, Layla had travelled through Europe and the UK on a back-packing holiday and during this time she made her way to Wales, on her mother’s request, to see if she could make contact with any of her mother’s extended family. Layla managed to track down an uncle who was able to enlighten her as to the reason for her mother being sent to Australia. An aged man at the time, her Uncle John had lost count of the years that had passed and mistook Layla for her mother. He addressed her as such and she did not correct him, providing him with the opportunity to explain why, with regret, he had signed the papers that had sent her away. While saddened by his decision, he was happy that she had returned to see him and assured her that she was Welsh and part of a larger family. He explained that he had been the one to sign the papers that had given the orphanage in Cardiff permission to send both Anne and her sister to Australia. In hindsight, her uncle said he regretted his decision but gave no specific reason why. Over the course of the conversation with her the uncle, Layla, came to realise that her mother and her siblings had been sent away because they had been baptised as Catholics. Their mother Maeve had been an Irish Catholic, unlike the extended Welsh family she had married into, who were Presbyterians. This was an unwelcomed union and if the children had not been Catholics, it is likely that they would have been kept by the family. The decision was made purely on religious grounds. In this village, during this era, Catholics were not welcomed into Presbyterian homes.

At that point in time, Layla had assumed that her mother’s story was one unique to her family and had no idea that her mother had been part of a much larger narrative that involved the removal of thousands of children from the United Kingdom to Australia. It was not until she had read the book *Empty Cradles* by Margaret Humphreys, the Nottingham
social worker who brought the story of the Child Migrants to the attention of the world, that Layla realised that her mother was a part of that group and explained that, “It was something that I gradually became aware of.”

Once Layla realised that her mother had been a part of the BCM scheme, she searched out more information from her mother’s sister who had remained in Wales but had immigrated to Australia in the 1970s. It was through this contact that Layla came to understand the story of her mother’s journey.

Her mother Anne was born in Wales in 1937 to Maeve and Lloyd Jones and was the fourth of five children. Maeve was a young Irish Catholic who had married Lloyd, a Presbyterian and miner from a small Welsh village. It appears that the difference in religions had not been an issue for the couple, but Lloyd’s extended family were unhappy about the union and Maeve was not welcomed into the family. Adding to her ostracism was the presence of Maeve’s illegitimate son who had been fathered by another man but whom Lloyd had been prepared to raise as his own. Nevertheless, Maeve and Lloyd married and went on to have four children together. It is unclear as to the circumstances of Lloyd’s departure from the family but what is known, is that after the birth of the fifth child, Maeve, aged 31 years, suffered post-natal depression and was unable to cope with five children and an absent husband. Sadly, she had a complete breakdown and was admitted to an asylum in Cardiff where she was subsequently lobotomised, a procedure carried out in order to ‘calm her down’. Maeve never returned to the family and remained in the asylum until her death in 1963. Layla’s Aunty Margaret did visit her mother on one occasion but reported that Maeve’s treatment had resulted in her being ‘stuck’ in 1939 and awaiting the return of her husband. It is unknown if Margaret had shared this information with Anne as Anne had never made mention of it to Layla.
With no parents to care for the young family, and a reluctance by the extended Presbyterian family in the village to look after the Catholic children, four of the children were sent to Catholic orphanages in the city. Anne, the second youngest child, and her sister were sent to Nazareth House in Cardiff, while the two older boys were sent to an orphanage in Swansea. The youngest child, a baby at the time of Maeve’s breakdown whose name is unknown, had not as yet been christened and was given to a local family.

At the tender age of two, Anne and her older sister Margaret, boarded a train to Cardiff and made the journey to Nazareth House. Throughout her time there, Anne had been lucky enough to have had the company of her older sister but in 1947 when the authorities decided to send the children to Australia, Margaret was told that at age fourteen, she was too old to go. Sadly, the sisters were separated and were only able to meet up again a quarter of a century later when Margaret visited Australia with her young family.

At the age of twelve years, Anne embarked on the SS Asturias arriving in Australia in September 1947. She was then placed into the care of the Sisters of Mercy at St John’s Catholic orphanage where she remained until she left at age eighteen. Layla does not recall Anne talking about her life in the orphanage, but she remembers her mother and the ‘Aunties’ reminiscing about their time there but had no specific memories of the actual stories. She described the ‘Auntie’ gatherings as occasions where the women would get together and laugh, drink copious amounts of tea and smoke cigarettes. She also recalled that the Aunties seemed to have a language that was unique to the women. They had lots of little sayings that were unique to them.

I do remember them referring to the nuns as S’macktil (Sister Mactill) and S’Joseph (Sister Joseph). They had lots of other little sayings, it was like their own ‘Aunty’ shorthand.
When Anne left the orphanage, she began her training as a nurse’s assistant but never completed the course. It is unknown to Layla why Anne did not finish, and it is unclear what she did in the period prior to marrying at age 24. Anne was married for 17 years and had four children. She passed away in the early 1980s just before the story of the BCM came to the attention of the Australian and British public.

In the years since Anne’s death, the story of the BCM has become widely publicised and with that publicity, it appears that permission talk about those years has been granted to the surviving BCMs. As such, the ‘Aunties’ in Layla’s life have been more forthcoming in the information about their time at St John’s and she has is still finding out about her mother’s time in the orphanage. It has been revealed to Layla, through the ‘Aunties’ that Anne had been a headstrong girl who was once brave enough to run away from the orphanage and she was known for stealing food for the other children. One of the ‘Aunties’ had told Layla that Anne had been a favourite of the nuns and that she would often receive an egg for breakfast, while the other children had only ever received cereal. This led to Anne being given the nickname ‘Big sister’s egg’. The ‘Auntie’ could provide no reason for Anne’s special treatment. Layla was also provided with the information that her mother’s identity had been reduced to a number throughout her life. In the Australian orphanage Anne had been given the identity ‘No 33’ and in the Welsh orphanage she had been ‘No 57’.

Layla thinks that the lack of an individual identity impacted heavily on Anne’s understanding of who she was and where she fitted into the world. Layla recalls that her mother was very proud of her Welsh heritage and realises now that Anne had needed to connect to her Welsh identity in order to understand her place in the world. As a young woman, Layla, recalls that she was quite critical of her mother’s allegiance to a country that had sent her away and reflected on the time that she had asked her mother “Why do you go on
about Wales? You’re Australian, you’re in Australia and an Australian citizen”. She now understands that it was the need to have an identity.

Layla is unsure if her mother was ever naturalised but believes that carrying the stigma of being an orphan and being referred to as a number, profoundly affected Anne. She says her mother experienced inner turmoil about her past and this impacted upon her ability to deal with the day-to-day rigours of family life.

I think she drank and she smoked and was self-medicating for inner anxiety. I think her lack of her ability to be the good wife or mother like spending money of smokes and things, preyed on her mind

Layla was in her in her mid-twenties at the time of her mother’s death and although she had, at times, had a tumultuous relationship with her, they had been on good terms before she died. Like many mothers and daughters, the two of them had often clashed over the usual teenage issues such as clothes, boyfriends and responsibilities but this had subsided as time had passed.

Layla described her mother as being strong-willed but felt that Anne had struggled to come to terms with her past. It was Layla’s opinion that her mother had always felt that she was under the thumb of the Catholic church and that she never knew quite where she belonged. There was however a fun side to Anne. She was a smart, articulate and intelligent women with a superb signing voice and always ready for a song and a laugh. When the ‘Aunties’ were together, Layla says that it was always Anne who started the festivities.

Layla’s father is still alive, and she remains close to him and her siblings. She has three children and three grandchildren, is well educated with a variety of university degrees and has worked in the health industry for most of her working life.
Throughout her life, Layla has met with some challenging experiences, but those times have been resigned to their historical context and she looks forward with enthusiasm to life’s next adventures.

Significant themes that have been identified in Layla’s narrative, include the importance of familial relationships in her immediate and extended family as well as her social and friendship networks. Strong themes of identity, education and career were also evident throughout her story.

4.8 Participant 8

Portrait of Rebecca

Figure 15. Rebecca’s Maternal Relations.

Rebecca is the daughter of a BCM who was sent to Australia during the interwar years. I first heard from Rebecca when I received a phone call from her inquiring about the study. We had chatted easily for about 30 minutes and by the end of the conversation we had made plans to meet up the following week. As we both live in the suburbs east of Perth Western Australia, albeit some thirty kilometres apart, it was decided that we would meet at a park which was about half way between the two suburbs.

It was going to be a hot summer’s day in Perth and I knew that a bit of shade would be necessary for our interview, so I arrived at the park early in a bid to secure a shady and practical place in which to hold the interview. As we had no knowledge of what each other looked like, I guessed that if I positioned myself in the centre of the picnic area and stuck out like a sore thumb she would easily identify me.
Rebecca arrived right on time and spotted me sitting at the small picnic table. Our conversation didn’t appear to start, it just seemed to continue from our last conversation and at once I felt at ease in her company. We chatted easily about the study and after completing some necessary paperwork and setting up the audio recorders, the story of Rebecca’s life as a child whose mother had been an orphan was told to me. It began with the story of her mother Elizabeth.

Elizabeth arrived in Australia from a Barnardos’ orphanage in UK in the inter war years. Aged thirteen at the time, she had spent most of her childhood years in care in England and the next five years of her life would be spent in the care of St Jude’s orphanage in country Western Australia. On her release from the home, Elizabeth worked, married, had children and grandchildren and died in her eighties.

Information about her life at the orphanage, remains unclear and although glimpses of her time there were occasionally provided by Elizabeth, the effect of her status of orphan and her institutionalisation have resonated down the years and impacted upon Rebecca in a variety of ways.

Of her mother’s time in the UK, Rebecca has only a vague idea of her experiences. She is of the understanding that her mother had been about to be adopted by a woman who had been a volunteer at the orphanage where Elizabeth was living and was also being considered for a scholarship at prestigious school. She was however, shipped off to Australia before the adoption or the chance at a good education could eventuate. Rebecca could never be sure of the tale, but she described her mother as having a keen mind who was a writer of poetry and a mother who was adamant that her children received a decent education.

Elizabeth did however, share a few stories about her time at St Jude’s that would indicate that life in the institution was harsh. She recalled the story of a young orphan lad at the home who had died of septicaemia. Worried that he would be punished for being sick, the
other children had hidden him from the adult carers and by the time he was found, treatment for his infection came too late. Rebecca also recalled being told about the punishments meted out to her mother by the some of the carers at the home. One particular punishment was to force the children to kneel on the stone floor of the church all night while being periodically poked with a fire poker by the carer in order to keep the children awake.

Despite some tragic and sad experiences in the orphanage, Rebecca recalled that Elizabeth always saw the positive side of her years spent in the home and could occasionally be found writing poetry and funny stories with her friends about their time in there. She explained that her mother never complained and always maintained that Australia was the best country in the world and that she would never have met her beloved husband had she not left England.

It is unclear at what age Elizabeth met Rebecca’s father Bill, but from Rebecca’s account of the relationship, it was a loving one in which Elizabeth shared the dreams and goals of her husband. She tells me that they were a romantic couple who wrote poetry to each other and that her mother loved her father until the day she died. Elizabeth, however, was not Bill’s first wife. As a young 16-year-old he had gone to WW1 and fought in the trenches of France. When the war was over he met and married an English woman whom he had brought back to Australia. The couple married and had a son but unfortunately his wife suffered post-natal psychosis and she was returned to England where she was institutionalised, while Rebecca’s father raised their son back in Australia. The fact that he was still legally married to his first wife meant that the Elizabeth and Bill had to enter into an unconventional relationship for that era.

Although her parents married after the death of his first wife the stigma of ‘living in sin’ was to follow her mother throughout her life. Rebecca says that the people in the
area referred to her mum as the prozzy (prostitute). As a child, Rebecca didn’t really understand what this meant but she does recall that she had always felt different.

It was kind of like we were the dirty orphan’s kids and not only that, she was my father’s sex object. I had no knowledge of what that meant I just knew I was a dirty orphan’s kid, so I had a fair amount of being excluded, of being teased.

Despite the gossip and stigma of living together Rebecca’s parents ran their orange orchard, raised their children and were both active members of the community. Her father was instrumental in setting up the local fruit and egg co-operatives and was even the president of the Country Women’s Association. Her parents also provided support for some former orphans of St Jude’s.

Rebecca herself was born in the early 1950s, and was the second of three children, two girls and a boy. She described a family in which her father’s word was law and her mother supported any decision that he made, his dreams were her dreams. Although Rebecca described a great love between her mother and father the relationship with his children, appeared to be inconsistent.

Yeh, he used to hit us quite a lot. But only in moments of… my father was strange, he taught us all the time about everything he knew. He played with us but then he would just lose it and I wasn’t a very obedient child. I think I was a bit spirited. Um so yeh, he would beat us.
Rebecca notes that he never beat her Mum and explained that he would never hurt her, and he never really hit her younger son as he had a health problem with his ears. According to Rebecca, her older sister had suffered terribly as a child and had hated her childhood.

Although her father had bouts of violence, he had a driving determination for his children to have a good education and to have the best opportunities possible. He instilled a profound sense of community upon Rebecca and he also taught her the vital importance of getting a good education. She recalls him saying;

You need to be all you can be and don’t think because you’re a girl you’re going to get out of anything. A girl can do anything a boy can do and you are going to be educated because it is just as important if not more.

It appears that Rebecca’s father’s efforts to ensure a good education for his children was well supported by her mother who was also determined to see her children through their education. Rebecca told me that her mother was very smart but without education.

I asked Rebecca about her school experiences and she began by describing her primary years at a small government run state school in the town where she lived. The school had only one teacher and she disliked his heavy handedness with the cane. She also described herself as a child who was easily bored in the classroom, always longing to be outside and she would devise ways of being sent out of the room. School life improved however, when Rebecca left the local primary school and began attending the District high school, a school in a rural area that caters for children of all ages from the surrounding districts, which was a three-bus ride away.
While Rebecca enjoyed the opportunity to experience a more progressive attitude to education, tragedy struck in Year 8 when her father died. Her grief was such that she found it impossible to continue with her school work and simply gave up caring about anything. It was however, her year 8 teacher who came to her rescue and guided her back onto her academic path.

I had a wonderful teacher in year 7 and 8 and I didn’t realise it at the time. He had felt really sorry for me and he put a lot of time into me. He would help me at lunchtimes, he would invite me on holidays with his family. His wife and he had girl in my class, and he made an absolute effort. When my dad died he looked after me at lunchtime, he saved me. He made me go, ‘I want to do this, I love learning.’

As Rebecca began to recover from the grief of losing her father, life at high school improved and with the support of her teachers her remaining time there was a remembered fondly. She successfully earned her nursing bursary and at the completion of Year 10 she moved to Perth to complete Years 11 and 12. Unfortunately, these years for Rebecca were a nightmare for a number of reasons, and she recalled them as the worst years of her life.

As both Rebecca and her sister were now at school in the city her mother decided to sell the orchard and move to the city for the sake of her children’s education. This took time to happen and Rebecca was sent to Perth to board with a family while her mother arranged the sale of the property and found a house in the city. Starting at a new city school was daunting enough for a young girl from the country but having to live with a strange family whom she did not particularly get on with, impacted negatively on a young Rebecca. When the family was finally reunited, her older sister who had been boarding in the city for some
time, reluctantly returned home and her younger brother experienced some challenges in his new environment.

Although the family experienced some challenges Rebecca’s mother was determined to fulfil their father’s dream of seeing the children through their education and supported them as best she could. Her mother took on a variety of low paying jobs to support her family. Rebecca recalled her mother’s labours;

She peeled prawns, she cleaned houses, she was just such an amazing woman. I think that now, but at the time I’d think, shit my mother’s peeling prawns.

As the family tried to settle into city life, things at school were not much better for Rebecca. She found the urban school environment brutal and clinical and was frightened and appalled by the violent conduct of some teachers, one in particular who beat her brother until his ears began to bleed.

Despite all the negative pressures that Rebecca experienced at the time she found a focus in her studies and continued to excel in all her subjects. At a time when she could have given up, she cites her devotion to her mother, who was desperate to fulfil her husband’s dream of seeing his children educated, with her decision to do well. She also acknowledged that the expectation to succeed when she was young also contributed to her decision to remain focussed on her studies. With this in mind, Rebecca became a model daughter and student refusing to participate any of the usual teenage risk-taking behaviour. She explained;

I look back and I think I’m lucky because I was on a path where the mandate was that you were successful, we were going to learn. I think
I always had that in my mind. I would not have thought of failing anything because I would not let my mother down like that. Because she was carrying out dad’s wishes and you know, we were supposed to have what they didn’t have, that was so clear.

Despite the upheavals in her life during these two years, Rebecca passed all her subjects with distinctions. She tells me that she was surprised that she passed and puts it down to her luck of being able to retain information easily. Rebecca doesn’t see herself as bright but she says that she can learn quickly. She acknowledges that her sister had to work hard to pass but explained that fortunately for herself, she seemed to have had an aptitude for learning, a skill that her brother also shared.

Rebecca trained as a nurse at a Perth hospital but she tells me that she had harboured dreams of going to university to become a social worker. She had, however, won a nursing bursary for years 11 and 12 at a Perth high school that had paid for her books and tuition and because she had accepted the bursary she had to go on to do nursing, otherwise her mother would have had to pay back the scholarship money. This would have been difficult as her mother was already struggling to make ends meet.

Rebecca did complete her nursing training but in her later life she had a career change and went into counselling. Rebecca’s mum did not approve of her daughter’s choice to change careers as she thought that nursing was a better choice. Counselling however was an industry in which Rebecca has excelled and she remains working in this field at present.

Rebecca’s relationship with her mother is a complex one. As a child, Rebecca was ashamed of her mother. Her mother’s status of orphan and “prozzy” resulted in Rebecca having experienced exclusion and teasing at primary school. In her high school years, she spoke of the shame of her mother’s manual labouring jobs. After her father had died, her
mother had no extended family to whom she could turn and so the four of them became a very tight unit and the focus was on taking care of her mother. She explained that she now recognised that she and her siblings became their mother’s mother, focussing on her needs and wants.

Although Rebecca and her siblings made their world around their mother and made sure that birthdays and Mother’s Day were special times, there was tension in the relationship. Rebecca related a story about her mother that brought Rebecca great relief because she had always felt that the tension in their relationship was her fault. The following exchange put the relationship into a better perspective.

My mother had mild dementia before she died, and I took her walking one day and there were some little ducklings walking past. She was in the wheelchair and I said, “Aren’t they just so cute mum?” and she said, “No I hate them!” So, I went around the front of the wheelchair because I could hear that she was angry and distressed and I said, ‘How come?’ and she said “The reason I hate them is because I hate you. They’ve got a mum, you’ve got a mother and I never did have one. It was such a relief, I don’t tell many people, but it was a huge relief, because it made me understand that on one hand she wanted everything for me, like education, but it was a huge relief, because it made me understand that on one hand she wanted everything for me, like education, but on the other hand she hated me because she was giving me that. I remember saying to my mother once, why don’t you go to therapy, everyone goes to therapy? And I remember her saying to me “Leave me alone. You do what you want to do. I don’t try to tell you what to do with your life, you want to go
to therapy, you go. Leave me alone, I have found my way to manage.

I think I’ve been a lucky woman; I don’t want to do therapy.

Rebecca suffers from anxiety which she has struggled with all her life. She tells me that she lives in fear of her anxiety every day and that this fear has profoundly ruled her life in ways she wishes it hadn’t. She is anxious over many things. When I asked her, what may have caused the anxiety she told me that she thought it had come from not having a sense of worth which she says is a result of her childhood. She explained that from an early age she always felt like an orphan. She knew she wasn’t but she had all those feelings that went along with what being an orphan is. Ironically, she says her mother always said that she felt lucky and not like an orphan.

My mother had a good belief that she had a good life and she didn’t want to go back to those orphan days. We knew all about mum’s story, we lived her story.

I said to Rebecca that despite her anxiety and fear that she is a successful and confident woman. She responded that this was due to her education and that the reason she did so well in education was that was the only way she could look good in her parent’s eyes. Her mother did not know how to praise and would often point out her children’s failures and follow up with the quote, “You’ll be the death of your father”. Because she had heard this accusation so many times, Rebecca explained that when her father actually died, she felt that she had been what caused her his death.

Our conversation turned to those people other than family who influenced her life. She told me that she has been fortunate to have met so many good people who have
supported her and encouraged her along the way. She mentioned the positive impact of her teachers, friends, work colleagues and therapists who have trained and encouraged her into her present career. She had fond memories of the people she worked with at the coffee lounge while in high school and tells me how they held an impromptu celebration on the day she received her exam results. Rebecca said that although this was a little example it was just one of the many nice experiences that she has had with the people who have come into her life.

At the conclusion of the interview that summers day, both Rebecca and I could have talked on for a few more hours. Due to a hair appointment however, she had to leave and we hugged each other goodbye and arranged to meet up at a later date, which we did. In the short time we spent together that day it was clear that the warm, intelligent, articulate woman, who was open and trusting with her story, is still working through issues that are anchored in her childhood experiences.

The significant themes that were identified in Rebecca’s narrative, included the personal relationships and friendship networks that she had access to throughout her life. Key issues of the trauma, and anxiety were also evident as were themes of career and education.

Summary

From these portraits similar themes echo across the women’s stories. Self-determination and resilience, education, family, friends, sport and religion, are all factors that have contributed the rich story of the extraordinary women who participated in the study. Through the participants’ interaction within the various networks made available through the aforementioned avenues, they were able to acquire useful social capital which enabled them to successfully negotiate the diverse experiences their lives. In the next chapter, I report on the major themes that were identified in the data.
Section 2 Main Themes

The purpose of this qualitative portraiture research study is to understand the experiences of the daughters of the BCMs and to ascertain the impact of their mother’s institutionalisation on their lives. In the next 5 chapters I present the five major themes that are present in the data: Education, Work, Family Relationships and Sport.

Chapter 5 Education

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present findings regarding the educational outcomes of the participants, all of whom have achieved standards of education that have surpassed those of their parents. I begin by providing an insight into the educational standards of the participants’ family. I then examine their educational experiences and achievements throughout their primary, secondary and tertiary years. These outcomes are examined in relation to the influences of networks and relationships that impacted upon the participants’ educational achievements throughout their lives.

In this study, I examined the historical, social and economic situation of the participants family, as well as their family networks and attitudes to education. I did this in order to ascertain how these factors have impacted on the women’s educational achievements. The data on the educational achievements and outcomes of the parents were collected through the interviews with participants most of whom had a general knowledge and understanding of their parents’ educational achievements.

Table 5 Parents’ Educational Standards

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5.1 Parent’s Educational Outcomes

The educational standards achieved by the parents of the participants in this study, reflect the educational expectations of the socio-economic classes of 1940s Australia, the period in which the parents were educated. During this era, children from working class backgrounds in Western Australia were expected to attend school until they turned fourteen (some eastern states had raised the leaving age to fifteen), at which time they could either leave formal education or attend trade schools in order to be trained and ‘skilled up’ for a depleted workforce that had occurred after the end of WW2 (Tully, 2002). With the exception of Mary, who considered her family as belonging to the middle class while growing up, the other participants all identified as working-class families. In this study, all but two of the parents had left school and joined the workforce in a variety of industries by age fifteen. The following tables summarises the parent’s educational achievements.
5.1.1 Mothers Education

The mothers of the participants were all educated in religious orphanages in Western Australia. While many Care-Leavers in Australia had been denied a basic education (Murray & Rock, 2005), all of the mothers had satisfactory functional literacy skills and most of the participants I interviewed, recall that their mothers could read and write competently. To ascertain the sophistication of their literacy was difficult, as the daughters had never really taken much of an interest in the topic. Mary observed that many of the ‘Aunties’ she knew could not read properly and that while her own mother had competent literacy skills, her mother’s two sisters were both illiterate.

Rebecca and Layla recalled their mothers being bright, articulate and possessed satisfactory writing skills but both participants described a sadness in their mothers’ life that seemed to stem from their inability to reach their full potential because of their lack of a good education. The mothers had had few options in their lives, particularly in employment and it appears that this was a significant factor in wanting their daughters to have a good education.

5.1.2 Fathers

Information about the fathers’ education is minimal and only three of the participants were able to provide information about their father’s schooling. What is known, is that with the exception of Mary’s father who achieved a tertiary education, the other seven left school in their early teens. Layla’s, Ruby’s Twinney’s and Mary’s father returned to study during the course of their lives. Layla and Twinney assumed that their father’s return to the classroom might have been for work related reasons but Ruby’s father wanted a career in electronic engineering and Mary’s father completed his teaching diploma after retiring from the public service.

This absence of a higher formal education amongst the parents of the participants did not prevent them from trying to instil in their daughters the importance of a good
education. It appeared that the lack of a higher education was a driving force in their determination for their daughters to attain a good education. Six of the participants in the study explained that it was their parent’s expectations that were a significant determinant in their educational achievements.

For Mary, there was an appreciation of the benefits of education from both her parents but it was her tertiary educated father who had more of an impact upon her learning. Mary explained that he was the parent who would help her with her homework as he understood the learning process and was able to help hone her subject skills. Both parents, however, had high expectations that she would complete a tertiary education.

There was the same expectation for May, who from an early age was encouraged to aim for a tertiary education. It was her mother’s expectation that her daughter become a teacher, that appeared to be more influential than her father.

So, I think she (mum) just always thought that I would be a nurse or a teacher and she knew that they were my interests and that university work was necessary at that time.

Rebecca’s parents had been insistent that all their children receive an education. Her father in particular was a driving force in their education and he had an expectation of all his children to be high achievers at school. Rebecca describes his quest for a good education for his children as akin to the search for the holy grail. He was determined that they would be educated and when he died before he could see his dream come to fruition, Rebecca explained that it then became her mother’s holy grail.

Layla credited her parents with explaining the importance of getting a good education. They had always encouraged her to do the best that she could and remembers their talks on
doing well in school. She recalls that both her parents valued education and spoke of how proud her father was of her educational achievements. Ruby’s parents were also very hands on with their children’s education and she remembers her father always helping herself and her siblings with their homework.

The story for Julie was different. She felt that her parents had little influence on her educational achievements. She has no recollection of her parents encouraging her to work hard at school or to complete any homework. Her educational achievements were acknowledged when she received a good report but there was no tangible guidance provided in terms of homework or of the educational journey that she might consider in terms of post compulsory and or tertiary education. She stated;

I don’t remember being made to do any homework, I think they [parents] might have asked, ‘Do you have homework to do?’ I did have a little desk when I was in high school and I used to cart the books home and back, and maybe I did some homework… I never knew about university until I left school

For Jane, the story was also one of no parental involvement. Both her parents had challenges in their lives that had resulted in Jane being placed into an orphanage where she was raised by the Sisters of Mercy. She explained, “Living in the children’s home my parents played no part in encouraging me in my education.” As a result of her living arrangements, the responsibility of Jane’s education fell to the nuns who looked after her and there appeared to be no expectations from them other than to see her through high school.

Twinney completed Year 12 and she excelled in accounting and commercial courses. Her parents had been encouraging her to do well but their encouragement to consider further
tertiary education was not entertained by Twinney who was keen to enter the workforce as soon as she could. At the time of her graduation in the late 1970s, few girls were opting into university courses and teachers’ college or nursing school did not appeal to Twinney.

It is clear from the data, that for six participants in the study, a good education was an important goal for their families. With the exception of Julie and Jane, there were clear expectations from parents about achieving well in school and the necessity to do well in order to procure good employment.

5.1.3 Schools

The choice of schools the participants attended was based on a variety of factors that included family expectations, financial considerations and religious and social values. The participants were educated in a mixture of public and private schools across a period of three decades.

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s when the participants attended school, Australians were able to access free public education but parents were also afforded a choice of sending their children to variety of fee-paying private schools. In response to the baby boom of the post war period, the need for the government to provide enough school places for the burgeoning population had resulted in the Australian government re-introducing funding for Catholic schools in the 1960s (Wilkinson, 2013). Catholic schools at this time, were low fee-paying institutions with the vast majority being overseen by nuns from various orders such as the Sisters of Mercy or the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Parents who sent their children to Catholic schools did so as a result of their religious beliefs but did assume that these institutions provided a better-quality education (Cahill & Gray, 2010).

The decision of four families to provide a Catholic education for their daughters appears to have been driven by the mothers of the participants There is no doubt that the Catholic community would have been a recognisable environment for the mothers. Having
been raised in a Catholic institution their acquired social and cultural capital via Catholicism, was a system they knew, and one in which they would have been able to negotiate religious rituals, teachings and expectations. At the time of the participants’ primary education, Catholic schools were predominantly run by nuns, brothers and priests. The teaching practices, activities, curriculum and co-curricular activities were underpinned by religious practices and beliefs (O’Donoghue & Burley, 2008).

5.2 Primary School

Four of the participants attended a Catholic primary school and four attended the local government schools.

5.2.1 Catholic Primary Schools

The Catholic primary schools that Julie, Jane and Layla attended were situated in the suburbs of Perth, Western Australia and were administered by the Sisters of Mercy, the same order of nuns that had raised their mothers. Twinney also attended a Catholic school in the country town where she was living at the time and came under the tutelage of the Sisters of St Joseph. The nuns of both orders did not receive a positive report card from the participants and stories of the Sister’s heavy handedness were scattered throughout the interviews. Learning in the Catholic environment was steeped in religious dogma and the use of physical punishments to instil discipline and the perceived harshness of the nuns were factors that the participants found challenging as young children. Layla in particular, talks about the trauma she experienced in primary school.

I was traumatised from being told stories by the nuns of what would happen if I was bad. The nuns would tell me stories about a little girl that didn’t go to church and she deliberately didn’t go to church and then on her way home from a picnic she was killed in a car accident
and she went to hell for all eternity, never to get out. I was pretty scared of doing anything wrong. And I was terrified that my dad who didn’t go to church every Sunday, would die in his sleep or in a work accident and then he would have to go to hell for all eternity. And he was good man and it didn’t seem fair or just. I was always in fear of him dying with sins on his soul. It was… it was a living nightmare. I used to be frightened at night, I needed a light on. I was sure I would see the devil, or the devil would come and take me away or terrifying things that I would have to worry about.

And from Twinney;

My earliest memory is being caned by the teacher for talking. I was in grade 1.

Jane’s primary school experience was a traumatic one and she simply described it as;

A very difficult time in which I struggled with my education.

5.2.2 Government Primary Schools

Mary, May, Ruby and Rebecca all attended government primary schools. Rebecca, who had lived in the country when she was young, attended the local government primary school and while this was her only option, her father had enrolled her in a private school in Perth for her high school tuition. This did not eventuate as her father passed away when she was in Year 8 and her mother could not afford to send her to a private school.

Mary attended her local government school in the suburbs of Canberra. She explained that her parents, particularly her father, was a big supporter of the public-school system and all the children attend their local school.
Due to financial reasons, May, who had completed one year of schooling at a Catholic school, along with her brother, was sent to the local government school where she completed her primary years. Ruby also attended the local government school that was situated just around the corner from her home.

With the exception of Jane, primary school was a time of the participants’ lives that went by without too many challenges. High school, however, was a much more challenging adventure for many of the participants in the study.

5.2.3 High School

The participants’ experiences of high school varied from being a wonderful time in their lives to the worst. When Rebecca was in first year high school aged 13, her father died. It was a challenging time for the family and Rebecca began to flounder in her studies. She lost focus in her school work and cared little for what was going on around her, in her words; “I didn’t give a shit about anything”. Fortunately, one of her teachers stepped in with support and care and nurtured her through this difficult time. The teacher had a daughter in Rebecca’s class and he would invite Rebecca to join his family on holidays and he supported her in her school work. She credits this teacher with helping her to get back on track with both her education and her life.

The district high school that Rebecca attended did not cater for post compulsory education and at the completion of Year 10, students would either leave school or continue with their post compulsory studies in the city. In the 1950s in Western Australia, a bursary system was introduced by the government of the time to encourage more women to complete post compulsory education and to enter into the nursing and teaching professions (Tully, 2010). Rebecca had been the recipient of a bursary and in return for financial assistance to complete Years 11 and 12, the final two years of high school, it was expected that she would undertake nursing training. On accepting the bursary, Rebecca relocated to the city where she
attended a large government high school. After the nurturing environment of the small
district high school, Rebecca found the impersonal environment of the city school a
challenging experience. Compounding her sense of dislocation was also the fact that Rebecca
was boarding with a family of strangers. Her mother had not as yet moved to the city and
temporary accommodation had been arranged for Rebecca until her mother arrived. Of her
experiences in the city, Rebecca explains;

I boarded with these horrible people for three months of 4th year ‘til
she (mum) moved down to the city. My teenage years were a
nightmare, my 4th and 5th years were the worst years of my life, a
nightmare. I hated the teachers. I thought some of them were
appalling.

Layla’s high school years began happily enough, attending a small all-girls Catholic
college in the inner city. She was a popular student who achieved good grades and was a
natural leader within the school environment. Unfortunately, the school at the time, did not
cater for post compulsory education, which resulted in Layla having to continue her post
compulsory studies at a new school. Coming from a small intimate environment of all girls to
a very large co-ed school posed a few challenges for Layla and while she completed Years 11
and 12 she did not achieve the results that she had wanted. She explained.

Well you know suddenly I felt like a little fish in a big pond, no one
else gave a damn, whereas, at my other school I was a big fish and
everybody knew my business. So, if you did something wrong or if
you achieved something everybody knew about it. When I went to the
other school nobody knew me and if I didn’t turn up for class nobody
knew if I was there or not.

Layla, however, managed to do well enough in her final exams to be accepted into university.

Twinney transitioned easily from her primary school to the local Catholic high school. She remained there for the first three years of high school but was sent to a Catholic boarding school in Perth for the last two years of her schooling. Afraid that she was becoming too involved with a boy in her hometown, Twinney’s parents made the decision to send her to the city and although she completed her time there she disliked the whole experience.

I hated boarding school. You got up in morning and said prayers and then you had prayers after breakfast and then you had prayers at lunchtime and you had mass on certain days and then you’d have prayers before you went to bed. I was like OMG I have died and gone to hell. And I had to share a room with two other girls who liked to sleep with the windows open and I was freezing cold. Oh, it was dreadful.

Twinney managed to get through those years and successfully completed her Years 11 and 12.

Jane didn’t provide much information about her time at the Catholic high school she attended. She described her time there as a horrid experience. Having been raised in the children’s home, the stigma of being there made life in high school a very unhappy time for her. Although Jane found her education a challenging experience, she did go on to complete Years 11 and 12.
For Julie, high school was a pleasant enough experience and she enjoyed the sporting curriculum and had a good group of friends. Julie was a year younger than her peers after starting school a year earlier than necessary. Being a year behind in age to her cohort was no problem for Julie and she coped well with the academic and social requirements demanded of her. It wasn’t until the final years of high school that she found the rigors of school challenging.

When I got to year 11 and 12 that’s when it began to get hard and that’s when I had terrible teachers. There was no tutoring, no one-on-one help, and I had no role models in the household to look up to.

Despite her challenges during this time, Julie did go on to successfully complete Year 12.

Ruby attended the local government high and enjoyed the whole experience. While she completed Year 12, her exam results were disappointing, an outcome she blamed on too much socialising, and as a result, she had to complete a summer course in English and Geography, in order to qualify for the nursing bursary, she had been offered. She passed the courses with distinction and began her career in nursing the following year.

5.2.4 Teachers

The role of teachers in the participants’ educational achievements, did not appear to be a significant focal point in their memories. While there were a few individual teachers who stood out during the participants’ school years, only a handful of teachers appeared to have been a motivating influence on their educational achievements.

This is not to discount the crucial role that teachers played in the participants’ accumulation of skills and knowledge, it is simply that the participants only remembered a few particular teachers. For Rebecca in particular, the relationship forged with a teacher when
she was in first year high school was instrumental in keeping her on track with her studies (see section 6.1).

Layla recalled two teachers in her life who she remembered as being inspirational in their teaching methods. In primary school she recollects Sister Claire teaching her mathematics and explains that the teachers’ rote teaching method had suited Layla’s learning style and as a result she was able to excel in the subject. She also recalls the teacher in her Year 12 English Literature class having a positive impact on her education. Layla explains that the passion of the teacher for Shakespeare, sparked her love of the subject, and she went on to achieve a test score in the top 3% of the state exams that year.

Twinney also spoke of two teachers that she liked. The first teacher was a nun who taught history at her high school. Although Twinney did not actually study history she was often on detention for talking too much in class and as a punishment, she was sent to clean the classroom while the history class was being taught.

I actually found her really engaging. I really liked it and I was really listening the whole time I was cleaning. I was actually learning her whole class.

Another teacher who had more impact upon her education was a nun who taught the commercial and accounting course in high school, an area that Twinney would eventually work in.

We had one nun, she’d been in the real world and worked and she was teaching short-hand typing and all that stuff so she had a lot of
experience and taught you well. I had a good grounding in office
work.

Julie has few memories of her primary years at school but she does recall that being
asked to help other students in maths boosted her self-confidence and reinforced her belief
that she was a smart student. Ruby recalls having some amazing teachers who were positive
role models and who made their subjects and learning interesting.

All of the participants in the study completed Year 12 and for the most part, they had
been provided with a solid educational foundation that gave them access to employment
opportunities and the option for further study. At the end of their schooling, three participants
began their training in nursing, two participants worked in the banking sector, one in the
hospitality industry and two continued with studies and attended university.

5.3 Tertiary Education

While six out of the eight participants have completed a tertiary degree only two
entered university directly from school. In the 1970s and early 1980s when most of the
women were leaving school, few Australian women were enrolled in universities. In 1973 in
Western Australia, where seven out of the eight participants were schooled, only 1 percent of
females attended university with this number increasing to only 4 percent by 1987 (Ahn &
Miller, 2002). By the time May, the youngest participant attended university in Western
Australia in early 1990s, the participation rate of women enrolling in university and had
overtaken male enrolments and stood at just over fifty per cent. This number was primarily
due to nursing becoming a university-based degree (ABS, 2018).

On completing her secondary studies, Mary enrolled in a University in Canberra
where she studied pure mathematics. After completing her degree three years later, she
secured a graduate position in the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
May also attended a University in Western Australia immediately after high school where she studied primary teaching. After graduating, May acquired a teaching position at a Catholic school in her local area. In 2013, she successfully completed a Master’s degree in education focusing on behaviour management and she is currently considering studying for a PhD.

Rebecca entered into nursing training at a hospital in Western Australia. Her training had been hospital based and in the 1980s she converted her qualifications to a Bachelor of Health Science. After some years in the health industry Rebecca wanted a change in careers and completed a diploma in transactional analysis. This was followed by a master’s degree in psychotherapy.

At the completion of Layla’s high school years, Layla enrolled in university but made the decision to drop out after a few months and enrolled in a nursing aide’s course. Layla enjoyed the job so much, that she applied to become a qualified nurse. Having been accepted into a programme of a Western Australian hospital to do her hospital-based training, Layla went on to convert her nursing qualifications to a Bachelor of Health Science. Following this, she completed a Master’s degree in Health Science followed by a Master’s degree in Business.

On the completion of her secondary school education, Julie secured employment in the banking sector where she worked for one year. After this, she applied to do nursing and was accepted into a local Catholic hospital. On completion of her training, Julie studied for a qualification in midwifery. She later converted her nursing credentials into a degree and gained her Bachelor of Health Science. In later years Julie undertook a Master’s degree in Occupational Health and Safety and she is currently, studying for her PhD. Julie has many qualifications which have been invaluable in her working life but she explains that it more a love of learning that inspires her to study.
It’s not just the education, it’s a value because I’m interested in learning things. As well as the qualifications I’ve got, I’ve always learnt, I’ve always studied so especially in remote area nursing I did a lot of short little courses in audio and x-ray and a whole lot of other minor qualifications but I will always value learning, I am always interested in doing something new.

Ruby completed Year 12 and began her nursing training the following year. At the conclusion of the course she then trained in midwifery. Like the other participants in the study who became nurses, Ruby was hospital trained but when nursing became a university-based degree, many nurses converted their qualifications into a degree, a two-year process. Ruby found that due to a number of factors that she was unable to do the conversion course.

My husband Ben passed away in 1994. My sons were 2 and 4 years old. I didn’t have the funds or time for the study load. I did enquire about it though.

Ruby did, go on to gain her qualifications in child health at a Western Australian university in 1997.

Although Jane finished Year 12, she had struggled with the whole process and felt very let down by the system. She had not been effectively engaged in the learning process and as a result her educational outcomes were disappointing and she did not have the option of a tertiary education at that time of her life.

Twinney and Jane found employment in the banking and hospitality sectors, also areas
in which were predominantly female at the time (chapter 6). The following table summarises
the schools the participant attended and their educational achievements.
Table 6 *Educational Outcomes of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>Secondary School</th>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Tertiary Level</th>
<th>Current Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Govt Country WA</td>
<td>Govt Country &amp; City WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Master’s in Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Catholic WA</td>
<td>Catholic WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Not Attempted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layla</td>
<td>Catholic WA</td>
<td>Catholic &amp; Govt WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Master’s Health</td>
<td>Master’s Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>Catholic WA</td>
<td>Catholic WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Master’s Health</td>
<td>Master’s Occupational Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twinney</td>
<td>Catholic Country WA</td>
<td>Catholic WA (Boarding) &amp; Govt WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Not Attempted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Catholic &amp; Govt WA</td>
<td>Govt WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Master’s Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Govt Canberra</td>
<td>Govt Canberra</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science: Pure Mathematic &amp; Statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>Govt WA</td>
<td>Govt /WA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Child Diploma</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Analysis of Educational Outcomes

In this section, I examine the participants’ educational experiences and outcomes from macro, meso and micro standpoint. (Bourdieu, 1977; Ciabattari 1988; Coleman, 1990; Dika & Singh, 2002; Dika & Singh, 2004). I identify a variety of historical, social and personal, factors within these three levels and I examine the impact of these factors upon the participants’ attitude to both their own and their children’s education.
5.4.1 Macro Factors in Education

To examine the macro influences that impacted on the participants in this study, it is necessary to situate their formal learning years in a social and political context. Seven of the participants completed their primary and secondary education in the 1960s and 1970s, the other completing her primary and secondary education in the 1970s and 1980s. The participants’ tertiary education has spanned the decades from the 1970s to present day.

The participants in this study were fortunate enough to be the beneficiaries of Australia’s progressive post WW2 education policies, which have delivered excellent educational and outcomes and mobility for Australia (Ranasinghe, 2015). They were also beneficiaries of the 1960s and 1970s New Left, revolution that challenged long held western conservative traditions (Ahn & Miller, 2002; Robinson & Ustinoff, 2012). As a result of the progressive attitudinal changes to the role of women in society, federal governments enshrined in legislation laws such the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth), the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, (Cth) and The 1972 Equal Pay Act, (Cth), laws that helped pave the way for a more inclusive and egalitarian workforce, and provided a framework in which Australian women and could better access and participate on a more equal footing in both the educational and employment spheres (Ahn & Miller, 2002).

An Australian comprehensive education system aimed to provide a school curriculum which was inclusive and reflected the social pluralism of the nation (Barcan, 2011). This comprehensive system was implemented throughout the 1960s and 1970s the period when most women in this study were attending school. This had an impact on the firmly entrenched differentiated school system, which social class hierarchy and structure was maintained and reproduced (Bourdieu, 1986; Sherington & Campbell 2004). Educational mobility was now
available to all Australians and not just to a select group. This resulted in wider access to higher education opportunities which in turn provided economic and social mobility for many Australians (Ranasinghe, 2015) including the participants in this study.

The implementation of a comprehensive education system, a system that provides a non-denominational education for all children regardless of economic, social and cultural backgrounds together with increased funding for both private and public schools, achieved a more egalitarian education in Australia (Campbell & Sherington 2013). This resulted in higher retention rates in schools and a more educated population. Further educational and career opportunities that had previously been unavailable to women were now an option (Cahill & Gray 2010; Ranasinghe, 2015; Tully, 1999).

In Western Australia, where the participants in this study were educated, these policy changes were reflected in the increase of pupils completing post compulsory schooling. West Australian educational policy during this era provided a variety of courses that catered for the needs of all students and although university was now an option for women, a large proportion of female students chose commercial courses as opposed to courses that would allow them entrance into university (Dettman, 1969). The decision by female students to stay on at school appeared to be determined by the amount of money they could earn by completing or not completing school (Dettman, 1969).

The macro changes within the education system did appear to have had some impact on the participants. Five of the participants received free education in government schools and for Rebecca, the opportunity to access post compulsory education via a bursary was probably the difference between her staying at school or leaving to join the workforce. It is, unknown if the participants would have completed
Year 12 if education had not been free. Clearly for the participants who attended the Catholic schools, their parents had been willing to pay for the education.

With the exception of May, the youngest participant who completed her schooling in the 1980s, the participants in this study were educated in the 1960s and 1970s. All participants completed twelve years of schooling and six of them have all achieved tertiary qualifications, while Jane and Twinney completed further studies and job specific training. The completion of post-compulsory high school by all the participants and the continuation to tertiary education by six of them is line with the findings of Ranasinghe’s (2015) study that looked at the educational mobility of Australians who were educated between 1942 and 1991. The educational achievements of the participants in this study reflects those survey results but what does not correlate however, was the finding by Ranasinghe’s, 2015 finding that daughter’s educational outcomes over this period were highly correlated to their parent’s education compared to sons. This was not the experience of the participants in this study, as all either matched or exceeded both their mother’s and father’s educational achievements.

This might be explained by institutional changes in the education system and a more progressive societal attitude in Australia but the acquisition of higher educational outcomes was not simply due to a single school system or a government policy. While these macro factors were significant and provided opportunities, parental expectations, religious structures and secondary reference groups also played significant and pivotal roles in those outcomes, by providing networks which supported the participants individual educational pursuits.

5.4.2 Meso Level Factors in Education

Meso-level factors refer to the institutions, associations and communities in which individuals interact. The networks and relationships formed within these groups contribute to the acquisition of both social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Field, 2016).
During their primary years of schooling, the dominant social groups the participants were involved in was their school and for five of them it extended to their religious community. The relationships and networks acquired within these groups and communities impacted the participants’ educational experiences, in that they added to the acquisition of the social capital necessary to successfully negotiate the educational environment.

5.4.3 The School Environment

The school environment is a most significant meso institution in the lives of the participants.

In Australia, notwithstanding a few minimal regional differences, children are required to attend school for thirteen years; this time being divided into three phases, primary, secondary and senior secondary school (Australian Government, 2018). While the formal education of children is driven by State imposed curriculum, the networks and relationships that are made, within the school environment, socialise children in community values. These values are reinforced through language, actions and objects, and it is how they come to understand their role within the wider community (Charon, 2007; Ritzer, 2007). This was no different for the participants in this study, who attended school some forty years ago.

In this section I examine the school environment and the networks formed within that environment and how these and subsequent relationships impacted upon the participants’ educational achievements.

The primary schools attended by the participants provided them with a satisfactory foundation in literacy and numeracy. While they recalled some primary school experiences, memories of their time during this period were limited and/or indifferent for most of the participants.

It was their experiences in high school that appeared to be the most challenging for the majority of the participants. As they worked their way through their high school years, they
did so with limited support and guidance from the institutions they attended. None of them recalled the school encouraging them to pursue a tertiary education or helping them to access employment opportunities. Twinney recalled being ridiculed for being “too smart” and was actively discouraged from achieving better marks than the boys. Julie recalled having no support or guidance at all in her final years, and Rebecca recalled her awful teachers who were heavy handed with some of the students and describes their treatment of children as deplorable. Layla also felt that she was largely invisible in her high school and Jane’s experiences failed to meet her educational needs. Ruby, Mary and May however, loved their high school years.

Despite the perceived lack of encouragement from their respective institutions as a whole, all the participants did graduate from Year 12. Their success in achieving this milestone, appears to be a result of a journey that, while marred with individual challenges, was negotiated partly with the help of relationships that were made within the school environment.

The educational institution is a place in which networks are formed between children and children, teacher and child, and child and staff other than teachers. In each of these networks, bonds and relationships develop which add to the acquisition of social capital which provides more resources for the individual (Coleman, 1988; Weiss, 2012). For those participants who did not have the resources at home or from the institution as a whole, these relationships were important contributors to their high school educational achievements. In Julie’s story, she identified a very close friend as being influential in her academic life during her high school years. This friendship provided Julie with a broad knowledge and understanding of the expectations of learning and introduced her to the positive outcomes that could be achieved through education. Rebecca spoke of a close child/teacher relationship in high school, that encouraged her to achieve her academic potential and also spoke of a
positive friendship that she had with another girl in high school. In this relationship, Rebecca would complete her friend’s homework and in return Rebecca would be included in her friend’s social activities. Although this did not necessarily impact upon Rebecca’s educational outcomes, as a country girl new to the city, it provided her with opportunities to form social networks and relationships in which she was able to acquire and internalise valuable social capital. Jane recalled her school days as “awful” and although she made no significant relationships in her time there, immersion in the educational system outside of the orphanage provided her with some useful social and cultural capital. Skills such as learning to use public transport, interacting with people from mainstream society and being exposed to popular culture albeit in a limited capacity, provided new and valuable experiences and understanding of life outside the institution.

The relationships and networks in which the participants interacted during their school years resulted in both negative and positive experiences. Whether the participants were inspired or frightened by a teacher, child or staff member, the interactions impacted upon the educational and social development of the participants at the time and added to their knowledge, understanding and accumulation of both cultural and social capital.

5.4.4 Religion & Education

Another meso factor that influenced the educational achievements of some of the participants was religion, in particular the Catholic church. Five out of the eight participants were raised in the Catholic faith and four attended a Catholic school for the majority of their formal education. These four participants also sent their children to religious schools, three chose a catholic school and one an Anglican school.

The participants who attended Catholic schools had mixed ideas of the role that the Catholic system played in their educational achievements. It is clear that those who attended them were educated proficiently but it appears that the most influential factors in the
participants’ development was not necessarily confined to the classroom. Being a part of the Catholic community provided opportunities for some of the participants to participate in activities such as public speaking, in the form of reading prayers in mass, participating in the offertory procession and generally helping out around the church. In addition to those activities, the participants were inducted into the church community through the sacramental initiation rites that members of the Catholic community participate in, such as Baptism, Reconciliation and Holy Communion. These rites validated both their identity (chapter 10) and their actions within their community.

There is, however, no mention by any of the participants of relationships or networks within this community. They interacted with clergy in the school room and during the process of mass and receiving the sacraments but being part of the Catholic church did not appear to have bestowed any educational advantages or disadvantages to the participants of which they were aware.

5.4.5 Micro Factors

Relationships between the participants and their parents, friends, extended families and peers, impacted upon the participants’ education and these are arguably the most significant influences upon the participants’ educational achievements. In this section, I examine the impact of these micro factors (Bourdieu, 1986; Halpern, 2005) on the participants’ educational journey. The networks and relationships accessed by the participants from their family, friends and peers all appear to have contributed to the participants’ understanding of themselves as learners. By identifying and examining those relationships between student/teacher, student/student, student/family and student/community (Feinstien, Duckworth & Sabates, 2008), it is possible to provide a portrait of the participants in their development as a learner and how they view themselves as learners.
5.4.6 Parental Influence

One of the most significant factors in six of the participants’ educational achievements was parental expectation. These participants all recalled being instilled with the notion that ‘a good education’ was the most important ingredient necessary for a good life. Layla recalls her parents saying: Study at school because education is the only chance you’ve got, and I remember them saying many, many times that if you don’t get an education you’re in trouble. You’ve got to have an education.

Rebecca and Ruby recognised that this emphasis was a result of their parents not having a high level of education themselves.

Neither of my parents had an education. Education was so important. (Rebecca)

Mum and Dad expected us to complete Year 12 and work as hard as we could. We were strongly encouraged to obtain some qualifications. They both spoke of their education levels and opportunities that they never had. (Ruby)

Working class parents tend to have a less formal education, fewer academic resources and have less confidence than their middle-class counterparts when negotiating the education system but they are still eager for their children to do well in school (Lin, 2001; McNamara, Horvat, Weininger and Lareau, 2003; Thirunurthy, Kirylo & Ciabattari, 2010; Weiss 2012.)

This was clearly the case for most of the participants whose parents, having limited formal education themselves, knew the importance of education and wanted it for their daughters. There was an expectation that the daughters would do better than their parents and while parental authority set the expectation for the ‘participants education, it is not clear how that expectation was supported or reinforced by the parents. Only Mary, Ruby and Layla’s
father appeared to have provided hands on support with homework and these were the only participants who spoke about their parents being involved in school activities.

Although some parents were unable to provide direct educational assistance to their daughters, it is clear that most of the parents provided the necessary resources for the participants to attend school and to complete a post compulsory education.

For example, Rebecca’s mother took on extra employment to ensure her children were able to stay in school. Jane’s father felt that his daughter would be better off in the orphanage where she would be provided with a more stable environment. The parents of Twinney, Layla and Julie worked to ensure that their daughters could attend a private school which they believed would be the best environment for their daughters and May’s parents provided support and a stable environment in which their daughter could work and socialise.

While the parents did the best they could to encourage their daughters to do well at school, their expectations for their daughters were ones of traditional female vocational careers as nurses or teachers. Some of the participants explained that a career in nursing or teaching was something that their parents and teachers wanted them to aspire to. This also reflects the thinking of the time when authorities were encouraging women into the teaching and nursing professions by providing scholarships/bursaries into both fields. The following quoted exemplifies this attitude.

We were expected (by the nuns/teachers) that we would go to teacher’s college, which wasn’t quite university then. You would either become a teacher or a nurse until you married full stop, preferably to a doctor if you were pretty, and that’s true. (Julie)
Well mum wanted me to go into teaching or nursing and I didn’t want to do either of them. (Twinney)

It was like a scholarship and they gave them for nursing or teachers because they were the main careers. (Rebecca)

So, I think she (mother) just always thought that I would be a nurse or a teacher and she knew that they were my interests. (May)

I had always been keen to study Nursing. At the end of Year 10 I received what was called a ‘Nursing Bursary’ from the Medical Board. I think it was around $100 or $200 a year to assist with books for high school and I had to send in Year 11 and 12 reports in to the Medical Board. (Ruby)

When they left school, all the participants entered into professions traditionally occupied by women (see chapter 6).

5.4.7 Intergenerational Closure

The impact of the work and expectations of the parents in their daughter's educational experiences were not necessarily conducted in isolation. The parents were all part of a variety of networks and relationships in which information and values were exchanged and expectations and obligations were met. The outcome of these interactions provided intergenerational closure, a significant micro factor in the participants educational journey.
Intergenerational closure posits that social capital that is transmitted within the family networks can lead educational success (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010; Coleman, 1988; Graaf et al., 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006; von Otter & Stenberg, 2015). The parent/parent relationships provide information about the school and its educative processes and systems, as well as expectations within the school community. This information and expectations are exchanged and validated through symbolic interactions, the social process where individuals make meaning from their interactions with others. These interactions reinforce both the social norms and sanctions which are then passed on to children through parental communications or through the relationships of the children and other adults. What is not so clear is how effective the parent/parent or the child/other adult relationships, were in providing the participants in the study with effective intergenerational closure.

Layla is the only participant who recalled a school environment in which high expectations were held by members of community. As Layla said, “It was shameful not to do well”. Other than that, one comment, there was no evidence proffered by the other participants about how school, religious or neighbourhood community relations/networks impacted on their education.

While there is no overt evidence of intergenerational closure, it is clear from the data that there were networks and relationships within the community that would have necessarily impacted on the participants for example, both Mary and Ruby’s parents, were involved in sporting activities in the school community and Rebecca described her parent’s involvement in many community groups. Presumably, their parents’ social connections impacted on their daughters lives by inculcating them with knowledge of social norms and sanctions, but few specific examples of how this manifested itself were remembered by the participants.

It is evident also, that the participants who attended Catholic schools and grew up in the Catholic faith were part of a wider community that reinforced specific values. As might
be expected, the participants who were educated or involved in the Catholic community had been immersed in the structure and teachings of the church and this instruction into and about Catholicism, was reinforced through interactions between the participants and their teachers, friends and family. Given these factors, it can be assumed that there was some intergenerational closure going on in the lives of the Catholic participants but there is limited evidence with which to conclude how significant that was in the women’s educational achievements.

5.4.8 Friends and Colleagues

One of the most influential factors in all the participants’ lives were and still are, the relationships that they have made and continue to make with people outside of the family, particularly those in the workplace. Some of the relationships that were forged within the school and work environment have provided the participants with access to knowledge, skills and support that allowed them to expand on their solid educational foundations to pursue further education and training.

Given that six of the eight participants have tertiary degrees and only two of them attended university straight from school, I wanted to examine the factors that led to the other four pursuing further university education.

Layla, Julie, Ruby and Rebecca were the four participants who studied for a university degree in their thirties. Although Julie had her nursing and midwifery qualifications and was an experienced theatre and remote area nurse, it was the examples set by her work colleagues that led her to enrol in the university course. She had observed many of her lecturers at the hospital where she had trained, doing their university degree despite having fifteen years or more of hospital experience. Julie reasoned that if the mature staff
were upgrading their qualifications then she would have to as well if she was going to keep up with the industry. It was at this time that she enrolled for her first university course.

Attending university was a new and exciting experience for Julie as it was an institution she had no real understanding of. She explained that it had never been mentioned at school or at home and that neither she nor her friends, had ever thought about going to university. The lack of knowledge or familiarity with the tertiary system however, did not deter her from applying and successfully completing the course. She knew that studying would be a good career move and was confident in her ability to achieve in an area that she enjoyed.

It was not too long after the completion of her degree that Julie again enrolled in another university course, this time to study occupational health and safety. It was a relationship forged in the workforce that led to both her and her colleague embarking on an educational journey together. Julie and her colleague were able to support each other and both successfully completed the course.

On her return to the city, Julie operated her own nursing agency supplying nurses to the remote mining areas of Western Australia. It was during this period that she once again returned to her studies. Some of the nursing staff that she was employing were studying their graduate diploma and it occurred to Julie that she needed to be ahead of the people that she employed and so set to work on a master’s degree which she successfully completed two years later.

Julie’s tertiary journey continues at present, as she studies for her PhD in the health care field. It is clear from her story that the relationships she made within the school and work environments have been a significant micro factor in her educational journey. While Julie has a love of learning and independently seeks out new knowledge and experiences, the
support of friends has been a significant influence in helping her negotiate the educational systems and processes. She sums up her educational like this:

I don’t think it’s [educational achievements] because of my family. I think the influence of my friends was huge.

Rebecca has also found that many of the relationships she has formed throughout her life have impacted immeasurably upon her education. A hospital trained nurse, Rebecca also converted her nursing qualifications to a Bachelor of Health Science degree. Following on from this Rebecca had a career change from nursing to counselling, completing a diploma in transactional analysis, followed by a master’s degree in psychotherapy. While Rebecca enjoyed the study and the change of direction in her career, she explains that it was the support and nurturing of her friends in the industry that had been the greatest influence. She explained:

These people (work colleagues) have picked me out of a group of people and they’ve gone ‘Hey, we are going to nurture you.’ They took me into their practice as a trainer, I was so lucky.

It is clear from Rebecca’s experience that the relationships with her secondary teacher, her work colleagues and her school friends have been important in her education and she sees herself as fortunate in meeting these people on her journey.

Layla’s educational achievements have also been influenced by her friends. While her desire to improve her educational qualifications was anchored in her own personal aspirations, she recalled the importance of the colleague’s and friend’s influence during that
journey.

In the mid 1980s, Layla and two work colleagues enrolled in a Bachelor of Health conversion degree at a Western Australian university. The three participants, all with young children and working part-time, banded together to provide practical and emotional support for each other, successfully completing the course two years on.

Friends and colleagues have been significant influences in the educational development of the many of the participants in this study. Throughout their formal school years and in their professional lives, the participants have made relationships that have provided them with the knowledge and skills which have enabled them to build on their formal education and in their professional lives.

5.4.9 Children’s Education

The participant’s experience and knowledge of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the education system has enabled them all to make informed choices about the schools and learning environments in which their children have been educated. They have all demonstrated a good understanding of the structural education systems and have negotiated them with success, a result of accumulated capital by the participants.

Between them, the participants in this study have twenty-five children ranging from seven years to thirty-five years of age. In Australia where primary and secondary education is free, four of the participants chose to send their children to fee paying private schools. Layla, Julie, May and Mary opted for a religious based education for their children. All four of the participants had been raised as Catholics but there were varying reasons for their decision to send their children to Catholic schools.

Layla, who has three children, decided on a Catholic education for her children’s high school years. She explained that she had always wanted to send her children to a
Catholic school because she had an inexplicable preference for the Catholic education system.

Even though I saw what was wrong with Catholic schools like the religious brain-washing, the fear of God and the guilt associated with religious education, I also felt I should as a good Catholic give the Catholic education system the benefit of the doubt and give the children at least some religious background.

Her husband, who was not Catholic did not support a religious education for his children but a compromise was agreed to and it was decided that the children would attend a government primary school and a Catholic high school. By the time the children reached high school age, Layla’s marriage had ended and she found herself shouldering the family’s financial responsibilities. Working long hours to pay the mortgage and raise the family, the added pressure of school fees, uniforms and books did not sway Layla’s decision to send her children to the Catholic high school. Central to that decision was Layla’s belief that the Catholic school would provide a safe and nurturing environment for her daughters.

At the time they did go to senior high school I was a single mother working long hours and my children needed strong school guidance. I wanted the school to know who they were and call me if they didn’t go to school or if there were any problems. I felt this private school would do this. I had attended a public school for my final two years of schooling and it was a big school. I felt like it was easy for children to fall through the cracks.
Her trust in the school to provide a safe place was well placed and she was thankful for the guidance and counselling that was provided to her children when they faced a major life trauma as a result of their father’s actions and his subsequent imprisonment. She described the school as providing both individual care and passion for her children. While Layla’s overall assessment of her children’s Catholic education is positive, she felt that her youngest daughter had not been provided with academic support that she needed when her grades began to slip. Layla felt that the school was more geared to those more academic students who consistently achieved high grades.

Although Layla’s children faced personal upheavals during their high school years, all three of her children successfully completed Year 12. Presently, one is a state manager for a large transport company, another has just completed a master’s degree, and the other works as an executive assistant.

Julie’s decision to send her child to a religious-based school was two-fold. In her daughter’s primary school years, the family lived in a mining town and the local Catholic school appeared to be a better choice than the local government school. The local Catholic community provided an environment that reflected Julie’s values and she felt that this was a good option for her daughter. On returning to Perth, Julie and her partner enrolled her daughter in the local government primary school but were not happy with the academic rigour, instead choosing to send her to an all-girls college in the city. It was felt by both parents that this environment better suited their child’s needs and better reflected their educational values and expectations. Thus far, their daughter has excelled within the environment. Julie is particularly passionate about education and learning and as a result, she has encouraged her daughter to recognise the importance of education. The parental expectations have been clearly defined and communicated by Julie and her partner and their daughter knows that she is expected to attend university. Those expectations are however,
wholly supported by both parents who are ‘hands on’ with their daughter’s education. They are both supportive with homework activities, extra curricula programmes and are active members within the school community. The following quote describes Julies’ expectation for her daughter’s education.

She gets a lot of help. She has two well qualified parents. I have married somebody with a degree in law and she has very good verbal skills. I haven’t any doubt that she’ll go to uni. I don’t mind if she goes to uni to do arts or to do music or acting. It doesn’t have to be medicine or law or engineering or something but I’ll let her choose what she wants to do but the expectation is that she will go.

Universities teach you how to think, not what to think. So that’s my message to her.

Twinney is a case study of how education can be tailored to the needs of ADHD children. She has two children who both attended the local Catholic school. Initially she had sent her son to the local government school but when he was diagnosed with ADHD, she found that the local Catholic school was much better equipped to deal with his behaviour and he finished his primary education there. Not wanting to medicate her son, Twinney implemented home management strategies, and with good support from the school, he was able to complete and do well in his primary years.

When her son went to the local Catholic high school however, the structured and comfortable environment of the primary school was not replicated and her son was expelled in year 9 for misbehaving. Twinney explained that the school did not believe in ADHD and that her son was just a ‘naughty boy.’ He then attended the local government school but after a year of what Twinney describes as hell, they managed to find him an apprenticeship which
he has now completed and in which he excelled.

Twinney’s daughter also began her education at the local Catholic school. Her satisfaction with the educational experiences of her son in the Catholic primary school, she felt that it would be an environment that would also be good for her daughter. An added bonus was that a couple of her daughter’s cousins also attended the school. Her daughter went on to complete her high school education at the all-girls Catholic school and excelled in her studies. She is currently undertaking her second tertiary degree. It is clear that Twinney values education but explains that she had instilled upon her children that learning was a life-long pursuit.

I always told Sean and Katie that school wasn’t the end of their education and that they could always do further studies as adults if they wanted to, but to choose something that they really wanted to do.

May has eight children between the ages of 7 and 20. she has four biological children, two step children and under a kinship care arrangement she is responsible for her niece and nephew. Four of May’s children began their primary schooling at the local Catholic school where she works. It is a kindergarten to Year 12 school (K-12), the primary school being co-educational and feeding into the two single-sexed Catholic high schools in the area.

May’s eldest daughter attended the school from K-12 and her youngest daughter is in Grade Two at present. Two of May’s sons attended the primary school and at the commencement of high school, they were enrolled at the local Catholic boy’s college. The other four children attend the local government school. Her decision to send the other four children to the local government school was a decision based on what was best for the individual children. she explained;
My step children attended the local high school. This was the feeder school from their local primary school so they continued on there. Coincidentally, it was also the same high school both my husband and I attended so we are pretty familiar with the school and even some of the staff who are still there! My niece and nephew are also at the same school which was also a feeder school for them. As they were already enrolled there when they came to us, we left them there to keep them settled. It is also convenient for my husband to collect them all from the one school.

May’s eldest daughter completed her studies in midwifery in 2017 and her eldest son is in the second year of his communications degree at university. Another son is in the automotive trade and the rest of the children are at various stages of their education.

May described her daughter’s education at the Catholic school as excellent. Her daughter was Head Girl and was encouraged at all times to strive for her best. The Catholic college is the same one where May is employed and based on her knowledge of the staff and the school she chose to send her daughter there.

May has been impressed with the education that all her children have received and despite some learning challenges along the way she is confident in the ability of all her children. One of her sons struggles with dyslexia and although he has found school quite challenging, he is doing well in his vocational trade’s courses.

Both Rebecca and her husband had high educational expectations for their children and the two children attended the local government school. When the time came for high school her daughter attended a school that offered a gifted and talented programme which provided a nurturing environment in which she flourished. Rebecca’s son, however, attended
the local government school which Rebecca described as being quite rough and under resourced in terms of dealing with children who were experiencing learning difficulties as her son was. He found high school quite challenging and according to Rebecca his learning difficulties became behavioural difficulties.

Rebecca’s children have been out of school for many years and both have successful careers. Her daughter, who had set her sights on medicine, is now a consultant physician and her son are a successful carpenter. Her son also has two children, one of whom has just been accepted into the gifted and talented program at the local government school.

Mary’s parents were very much involved in her education and like her parents, she too has a deep interest in her own children’s education and is very much involved with both her sons’ schooling. When it came time to consider her own children’s education, Mary tells me that the idea of sending them to a private school appealed to her on two fronts. First, both her sons are heavily into sport and the amount of extra-curricular sport provided in the private sector would have suited their interests. Second, Mary believes that the discipline at a private school is superior in that trouble makers can be excluded from private schools, which in turn makes for a better learning environment. Private schooling, was however, never a serious consideration due to costs. Her sister, a teacher at a public school, also had great pleasure in telling Mary that academically there is no advantage in sending children to a private school. She jokingly tells me that if she had put her boys into a private school there would have been “Hell to pay”. Mary’s sons are both in high school at the time of this study.

Jane has five children and all have completed their schooling in government schools in the UK. All five children began their formal education from the age of two, when they attended the local nursery school. From there, the children progressed to play-group and then on to primary school. At the completion of their primary education, the children moved into their secondary education, progressing on to college and then to university.
Four of Jane’s children have university qualifications and the fifth has just completed his secondary studies. Her eldest has a Master’s degree in Landscape design, her second child has a degree in design, her third child has a Master’s in paediatric intensive care nursing and is currently studying tropical disease nursing. The second youngest has a degree in internal architecture and the youngest is taking a gap year after which he will be studying landscape architecture at university. Jane credits the school that her children attended as being an environment that was conducive to learning. Jane explains her reasons for choosing the school;

We looked at the school ethos, it’s caring supportive teachers, zero tolerance to bullying, inclusive, and academic attainment of the school.

Jane and her husband were very supportive and encouraging parents and valued education, which has been reflected in their children’s achievements. She does point out however, that they always allowed for the children to be creative, to follow their passion and to plan a way in which to achieve their goals.

We have always looked at education as a way to grow and learn, to be excited about learning, my children have embraced education, they have all continued to want to learn, to have more than one degree in their chosen field. So, their love for learning continues.

Ruby’s two children attended their local government school for both their primary and secondary education. Although there had been some challenges for her children
during their high school years, the family worked hard to successfully overcome those issues and both sons completed their secondary education.

It is clear that the participants value a good education for their children but they also recognise the importance of allowing their children to work to their strengths and passions. In all cases, they have been supportive of their children’s endeavours and have carefully chosen a school environment in which they considered their children would benefit the most from.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter I presented the findings of the educational achievements and outcomes of the participants and their parents. I examined their educational experiences of the participants throughout their primary, secondary and tertiary years. I then examined the significant factors that impacted on their educational journey.

There is much conjecture as to the impact of parental support and involvement on their children’s educational achievements (Croll, 2004; Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003; Kim & Hill, 2015; Minello & Blossfeld, 2017; Vorhaus, 2014; Weiss, 2012). Some suggest that because middle class parents, understand the system better, so they are able to negotiate it more effectively, providing their children with the cultural capital necessary to negotiate the system to their advantage (Lin, 2001; McNamara, Horvat, Weininger and Lareau, 2003; Weiss 2012.) Others argue that the working class groups who may not be familiar or confident within the education system are able to access other forms of support outside of the school environment which are also valuable in helping children achieve (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). Researchers such as Croll (2004), Weiss (2012) and Vorhaus (2014), suggest that social class makes little or no difference at all and that children can achieve educational success with minimal parental involvement.

All these perspectives have some place in this study. In Mary’s middle-class home, her father who had a university degree and helped with homework, was familiar and
confident in his knowledge of the education system and encouraged his daughter to explore her tertiary education options. In the working-class homes of both Rebecca and Ruby, the parents were able to access bursaries for their daughters which would indicate a degree of confidence in accessing the government assistance programmes. In the cases of Julie and Jane, who reported that their parents had little impact upon their education, both participants were able to access the education systems at different stages in their lives and like the others in the study have surpassed their parents’ educational achievements.

A significant impact of the parents on the educational outcomes of their daughters was their firm belief in the importance of education in their daughters’ lives and the opportunities that it afforded. In an era when many girls were not expected to complete post compulsory secondary school, the parents of the participants had wanted their daughters to have solid job prospects and careers. For the most part, the parents of the participants valued education and knew that a good education was imperative if their daughters were to have options in their lives.

It is clear from the data that the participants educational achievements have surpassed those of their parents, and that a variety of influences over the course of the participants’ lives have contributed to their success. The educational achievements of all the participants are outstanding. All eight participants completed post compulsory studies at time when most young participants left school after Year 10 and six participants have completed tertiary level studies. They have been life-long active learners and as such they have provided themselves with the opportunities to access good employment.

In this chapter I have provided information about the participants’ educational experiences and the factors affecting their educational outcomes. In the next chapter I
Chapter 6 Working lives and Sporting lives

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the paid working lives of the participants. First, I begin by providing a historic and socio-economic overview of the participant’s parents working lives. Second, I provide an in-depth examination of the participant’s paid employment experiences. Third, I examine the influences of networks and relationships that impacted upon the participant’s paid employment. In this study, all the participants were born in the post war years, an era when married women were expected to work in the home while their husbands were expected to be in paid employment. With the exception of Mary, all the mothers of the participants were the main caregiver in the family while the children were young, and all the fathers were in paid employment.

In terms of the intergenerational transmission of work values, the participants in this study are a unique cohort. Their mothers had never experienced seeing a parent go to work and the only transmission of work values while growing up was the negative experience of work in the orphanage (Parker, 2013). The working lives of the mothers had not followed traditional paths to employment but the participants all recalled their mothers having a strong work ethic.

6.1 Mother’s Working Lives.

Under the British Child Migrant scheme, the organisations that had entered into the agreements with the government to look after the children, were responsible for helping them to access employment and accommodation once they were old enough to leave the orphanage (Parker, 2013). On leaving the institution, the mothers of the participants all found employment in traditionally female dominated professions such as nursing, retail and
hospitality. These positions, however, concluded for most of them when they married and had children, although two of the mothers re-entered the paid workforce later in their lives.

Mary’s mother Delma was the only one to continuously work full-time throughout her married life. At the end of her time at the orphanage, Delma had been employed by the State Health Department where she was trained as a typist. She was encouraged by her employer to further her skills at a business college which she did, and eventually gained her business administrative qualifications. After gaining her qualifications Delma left Perth and travelled to Victoria where she joined the Australian Army Nursing Corp, learning first aid skills and basic nursing practices. It was here she met and married her husband and when her husband secured employment in Canberra, Delma found employment in the public service where she worked in the typing pool until her retirement in her 70s. While many women during this era gave up paid work to raise children, Delma and her husband were able to work through the logistics of raising children so she could remain in the workforce. Child care was provided by a neighbour and the access to government flexi hours allowed Delma to work school hours. Mary recalls the routine of her mother and father heading off each morning to work as just a normal part of everyday life and did not really consider that her mother’s choice to work was in any way the exceptional during this period of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mothers of Layla, Julie, May, Twinney and Ruby all entered the nursing profession when they left the orphanage. While none of the participants gained their registered nursing qualification, they did qualify as nursing assistants; a qualification which enabled Julie and Layla’s mothers to find paid positions in the health industry when their children were of school age.

Jane’s mother worked in the hospitality and retail sector after leaving the orphanage and continued to work in these industries throughout her life. Rebecca’s mother, Elizabeth worked the family orchard until the death of her husband after which she moved to the city
and was employed in a variety of labouring jobs which included cleaning and food preparation. The other three mothers never returned to the paid workforce after marriage and children.

6.2 Father’s Working Lives

All of the fathers of the participants were employed full-time when their children were growing up. After leaving school, three of the fathers had entered into apprenticeships, two had joined the armed forces, one was employed in the transport industry, one a service technician and one a senior public servant.

Prior to their marriages, Rebecca and Twinney’s father had served in the armed forces. Rebecca’s father enlisted in the Australian Infantry in WWI and on his return, established and worked an orange orchard in country Western Australia. Twinney’s father joined the navy during peace-time. On completion of his time in the navy, he pursued a career on merchant vessels and worked his way up to the position of Captain. Jane recalled that her father was a truck driver in Australia, but he spent much of his working life in Papua New Guinea, however it is unclear what his employment was in that country. May’s father was a manager for a logistics company and Julie’s father trained as an instrument maker and worked for many years in the aviation industry. Layla’s father worked in the union movement, working his way to the position of union secretary, a position he held up until retirement. Mary’s father was a federal senior public servant and later trained as teacher. Layla, Ruby, Mary and Julie’s fathers all enrolled in further educational studies and training during their working lives.
Table 7. *Parent’s Paid Employment History*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s Occupation</th>
<th>Father’s Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twinney</td>
<td>Trained in the Navy and then a Ship’s Captain on merchant vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained as Nursing Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped working when married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Worked in Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained as Nursing Assistant</td>
<td>Manager of a logistics company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped working when married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layla</td>
<td>Worked in a variety of occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained as Nursing Assistant</td>
<td>Union Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to work when children were older; worked in health and retail sectors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>Tradesman/Instrument maker working in the aviation sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained as Nursing Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to work when children were older; worked in health sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchardist/Domestic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained as a typist and in administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Servant; worked throughout her life, retired at 71.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchardist/Domestic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained as Nursing Assistant</td>
<td>X-ray technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped working when married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; hospitality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Participants Paid Working Lives

Like their parents, the participants have worked throughout their lives and in a variety of roles. In this section I look at both the paid and unpaid work that the participants have engaged in. In Chapter 4 Section 1 ‘Portraits of the participants, I have provided an over view of the participants’ employment. In this section I examine those lives in more detail.
6.3.1 Layla

Layla’s working life began at age fifteen when she acquired her first part-time job at a Woolworths supermarket, a position she held until the completion of high school. After securing a place in a nursing assistant training course, Layla successfully completed an eighteen-month program in a large public hospital in Perth. She had enjoyed working in the hospital environment and enrolled to train as a registered nurse in a city hospital. She completed the course successfully and continued to work at the hospital for the next few years. The skills, knowledge and networks that Layla was able to access and develop during this period of her life would provide a solid foundation for her continued and influential journey within Australia’s health system.

At aged 27 Layla married and had three children within five years. During this time, she worked part-time doing night shift so she and her husband, also a nurse, could juggle the care of the children. As the children grew and began their primary school education, Layla continued to work but decided also to upgrade her nursing qualifications to a degree at this time (Chapter 8). At the completion of her degree, Layla returned to full-time employment, specialising as a neurological nurse. She was then provided with an opportunity to oversee the establishment of new pre-admissions clinic at a large public hospital, a challenge that led to positive and innovative changes in the care of patients, a program which is still in use today.

It was during this time, however, that Layla’s marriage ended and with the sole responsibility of three children Layla looked to alternative employment to meet the financial needs of her family. The opportunity to work as a pharmaceutical representative presented itself and Layla was given the responsibility of selling cancer drugs. The amount of knowledge required in her new position once again saw Layla head back to university to complete her Masters of Health and a Masters of Business. After more than a decade working
in this industry, Layla accepted a redundancy package and left her position to re-evaluate her professional career. Before too long, she secured employment within the Health Department where she worked for 12 months. At this stage of her career, Layla’s children were grown and with the pressure of her financial responsibilities lessened, she decided upon a new trajectory and with a fellow health professional, she began a business that would provide health care in the patient’s home.

Layla’s working career in both the paid and unpaid spheres has been both challenging and rewarding. She has been a risk taker in her all aspects of her working life and her strong and unconventional approaches in business have disrupted the conventional approaches to health service and have led to positive economic and social changes in the industry.

6.3.2 Twinney

Twinney has been in paid employment since the completion of Year 12. With an interest in accounting and having been one of the top students in the commercial course in school, Twinney was able to secure a position in administration at one of Australia’s largest banks. It was a job in which she excelled and one that she enjoyed immensely. After being in the position for two years, Twinney decided that she needed a change of scenery and swapped city life for the country. After securing a transfer within her organisation, Twinney took up a position in the remote Pilbara area of Western Australia. It was during this time that Twinney met her future husband and fell pregnant with their first child. Having made the decision to return to Perth to have her child she negotiated a year’s unpaid maternity leave and returned to part-time work not long after the birth. After working in the banking sector for many years, Twinney and her husband established their own company in the construction industry with Twinney being responsible for the administrative arm of the business. Highly successful, the company is still going strong thirty years later with Twinney continuing the administrative duties.
6.3.3 Jane

Jane has been in paid employment for the majority of her life. At the completion of high school, she entered the workforce working in the hospitality and retail sector. After moving to England, Jane married and had five children. She trained as a tutor for children with special needs and gained employment working one-to-one with students. As a result of working with special needs children, her ability to effectively advocate on behalf of both the student and parents, led to her securing the position of Parent Support Advisor for the schools in which she worked. It was during her time in this position that Jane identified a need for parents to be able to access one-on-one parenting courses. In partnership with two colleagues, Jane took a year off work and set to work on designing and developing a parenting program. The program has been very successful and it has since been adopted by schools throughout the United Kingdom. Besides operating her program, Jane’s successful trek to the South Pole with a team of women who set out to complete the explorer Shackleton’s unfinished journey, has resulted in her being a much sought-after motivational speaker. Jane is also a street pastor helping people in her local community to overcome social, emotional and economic challenges in the lives.

6.3.4 Julie

Julie has been in paid employment all throughout her adult life. Beginning with her first part-time job at a bakery when she was still in school, Julie has worked in a variety of sectors including banking, health, education, tourism and the oil and gas industry. At the end of Year 12, Julie began work in the banking industry where she was trained in administrative duties. After twelve months of working Julie she was looking for a new challenge and applied to the school of nursing to train as a registered nurse. She was duly accepted into a large Catholic training hospital and began her three-year course the following month. She
believed that that being raised and educated in the Catholic community was a significant factor in securing her the position in the school.

At the completion of her training, Julie found employment as a theatre nurse at a smaller hospital. This new role suited her, as surgical procedures were performed during the week leaving the weekends free to play sport. Julie enjoyed her work in theatre but an incident in the operating room changed the course of her career. She explained that she had attended a caesarean section in the operating theatre in which she found the atmosphere to be much more positive and patient centred compared to her experience in general surgery which had a strict hierarchy which was predominantly focussed on the requirements of the doctor. It was during this event that she decided to pursue a career in midwifery. Julie approached the hospital where she had completed her initial training and enquired about a position in the next School of Midwifery. She was told that she would have to work as a registered nurse for a year before she could apply for a place but Julie felt that she was being treated unfairly, as other young who had already been accepted in to the course had graduated with Julie some six months previous. Refusing to accept the hospital’s decision she continued to pursue a place in the programme. She explained:

I guess it’s that competitive thing, because the girls in my class that stayed on at the hospital, they got in immediately for midwifery.

Three of them got in, they hadn’t had to wait a year. Anyway, I was just working casually there and I kept on going down [to the nuns] and asking. Then somebody dropped out on the Friday and I immediately went and I said, ‘I can start on Monday.’ So they let me
join their midwifery school. Well I thought, they [young women] got in and I wanted to do it, so I pushed my way into that.

Julie found the course fascinating and was top of class that year. Four years of nursing training however, had taken its toll and Julie decided that she needed a change of scenery. In a complete career change, she successfully applied for a position as a crew member on a tourist boat in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, a job that entailed a variety of jobs from cleaning cabins to crocodile spotting. When the tourist season had finished, having enjoyed the lifestyle of the north, Julie took up a position as a remote area nurse in the Broome region. During the next few years she worked as a nurse in regional towns, Aboriginal communities and in mining communities. In the early 1990s a position for a nurse in the oil and gas industry became available and Julie moved to a town in the Pilbara region of Western Australia to take up the job. It was in this environment that Julie became interested in the occupational health and safety aspect of the industry. Inspired by her work colleagues and a genuine interest in the prevention of workplace injuries, Julie began a tertiary degree in occupational health and safety. At the end of the construction of the gas plant where she worked, Julie decided to return to the city and to reassess her work options.

In the late 1990s, Julie, now a trained yoga instructor, opened a health centre which ran yoga classes and provided massage, beauty and alternative health therapies. Once the business was established and a manager hired to run the day-to-day operations, Julie, who had been working as a casual fly-in fly-out nurse around the state, established her own nursing agency that provided nurses for the mine sites in the north of the state. With both businesses, up and running Julie decided to quit her own nursing job and enrolled to do a Master’s degree in occupational health and safety. It was also around this time that she became a mother and took an extended break from paid employment. When her daughter was
a year old, Julie’s partner was offered a position in the Solomon Islands and the family settled into island life and Julie was able to complete her degree in during this period. On her return to Australia, Julie and her partner were posted to Kalgoorlie where Julie worked part-time for the local obstetrician as a nurse and midwife. On her return to Perth five years later, she chose not to work in paid employment but to involve herself in local community issues. As a result of her interests, she stood for election in the local shire council and was duly elected. Throughout her time, on council, Julie took up a casual position in the local medical centre, worked as a TAFE tutor in a regional centre and is currently working as a casual university lecturer. At the time of writing this, Julie has decided against a further term as a Shire Councillor to devote her time to completing her PhD.

6.3.5 Ruby

Having obtained a nursing bursary, Ruby began her training two months after completing high school. At the completion of her degree, she continued working at the same hospital until she left the city to start life in a small country town to which her teacher husband had been posted. With two small children and no nursing opportunities in town, Ruby decided to be a full-time mother and to work within the community in a voluntary capacity. When her husband died unexpectedly, Ruby returned to Perth and secured employment at a local medical centre, working school hours in order to look after her children. She worked at the clinic for a few years, but after one of her sons began to experience some mental health problems she chose to give up her paid employment in order to support her son throughout his high school years. Ruby’s dream, however, was to work in child health and in pursuit of this, she completed her Community Child Health diploma at University. With her diploma in hand, she found her dream job working at a local child and parent clinic in Perth. Ruby enjoyed her work immensely and as she worked school hours she was able to combine her professional and home life successfully.
I had the most fantastic job, and a manager who I loved to bits. I loved my work. I loved the families. Going to work was actually – yep, we all have crappy days- but most of the time it was great!

Recently, Ruby’s working life has taken off in another direction. Ruby is a talented and creative seamstress who has, over the years, made baby’s clothes and accessories for friends and family. She has decided to combine this hobby with her knowledge of child health and has started her own business working from home. She explained;

So, I'm getting my little business going. What I'm trying to do is make things for babies and children that will enhance their development a little bit, and I'm bringing it back to home-made stuff and cotton. I stopped work in January, and I've never been busier.

6.3.6 Rebecca

Working has always been a part of Rebecca’s life. Having grown up on an orchard it was expected that she would help during the harvest and with the general jobs that needed to be done. Her first paid employment was in a coffee shop, a job which she began when she went to the city for school. She enjoyed her time there and made good friends with the owner and her fellow workers. Having been awarded a nursing bursary, at the end of Year 12 commenced her nursing training at a public hospital in WA. She describes her time there;

I loved it. I loved training, I loved living in, I loved it all. The main part of nursing that I really loved was the family. My whole school was from the country and it was like a big family. The orderlies, the
cleaners, the nurses the doctors well not all the doctors, and I miss it so much in the job I do now.

She explained how she loved the family atmosphere of the hospital. Everyone attached to nursing school had grown up in the country and everyone from the cleaners to the doctors were all very friendly and according to Rebecca, a joy to work with.

She completed her training but after working in the hospital environment for a few years the stress of working in an environment of sickness and trauma began to have a negative effect on her.

I got tired of watching people die, I got tired of not being able to impact things and I got seriously depressed and anxious and I went to the medical model and found no help at all.

Rebecca sought help from for her anxiety via the traditional mental health areas such as counselling but to no avail. A decision to seek help from transactional psychologist was however, a turning point in Rebecca’s life and she began to successfully work through her issues. This type of counselling helped Rebecca heal and she found the confidence she needed to make changes in her career. So, impressed with the counselling that she had received, Rebecca embraced transactional analysis and decided to enter the field herself. She embarked upon a course of study and training in the field of psychoanalysis and as a result she now runs her own counselling practice.

6.3.7 Mary

Mary has been in paid employment for all her working life. From school she went straight to university and after she graduated was employed as a Public Servant in the
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). She worked in this department for most of her working life but throughout her career she was seconded to other government departments. Placements in the Departments of Indigenous Affairs, The Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Defence, have provided Mary with an excellent understanding of the processes of the Australian bureaucratic system and her skills and knowledge are well recognised. Although an experienced and well-regarded worker, Mary has deliberately chosen to remain a senior public servant in the ranks of middle management. Having been offered a promotion on a few occasions, Mary had declined the opportunity as she has wanted to maintain a good work/life balance.

In 2016 Mary took a redundancy from work, knowing that she would be able secure temporary contracts in the public service at later date if necessary. In 2017, she was offered a casual contract back at the ABS and is enjoying her job at present.

6.3.8 May

May has worked in paid employment for most of her working life. After graduating as a primary school teacher, she found a teaching position at a Catholic school in the suburb where she lives.

May soon settled into her role as a primary school teacher and loved her job. She took leave when she had children but returned to the work place in a part-time capacity when her first marriage ended. While it was an exhausting time, May recalls that she would not have been able to return to the workforce had it not been for her parent who would help look after the children and complete the domestic chores as well as cooking an evening meal on the days she worked.

May approached her teaching career with enthusiasm and a commitment to excellence. Her skills and knowledge of education and her teaching practices in the classroom and a Master’s degree in education resulted in May achieving the status of Senior
Teacher. In 2016, May was awarded the 'Benchmark Trophy' an award in which the Principal recognises an employee who embodies the core purpose of the college at which she works.

May reflected;

I had no idea that I had won the award and was completely shocked but honoured. I was also very humbled by the speech my Principal gave.

May continues to teach at her local Catholic school and is a respected member of both the school and parish community.

6.4 Discussion

All the participants in this study have successful, rewarding, varied careers and they continue to participate in paid employment. The above vignettes of the participants working lives serve to illustrate that throughout their lives they have demonstrated a strong work ethic and have been risk takers in their careers. They have built on their credentials and qualifications and are confident in their areas of expertise and are rightly proud of their accomplishments.

Parental influence has not significantly influenced the career choices of most of the participants. While parents instilled the value of a good education in order to procure a good job, most of the participants made conscious choices about the work they would enter into. At the beginning of their working lives most of the participants sought areas of employment which appealed to them. Rebecca was the exception to this and trained as a nurse because she felt obligated to complete the conditions of her government bursary, but later entered into a field that she was passionate about.
Having started their professional careers in predominantly tradition female areas they have used the skills and knowledge acquired within their professions to enhance both their careers and their qualifications. The networks accessed within their various jobs has provided them with the opportunity to access bridging capital (Claridge, 2018, Pelling, & High, 2005). This has enabled them to enter in to a different habitus (Crul, Schneider, Keskiner, & Lelie, 2017) which in turn has led to more networks in their professional lives. The participants have used those networks to further their careers.

All the participants have been in paid employment throughout their working lives. Beginning with a Year 12 education all the participants were able to access employment immediately after their formal schooling and have been able to access opportunities to enhance and further their professional lives. This is in stark contrast to their mothers opportunities. With limited education, and an expectation that they would give up work after marriage and children, the mothers were limited in their employment options but they were all hard workers and appear to have instilled a strong work ethic in their daughters.

6.5 Sporting Lives

The involvement in sporting clubs and activities of the participants was an experience that all the participants shared at some time during their lives. While most of the participants had played some type of sport at school, Julie, Mary, Layla and Twinney explained that being involved in sport had been a highly significant and important element in their lives. Their involvement in a sporting team and club, had in their opinion, provided them with social and personal skills that were transferable to other parts of their lives. It also provided them with opportunities to access networks in which they could form links with both individuals and the wider community.

For Julie and Mary, participating in sport was central to their development as people. Both participants were gifted athletes with Mary representing Australia in the World
Volleyball Championships and Julie representing the state of Western Australia in the Australian Softball championships. Both participants explained that playing sport at a very high level provided them with both the confidence and skills which they were able to transfer to other parts of their lives. Of her sporting experiences, Julie explained:

Can I just say before we move on, I think that sport had a huge impact, I think that [um] being physically capable of doing anything I chose to do, like if I take up a new sport like if I went skiing or anything physical I could do it. I think that is a big self-esteem thing and I think being competitive and having sport as an outlet was a really useful thing.

Sport has been a constant in Julie’s life. Her love of sport was ignited when her mother enrolled her in the local netball team when she was about eight years old and it has not waned over the years. It has provided her with a strong sense of self, fitness and social connections.

Having lived in variety of country towns throughout Western Australia, Julie knew that wherever she went, her ability to play any sport would enable her to meet new people, make new networks and generally fit into her new surroundings. She continues to play sport at a competitive level and is a regular competitor at the World’s Master’s Games.

Mary, who was introduced to sport by her parents at age 10 explains the myriad of ways in which sport has impacted upon her experiences;

I think sport has helped in many ways – teamwork, towards a common goal, dealing with disappointment (losing) and showing
restraint. For example, how you handle other players behaving badly, bad umpiring decisions or unreasonable rulings from sporting associations. I guess I would say I am confident. I got it in the sporting environment because it's a certain skill, an understanding that you know you’re good at it and you’re there for a purpose.

Mary no longer plays sport at a competitive level but she continues to keep fit through physical exercise with a group of friends. She is heavily involved with her children’s sporting teams and activities, and the sporting culture remains an important part of her life. She credits her understanding and experience in the elite sporting arena of providing her with the necessary skills and knowledge of negotiating the sporting environment. She reflected on her involvement on her children’s sporting activities:

Both my sons play various sports, I certainly encouraged them, and they are happy to still be in it. I understand how difficult it can be at times dealing with associations. Some sports admin people can be very difficult to deal with; they become insular and focussed on rules rather than taking a step back as to why they are there (i.e. to encourage/facilitate participation in sport!). I think my sporting background has made it easier for my sons to also participate in sport. I have a realistic view about how sports operate, e.g. it is never perfect and there are some illogical rules. I also discuss with them not to abuse umpires (even when they’re blatantly wrong!).

Mary is also a firm believer in the positive benefits of being involved in sport either has a player or a parent.
Besides having a sense of ‘community’, you can make life-long friends and travel. It is also very social (for the children playing and the parents on the sideline). Going for a drink/meal after training or a game is very common. Sport can give people an interest, and for school-aged children keep them occupied (and hopefully too busy to get into trouble).

Layla has been an active netball competitor throughout her life. Up until she injured her knee a couple of years ago and was unable to continue playing, Layla had been an active member of the local netball team. While the game itself provided her with an opportunity to exercise and to compete, she was also able to forge relationships with other women and to build new social networks within the community. The netball team, of which she had been a member for some thirty years, was one of the most important networks in Layla’s life. As a young newly-wed, Layla had moved to a newly built northern suburbs of Perth and being geographically isolated from her extended family, it was necessary for her to create new relationships and networks in the area. The opportunity of joining a sporting team made up of women who had children at the local playgroup allowed Layla to make lasting relationships that have shaped her life profoundly.

I think when I moved into the northern suburbs and I met the netty [netball] girls they became my sisters and they became the aunties of my children. We were all quite isolated and like my mother had done, I desperately created my own family around me and my own sisters around me. We were all in a similar situation and yeh… we met in
our mother’s club and essentially we are still there in our heads even though we are now grandmothers.

The community and social networks that Layla became a part of, very much involved her children. Both she and her daughters became heavily involved in netball and they in turn made valuable social networks. Now adults, they remain involved in the netball community and Layla has taken on the responsibility of looking after her grandchildren to enable her daughters time to play and umpire.

Twinney was also involved in netball when she moved to the North West of Western Australia, isolated area some two thousand kilometres from the capital city of Perth. Moving to a new town where she knew few people, netball provided her with the opportunity to meet people and make links into the community.

Ruby was also an enthusiastic netballer and played for the local team throughout her primary and secondary years. She has also been a member of her local gym for many years. While being a part of a netball team provided Ruby with the opportunity to play competitive sport and to socialise with other girls, her motivation to be a regular gym goer was a commitment she made as a teenager, Ruby explains;

I played netball at primary school and high school. As soon as I could drive, I went to the gym, because I realised early on that the feel-good feeling from exercise was good, and I didn't want to be like Mum who was in her 40s, with the crimpolene dresses and a girdle thing on.
Sport did not feature in the conversations with Jane and while Rebecca did not talk of being involved with sport herself she is a supportive grandmother on the sidelines of her grand-children’s sporting events.

The accumulation of Social Capital within the sporting associations in which the women participated provided a fertile ground for bridging social capital. Belonging to these groups, provided positive social capital which is in line with the studies of Tonts (2005), Putnam (2000) and Zakus et al., (2009).

Seven out of the eight participants had played, or continue to play sport at club, state and national levels. The relationships that were accessed through these networks, provided the participants with important social contact during their early days as mothers, wives and young women. The emotional and practical support they gained from belonging and interacting with other team members of the group was instrumental in many of the participants being helped in their personal and professional lives. Sport also provided a forum in which the participants were able to build their confidence in themselves and for some women who excelled in their chosen sports, it provided experiences at playing sport at a state and national level. The social capital acquired through sport has been passed on to their children, with most of the participants reporting some involvement of their children in organised sport.

For Mary, Julie and Layla, the networks and relationships accessed within their sporting teams and clubs have been a core feature in both the development of their personal identity and in their acquisition of social capital. The knowledge they have gained about how the sporting systems and processes work has been re-invested into their children’s understanding of the sporting environment and the intergenerational transmission of social capital is being passed on to their children.
Chapter 7 Family Relationships and networks

7.0 Introduction

An important theme that emerged from the data was the many significant family relationships to which the participants belong. In this chapter I present data on four significant familial relationships: siblings, extended family, partners and children. It excludes the relationship with the participants’ parents which have been presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

7.1 Siblings

Sibling relationships help form one’s ‘identity and their sense of self in relation to others’ (Davies 2015 p. 679). The relationships between siblings, whether positive or negative, significantly influence the emotional and behavioural development of the other sibling, particularly during childhood. These relationships are also important in the child’s social-cognitive development (Milevsky, 2016).

Between them the eight participants have 25 siblings, with each of the participants having three or more siblings. From the vantage point of middle age, the participants reported that they enjoyed good relationships with most of their siblings, but the closeness of their relationships varied between siblings of the same family.

Twinney reported that she has a good relationship with her siblings now, although this was not always the case. Being the eldest child of five children, she was given a great deal of responsibility for the care of her younger siblings and did not enjoy being in this role at all. She recalled that as a teenager she made the decision to never have children because she had simply had enough of looking after her brothers and sisters. She did not keep to this promise and she has two children.

May has fond memories of growing up with her siblings. She recalled that she enjoyed a good relationship with all of them and puts that down to the fact that she was the youngest.
May explained that there was a large gap between the fifth and the sixth child and because of this gap, she considers that she had a very different upbringing from her sister and brothers, particularly her sister who was treated differently by her parents as May explained;

You know I was more involved with my brothers and sister growing up but Yeh, I am the baby, and mum was a bit more relaxed with me than my sister. She was just ultra-strict with her and she left [home] really early. She left at 16 because of the strictness. Mum was quite strict on that front [boyfriends] but she was lot more lenient on me than on my sister.

The large thirteen-year age gap between the sisters meant that growing up, the two did not share a close bond. As they have grown older and have shared similar experiences of motherhood, and caring for their elderly parents, they have come to share a much closer relationship are in regular contact with each other.

Family life has always been central in May’s life and her sibling connections have been an important in both her identity and her sense of belonging and sense of place. Although she did not focus too heavily on her siblings during the interview it was clear that her place in the family and her sibling relationships were significant in the construction of her sense of identity.

Julie has three siblings and while she enjoys a close relationship with them now, she makes few references to them as she tells me about her life growing up. She does credit one of her sisters as being instrumental in her decision to take up nursing, a career that has led multiple opportunities for her.
My sister kept saying to me about nursing and so I thought, “Oh yeah alright,” so I went for the interview and the nun said to me, Well you haven’t done very well in the, the only one I did well in was human biology? But they, took me because my sister was a good student, because I’d gone to a catholic school and I was familiar with nuns I suppose and because I had done well in human biol [sic] [biology]

Julie is in regular contact with her siblings and she enjoys her role as aunty and great aunty to her nieces and nephews.

Jane has two siblings, a sister who lives in Australia and brother who is deceased. She has a close relationship with her sister and they are in regular contact despite living on separate continents. Although Jane had remained in contact with her brother the relationship had not been a close one and she considers this to be a result of their separation from each other when they were young. Like the sisters, her brother too had been placed into the children’s home with but he had been sent to the toddler’s section of the orphanage. Not long after they had entered the orphanage, Jane had seen her brother crying and tried to comfort him, but a nun slapped her around the face until Jane’s nose bled and she had then told her to leave him alone. Jane reported this to her grandmother who promptly took her brother out of the orphanage and took on the responsibility of raising him. Jane’s grandmother would also take the girls out of the orphanage for the occasional weekend and these visits helped maintain the sibling connection during the years that Jane and her sister were in the home. Due to the prolonged periods of separation between the sisters and their brother, the relationship was not as close as it could have been but all three siblings remained in communication, albeit sporadically with their brother, until his death in early 2018.
Mary has four siblings, two sisters and two brothers. It appears that she is closest to one sister in particular who lives nearby. Her bond with this sister seems to have been forged on the volleyball court when the two used to play together competitively but she does have a good relationship with the others. Mary’s parent’s coastal holiday home provides an opportunity for all the siblings to gather for holidays, so an ongoing relationship with each other has continued. The regular contact and relationships that Mary enjoys with her siblings has provided social and emotional support for both her and her sons.

Rebecca mentions her siblings throughout her conversations remembering how, after her father died, she and her siblings took on the role mothering her mother. They became the responsible adults assuming household and parenting responsibilities and as a result, they became a tight-knit group. This changed when her eldest sister went to the city for her high-school education and made a life for herself there. With just her brother and herself at home the two became very close and they remain best of friends. Although they live in different states they remain in regular contact. Of her relationship with her brother, Rebecca reflected;

My brother was always supportive of me, we were absolutely best mates, I’m blessed with my brother. We stuck together after my dad died.

Of her sister she explained that they have a strained relationship. She stated;

Look umm we love each other, if there’s anything I need if I’m sick I know that she’ll be there. I say my brother’s my best friend but I wouldn’t say that about my sister. I have always loved my sister and I
don’t doubt that we would be there for each other but I’m not mates
(with her) like I am like my brother.

Rebecca says that her sister had a difficult upbringing but it hasn’t been until recently that she found this out. Like Rebecca, her sister has also suffered intergenerational trauma but has only just begun to deal with the effects it has had on her life.

My sister suffered terribly, she was the only one in our family who was confident to do anything, according to my mum. My brother would try to do something and my mother would say, no you’ll break it. What I realise now is that my sister paid a heavy price and she’d get migraines. And now she is starting to say, now that there is a major crisis in her life, now she is starting to say how much she hated the farm, she hated dad, she would say she would get 99% and dad would say you should have got a hundred.

She does think that both herself and her siblings have been affected by their mother’s experiences. Her mother’s lack of a parental role-model and her ability to parent effectively and her abrogation of her adult responsibilities to her children the death of her husband and resulted in strained and challenging.

Ruby shares a close relationship with her two brothers. After the death of her first husband, her brothers stepped in to help her to get back on her feet and support her with her children. It is clear that she thinks highly of them both and tells me that are bright energetic men who her mother would be proud of and who are loved by her sons.
Layla has three siblings and enjoys a good relationship with all of them but is particularly close to her sister. Being the eldest she recalls the pressure of having to be responsible for her younger siblings while they were growing up and while they went their separate ways in their teenage years they are all back in the one city now and enjoy regular contact with each other. Layla credits her siblings with helping keep the family together in the years after her parents had divorced. She had become estranged from her family but her siblings kept the lines of communication open.

I didn’t know what a family was. I think that it was only that my sisters kept in touch with me that changed my life. If they had not stayed in touch with me and been the lynch pin I would probably have been over the other side of Australia, I probably would have left Perth and never seen them again.

For most of the participants, their siblings have been a source of strength at different times throughout their lives. They value their roles as sisters and aunties and are part of an extended family network to which they bring a wealth of resources.

7.1.1 Grandparents

Some of participants spoke of the loss they felt at not having had an extended family while growing up. Only three of the participants recalled meeting their paternal grandparents and none had the possibility of meeting their maternal grandparents.

Mary has strong memories of her paternal grandparents and her great grandparents and recalls visiting them in Sydney. Her grandfather was one of eight children and she remembers meeting many of his siblings growing up. She recalled her visits:
We used to go to Sydney a lot. They [grandparents] lived in a flat in Sydney, and I've got very strong memories of it. We'd go there and we'd all sleep on the floor of the flat. I think Grandpa was one eleven.

Jane also interacted with her paternal grandmother who she explained was the person responsible for keeping her fractured family connected over the years. Twinney was also able to recount a couple of meetings with her grandparents but her grandfather was often away working and she described her grandmother as lovely but a very hard woman whom she was never close to.

Julie lamented the fact that she had no grandparents or relatives while growing up. Her father had no family in the State and the closest she had to an extended family were the ‘Aunties’ from the Orphanage.

Yeh, I would have loved to have had an extended family. I’ll tell you how it impacted on me, I gravitate towards granny types. I moved toward very stable households to befriend. I would have loved to have had a granny.

Ruby had no extended family while she was growing up. She doesn’t talk about ever meeting her grandmother but she does recall her father talking about is childhood and like her mothers’ life, it had been traumatic and he had suffered abuse at the hands of his mother’s partner. As a result she never met her father’s family.

In the past few years, Ruby has located members of her mother’s family in Ireland. She described meeting them in Ireland.
It was just completely overwhelming to go there [Ireland]. After our long flight, they’re all at the airport. They’d all driven from the centre of Ireland to meet us at the airport, and one of the cousins had a welcome home party in the local pub and locked the doors at 12:00 and we partied all night. They’d just been amazing.

In searching her mother’s story, she has also found that her grandmother and mother were both seamstresses as she is.

Layla felt that she had missed out on something special by not having an extended family. Her father’s family were not in their lives and she describes her feelings about the absences of relatives.

We had no grandparents and I felt very isolated. I felt I particularly would have liked to have had a grandmother ….. yeh I do I feel quite resentful. Well we were quite insular. I used to hang round with the Italians and they had aunties and grandparents and cousins in the playgrounds that protected them and look out for them. I should have been Italian!

7.1.2 The ‘Aunties’

An important part of the participant’s family in this study was the group collectively known as the Aunties. Throughout the study, this was the one topic that was discussed by all the of the participants. The ‘Aunties’ are not biological relatives of the participants in the study, but the participants who had been at the orphanage with their mothers. The ‘Aunties’
are/were, [many have died] mainly British Child Migrants, although some were Australian girls who had also been in the same orphanage.

I had a connection, albeit tenuous in some cases, as I had known some of the participants’ mothers as ‘Aunty’ and they in turn had recognised my mother as their ‘Aunty’. All eight participants had a group of women that they referred to as the ‘Aunties’ with six of them sharing the same group of ‘Aunties’. Ruby’s mother was at the same orphanage as six of the other women but Ruby’s ‘Aunties’ were made up of a different group of women to that of the others. Rebecca’s mother who had attended a different orphanage in Western Australia to the other seven participants also talked about the ‘Aunties’ and ‘Uncles’ of her childhood. Likewise, they had been in the orphanage with her mother.

While the title of ‘Auntie’ was bestowed upon these women, the role they played in the lives of the participants differed greatly to the participants’ perception of what the role of an aunty should be. Most of them said that while they remembered the ‘Aunties’ as fun and enjoyed their company, they were not close to them in a familial sense. Jane was the exception to this thought:

My happiest memories are from time spent with my Aunty Judy, who was also from the children’s home. She was married to my dad’s brother. She has been very warm, loving and supported us throughout, she was always very kind.

May also enjoyed a closer relationship to Aunties; ‘Barb’ and Robyn:

She was my favourite, she called a spade a spade, Yeah, Aunty Barb and Aunty Robyn, well I had a real soft spot for them. I don’t know
why, but maybe because I was the baby by a long shot and they always made a fuss of me.

Layla describes the Aunties thus;

I kind of get it now, that they were pseudo aunties but I think the ‘Aunties’ wanted the affection of my mother and of each other and not necessarily their children.

Of the ‘Aunties’ relationships Twinney explained;

Well I always called them my ‘Auntie’s and I never thought of them not being my ‘Aunties’, although they were probably separate in the fact that you know, it wasn’t like you’d expect them around on your birthday for dinner or something like that, not that type of aunty. But definitely had them all at my weddings, you know it was that special connection. I never thought of them being biological aunties, just ‘Aunties.’ And they were all very funny and they were always entertaining.

Ruby remembered the role of the Aunties:

All the ‘Aunties’ when we were growing up, they were always fun, you know? We'd have a get-together and they were always fun.
It is clear from the data that the ‘Aunties’ played an important role in the lives of the participants. Despite not being necessarily emotionally close to the women, what the ‘Aunties’ did appear to do was to provide to a supportive relationship and social network for the participants and their mother, to them all to draw upon.

The ‘Aunties’ played two roles. Firstly, they were the primary ‘family’ group of each of the participants’ mothers. These women had all grown up together and for most of them the only family that they had ever known.

I always knew them as ‘the girls’ but mum used to say they were her family because she had no family. (May, 2016).

Her friends in Perth – they're a very tight-knit group even if they don't see each other that often. They've got that bond that they're always going to have. Very supportive of each other. If anyone criticises one of them – they're very protective of each other because they went through that – it is like trauma, isn't it? (Twinney, 2016).

We would often have mum’s pseudo siblings, I called them, to stay if they were struggling.” Rebecca (2016).

The meetings between the ‘Aunties’ enabled them to reconnect and reaffirm their support networks. Importantly, through the exchange of knowledge with each other, the ‘Aunties’ were able gain valuable information and skills needed to negotiate family issues, schools, bureaucracy and relationships, all areas in which they had limited experience.
These gatherings of the ‘Aunties’ also provided the participants in the study with a larger network from which to access information and to form new relationships, specifically with ‘Aunties’ but also with their children. As children, the participants did not recognise their time with their ‘Aunties’ or with their ‘Auntie’s’ children as important or worthy of discussion in great detail but on reflection they understood the importance of the gatherings for their mothers. Only Layla mentioned the children of the ‘Aunties’

I think we were just thrown together. When the ‘Aunties’ went to see each other, we were just thrown outside and were expected to get along. I don’t think they particularly encouraged us to be close. I don’t remember being encouraged to have sleepovers or attend parties and give birthday presents and cards. Nothing like that it was just like meeting them but I felt no sense of affection towards them.

I asked Layla about the ‘Auntie’ network and whether she had considered them as an extended family. She explained:

If mum had still been alive and I had seen the ‘Aunties’ regularly, then they would have been interchangeable, but she was young when she died and they were still raising their own families. Had they been older I think we would have been closer to them. I think they were very helpful for her and they provided that extended family. They were our extended families that’s why we call them ‘Aunties’, even today, but we weren’t close.
Many of the ‘Aunties’ have passed away now but the few who remain are well aware of what the participants are doing. The orphanage ‘telegraph’ the communication the ‘Aunties’ have within the BCM community, keeps them informed and on the occasion of a milestone birthday or wedding or funeral the BCMs daughters and the ‘Aunties’ renew their ties.

7.2 Marriage and Relationships

The personal relationships of many of the participants have been challenging. Stories of domestic abuse, infidelity and criminal acts were shared by many of the participants. The stories were traumatic but all of the participants involved in a challenging relationship removed themselves from the situation and chose an alternative path to travel. That is not to say that the journey was easy, but the participants’ strength and resilience prevailed.

Six of the participants in the study have been married but only four remained married at the time of this study. Rebecca and Jane are married to their first husbands while May and Twinney and Ruby have remarried. Layla is divorced from her first husband and is in a long-term relationship. Julie and Mary have never been married but have long term partner relationships.

Rebecca

On the day I interviewed Rebecca, her husband had accompanied her to the interview. Recently retired, he had come along for the ride but had not joined us for the interview. She had first met her husband in high school and they have been married for over forty years. She mentioned that they had one short separation but did not elaborate further. She did not talk about her relationship with her husband but she did she explained that she found her relationship with her husband’s family was at times, quite challenging and strained for many years.
My husband’s mother was quite controlling and I struggled with that. Towards the end of her life, she lived ‘til she was 90, I really got to appreciate her. I grew to love her. I was there when she died.

Although she spent a good deal of time with her parents-in-law and the extended family, when the parents died in their late 80s and 90s, contact with the extended family ceased.

Jane met her husband through her church and they have been happily married for nearly thirty years. She does not provide any personal detail about him but his presence pervades conversations about her children and the extended family, and it is clear from this information that their relationship is a happy and supportive one.

Twinney has been married twice, her first marriage being annulled after she left her husband in the first year of marriage after suffering domestic violence. She stated:

I got married when I was 21 and I hadn’t been married very long and he actually hit me and the next time he hit me it was harder so I got out pretty quick. You would see the violence and then he was really sweet. Then I’d try and modify my behaviour and then it would escalate and I would get beaten up and I wouldn’t know what to do. If I was quiet, I would get beaten and he would do things like lock me out of the house.

Twinney remarried some years later and has been with her second husband for thirty years.

May has been married twice. She explained that in her first marriage she had been very young at the time and that the marriage lasted for thirteen years (see chapter 4). She
does not talk too much about her present husband during our interviews but says that they are both very supportive of each other.

Layla is more open about the topic of marriage in general but of her own marriage of 13 years, she simply stated that: “I married the wrong man”

When her husband left she concentrated on working and studying and bringing up her three children and she says that she would never marry again. She is however, not adverse to having a partner and is currently enjoying a close relationship.

Julie is happy to talk about the subject of marriage and relationships. At present, Julie is in a long-term relationship with her partner of fourteen years and neither of them feel the need to marry. She does not elaborate in any great detail about the relationship but does explain that throughout her life she has had many wonderful relationships as well as marriage proposals. It wasn’t until she met a man who was her intellectual equal that she felt comfortable to be in a long-term relationship.

Because I had an education I chose my intellectual equal. I knew the mechanic and the wildlife guy I went out with were all nice men, but I just didn’t feel balanced and I knew I would get bored with their mental stimulation. And so, I kind of gravitated towards smarter men and that has given me a better quality of life and gives my children a better opportunity to have parents that they can turn to help them with their homework and such.

Mary has never been married but has been in an on-going relationship with a man. She has two children to him but their relationship is a private arrangement that is fiercely guarded from the family and the children. She explained:
I ended up having an affair with a married man, someone at work. So yeah, I ended up having an affair with this guy, and he's actually the father of both of my children. It was a terrible shock, but in a way, once I got over the shock I thought that's pretty cool, because I was in my late 30s, 36 or 37, and I began to wonder whether I would have children. I wanted them, but I just thought I just can't see me meeting anyone.

7.3 Motherhood

The role of motherhood is one shared by all the participants in the study. They have twenty-five children between them, ranging in age from seven to thirty-five years. All the participants have embraced their role as mothers but as middle-aged women they view that particular role as part of their identity and not as their only identity.

Layla has three strong and capable daughters, two of whom are now mothers. Her first child was born when Layla was 28 and this was followed quickly by two more children in the space of three years. When her children were in primary school their parents divorced and Layla took on the sole responsibility of her girls. It was an exhausting and challenging role but they remain a tight-knit family who are supportive and caring of each other. Layla is now also a grandmother. With three grandsons to fuss over she relishes the opportunities she has to spend with them. While Layla’s family unit is one of the most important aspects of her life, her role of mother and grandmother does not wholly define her identity. It is just one of the many roles she has albeit, the most significant. She explained the importance of her role and how her mother’s early death impacted on how she approached motherhood.

I think because of the loss of my mother and husband [divorced], and
the fact that I didn't have any aunties or grandparents myself, I felt very alone bringing up my children and it made my role as a mother feel more important to me. I absolutely needed to be there for my children. I strongly believed that if anything happened to me, that is if I died young and left my children alone, that I should try and mitigate the loss for my children as best I could. I therefore deliberately taught my three daughters (and step daughter) to be more strongly dependant on each other than on me. I sent them out together without me to functions or shopping etc so they developed a bond and could act independently JUST IN CASE they lost me. In later years I worked very hard to buy investment properties and had high life insurance and superannuation so that the children would inherit something to give them a financial gain to somehow ensure that from the loss of me, there would be a compensation. I want to leave a positive legacy not only for them but for my grandchildren as well. All of this I believe has been in the back of my mind since I lost my mother and she died in poverty and not only left me but my siblings too with nothing. It’s like she almost didn't exist except in the memories she left me and my siblings.

Rebecca is also a very proud mother and grandmother. Rebecca has a son who is a tradesman and a daughter who is a consultant physician. She enjoys a good relationship with both her children and although her daughter works interstate they are in regular contact. Her son lives in Perth and is married with two children and Rebecca is a regular visitor to his house. She has embraced the role of grandmother and spends as much time as she can,
helping out with babysitting and with the picking up of children. She is proud to tell me that her granddaughter has just been accepted into an academic acceleration program.

Jane has five children and her role as mother is very much part of her identity.

My role as a mum is very important to me, I have learnt through my children, discovered who I am in so much as encouraging them to learn, grow and achieve. I’ve discovered what I am capable of. You want your children to be compassionate, have integrity, be honest, so you tend to check your own character as a mum to role model that to your children. I believe, whilst being a mum is incredibly hard, it’s more about what you gain from having children than what you have to give up. “To the world you are a mother, but to your family you are the world”

She explained that her parenting skills would never have been developed and honed without the help of her wonderful mother-in-law Rachel. Rachel who had raised seven children in a stable and loving environment helped Jane understand that parenting was more than just providing food and shelter. Jane had grown up with poor parental role models, and it was Rachel who helped her navigate parenthood. Jane explained:

Rachel showed qualities that I had not seen. I could see from the first moment I met them as a family, that they communicated lovingly with each other, were committed to the well-being of each other, it was then I began to ask her about parenting.
She taught me that in parenting from 0-2 years you nurture, 2-16 years you train and discipline, if you have all that in place you should become a mentor to your children as they grow into adulthood. She taught me to parent with the end in mind, to raise my children to become responsible, independent, adults with a sense of well-being.

With the guidance and lessons learned from Rachel and the experience of raising five children of her own, Jane used her knowledge and skills to develop a parenting program which she now delivers throughout the UK.

The role of mother is very much a part of May’s identity. With eight children under the one roof, May’s days are structured very much around the needs of her children. Apart from the normal logistics of caring for eight children, May also spends a great deal of time with extra curricula activities.

I am very 'hands-on' with all my kids. I have coached the netball team, the cricket team two years in a row. I have also attended most football games for the two boys, who are on the same team. Pretty busy running around after all the kids and working!!”

Julie is the mother of a teenage daughter. Having given birth at age 40, Julie was in a position to choose to give up paid employment for the first five years of her daughter’s life and to re-enter the paid workforce in a part-time capacity when her daughter was of school age. She and her partner are dedicated parents who are very much involved with their child’s school and sporting activities.
Mary has two sons whom she has chosen to raise on her own. She enjoys a close relationship with her boys and is closely involved with their school and sporting activities. She has the usual parenting challenges and on occasions is concerned that the boys do not have a father figure. She explained:

I've never lived with a man, so they're [sons] not used to having a man around on a daily basis. So, you know, I do worry about the effects of that, but unfortunately these days there are plenty of kids at school – not in my exact situation – but who don't have a dad. Sometimes I do feel guilty about them not having a father figure, but there are other males around.

Ruby has two adult sons. When the boys were just three and five years of age their father died and Ruby was left to raise the children on her own. She juggled the responsibilities of motherhood and work while the children were young but was able to share some of that responsibility when she married her second husband. Ruby and her sons have experienced some challenging issues which have been overcome with the support of each other and they remain close.

All of the participants were involved in a relationship during the time this study was conducted but none of the participants spoke about of their roles as wives or partners to a significant extent. They acknowledged their relationship status but it was clear that their partners were part of the women’s lives but they did not discuss them in terms of their own identity.

It is clear that the nuclear and extended families of the participants are significantly important in their lives. Five of the participants had experienced family trauma while
growing up and some of the participants experienced the breakdown of their own marriages, but these events have not stopped them from embracing their own family networks. It is clear that some of the participants would have liked to have had extended family when growing up but the absence of grandparents and ‘real aunties’ from their lives have not stopped them from stepping easily into the role of mother, grandmother and aunty.

Chapter 8 Analysis of Data

8.0 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss my first research question posed in this study ‘What are the experiences of women whose mothers were institutionalised in an Australian orphanage?’ and review my discussion on the common themes that were found in the participant’s narratives with a discussion of the social and historical context of the participant’s stories. Second, I present an analysis of the interview data in order to answer the second research question, ‘How did growing up with a mother who had been institutionalised in her childhood, impact on their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, education and identity?’ In this section, I provide an analysis of the impact of the participants’ mothers institutionalisation on their daughter’s social capital, identity and education.

In this study, I asked two research questions.

1. What are the experiences of women whose mothers was institutionalised in an Australian orphanage?

2. How did growing up with a mother who had been institutionalised in her childhood, impact on their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, education and identity?

To answer the questions, I used portraiture and narrative interviews to explore the narratives of eight participants whose mothers had been institutionalised under the BCM
scheme and placed into orphanages in Western Australia. Using these methods, I constructed, interpreted and analysed the participants stories looking for what was good and healthy in the participant’s stories (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis 1997).

All of the participants are strong, successful, well educated women, who have negotiated their lives with resilience and determination. They have become mothers and grandmothers, wives and aunties, workers and volunteers, sports women and friends. They have been educated and trained in a variety of skills and are experts in their chosen fields of employment. This study examines both the positive and negative experiences that have contributed to the women’s success and achievements.

8.1 Analysis of Data

The first research question inquired into the life experiences of the participants (Chapter 4-8). Each participants’ story was different and their experiences unique. The age of the participants ranged from 45 to 68 years, a time in their lives where theorists assert that one’s self-confidence and career satisfaction is high (Lachman, 2004). Their stories have been told to me from the wisdom of middle age, their experiences and the events in their lives having been reinterpreted and constructed through the lens of time and maturity.

8.2 Social and Historical Context.

Seven out of the eight participants are Baby Boomers, those children who were born into the prosperous economic times of the post WW2 years (Kendig, O’laughlin, Huessian & Cannon 2017). As the great Australian dream of a house in the suburbs became a reality, and the urban sprawl edged out from the cities, the participants in this study began their lives under the watchful care of their mothers who had, less than a decade or so earlier, left the confines of institutional life. The youngest participant, May, was born in the 1970s, also known collectively as GenX, into an era of social change and changing values (ABS, 2014). For her mother, the orphanage days had been 20 years in the past.
The 1960s and 1970s was also an era when women were being encouraged to further their education by accessing opportunities for post compulsory and tertiary education (Tully, 1999). These educational opportunities were just emerging into the mainstream at the time the participants were attending high school and like many other women of their generation they all completed post compulsory studies. Tertiary studies, although available to women at the time the participants left school, was still a sphere that was male dominated and the traditional female career in nursing, of which four of the participants entered, involved training in hospitals. Although six of the eight participants have tertiary degrees these were completed later in life and one is currently studying for her PhD.

These participants were also born into an era that saw rapid social change in Australia. By the time most of the participants were in their adolescence, the traditional roles of women were being questioned and re-evaluated, and these changing values led to some conflict between the participants and their mothers, particularly in regard to personal relationships with men. For the mothers who had been brought up without ever interacting with men until they left the orphanage, and having their values steeped in religious virtue, these changing attitudes must have been confronting. Like-wise, many of the daughters were conflicted by the internalised values of their upbringing and the values of their generation. Twinney’s decision to travel and live with a man out of wedlock went against the teachings and expectations of her parents. Layla, May and Twinney also chose to leave their first marriages which was against the religious and parental teachings they had grown up with.

In the decades that have followed their teenage years, the participants married, divorced, had children, developed careers and had taken on a variety of roles and responsibilities, all of which have contributed to their identities and sense of self. Their stories, roles and experiences continue to enrich their diverse and productive narratives. Layla continues to expand her business throughout Australia, and Jane’ has recently become
an advocate for former BCMs in the UK who are still fighting for compensation. Julie’s work in the community continues as does her academic research.

8.3 Institutional Impact

The second research question was to identify how the mother’s institutional incarceration impacted on their daughters. As would be expected, the maternal influence on daughters is significant, whether the mother has been institutionalised or not. The participant’s stories reflect the complex relationships that mothers and daughters experience but what makes these narratives unique is that the mothers had raised their daughters without ever having the role of mother or parent modelled in their own lives. Raised in austere conditions in total institutions (Geppert & Pastuh, 2017; Goffman, 1961) the experiences of the mothers inside the orphanages have had a direct effect on their daughter’s lives.

It is evident from the stories of participants in this study that although much of the mother’s institutional experiences were never spoken of, some of the trauma of this period, has been passed down to many of the participants. In their narratives, some of the participants spoke of their own anxiety and the mental health issues that they believed had their foundations in their mother’s incarceration. Others reflected on the decisions they made about relationships and parenting as a result of their mother’s behaviour and values. Others talked of the strained relationship they had with their mother while others were reluctant to explore their mother/daughter relationship.
8.4 Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma

In chapter 2, I examined literature on the intergenerational transmission of trauma (ITT) can be categorised into two areas, historical trauma and intergenerational trauma (Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014). In this section I present an analysis of the transmission of historical trauma and of intergenerational trauma in the narrative of both the daughters and of the BCM.

8.5 Historical Trauma

A significant finding in this study, that has not been reported elsewhere in the literature on BCMs is that there is limited evidence to suggest that historical trauma has occurred. The three elements necessary for historical trauma to be present (Mohatt et al., 2014) are not evident in the data. The first element, that trauma must be shared by a group of people, is present in the stories of the mothers and the narrative of the BCMs but the daughters, while experiencing traumatic events, did not share a collective trauma such as those described in the studies of Atkinson et al., (2010) de Mendelssohn, (2008); Elias et al., (2012) and Menzies, 2005). Also, significant, the second element of historical trauma that it must be experienced by multiple generations is not supported by the evidence in this study. However, the third element: affected groups may experience trauma related symptoms without having been involved in the trauma in the first instance, is only notionally supported in the story of Rebecca, who experienced the symptoms of being an orphan (Chapter 9 section 9.5).

In the studies of Atkinson, (2002) Atkinson, et al., (2010) Elias et al., (2012) McLeod and Thomson, (2009) and Menzies, (2005), historical trauma evidenced in Indigenous societies was anchored in the loss of culture, land, language and ceremonies. These key factors were not present in the study, although there were aspects of the mothers’ stories that reflected experiences similar to those who have experienced historical trauma. This was also
evidenced in my earlier study of a group BCMs who grew up in the same orphanage as seven of the mothers mentioned in this study (Parker, 2013).

The mothers had been taken from their place of birth and all but one of them had been separated from immediate family members. They had been removed from the familiarity of their orphanage and their school and had lost all connection to their former lives. This was clearly traumatic for the mothers but their religious ceremonies and language had been transferrable to their new country. On arrival in Australia, they had been sent to similar institutions where their religious practices continued and English was the language spoken. Importantly, they had been chosen by the authorities to go to Australia because they were white and of British stock, attributes that ensured them a future place in Australian society. Despite the lack of experience and usable social capital available to the mothers inside the institution and the challenges that faced them on release, they were able to benefit from being part of the dominant culture; and they were able to draw upon this to improve and reinforce their place in the community. This differs significantly from the circumstances of Aboriginal Australians who not only experienced historical trauma due to former generations being denied the right to practice their spirituality and culture but being unable to access networks to acquire usable social capital within the dominant culture (Atkinson, 2002)

Historical trauma is also handed down through the remembering of events by individuals and or communities (Muid, 2004). Collectively, the BCMs were a small community consisting of around 10 000 children who arrived over a 50-year period and were distributed across Australia. Up until the 1990s the BCMs had never been identified as a collective group and had never had a collective voice. Their trauma was not recorded or passed down collectively and it is only in the last three decades in Australia, that investigations into the plight of the BCMs have been publicly shared (Australian Government, 2001; Australian Government, 2004). The fifty years of silence that preceded
those inquiries appears to have protected the children of the BCMs from historical trauma.
The stories of the daughters in this study do not indicate a shared group trauma.

In comparison with the generations of Indigenous peoples or the children of genocide survivors who have experienced historical trauma (Danieli, 1981; Dass-Brailsford, 2007; deMendelsshon 2008; Lev–Wiesel 2007), the participants in the study, as a collective group of second generation BCMs, do not share the same ‘collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity or affiliation—ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation’ (Evans-Campbell, 2008 p. 320) and could not be considered as having intergenerational historical trauma. The participants in this study were provided with opportunities to access a range of networks and to acquire on a macro, meso and micro level, (Bourdieu, 1986; Ciabattari 1988; Coleman, 1990; Dika & Singh, 2002; Dika & Singh, 2004) providing them with the social capital to move confidently through society.

8.6 Intergenerational Trauma.

The narratives of the participants in the study suggest that there has been an intergenerational transmission of trauma (ITT). ITT is defined as the “specific experience of trauma across familial generations but does not necessarily imply a shared group trauma.” (Mohatt et al., 2014 p.128.). All of the participants in the study reported that they experienced some personal trauma or distress as a direct result of their mothers’ institutional experiences.

The literature on BCMs provides evidence that the agencies into which their care had been entrusted were responsible for a variety of processes and systems that resulted in many former BCMs experiencing physical, emotional and sexual abuse (Child Migrant Trust, 2017; Humphreys, 1994). The participants all considered that their mothers had suffered some level of trauma due their institutionalisation but as it was never openly discussed, and to what degree that trauma was experienced can never be known. The stories of the mothers and the glimpses of life in the orphanage that they did share with their daughters, suggest that for
most of them the separation from their country and in most cases their immediate and extended family and their time in care was traumatic.

For example, May’s mother, was grateful to the nuns for saving her from a life on the streets but traumatised on being separated from her brother, and Jane’s mother struggled with her childhood experiences throughout her life. It was experiences such as these, together with the lasting emotional impact of institutionalisation that resulted in the intergenerational transmission of trauma on the daughters.

When trauma survivors do not talk about their experiences, the feelings and experiences that they have endured are sometimes transferred to the children subconsciously and consciously (Atkinson et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2001).

The narratives of the participants suggest that their mother’s trauma had been passed down to their daughters. Conversations about traumatic experiences were never discussed between mother and daughter but the participants have attributed some of their traumatic experiences and challenges to their mother’s institutionalisation. Rebecca, for example, claimed the legacy of her mother’s institutional experience and her refusal to see her time in care as a negative experience resulted in Rebecca feeling as though she had been the orphan.

This experience reflects the findings in Danieli (1981) and Weiss and Weiss (2000) which found that some children carry the trauma of their parents. The other participants did not provide specific evidence of how their mothers traumatic experiences directly affected them but they identified various factors in their own lives that could be traced back to their mother’s institutionalisation. Jane’s placement into the orphanage, had been a direct result of her mother’s mental health which had been severely compromised during her time in care. Layla’s observation that her mother was unable to break away from the scrutiny of the Catholic church, which resulted in her mother’s substance misuse, is also rooted in her orphanage experience and directly affected the way Layla coped with the challenges in her
own life and the parenting strategies she adopted. The religious devotion of May’s mother also impacted on the way she approached her early relationships and Mary spoke of her mother’s hesitancy to be openly affectionate and associated this with her institutional experiences.

All the participants experienced traumatic events in their lives and their mother’s institutionalisation can be directly and indirectly linked to some of those events but the participants’ narratives also suggested that they had been protected from much of their mother’s experiences. Their mother’s inability to share their stories as a collective or as individuals may have inadvertently helped stem the transmission of trauma. Growing up, none of the participants had known that their mothers had been a part of the British Child Migrant Scheme or what it meant to be an orphan. It wasn’t until they were in their thirties that they came to fully understand why their mothers had been sent to Australia but by this time they were women with careers and families of their own and were able to comprehend the stories through an adult lens. It is unknown how the sharing of childhood trauma by the mothers with their daughters may have impacted their lives, but the participants appear to have been largely protected from the emotional attachment and identity issues (Rosenthal, 2011) that have been associated with many children of survivors of trauma who had remained silent about their experiences.

The daughters may have also been protected from ITT because most of their mothers had experienced some type of family connection in their early childhood. Many survivors of the Holocaust had been able to protect their daughters from their own trauma because they had experienced a few years in a normal family environment before being imprisoned. This had provided them with strategies to help them cope with adapting to the normality of family life and motherhood after the war and they were able to develop familial and trusting relationship (Sagi-Schwartz et al., 2003). Similarly, seven of the mothers in this study
although labelled as orphans, had been part of a family before being sent to Australia. The mothers of Julie, Layla, Twinney, May, Mary and Ruby, had either known their parents, or siblings or had been in the UK orphanages with them. Jane’s mother had arrived in Australia with two of her siblings. This early experience and attachment with family members may have provided the mothers with the ability to protect their daughters from much of their own trauma, as they too had known the power and importance of being looked after, loved and protected.

Another contributing factor in the lack of traumatic memories being passed down to the daughters was the role the ‘Aunties’ played in the lives of the participants. Their involvement can be likened to the collective memory of the Holocaust survivors that protected the next generation as they looked together to the future having understood the trauma of the past (Sagi-Schwartz et al., 2003). Similarly, the ‘Aunties’ collectively understood the orphanage experience but supported each other as they looked to their own futures.

The narratives of the many British Child Migrants are now in the public domain and although many tragic stories and events have been documented by the BCMs, their collective narrative has provided the participants in this study with further insight into their mother’s life and this has had a positive impact on some of the participants.

As Twinney explained:

I think when I got older… I was more aware that she [mother] was an orphan and since the whole Child Migrant thing has come out, I think they’ve all made quite successful lives in a lot of ways. In their own way they have all been… well they were all very resilient women and
I learnt from mum, you just picked yourself up and kept going, moving forward kind of thing.

I didn't get to go to it, [the apology to the child migrants] but my sister did and she said it was such an eye-opener, they were very emotional. I didn't know they were allocated a number. (Mary)

I visited the nuns in Ireland and that told me they remembered my mother because she was very bright red head. (Ruby)

The heightened demand for more transparent public access to institutional records of BCMs has allowed Ruby to find record of her mother’s life and as a result, she has connected with cousins and other family members in Ireland. Finding out about the day-to-day life in the orphanage has helped Layla and Mary understand their mothers from a more informed position and Jane’s understanding of her mother’s journey had helped her overcome some of her own challenges.

I always though why didn’t the family [her mother’s] keep their own relatives. Why would they send their own family away?

I thought it was something peculiar to our family. I think when Margaret Humphreys started making waves I heard people refer to the taking of children about child migrants. I guess it [Child migrant scheme] was something that I gradually became aware of. (Layla)
8.7 Positive legacy

All participants experienced some negative impacts of their mother’s institutionalisation but their mothers were also able to transmit the more positive aspects of their experiences. The skills that helped them survive in the orphanage; resilience, hard work, hope and laughter were all reflected in their daughter stories.

8.8 Impact on Acquisition of Social Capital

![Diagram showing the impact on acquisition of social capital](image)

*Figure 16. Access to Social Capital of Mother and Daughters.*

One of the aims of this study was to establish the degree of impact of their mother’s institutionalisation on the daughter’s acquisition of social capital. In this section, I examined the social capital acquired by the participants from a variety of networks and relationships. First, I examined the social capital transmitted from within the family and second, I examined the social capital acquired through non-familial networks.

The participants in this study belong to a unique group. Their mothers had been institutionalised for the first 16 years of their lives in orphanages in the UK and Australia. During this time, they had minimal opportunity to experience a parent/child relationship or traditional family relationships. They had no access to networks outside the orphanages and few opportunities to socialise with people in the wider community and experience the natural transmission of SC suggested by Weiss (2012) from parent to child was absent from their
lives. Acquisition and accumulation of SC through the normal structures of school, sport, and familial networks, were unavailable to mothers inside the orphanage. Their interactions were with the same people all day every day, hierarchies and behaviour were reinforced through symbolic interactions that reinforced the norms and sanctions of the institution (Charon, 2007; Ritzer, 2007). It cannot be known to what extent the mothers were affected by their isolation in the confines of the institution, but what is known, is that the social capital they had gained was limited and left them unprepared for many of the processes and systems outside the home. Once free of the orphanage and engaged in employment, the years between leaving and marrying provided the mothers with opportunities to form new relationships and networks which necessarily added to both their cultural and social capital.

8.9 Transmission of Social Capital

There is limited evidence to suggest that the lack of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Rainie & Wellman 2012) of the mothers during their institutionalisation impacted negatively on the daughters. The inadequate and narrow social networks experienced by the mothers were not replicated in the daughter’s lives as they were provided with access to a variety of familial and non-familial networks.

8.10 Family Networks

The family unit is at the centre stage of the transmission of social capital with the parent-child relationship considered to be one of the most influential relationships through which social capital is transmitted (Claridge, 2018; Coleman, 1990; Weiss, 2012). These familial networks were unavailable to the mothers inside the Australian orphanages but prior to their arrival in Australia, seven of them had enjoyed a relationship with at least one family relative in the UK and one had arrived in Australia with her sister and was sent to the same orphanage. These relationships, when the mothers were small children, although interrupted by their departure from the UK, had provided them with a limited connection to family. This
connection had given the mothers an identity and had linked them to a network (Coleman, 1998; Kiani, Hojatkhah, & Torabi-Nami, 2016) to which they belonged. So important was this tie, that six of the mothers spent years searching for relations and were reunited with their siblings in later life. The need to be a part of a family unit had been an overwhelming factor in some of the mother’s decisions to have their own families. Two of the participants had observed their mothers need for a family:

Being in the orphanage, I just think it made her very family orientated, just very big on family and partly why she wanted so many kids, I think, which dad just went along with, she wanted her own family (Mary).

Well we had a happy family growing up although I think we were close knit as mum kept it... she wanted that family thing. You know it was very important for mum to have a happy family. Because she had no family (Twinney).

The important family networks which had been absent in the lives of the mothers were available to all the daughters. They were all a part of a traditional nuclear family, had brothers and sisters with whom they remain on good terms and some had extended family on their father’s side. Three of the participants indicated that would have liked to have had a maternal grandmother and more of an extended family to identify with when they were younger but do not see the absence of them as a significant factor in their lives.

All the participants acknowledged the significant impact of the ‘Aunties’ who were considered as extended family. They were not particularly close with the ‘Aunties’ but the
daughters witnessed the deep bonds between the ‘Aunties’ and understood the importance of them in their mother’s life.

The bonding capital (Putnam, 2000; Rainie & Wellman 2012) acquired within the family network in the daughter’s formative years, provided the participants with good social capital to interact confidently within their own habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) but the formation of strong ties essential in bonding social capital were fractured during five of the daughters’ adolescent years.

The breakdown in family relationships of five of the participants, interrupted the natural progression and consolidation of what capital they had acquired. On entering the orphanage, Jane lost her close familial connections and Rebecca’s home-life was flecked with violence, emotional upheavals and temporary separation from her family while she attended school. Julie, Layla and Ruby dealt with parental issues such as alcoholism, domestic violence and depression which had framed some of their childhood years and led to their parents’ divorce. Twinney, Layla and Julie and May had also been immersed in a religious zealotry resulting in their social capital being significantly impacted by the teachings of the Catholicism. All these factors impacted on the participants’ familial relationships but as the daughters began their journey into their adolescence and adult years, they accessed new networks to broaden their social capital.

There were four significant areas where the participants were able to access groups and relationships outside of the immediate family. The Catholic church, school, sporting clubs and the work place, all provided opportunities to acquire bridging capital; capital that links people who are from varied groups and people within the community but who share common interests (Pelling, & High, 2005). It was within these networks that new relationships were established and enabled the participants to gain good social capital that would enrich both their professional and private lives.
8.11 Religious Social Capital

The social capital acquired by the mothers inside the institution was steeped in religious dogma with seven of the mothers being raised in the Catholic faith and one in the Anglican faith. The positive effects of being part of a religious community as posited by Ebstyne King & Furrow (2004) Fan (2006) was not evident in the story of the mothers. Their religious community was their only community, and there were no opportunities to broaden their social networks.

What the mothers did have was religious capital (Finke, 2003). The mothers at St John’s had all been brought up in institutions run by the Catholic church and understood the teachings, processes and systems of Catholic life. Being fully conversant in the ceremonies and traditions of Catholicism, some of the mothers, on their release from the orphanage, were able to access a community in which they were confident of their religious knowledge and skills. High levels of knowledge provide opportunities to access strong networks (Barker, 2008) and this proved true for the mothers. Their participation within their parish through the weekly mass, and later sending their children to Catholic schools and raising their families in the Catholic faith, provided access to familiar surrounds but with new networks that afforded opportunities to access strong social networks. Their involvement, in the Catholic community provided an opportunity in which they could accrue and develop social capital, and these networks, provided valuable networks for their daughters.

The transition of the mothers from one religious community to the next, profoundly shaped the way in which participants in this study grew up. As children, Layla, Twinney, May and Julie and Jane were able to access social capital and religious capital through the networks outside of the immediate family structure. This provided the participants with the skills to negotiate the Catholic community and education system. Early integration into Catholicism provided some of the participants with a sense of identity and fostered a
connectedness within the community. This immersion in Catholicism at such a young age was not always positive, especially for Jane who was in an orphanage, but the participants acknowledged it had given them some valuable skills and discipline.

I think it gave children a sense of participation, a general feeling of being grown up. I don’t remember having assembly, at school but my opportunity to speak publicly was the church, doing the readings, doing the collections. You know I think that gave the kids a sense of responsibility they were priming themselves to serve the church at a later date, you know to be part of team, well a cult following really” (Julie)

I do think growing up catholic, the discipline was useful. I think being in church for an hour and being still and not mucking around and just listening not even understanding it, just that discipline I think is a good thing. (Layla)

Well mum used to make us go to church every Sunday as far as I can remember we’d have to all get dressed up on Sunday and all had been really behaved as well. (Twinney)

Only two of the participants remained active in a religious community with faith and religious beliefs central in both participants lives; May, being a committed Catholic and Jane a committed Christian with faith and beliefs central in both participants’ lives. Twinney,
Layla and Julie had rejected the idea of religion and an almighty god, but they have embraced the Catholic and Anglican school systems in which to educate their children.

Figure 17. Generational transmission of Social Capital via religious networks

8.12 School and Social Capital

School is an important source of social capital and it was in this facet of the participants’ lives that the participants experienced strong and important networks with which to build social capital. Teacher/student and student/student relationships all featured in the narratives of the participants and for the most part these were positive interactions.

On a person level, the friendships that the participants made and the daily interaction between themselves, their fellow students and teachers, provided the participants with strong social capital. They mixed socially with children from other cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds and interacted with non-familial adults. The exception to this is Jane whose entrance into the orphanage and subsequent separation from her parents and one of her siblings, severely restricted her acquisition of social capital.
Jane was able to access friendship networks both in and out of the orphanage, but she was unable to fully immerse herself in relationships outside the confines of the convent. Coming from the orphanage and having limited access to teenage pop culture such as fashion and music prevented her from being able to interact on an equal footing with the other teenagers at her high school.

In Year 12, Jane and her sister were allowed to return home to the care of their mother on weekends and during this respite from the orphanage Jane became a member of the Girl Guides Association and made began to make friends outside of the orphanage. This in turn led to other social opportunities such as shopping and going to the cinema, and opportunities to make new networks and relationships that were important in the accumulation of social capital.

Valuable as those interactions between the participants and their friends and teachers were, most of the schools attended by the participants had not provided the opportunities or experiences for them to consider tertiary education or to pursue occupations outside the traditional female vocations of teaching and nursing. At the time, most of the participants were completing their education, societal attitudes to women’s work were changing. Women were no longer expected to stop work after they were married and educational institutions encouraged girls to complete post compulsory secondary education (Dettman, 1969, Robinson & Ustinoff, 2012). While the retention of girls completing Year 12 increased most chose to study courses that led to traditional professions of nursing, teaching and commerce and this (ABS, 2018; Dettman, 1969).

The participants in this study were no different and all of them entered into what was considered the traditional female professions. The social capital, skills and encouragement needed to think outside of the traditional opportunities was not encouraged by the schools that the participants attended. Twinney revealed that she had been mocked by male students
when she excelled in her accounting class and was never encouraged by her teacher to achieve her potential in that subject. Julie recalled having no knowledge or understanding of university at school or at home and Jane had felt that she had few options other than retail and hospitality at the conclusion of her education. Mary and May are the exceptions to this. Mary’s education was completed in Canberra, a city at the forefront of social change in the 1970s, and one where opportunities for women were embraced and generally accepted by the wider community. May, who left school in the 1980s was well-prepared for a tertiary education. Women at that time comprised 50% university enrolments, particularly in nursing and teaching (ABS, 2018) and May was part of the changing culture in which women obtaining a tertiary degree was the expectation rather than exception.

8.13 Work Place

The networks accessed by the participants in the workplace were a rich resource for the acquisition of social capital. For Layla, Jane, Julie, Rebecca and Ruby, the networks they were able to access throughout their careers have been instrumental in the participant’s educational and professional development. Jane’s and Layla’s partnerships with work colleagues to found and develop new businesses, grew from relationships and connections within their career networks. Rebecca’s professional networks supported her through a change of career and Julie’s educational achievements have been assisted by her professional colleagues. The participants have been able to accrue and develop their social capital throughout their professional lives and this has resulted in all of the participants being able to move confidently between the different fields of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990).

The sporting teams and associations in which the participants were involved, provided them with rich networks and relationship that delivered both bonding and bridging capital (Tonts, 2000; Zakus et al., 2009) Membership of sporting clubs instilled, self-confidence and a sense of belonging for the participants. I found no evidence that the
groups the participants were affiliated with, provided negative social capital (Brown, 2017). Furthermore, the social capital acquired throughout the participant’s sporting life has been important in the intergenerational transmission of capital to their children.

8.14 Discussion

Based on the research findings, the participants in this study, have not been significantly affected by their mother’s lack of social capital. Despite some negative experiences for some of the participants during their formative years, all the participants have been afforded a variety of opportunities to access and develop social capital. The economic resources available within the family enabled the participants to play sport, attend social events and for some, holidays. The wealth of networks, relationships and experiences made available to the participants, provided the social capital needed to negotiate their habitus (Bourdieu; 1990; Crul, Schneider, Keskiner, & Lelie 2017) when growing up and subsequent access to a variety of networks have been economically, socially and educationally positive for the participants.

8.15 Impact on Identity

One of the important factors that has emerged from studies and reports into BCMs, is the lack of a personal and social identity that individuals felt when they left their respective institutions (Australian Government, 2001; Parker, 2013). Many care-leavers from Australian institutions, reported having no sense of a credible identity due to their incarceration. Being separated from their siblings, parents and friends, many felt that the stigma that came with being an orphan gave them little legitimacy in the wider world and had resulted in a negative impact upon their children (Australian Government, 2001). The stigma of being an orphan from an institution was an ever-present factor in the lives of many of the mothers of the participants and nearly all the participants in the study, identified some instances or areas in
their mother’s lives which they thought reflected an inner struggle with that stigma. They explained how they interpreted their mother’s struggle;

Well, I felt that mum felt that she was always trying to prove herself because she …. And I felt at her inner core she was fighting the authority and I always think she felt under the thumb of the Catholic church and the nuns and I think that she was strong willed. I think she drank and she smoked and was self-medicating for inner anxiety.

(Layla)

I can remember she had patches of…. where probably as she got older, maybe into early ’40s, I remember she had some depression.

(Ruby)

When Kevin Rudd…(former Australian Prime Minister) when he did that, (Apologised to the Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants in 2009 ) it was a pretty big thing, and he said in his speech that he understands the fear of being institutionalised in old age; that fear that these women and men have because of their childhood. And it is very true. I think my mum does have a fear of...or is very determined to stay in a house and be independent, "Don't think of farming me off anywhere" you know, that sort of thing. (Mary)

My mum denies her pain and I think myself and my siblings have a fair degree of it. instead of having a healthy mother/child bond I felt like the orphan. I felt what mother didn’t feel. (Rebecca)
Rebecca was the only participant to link her sense of self to her mother’s time in an institution.

Central to the identity is the ‘sense of self’. (Coleman, 1998; Kiani, Hojatkhah, & Torabi-Nami, 2016). It is our personal identity and is created over time as an individual participates in different pursuits and interacts with a variety of people (Burke & Tully 1977; Burke & Stets, 2009). The participants in this study have had a very strong ‘sense of self’ and were very comfortable and proud of who they are and what they had achieved. The development of their sense of who they are and where they belong reflects the identity theories of Stryker and Burke (2000) and Burke & Stets (2009) which posit that identity is shaped by social structure and internal evaluation. Through the context of their personal and social roles the participants have developed networks and relationships both within the family structure and through their connections within the wider community. The interactions the participants had within these networks presented opportunities to evaluate themselves and their actions within those networks. The ‘sense of self’ that they have acquired has been anchored in those symbolic interactions (Charon, 2007; Ritzer, 2007) and their subsequent evaluation.

The ‘sense of self’ of each participant has been developed across the years through the positive and negative experiences within the various networks and relationships of which they have been involved. Their narratives tell the stories of participants whose identities and ‘sense of self’ have been challenged through the traumatic events of their lives, but those events have been examined, retold and re-contextualised from the perspective of mature, experienced women, who have reconciled those times and put them into context within their life’s experience. The effects of the traumatic events can still be observed in the participants’
description of themselves but they have embraced and acknowledged those aspects of their identity, and it is a rich and important part of who they are.

8.16 Family and Identity

The development of an individual’s sense of self begins in the family unit (Coleman, 1998) and it was within those family structures that the participant’s evaluation of their sense of self was formed validated, and where their values were learned. The family structures were not always a positive experience for all the participants and their internalisation of familial interactions resulted in adverse emotional effects for some of them. For example, Rebecca internalised a negative ‘sense of self’, early on in her life, a result of various factors within her family structure. Her father’s violent outbursts, her mother’s inability to nurture effectively and her sub-conscious transmission of her trauma onto Rebecca, were aspects that were damaging to her self-esteem and manifested itself through her anxiety. As a result, she explained; *I have anxiety. and I have struggled with that all my life.*

The other participants all identified incidences of conflict in their family networks, as most families’ experience, but in terms of their ‘sense of self” the family networks had provided them with a clear sense of belonging, and firm sense of place in the family.

During the course of my conversations with the participants, I had asked each of them to describe their sense of self. Layla described herself as follows.

*I don’t think I am particularly smart, I think I’m only average but I think I’m determined and I think I’m a risk taker. Yeh, I think I’m just average but being determined and a risk taker, like starting a business at 55 years of age in an area I know nothing about. But my business partner says the odds are on our side and you know I am determined not to let it fail.*
Layla’s company has since gone on to win a variety on state and national business awards and has currently been listed as one of Westpac’s top 200 companies in Australia and has expanded throughout the country. She is a confident, sought after public speaker and continues to be a successful innovator in the health industry.

Mary described herself as a confident person in both social and professional situations. She has a strong sense of self’ which she thinks had its foundations in being successful within the sporting arena. Playing sport at a top level and acquiring the skills necessary to compete at an elite level, provided Mary with a belief in her abilities and in herself and this flowed over to the other areas of her life. She does concede that there are times in her life when she has had doubts and uncertainties but she trusts in her judgement.

I guess because of the sporting environment I am confident because
it's a certain skill that you know you’re good at it and you’re there for a purpose. I have got inner fears, not strong fears, but I would think, ‘Oh gee I'm not 100 percent sure about this’, but I'd still do it.

Rebecca is a positive person and a confident educator and health service provider. She runs her own business and has excelled in education. She acknowledges that she has a very good brain and that she has always found studying a relatively easy pursuit.

I think that I am really lucky, in fact I have the ability to retain information I’m a quick learner and have an aptitude for learning.

While Rebecca is an accomplished individual, of her ‘sense of self”, she explains that she has an underlying anxiety that is a significant part of her being. This anxiety has its
foundations in her mother’s orphan status. Rebecca explained that throughout her life she had always felt that she was the orphan. Her mother had insisted that she, herself, was a very lucky person and refused to acknowledge any pain or trauma that she may have experienced or carried with her. Rebecca believes that her mother had low self-esteem and had little sense of worth but the refusal of mother to admit to any of it resulted in Rebecca taking on those feelings as a child and it became her identity. Although Rebecca has worked through many of the issues that have arisen from her relationship with her mother, she accepts that there are long term effects on her life.

Like I have fear of anxiety every day. I think fear has profoundly ruled my life in ways I wish it hadn’t. So, it’s having this profound sense in my bones, I think I have accepted that I am going to struggle with anxiety?

Rebecca has accepted that her anxiety is a significant factor of her identity but it has not stop her from participating in life to the full. She is active in her community, is in full time employment and a supportive mother and grandmother.

Julie is a confident, well-educated woman who is a leader in her local community. She explained that she has been very successful in life and that she has never doubted her ability to achieve her goals. Julie acknowledges that she has a healthy self-esteem and credits her involvement in sports from an early age as the foundation of her self-belief. Being physically capable of doing any sport that she chose, provided her with excellent self-esteem. Competing in high-level competitive sport instilled in her a confidence that she was able to call on in other parts of her life. Julie explained that she had never been one to sit on the
sidelines and watch a game, preferring to be on the field at all times and this is how she has approached all other aspects of her life.

I’ve never had that feeling that there’s something that I can’t do."

“What couldn’t I do.

At the time of the interview with Julie she was half way through a four-year term as a Shire Councillor. She had chosen to run for council election because she wanted to be part of the process of what happens in her community. She explained that she never doubted her ability to be a community leader and although it had been a steep learning curve she had certainly been up to the challenge.

Twinney had a strong sense of self although she hasn’t always felt that way. She recalled that she was a timid child and that she suffered from a little bit of anxiety, preferring to read books rather than put herself forward in social situations. This changed as she grew older as she had to deal with her three younger brothers who were boisterous and lively children.

I’m quite small and I’ve had men 6’4 who stand over you and think you’re going to back down and you know I will not back down, because I had 3 big brothers. And so, size doesn’t intimidate me at all.

Twinney has had adversity in her life but she has always demonstrated a confidence in her ability to look after herself and she put some of this down to resilience. She had adopted the attitude;
You just picked yourself up and kept going, moving forward kind of thing.

Jane’s journey to the confident and inspirational woman she is today has been a difficult one. Her separation from her parents and her life in an orphanage took many years to come to terms with. Through her faith, her own family and counselling, Jane has worked through her experiences and has used her knowledge and understanding to reconcile her upbringing, she explained:

My life's journey has not been perfect, but I am grateful that along the way I was able to connect with the right people who would support and love me.

The breakdown of Jane’s family and her separation from her parents at a young age meant that she could not assess nor validate her role or any other roles within a family unit. This was reflected in her experiences as a young mother when she found that her idea of parenting reflected those of the nuns who had provided her with shelter, clothes and food, but none of the nurturing skills that she needed to raise her children with the human capital they needed. These skills were taught to her by her mother-in-law and as she put those skills into practice, she was able to re-evaluate her role as mother and daughter and ultimately her sense of self.

Ruby, now in her fifties is a self-assured, articulate woman who has a keen awareness of the influences in herself development. She explained that she had not always been the assertive woman that she is today. Before the death of her first husband she described her attitude to life as pretty laid back, however, when he died and she was left with two young
children to raise she had to rethink her approach to life. As she battled to raise her children and find a job she also recalled having to deal with stigma of being a single mother. While she did not go into detail about the “terrible things” she had to face, she recalled the advice given to her by her younger brother on how to deal with the challenges ahead.

My brother Peter, who is 18 months younger than me, he just said, ‘Grow some balls. That's what you’ve got to do to survive.’ So, I learnt to do that, and I'm quite a different person to what I was at 25 even.

In comparing herself to her friends, Ruby thinks that she looks at life from a different perspective from them. She says that a combination of events that she has dealt with over the years had taught her not to sweat the small stuff.

May is a self-assured woman with a confident outlook on life. She is intelligent, articulate and a well-respected member of the community but is humble about her achievements. She explained that her mother’s positive nature had sent a strong message to her that life is what you make it and so May has adopted an optimistic outlook on life. She explains “I was immersed in that whole positive nature and I have turned out to be a positive person as well.”

These family networks, however fractured or conflicted for some of the participants, provided sufficient social capital for them to be able to interact with the wider society. Jane’s social capital had been stymied in its development once she entered into the orphanage, but the tenuous access to outside networks and the relationships formed within the home, allowed some measure of capital which enabled her to satisfactorily interact in the wider society.
Identity Roles

The participants had a variety of identities in both their private and professional lives. They are mothers, partners, sisters, daughters and part of extended families. Their roles as wife or partner while spoken about, did not feature significantly in the participants’ notion of their identity but it was clear that they valued the relationships they had at the time of the interviews. While they acknowledged their partners and shared a few anecdotes, there was little information provided about their role as wife or partner to any great extent. It was clear that having a significant other did not define who they were as an individual woman but enriched who they are.

The participants’ identity roles as siblings, sisters, and aunties have also been acknowledged as a positive part of their lives. Their relationship with their siblings and extended family were a significant part of the sense of who they are and of their place within their familial networks. The most influential role identity of the participants was that of mother (Chapter 8). The participants were the main care providers for their children’s formative years and are very much involved with the children’s lives whether it be in sport, school, or in the case of Rebecca and Layla, their grandchildren.

The focus of this study was on the mothers of the participants and the participants’ identity as the daughter of a BCM. Clearly all the participants had fathers, and while they talked about their fathers in general terms, they did not focus on their daughter/ father relationship. It is evident that their fathers played a significant role in all of the participant’s lives. Most notable was the influence of the fathers on the educational expectations of most of the participants (Chapter 4 & 5).

Social Identity

Social identities, which are based on their individual membership of certain groups such as religious groups, sporting groups and social organisations were significant in the
participants’ lives (Burke & Stets, 2009). All the participants have belonged to a variety of social groups throughout their lives with the most significant being the sporting, community and religious communities they have been involved with. For most of the participants it has been the membership of these social groups that have been significant in in shaping their sense of self. Their identity as friend, competitor, team member, office bearer or babysitter, all provided the participants with an autonomous sense of identity within the wider community away from familial networks, allowing them to accrue new skills and access new resources that enabled them to develop social capital to bridge other habitus. (Bourdieu; 1990; Crul, Schneider, Keskiner, & Lelie 2017).

One of the most significant role identities of the participants at present and in the past, is that of professional worker. Within their workplace all the participants have held positions of responsibility, leadership and mentoring. They had proven themselves to be successful business women, teachers, health professionals and entrepreneurs. They are community leaders, business leaders and have been able to negotiate the working sphere with confidence and skill.

The participants in this study have a very clear sense of self and are keenly aware of their own strengths and purpose and comfortable and accepting of who they are. The self-assuredness and confidence they radiate has been constructed from their life’s experience and reflect the myriad of experiences and roles they have undergone throughout their lives. They are assured of their identity and their place within the private and professional spheres and hold positive hopes for the future for both themselves and their families.

This chapter has identified key findings in relation to the research questions

Q1: What are the experiences of women whose mothers were institutionalised in an Australian orphanage?
The experiences of the participants were told to me through the lens of middle age. Born in the prosperous times of the post WW2 era, the participants had access to free education, full employment and a more progressive society in which women enjoyed more freedom and opportunities compared to their mother’s generation. Their narratives reflected experiences and events that are familiar stories in the lives of many women; marriages, children, careers and family and friends. Their narrative provided insight in the experiences of growing up with a mother who had been impacted by institutionalisation and has continued the narrative of the BCM.

Q2. How did growing up with a mother who had been institutionalised in her childhood impact on their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, their educational achievements and their sense of self.

- I found that the participants experienced intergenerational trauma as a direct result of their mother’s incarceration in an Australian institution, although it varied in severity between the participants.
- There is no evidence to support the presence of historical trauma as the second element of historical trauma; that it must be experienced by multiple generations, is not supported in this study.
- The lack of the mothers’ social capital did not impact significantly on the participant’s long term acquisition of social capital as the participants had access to a variety of networks and relationships that helped the acquire social capital.
- The lack of educational opportunities for the mothers did not impact negatively on the participants due to access to educational opportunities, parental expectations of academic achievements and non-familial support in academic pursuits.
- The participants had a clear sense of self and belonging and were confident in the many roles that held in both their family, the community and in their professional lives.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of eight women whose mothers had been institutionalised in Australian orphanages under the British Child Migrant scheme during the inter-war and post WW2 period. The research questions were:

1. What are the experiences of women whose mothers were institutionalised in an Australian orphanage?

2. How did growing up with a mother who had been institutionalised in her childhood impact on their daughter’s acquisition of social capital, their educational achievements and their sense of self.

Using a qualitative paradigm, narrative enquiry and portraiture methodology I explored the individual stories of the participants. The use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews, to elicit the narratives of the participants, allowed for the individual voices of each of the participant to be heard and a portrait to be constructed. The rich data generated from the interviews afforded an-in depth insight into both the participants’ experiences and the impact of their mothers’ institutionalisation on their own lives.

In chapter 1, I introduced the aim and background of the study and its original contribution to research. In chapters 2, I reviewed relevant literature and in chapter 3 I situated the study in a theoretical and methodological framework. In chapter 4, I constructed a portrait of the participants and introduced their mothers. In chapters 5-7, I presented data on the main themes identified in the narrative; education, employment, sport, and family and relationships. Chapter 8 provided an analysis of the findings and chapter 10 my conclusion,
discusses my contribution to new knowledge, the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

9.1 Implications

This study adds to the research literature on the impact of institutionalisation on the second generation as well as contributing to the literature on social capital. It also contributes original knowledge on the narrative of the British Child Migrants through the exploration of experiences of children of the British Child Migrants.

In chapter 4, I presented portraits of the eight participants. These narratives provided insight into the lives of individuals who had been impacted by their mothers’ institutionalisation and produced data that has not been presented before in research studies. The portraits and the analysis in chapters 5-9 continue the story of the British Child Migrant and add to the understanding of the impact of the scheme on subsequent generations. Key implications drawn from chapters 5-9 indicate the importance of the acquisition of useable social capital derived from a variety of networks, to overcome negative intergenerational impacts.

Compared to studies on other second-generation groups that have been impacted by institutionalism, particularly, Indigenous Australians, and Indigenous Canadians and North Americans (Atkinson & Atkinson, 2010; Kellerman, 2001; Menzies, 2005) the second generation BCMs in this study did not suffer from the historical trauma sustained by these groups, although intergenerational trauma was evident. The lack of a collective trauma within the second generation BCMs is due to a number of factors but most significant is that their mothers were white women who spoke English and, once out of the institution, were able to access the dominant culture, networks and relationships within that culture. The religious capital of many of their mothers also ensured their entry into the dominant religious communities where they were able to freely access new networks for both themselves and
later on, for their families. Their mothers also entered into traditional marriages with men from the same cultural group and the nuclear family structure into which the participants were born, reflecting the structures of the dominant cultural and social values of the time.

The mothers’ marriages and their subsequent journey into motherhood reflected the two goals that had been at the centre of the immigration policy under which they had been sent to Australia and into the care of the Catholic and Anglican churches. First, they had helped repopulate the country (Immigration Restriction Act 1946 (Cth)) and second, five of the families had boosted the numbers of the Catholic church (Coldrey, 1993). On a societal level the habitus of the family and their associated networks, particularly religion, added to, and reinforced the societal institutions of the time and being a part of the dominant culture, allowed the participants to negotiate their world with a degree of confidence. Added to this, none of the participant’s fathers had been institutionalised and were better able to provide cultural knowledge and resources to their children. I contend this immersion into society significantly contributed to the absence of historical trauma for the participants in this study.

A contributing factor in the absence of a collective trauma can be attributed to the silence of the mothers about their experiences as a BCM. The lack of detailed knowledge of their mother’s institutionalisation protected most of the participants from being affected too negatively by their mother’s experiences. The mothers’ desire to get on with life, together with their efforts to leave their institutional experiences in the past, imbued a sense of resilience rather than trauma. This resilience was also reflected in the ‘Aunties’ and collectively, the participants had grown up only ever hearing the positive side of institutional life. The participants’ positive interactions with the ‘Aunties’, their enjoyable visits to the orphanage, and their mother’s relative silence about the negative experiences, meant that a collective trauma was never imparted to the participants growing up.
There is evidence that intergenerational trauma (Danieli, 1981; Dass-Brailsford, 2007; Lev-, 2007; deMendelsshon, 2008) experienced by the participants can be directly linked to their mother’s experiences in the orphanage. Much of the transmitted trauma was anchored in the mothers’ lack of a strong sense of self, the absence of parental role models and an understanding of the concept of normative perceptions of family while growing up. The trauma transmitted to the daughters particularly impacted on the participant’s sense of self during their younger years and their intimate relationships. For most of the participants, these issues have been worked through and have been used as valuable experiences to further their life’s journey.

The perceived lack of social capital of the mothers when they left the institution did not impact negatively on the acquisition and accumulation of social capital by the daughters. Access to a variety of networks through sport membership, educational institutions, religion, work, and individual relationships have provided the participants with access to capital and resources that has enriched their own social capital. These positive networks enabled the participants to accumulate positive experiences which opened up a variety of possibilities and opportunities that the participants readily embraced and resulted in the acquisition of social capital that helped successfully bridge the different habitus with which they have contact (Crul, Schneider, Keskiner, & Lelie 2017).

The woman in the study are all highly educated. All eight had completed Year 12 studies, six of the participants had tertiary qualifications and four had post graduate qualifications. The research literature on education is divided on the importance and influence of parents on their children’s educational achievements and the role that intergenerational closure has on educational outcomes and behaviours. This study found that most of the participants’ parents had high expectations that their daughters would do well in school and would complete post compulsory studies, but there were also parents who took a
minimalist approach to their daughter’s education. The expectation to ‘do well,’ was instilled in most of the participants but there is little difference between the achievements of those whose parents were vocal and supportive, to those who were not involved at all, but who ensured that their children had the resources to attend school. The provision of free education and access to government bursaries for nursing was also a contributing factor to the educational success and outcomes of some of the participants. The most significant influence in the acquisition of tertiary and post graduate qualifications was the networks of friends and work colleagues who encouraged and supported each other to further study.

9.2 Narrative of the British Child Migrant

This is the first study to explore the impact of institutionalisation on the children of the British Child Migrants. It provides insight into the lives and experiences of women who grew up with mothers who had been institutionalised in Australian orphanages. The story of the BCM has only become part of the Australian social narrative in the last 30 years. As a nation, we are only just reckoning with the impact of bringing thousands of unaccompanied children from their country of birth and placing them into institutions across Australia where they were subjected to a cruel and harsh existence.

In the silent years, the time before the BCMs voices were heard and listened to, the children brought to this country grew into adults and became mothers and fathers, husbands and wives. As they kept their stories hidden, they raised their children as best they could, all the time trying to live with the stigma of ‘orphan’ and the experiences of life in an institution. When their stories were finally heard, anguished voices shared their fears of the damage to their children because of their inability to be good parents.

The participants in this study, did experience negative impacts on their lives that can be directly linked to their mother’s institutionalisation, but the participants successful and enriched lives indicate that the effects of their mothers’ institutionalisation were, at times, a
significant element in some of the participants lives but did not dictate the direction of their lives. The impact was limited and mitigated by a range of factors that included access to a variety of networks and relationships that provided opportunities for the acquisition of suitable and beneficial social capital, educational opportunities and more liberal social values. These factors provided the participants with the economic, educational and social options that had been denied to their mothers.

9.3 Limitations and Validity

The identification of the limitations of the study is necessary in the analysis of data. A limitation of this study was the size and composition of the participants. Eight Caucasian women were interviewed, all were middle-aged and were from similar socioeconomic circumstances. All participants were born and raised within twenty years of each other and shared similar milestones such as marriage, motherhood and professional careers. The participants’ mothers were from two institutions, both located in Western Australia.

This is a small-scale study and the research results may not offer a broad view of the experiences of children of British Child Migrants. The research findings might not apply to other children of British Child Migrants who might be of different genders or from varied socio-economic backgrounds and does not necessarily reflect the experiences of British Child Migrants who were placed into institutions in other Australian states.

Another limitation is the focus on the mother/daughter relationship. While the father’s role in the participant’s narratives was acknowledged, it was not a significant focus in most of the interviews and has not been fully explored in this study.

The study has only focused on the experiences of the participants interviewed and does not take into consideration, or make a comparison with, daughters of non-migrant mothers who were institutionalised or mothers who were never institutionalised.
As the daughter of a British Child Migrant a concern for me during this study was my own bias in the interpretation of the data. Being a part of the small BCM community I was aware that I had many similar experiences and that I had some insider knowledge (McConnell-Henry et., al, 2009) of the BCM network. In Portraiture methodology, the voice of the researcher is everywhere, witnessing and interpreting the data (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis, 1997) and it is necessary that I reflected continually with both the participants and my supervisors to ensure my voice did not contaminate the data.

9.3.1 Practical Limitations

The time required to interview the respondents and then to transcribe those meetings was lengthy. It was envisaged that two interviews would be conducted with each respondent but, due to time constraints of my own and of the participants, follow up face-to-face interviews were limited to four of the respondents. Ongoing communication with the other participants was conducted through emails and phone calls.

9.3.2 Recommendations

These findings point to the need for a larger study to provide a more generalisable set of conclusions regarding the intergenerational impact of institutionalisation of British Child Migrants in Australia.

A larger, more comprehensive study including all genders and whose parent/s had spent time in a variety of institutions from around Australia, would provide a broader and more in-depth understanding of the intergenerational impact of institutionalisation on the children of the British Child Migrants and on the children of Care-Levers in general. In the Forgotten Australians report (Australian Government, 2004) it is suggested that nearly all people in Australia were either related to, knows or works with a person who has been institutionalised in an Australian institution or in out-of-home-care.
As I neared completion of this study in 2018, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, on behalf of Australia, apologised to the children who had been sexually abused while in the care of Australian institutions. Previous apologies had also been delivered by Prime Minister Rudd in 2008 to the Stolen Generation and to the Forgotten Australians and British Child Migrants in 2009. These apologies acknowledged the traumatic experiences of the members of these groups while in institutional care in Australia.

Given that Australia has only just begun to address the issue of individuals who were institutionalised in the 20th Century Australia in the last 30 years, further research in this area will provide a more in-depth evaluation of the effects of institutionalisation.

9.4 Personal Reflection

In the 1990s when I first heard the stories of the BCM, I was saddened by what I had heard. As the realisation that my mother had been one of the child migrants slowly dawned on me, I felt an overwhelming need to know her story. As she had already passed away, I had turned to my ‘Aunties’ to fill in the blanks. Their stories inspired me to do a small study about their experiences and at the completion of that study I felt compelled to continue the narrative and find the positive in the story. Before I commenced this study, the children of the ‘Aunties’ that I had known as a child, had all but disappeared from my life. I wondered how much they knew of their mother’s story and how had their lives had turned out. This study has gone some way in achieving that goal

It has been over 80 years since Rebecca’s mother arrived in Australia and it was just over 70 years ago the mothers of Layla, Julie, Twinney, Ruby, Jane, Mary and May disembarked at Fremantle and made their way to St John’s orphanage. Only one out of the eight mothers is living and is now in her 80s. I will never know if any of the mothers had felt that they may have let their daughters down in anyway, but they have all raised eight wonderful, strong resilient women.
APPENDIX A

Information Letter regarding research by Diane Parker

An Institutionalised Legacy: Growing up with mothers who were institutionalised in an Australian Catholic orphanage.

Dear Participant

My name is Diane Parker and I am writing in my capacity as a PhD Student from Murdoch University. I am conducting a research project that aims to explore the social and educational experiences of children whose mother was a female former child migrant in Western Australia between 1948-1960. This will involve interviewing women who grew up with mothers who were institutionalised in an Australian orphanage under the Child Migrant Scheme of 1947.

The Aim of this study is to

- To record the experiences of the daughters of Female Child Migrants in Western Australia.
- To find out about their experiences within the education system they attended.
- To gain insight into the effects of their mother’s experiences upon their daughter’s educational and social experiences.

The project is being conducted through Murdoch University School of Education, and my supervisors are Associate Professor Libby Lee-Hammond and Dr Sandra Hesterman. This study is part of a qualification I am completing to attain a PhD. I have a Master’s Degree in Education, a Bachelor degree in Women’s Studies, and I have a Graduate Diploma in Education. I currently work as a teacher for high school students teaching Politics & Law.

I would like to invite you as a daughter of a former child migrant to take part in the project, as I believe that your contribution would be of great value in adding to the understanding of the generational effects of institutionalisation, and to get a real sense of the effect on children when their mothers have spent time in an Australian Catholic orphanage. There has been little opportunity for the children of female child migrants to formally tell their stories and it is hoped that the material gained will add to the body of knowledge on the generational effects of institutionalisation with particular emphasis upon the former child migrants.
What Does Your Participation Involve?

You are invited to participate in an initial interview with myself, and then a follow up interview some months later. The interviews will be relaxed and informal, with the focus on letting YOU tell YOUR story as it relates to life. Subject to your permission, the interviews will be recorded on audio. The information in the final report to the University however, will be a written report, which may include transcripts from the oral recordings.

Do you have to take part?

No. Participating in this research project is entirely voluntary. This decision should always be made completely freely. All decisions made will be respected without question.

What if you wanted to change your initial decision?

Once a decision is made to participate, you can change your mind at any time. However, the final report is expected to be completed by December 2017 so a final decision to withdraw should be made by September 2017. There will be no consequences relating to any decision you make regarding participation, other than those already described in this letter.

What will happen to the information I give, and are privacy and confidentiality assured?

Your privacy is very important to us. Your participation in this study and any information will be treated in a confidential manner. Your name and identifying details will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. It is intended that the findings of this study will be compiled into a thesis report and presented to my University for examination. Following the study, the data will be kept in a de-identified format, in a locked cabinet in the office of the Chief Investigator.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please contact me on the 0403354009 or you can email me on diane.parker@westnet.com.au If you wish to speak to my supervisors about how the project is being conducted or was conducted, please contact Associate Professor Libby Lee–Hammond on 9360 2627, email: L.Lee@murdoch.edu.au or Dr Sandra Hesterman on 9360 6305, email: S.Hesterman@murdoch.edu.au

Is this research approved?

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval xxxx/xxx). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University’s Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX B

An Institutionalised Legacy: Growing up with mothers who were institutionalised in an Australian Catholic orphanage.

Experiences of Children of former Female Child Migrants Institutionalised in Western Australia between 1948 - 1965

• I have received an information letter explaining the Research Project intended by Diane Parker and I have read it or had it explained to me.

• I understand what the study is about and how it will be done.

• I understand that I can choose not to participate and I can withdraw my consent to participate at any time and this will be respected.

• I understand that the reports of this research may be published and if so I will not be identified without express written permission.

• I agree that research data from the results of the study may be published provided my name or any identifying data is not used. I have also been informed that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study.

• I have been given contact information and understand that I can contact the researcher, Diane Parker, or her supervisor Associate Professor Libby Lee-Hammond and Dr Sandra Hesterman to answer any questions.

• I have been given contact information of professional organisations should I feel I would like to talk to someone about issues raised in the interview.

Lifeline  Australia 13 11 14
The Samaritans 24/7 Crisis Line 93815555

- I am willing to become involved in the study, as it has been described in the information letter.
- I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.

Participant’s name: __________________________

Signature of Participant: __________________________ Date:

...../...../.....

I confirm that I have provided the Information Letter concerning this study to the above participant; I have explained the study and have answered all questions asked of me.

Signature of researcher: __________________________ Date:

...../...../.....

Date
Diane Parker
Researcher
School of Education
Murdoch University, Western Australia.
Home telephone Mobile: 040 335 4009
Email: diane.parker@westnet.com.au
Advertisement

Daughters of Female Child Migrants

My name is Diane Parker and I am undertaking a study of women whose mothers came out to Australia under the British Child Migrant Scheme and spent time in an Australian Catholic orphanage. I am interested in examining the generational effects on the daughters of those women, with a focus upon educational and social outcomes.

The study would involve a one on one recorded interview that would be take approximately 1-2 hours.

If you would like to be included or you would like more information in this study please contact me on

diane.parker@westnet.com.au

Or 0403354009
APPENDIX D

Educational Experiences

For this section I would like to find out about the schools that you attended.

1. What was the name of the primary school you attended? (If you attend more than one school, please list)
   a) __________________________
   b) __________________________
   c) __________________________
   d) __________________________

2. Focussing on the school you attended for the majority of your primary education, was this school a government school or a private school? ______________

3. If it was a private school, would you state what type of school it was (Religious, Montessori, Steiner, Community, other). ______________

4. If you attended a religious school, please state what religious faith it was.
   __________________________

5. How many years did you attend that school?

6. Which high school did you attend? (If you attend more than one school, please list)
   a) __________________________
   b) __________________________
   c) __________________________
   d) __________________________

7. Focussing on the school you attended for the majority of your primary education, was this school a government school or a private school? ______________

8. If it was a private school, please state what kind. (Religious, Montessori, Steiner, Community, other). ______________
9. If you attended a religious school, please state what religious faith it was.
______________

10. How many years did you attend this school? ______________

11. After high school did you attend any other educational institutions such as TAFE, university, private educational colleges. If so would you, please provide a brief description of the qualifications you attained?

12. Thinking about your experiences at primary school how would you describe this time in your life. (Please write as much as you like)

13. Thinking about your experiences at high school how would you describe this time in your life. (Please write as much as you like).

14. Thinking about your experiences at an educational institution how would you describe this time in your life. (Please write as much as you like).

15. Thinking about your overall educational experiences how would you describe the influence of your mother upon your educational achievements? (please write as much as you like).

16. Thinking about your overall educational experiences how would you describe the influence of your father upon your educational achievements? (please write as much as you like).

17. Thinking about your overall educational experiences can would you describe the influence of your teachers/lecturers upon your educational achievements? (please write as much as you like).

End of this section

Working Experiences

In this section I would like to find out about your working life. This includes paid and non-paid work. (Non-paid work includes, parenting, volunteer work or being an unpaid carer).
1. Would you briefly describe the paid work that you do?

2. What specific qualifications or skills do you need for this job?

3. Would you briefly describe the unpaid work that you do?

4. What specific qualifications or skills do you need for this job?

5. Thinking about your paid working life would you provide a brief description of the jobs you have had since you left school?

6. Thinking about your unpaid working life would you provide a brief description of the work you have done since you left school?

7. When you were growing up did your mother work in paid employment? (Please state what job she had.)

8. When you were growing up did your father work in paid employment? (Please state what job he had).

9. Do you think either of your parent’s work influenced your own work experiences?

10. If Yes, please explain how.

End of section

This section focusses on your social experiences.

1. How many children were in your family?

2. When you were growing up did you live with your parents and siblings?
3. If NO who was your primary carer when you were growing up?

4. When you were growing up were you involved in individual or team sports?

5. If YES would you describe that sport?.

6. What influence, if any, did the Catholic church have in your life?

7. Thinking about your childhood, how would you describe your family’s economic situation?

8. Thinking about your childhood, how would you describe your family’s happiness?

9. Thinking about your childhood how would you describe your own happiness?

**Mother**

*This section focusses on the influence of your mother who was in an orphanage for a period of her life.*

1. Thinking about your mum, how do you think that her experience in a Catholic orphanage impacted her life? (This can be both positive and negative).

   Thinking about your mum, do you think that your mother’s experience in a Catholic orphanage influenced the choice of school you were sent to?

2. Can you briefly explain your answer please?

3. Thinking back on your life, how do you think your mother’s experience in a Catholic orphanage may have impacted upon her parenting techniques?
4. Thinking back on your life, how do you think your mother’s experience in a Catholic orphanage may have impacted upon your social development? (that is your ability to negotiate the world outside of the family).

5. Thinking back on your life, if you can, please comment on your memories or experiences with the “Aunties” that is, the women who were in the orphanage with you mother.
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