

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Book

This book is primarily a project of tempered hope. Our research has testified to the way that young people are often excluded or ignored. This inspired us to re-centre youths' lived realities by focusing on their experiences and perspectives, while also focusing on the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in the lives of youths labelled as "marginal".

The book presents the findings of a research project that was launched under the working title "Youth at the Margins: A Comparative Study of the Contribution of Faith-Based Organisations to Social Cohesion in South Africa and Nordic Europe" (Swart: 2013a). "Youth at the Margins", for which we adopted the acronym YOMA, was conducted formally between 2013 and 2016. The project was an undertaking in team research made possible by a new cooperation initiative between the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and the Academy of Finland to promote collaborative research across disciplines on issues related to children and youths.¹ Importantly, however, the project undertaking also benefitted from a previous South African–Nordic collaboration in the field of religion and welfare research² that consolidated ever-growing network relationships between researchers from South Africa and the Nordic countries. Through the YOMA project, therefore, a conscious effort was made to build on the previous collaboration by engaging in an even more ambitious research undertaking between South African and Nordic researchers aimed at generating comparative perspectives on a topical issue that was seen as having important, if not crucial, global relevance: the phenomenon of "marginalised youths" in contemporary society. This was undertaken on the basis of an interdisciplinary interest across the fields of religious studies, theology and the social sciences³ in seeking to explore the nature and extent of FBOs' involvement in the lives of marginalised youths in selected local contexts. The following threefold aim steered the execution of the research:

1 Several other institutions also contributed to the funding of the project. They are acknowledged at the very beginning of this book (see Acknowledgements).

2 This previous collaboration was funded through the South Africa–Swedish Research Links Programme (NRF–SIDA) and was known as the WRIGP ("Welfare and Religion in a Global Perspective") project (see Swart et al.: 2012).

3 Researchers from the project hailed from all three these broad fields.

- To study the extent to which FBOs contribute to strengthening or weakening social cohesion in the way they relate to marginalised youths at the local level in South African and Nordic society;
- To compare the function of FBOs and religion for young marginalised people in South Africa, Finland and Norway;
- To fill the gap in knowledge about FBOs' relationship to and involvement with marginalised youths in their everyday living environments.

1.2 Planning and Conducting the Research

We recognised from the outset the complexities associated with the concept of “youth” which, as was well expressed in one South African source, “differs from one international organisation and country to the next, influenced by a number of cultural, socioeconomic and political factors” (Crause & Booyens: 2010, 7). However, given that age is a criterion for defining youth or young people (Herrera: 2006, 1472), we decided to adopt the United Nations' classification of youths as persons who are between 15 and 24 years old (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: 2004, 2, 5; cf. Crause & Booyens: 2010, 7; Herrera: 2006, 1427).

The initial plan was to study the youth in a city context, a midsize town and a rural community in South Africa and in the Nordic countries. The Swedish case study did not materialise and hence only a city locality (Søndre Nordstrand in Norway) and a rural community (Lammi in Finland) were explored from the Nordic perspective.⁴ South Africa was represented with four case studies, two city contexts, one midsize town and one rural community. The grounds for selecting the locations were based on a wide presence of “youth at the margins” across this urban–rural spectrum. The South African case studies included a heterogeneous urban area (Pretoria Central), an urban residential area south of Johannesburg (Riverlea), a residential area in a midsize town (Franschhoek) and a deep rural residential area (Emakhazeni). The context-specific reasons for choosing these localities are further discussed in each case study chapter.

After selecting the localities, a mapping process was undertaken to gain a broader understanding of the chosen areas. This mapping was done based on a unifying mapping document, which included generating basic background information on the different locations, specific information about young people in those locations,

4 Even though the Swedish case study did not materialise, a Swedish researcher, Per Pettersson, remained an active participant throughout the research process.

as well as information on the FBOs and their work among young people in those locations.

As our aim was to conduct a coherent study in these various localities, we spent a lot of time in planning the research together. To implement our joint planning effectively, the research team met annually. Additionally, the project and case study leaders had frequent Skype meetings.⁵

With the support of our theoretical exploration of key concepts from the perspective of our different (South African and Nordic) contextual realities (see Chapters 2 to 5) and the information on the localities from the mapping phase, we planned the individual and focus group interviews that were to be conducted with young people in each locality (see Appendices 1 and 2). In certain case studies the strategy was to start with interviewing the youths and to concentrate on their views and perceptions and only after that to interview the resource persons in the area, but in other case studies we interviewed the resource people first to gain a sense of the complexity of the specific environments. These schedules were contextualised to fit the specific location and, in the Nordic cases, translated into an official language of the country. Moreover, it was left to the different case study teams to use the two interview guides as a basis to conduct their interviews with resource persons from across the local faith-based, public and educational sectors. The initial plan was to include at least ten young women and men in the individual interviews, but the realisation varied to some degree. Each case study chapter contains more specific information on how the data were collected in that locality.

We selected participating youths from each study locality according to set criteria (purposive sampling). These set criteria included age and young people who clearly fitted the so-called NEET category (that is, young people not in education, employment or training) or were in danger of becoming NEET (see more on this concept below). Certain organisations and resource people assisted us in this initial sampling approach and by implication in getting access to the young people whom we interviewed. Snowball sampling was also used, where the initial participants were asked to direct researchers to additional participants. In most cases we interviewed the participants only once, with the few exceptions being people who participated in individual as well as in focus group interviews. This implies that we obtained limited information from each participant, with the result that we did not gain deeper insight into the living circumstances and experiences in each research setting. We acknowledge the limitations of our chosen research approach and methods, and we hope that our groundwork will inspire more exploratory approaches in future (see especially Chapter 14).

5 The YOMA meetings were held in Paarl, South Africa (2012), Tshwane, South Africa (2013), Lammi, Finland (2014), Pretoria, South Africa (2015) (only case study leaders) and Paarl, South Africa (2016).

Some teams used inductive content analysis while others opted for inductive thematic analysis to analyse the data. Most teams utilised the Atlas-ti analysis programme. The analytical methods are reported on in more detail in the respective chapters together with the findings of a specific locality (see Chapters 6 to 11). The case study leaders met once during the data-gathering process to compare the preliminary findings and make some changes to the data-collection approach, if that was warranted.

Ethical clearance was obtained according to the guidelines of each country and the respective universities where the researchers were employed. In a study focusing on NEET youths, ethical considerations are of particular importance since the majority of them are in a vulnerable position. For example, it was necessary to ensure that participants understood their right to withdraw from the research at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Throughout the book, we use pseudonyms when referring to all the research participants to protect their identities.

Some researchers were previously known in the study localities, whereas others visited the localities for the first time at the beginning of the study. Thus, a variety of roles both helped the research and in some cases made the process more complicated. These insider and outsider roles are analysed more closely in Chapter 12 from an intersectional perspective and in Chapter 14 from the point of view of a critical theological voice.

The South African–Nordic interdisciplinary research cooperation is clearly evident in the book. The theoretical explorations of the key concepts of the study in Part 1 and the summarising analytical chapters in Part 3 were written by South African–Nordic author teams. While this strategy slowed down the analytical and writing process, it had the positive effect of conceptual rigour, since all the terms used and the results presented were pondered and weighed thoroughly so that they made sense in both contexts.

1.3 Conceptual Demarcation

As already alluded to, this book derives from a research agenda that was intended to pursue further the development of a comparative South–North/South African–Nordic perspective on the place and contribution of faith-based organisational agencies in the sphere of social welfare and social development. Based on what we decided would be our more pertinent focus, we decided from the outset that our collaboration would contribute to the growing body of comparative youth research necessitated by what scholars had already identified in the mid-2000s as a distinctive trend – “the globalisation of youth and youth research” (Holm & Helve: 2005, xv). This did not mean that we were not aware from the very beginning of the

valid criticism in the literature of a one-sided focus on “youth-related problems” at the expense of focusing on what young people offer “as a positive force in society, as a resource that is changing the culture as well as societal structures” (Holm & Helve: 2005, xi–xii). At the same time, however, it was through our initial literature research that we found an important justification for the choice of our topical focus – a concern with the structural problems of social exclusion, marginalisation and pauperisation that a disturbing number of youth populations across the globe are experiencing (Swart: 2013a, 6).

We started the conceptualisation of our research by recognising that the phenomenon of youth marginalisation and its related social problems were a societal challenge shared today by both the Global South and Global North. This did not mean overlooking the fact that the contemporary South African youth context represents an extreme case in comparison to the youth contexts of the Nordic partners (Swart: 2013a, 6–7). On the contrary, we found important supporting perspectives in an initial corpus of critical scholarship that emphasised the failure of governments and market forces to implement policy and creative development opportunities for South Africa’s youth. Over against the idea of a “demographic dividend”, which holds that the youth bulge of almost half of the population has great potential to promote economic growth (National Youth Development Agency: 2011a; The Presidency, Republic of South Africa: 2009), the underlying argument was that South African society could not capitalise on this dividend because a large section of South Africa’s youth remains “stuck in the margins” (Shezi et al.: 2003) – not only in the geographical sense, but also in terms of young people’s personal physical deprivation, structural isolation and lack of opportunities for development in the post-apartheid democratic dispensation (cf. e.g. Crause & Booyens: 2010; Everatt: 2007; Gumede: n.d.).

From the very beginning our conceptualisation did not want to shy away from the fact that there are considerable contextual differences between South Africa and the Nordic countries, as reflected in the extreme case of South Africa’s marginalised youths. And yet we found an important justification for our decision to embark on a comparative South African–Nordic research undertaking from learning how the problems of youth marginalisation were in fact receiving increasing attention in Nordic youth research. As suggested by a considerable corpus of literature, “marginality”, “marginalisation”, “the margins” and the related notion of “social exclusion” constituted concepts that had moved towards the centre of a distinctive Nordic youth research agenda, not least in the countries represented in our research. Importantly, however, we also learned from our exploration that these concepts were not confined to studies of youths in the hinterlands of Nordic society, but were also adopted to understand and study social and economic processes and phenomena that were affecting young people more generally (see e.g. Aaltonen:

2012; Andersson: 2003; Chisholm: 2001; Heggen: 2000; Hertz & Johansson: 2012; Nyssölä: 1999; Paakkunainen: 2002; Sletten: 2011; Storen: 2011).

In exploring the role of organised religion in the lives of so-called marginalised youths in our selected localities, we decided to focus on the more open concept of FBOs. This not only meant that we would adopt an organisational concept that had become widely used and accepted in international development discourses (see e.g. Clarke & Jennings: 2008a; Global Health Council: 2005; Jones & Petersen: 2011; Marshall: 2011; Oluwu: 2011; Piper: 2009; Van der Merwe & Swart: 2010). It also meant that we would be open – on the basis of interfaith sensitivity and in accordance with a definition of faith-based organisations by Clarke and Jennings (2008b, 6) – to engaging with any organisation that derives its inspiration and guidance from the teachings and principles of a particular faith tradition, or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within that faith in the various case study localities.

Furthermore, we adopted the broad concept of FBOs because we contended that our research would be relevant from an international, comparative perspective, and in this way make an important contribution to addressing the lack of knowledge about FBOs' relationship and involvement with marginalised youths in their everyday environments. In other words, for us this meant that our research would make an important contribution to filling what we identified as a significant gap internationally in both theological and social science literature studies in addressing the question of how and to what extent FBOs are involved in addressing the plight of marginalised youths (Swart: 2013a, 24–25). By engaging in extensive empirical investigation in a range of differentiated localities and by developing different heuristic lenses to focus on the material,⁶ we anticipated that the research would serve as an important testing ground for the new positive appreciation of religious agency in the sphere of social welfare and development in both the South African and the Nordic European contexts. This included reference to the research outcomes related to the South African–Nordic research collaboration alluded to at the beginning of this chapter⁷ (Bäckström et al.: 2010; Bäckström et al.: 2011; Swart et al.: 2012). Not insignificantly from a South African perspective, however, it also included a wider spectrum of literature from the social sciences (see e.g. Maharaj et al.: 2008; Piper: 2009) that explicitly acknowledged the potential and actual role of FBOs in addressing the problem of youth marginalisation (Everatt: 2001; Everatt et al.: 2005; Shezi et al.: 2003).

6 Our intention from the start was to develop a threefold gender, sociological and theological perspective on the empirical material.

7 See 1.1 and footnote 2.

In our endeavour to produce policy-relevant research, we also incorporated the notion of social cohesion as part of our conceptual framework. We justified this conceptual choice by observing that, while the concept of social cohesion appeared to feature less prominently in the scholarly literature, it was highlighted in policy and related strategically oriented documentation on youth development (Swart: 2013a, 12). As a closer study of such documentation from both the South African, Nordic and broader European contexts revealed, social cohesion appeared to have a central place in the conceptualisation of policy addressing the problem of youth marginalisation in the respective societies (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe: 2008; National Youth Development Agency: 2011a; The Presidency, Republic of South Africa: 2009, 1; Weingaertner: 2010, 5). From the vantage point of this shared concern, we therefore anticipated that a similar understanding of social cohesion could emerge (Swart: 2013a, 12–13).

Social cohesion, we determined, could be defined as a strongly value-oriented and politically oriented concept denoting a conscious concern with creating new conditions of equity, inclusion, active citizenship, human dignity and solidarity in society at large. As a key priority for action aimed at the youth, the concept essentially denoted a process of strategic intervention that should lead to the creation of societal conditions significantly enhancing young people's opportunities, in particular those who find themselves in marginalised and vulnerable positions for whatever reason, for civic participation in all spheres of life: social, cultural, economic, educational and political. This, in turn, forms the basis for an understanding of social cohesion in which it is projected that young people's new-found participation would generate a dynamics of positive identity formation, active citizenship and the building of self-esteem and a sense of belonging (Mairesse: 2010; National Youth Development Agency: 2011a, 197–254; National Youth Development Agency: 2011b, 48–49; Schild: 2010; Schildrick: 2010; The Presidency, Republic of South Africa: 2009; Weingartner: 2010; Wulff: 2010).

Finally, while the concept of NEET – an acronym for young people not in education, employment or training – did not form part of our initial conceptualisation (cf. Swart: 2013a), it constituted a somewhat later and central conceptual expansion of what we saw to be a useful framework for capturing the essential realities of marginalised young people in a very concrete way. On the basis of our gradual exploration of the literature (see Chapter 2 in this book), we increasingly learned how the concept is located at the centre of present-day social science discourses and debates on youth marginalisation. This did not mean that we would not remain attentive to the criticisms of the concept in the academic literature, such as that the concept may fall short in dealing sufficiently with the full reality of contemporary youth vulnerability, or even more critically that it may capture a misrepresentation of young people's self-perceptions. However, as our frequent use of the concept in this book suggests, these acknowledged shortcomings do not preclude the use-

fulness of NEET as a conceptual framework for comparative research such as our own.

1.4 Distinctive Features of the Book

We have endeavoured to stick closely to the initial conceptual demarcation outlined above, but this conceptual focus also underwent a critical development of its own. We contend that our book can be favourably compared with recent titles from the field of international youth research such as *Youth 'At the Margins': Critical Perspectives and Experiences of Engaging Youth in Research Worldwide* (Bastien & Holmarsdottir: 2015) and *Youth at the Margins: Perspectives on Arab Mediterranean Youth* (Sánchez-Montijano & Sánchez Garcia: 2019). Admittedly, these examples are titles of anthologies of international and global scope that represent only a small, selective sample of a broad focus worldwide on cross-disciplinary youth-related research today. Yet at the same time, when considered against the background of our initial exploration of the literature (see 1.3 above), they represent prominent examples of a sustained international interest in the topic of youth marginalisation, noticeably defined in both instances by the catchphrase “youth at the margins”.

We are confident therefore that this book can take its rightful place in the ongoing international explorations on the topic of contemporary youth marginalisation and we accordingly want to identify a number of distinctive features that characterise our work.

Firstly, we present this book and its perspectives as the product of a carefully planned inductive research process. At the core of what it has to offer are the empirical perspectives derived from the six case studies presented in Chapters 6 to 11. In this endeavour the researchers from the respective case study teams have in their own concerted ways tried to relate their findings to the contextual and conceptual explorations in the chapters in Part 1. Yet central to the discussions in the case study chapters (Part 2) is a deliberate attempt to give a voice to the young people with whom interviews were conducted in the various case study locations. As a distinctive outcome, it is the perspectives and experiences of these young people that count in the first place and give direction to the collective perspective in this book. Consequently, it is by drawing on the words and insights of these young people that the authors grapple with the meaning of key concepts such as marginalisation, margins, social cohesion and social exclusion.

Secondly, a distinguishing feature of the book is the topical focus on youth marginalisation by bringing to the foreground a unique faith-based interest. Indeed, it is evident that not much has changed since our initial review of the literature indicated a noticeable gap internationally in addressing the question of FBOs' involvement in the lives of marginalised youths. This book makes a contribution

towards filling this gap and in the process initiating an empirically informed deliberation on such an involvement and relationship. As the stipulation of the threefold aim of our research at the beginning of this chapter indicates (see 1.1), learning about this involvement and relationship has been the major focus of our conversations, with young people in the first place, but secondly also with a selection of resource persons who included leaders and representatives from local FBOs. Through this endeavour and the findings and insights that have emanated from it, we believe that this book advances what has been missing from the discourse so far, namely a necessary combined topical interest in the social development role of FBOs and the contemporary challenge of youth marginalisation. As our readers will discover, however, our discussions do not shy away from the fact that FBOs evince noticeable shortcomings – not least when viewed from the perspective of young people at the margins. At the same time, however, our findings also provide ample evidence that FBOs constitute a meaningful presence in local society and the lives of many young people at the margins that cannot be ignored. Whether in societies in the far north such as Finland and Norway or in the far south such as South Africa, our book bears testimony to the fact that this institutional presence deserves ongoing investigation and consideration across the interdisciplinary spectrum of theology, religious studies and the social sciences.

Thirdly, while this book reflects a research interest focused on the role of organised religion in the lives of marginalised young people – based on the open concept of FBOs – this exploration has turned out to deliver findings on more than just that. By exploring the role of FBOs in the lives of marginalised young people, the authors of this book have – perhaps inevitably one could say – also gained some valuable insights into the lived religion of young people at the margins, as well as into the role of religion in the lives of young people at the margins. Although more pronounced in the South African case studies but by no means absent in the two Nordic case studies, this perspective gives evidence of a high degree of religiosity among significant numbers of young people at the margins. For these young people elements such as faith, belief in a personal God and learning the art of prayer clearly seemed to have mattered and had a decisive influence on shaping their sense of moral agency and hopeful attitudes towards the future. And yet, as the case study findings also significantly show, this is an expression of lived religion that more often could be traced to particular FBOs and what they had to offer in terms of religious prescriptions, guidance and devotional practices.

Fourthly, as an important qualification to its perspective on FBOs, this book by no means romanticises the role and presence of such organisations in the lives of marginalised young people. Based on the case study findings and the perspectives developed on those findings in the final part, this book leaves its readers with the impression of a group of young people whose desire for emancipation from the life-worlds that label them as marginalised remained by and large unfulfilled. Their

social realities do not suggest that the young people necessarily lacked a voice or agency, or lived lives without meaning and purpose. But these positive features did not invest them with the power to overcome by themselves the conditions of marginalisation entrenched in the structural make-up and operations of their respective societies. Consequently, it is this realisation of unfulfilled emancipation that necessarily also has a direct bearing on how the role of FBOs should be valued. A critical perspective developed throughout this book pertains to the way in which FBOs are consistently seen as falling short by not drawing on the agency of marginalised young people to forge relationships that would more purposefully work towards overcoming the structural conditions conducive to their marginalisation. In a nutshell, what is absent from this relational dynamic between FBOs and young people is a more active striving for social justice and liberation (or emancipation) emanating from solidarity relationships (see Chapter 14).

Fifthly, this book does not avoid critical self-reflection and introspection either. As evident from two of the concluding analytical chapters in particular (Chapters 12 and 14), there are members of our research team who hold strong views regarding our own conduct as researchers and the methodology that we have used. They advance arguments such as that we have by and large remained privileged outsiders with limited insight into the life-worlds of the young people with whom we have engaged (Chapter 12), and that we have fallen short of implementing a liberative research practice undergirded by the fundamentals of direct participation, action, solidarity and social justice (Chapter 14). Indeed, as the authors of this introductory chapter we do not perceive these criticisms as a devaluation of our collective contribution. We believe instead that these critical insights are an indispensable dimension of what our book has to offer; they are insights that do not devalue our advancement of a very specific research agenda and focus, but rather present a very important challenge within the realm of youth-related research, not least from a faith-based perspective. From this vantage point, it was perhaps inevitable that an inductive research process steered by a predetermined work plan designed by a few individuals would reveal its limitations on the road of discovery. Our self-reflection and introspection highlight those limitations in an honest way and at the same time pave the way toward a mode of engagement that should come ever closer to the ideals of a liberative research practice.

Sixthly, and finally, this book reflects a research outcome that values an openness toward interpretation of the findings. This is perhaps first and foremost suggested by the choice of the main title of our book in question form: “Stuck in the Margins?” On the one hand, as our readers will encounter, there is a strong line of interpretation running through the discussions in Part 2 and 3 that leans toward an affirmative answer to the question in our title. According to this understanding, the young people from the case study locations, but significantly also the local FBOs involved in their lives in one way or another, can be said to be subjected to a state of seemingly

permanent marginalisation – from the point of view of their physical separation from worlds of greater social, economic and political opportunity, but also from their mental perspective. On the other hand, however, this line of interpretation can also be said to be overhauled by a line of interpretation that until the end of the book does not want to abandon hope for a better future and the belief that social justice, liberation from marginalisation and oppression, and participation as full citizens are realistic ideals. In this line of interpretation concepts such as marginalisation, exclusion but also social cohesion therefore have relative value as they are challenged by new imaginaries of what may become possible when the voices, understandings and agency of young people at the so-called margins were to shift to the centre of larger liberative practices.

1.5 Structure of the Book

Now that the six distinctive features of the book have been identified, we want to invite our readers to learn more about the content of our discussions. On offer is a book that is structured in three parts to reflect its contextual, theoretical, empirical, analytical and evaluative dimensions. The chapters are presented throughout as co-authored, with a noticeable feature being that the chapters in Part 1 and 3 were all produced by a combination of South African and Nordic members of the research team.

Under the heading “Contexts and Concepts”, the four chapters in Part 1 present theoretical and contextual explorations relevant to the conceptual apparatus of our book, all from a comparative South African-Nordic perspective. Here the discussions start off in Chapter 2 with Ignatius Swart, Bjørn Hallstein Holte and Heikki Hiilamo’s exploration of the NEET concept and its usefulness for comparative youth research such as the South African–Nordic research represented in this book. This is followed in Chapter 3 by Bjørn Hallstein Holte and Marlize Rabe’s drawing on publicly available statistical information across the economic, social and religious spectrum to develop a more informed contextual perspective on the diverse living situations of young people in South Africa and the Nordic countries. In Chapter 4 the contribution by Olav Helge Angell and Stephan de Beer next resumes the exploration of key concepts to make sense of the notion of social cohesion and its multiple theoretical constructions, operationalising it for the purpose of the case study research presented in the book. In Chapter 5 Auli Vähäkangas, Elina Hankela, Elisabet le Roux and Eddie Orsmond conclude Part 1 with their contribution on a contextually relevant framework for using and understanding the concept of FBOs in the book.

Next, under the heading “Case study perspectives”, the six chapters in Part 2 are aimed at giving an account of the various case studies. These case studies

stand at the core of what this book has to offer as a research undertaking and, as such, the respective chapters have to be read by taking the six distinctive features outlined above into account. Furthermore, it should also become clear how the case study presentations follow a particular sequential logic. This means that the size of the different localities is taken as the point of reference, after which the presentations proceed from the biggest to the smallest localities in order to look for similarities and differences between the city contexts and between the smaller localities, and not between the South–North divide underlying the research. In Chapter 6 Ignatius Swart, Marlize Rabe and Stephan de Beer begin the case study discussions with their account of what they have learned about the situation of marginalised young people and their relationship with FBOs in Pretoria Central, an area of diverse neighbourhoods located in South Africa's Gauteng province. In Chapter 7 Bjørn Hallstein Holte, Annette Leis-Peters, Olav Helge Angell and Kari Karsrud Korslien present their research on the interactions between FBOs and young people in the city district of Søndre Nordstrand in Oslo, Norway, and this leads them to specifically highlight the case of so-called “street youths”. In Chapter 8 Elina Hankela and Regie Nel present their account of young people's rather diverse perceptions and experiences of the FBOs in the neighbourhood of Riverlea, a spatial remnant of apartheid South Africa located on the outskirts of the City of Johannesburg. In Chapter 9 Eddie Orsmond, Anita Cloete, Elisabet le Roux and Zahraa McDonald shift the focus to the midsize town of Franschoek in the Western Cape province of South Africa to recount what they discovered about the dynamic between the FBOs and young people in NEET situations in this setting. In Chapter 10 Christina Landman and Hannelie Yates give an account of the views of the rural youth from two townships in the municipality of Emakhazeni on the Highveld of South Africa's Mpumalanga province in order to learn about the FBOs' engagement with the young people in this context. And lastly, in Chapter 11 Auli Vähäkangas, Anna Juntunen, Elina Juntunen, Johanna Vilja-Mantere and Ulla Siirto present their account of young people's experiences of the FBOs in Lammi, a small town located in the southern part of Finland.

Finally, under the heading “Discussions and Conclusions”, the three chapters in Part 3 seek to move the book to a deeper reflection on and interpretation of the collective case study findings by offering discussions from three perspectives: intersectional, sociology of religion and theological.

From the start of the research undertaking, we knew that aspects such as gender and race would be important to understand the life worlds of the young people who participated in our research. However, given the fact that some of the locations where the case studies were conducted were poles apart from each other, we wanted to analyse and reflect not only on the differences but also the similarities between the respective case study findings in a systematic way. Applying an intersectional lens became an obvious method to do exactly that, as seen in Marlize Rabe, Bjørn

Hallstein Holte, Zahraa McDonald, Olav Helge Angell and Ulla Siirto's contribution in Chapter 12.

Concepts for describing marginalisation often imply spatial metaphors distinguishing between inside and outside, or centre and periphery. In the process of analysing the case studies from the perspective of a sociology of religion, it was therefore not surprising that the dimension of space turned out to be an important prism that cast light on many of the findings. This is explicitly and purposefully shown in Chapter 13, where Annette Leis-Peters, Ignatius Swart, Anita Cloete and Per Pettersson opt for a spatial lens to interpret the case study findings.

From the beginning of this research journey we also very deliberately wanted to apply the appropriate theological lenses to gain a deeper understanding not only of the religious and spiritual elements in the lives of the young people who participated in our research, but also of the particular theological motivations and ideas that steer FBOs in their interactions with those young people. In Chapter 14, in addressing this theological aim, Auli Vähäkangas, Stephan de Beer, Elina Hankela and Annette Leis-Peters fittingly conclude the book by building their argumentation on a “liberative” theological perspective inclusive of liberation and diaconal theological approaches.

Part I

Contexts and Concepts

