

Social Science Research

Anthropology and Sociology in South Africa

BERNIZE THOBELANI SILETILE

Anthropology and Sociology Book

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Introduction: The Purpose of this Book

The prime focus of this book is to help readers understand the contributions made by Anthropologists and Sociologists in analyzing the social events in our society today. That is to bring awareness on how Social Science has helped in conducting and discovering certain issues that concern humanity. Yet Social Science with its tools continues to underline key issues needing to be addressed. And this book presents Anthropological and Sociological studies giving a clear example of why scientific research is necessary for the present age. To showcase changes that have taken place it is due to social science disciplines. And in this book, I first present studies of Anthropology in the chapter 1. In chapter 2, presents studies of Sociology covering different topics which shows why we need these disciplines in our contemporary society. In a sense, we deal with social issues that can only be studied and analyzed by professionals with scientific methods and the necessary tools used.

Chapter 1: What Does An Undergraduate Research Assistant Do?

This research seeks to discuss the purpose of undergraduate research assistants to give a clear understanding of what they do. But before we get there we need to understand what research is and why it is so important, and also we need to know who we refer to when we speak of an undergraduate research assistant. In this discussion, I will include some examples we can look at, that will assist us to get a sense of in-depth knowledge about research assistants.

First, I discuss what is research and explain why it is relevant in our society. I then move on to discuss undergraduate students and their role in the field of research. I also include arguments from other scholars to substantiate my argument with a clear demonstration. And lastly, I conclude with a summary that reveals what undergraduate research assistants do, it is necessary and beneficial.

Now to understand undergraduate research assistants we first need to look at the definition of what research is all about. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) research, it is a broad concept to understand for many people because they have their understanding of the concept. However, the research could be considered valid research only if it constitutes a scientific method (Bhattacharjee 2012). It is scientists who get to define the term because it follows certain steps to be validated as research. For instance, it is argued that the "Scientific method refers to a standardized set of techniques for building scientific knowledge such as how to make a valid observation, how to interpret results, and how to generate those results" (Bhattacharjee 2012:5). This is something I relate to when I conducted my fieldwork in Wesbank township in 2019. And it is important to know the steps and set of skills to apply for methodology, especially when researching to collect qualitative data. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) research also follows five steps that define what would be considered true valid research and these steps are; identification and definition of the research problem, formulation of hypothesis, collection of data, analysis and interpretation, and lastly explanation of the findings of a research problem.

Based on the above argument, it's what would be considered and accepted as true valid research which constitutes the scientific method. And those are the steps that researchers need to follow. However, with regards to the relevance of research in our society, is that research contributes to the needs of the people. According to Kleinhans (1994), research is important in helping to address social issues that people deal with daily. For example, the issue of crime is one of the major issues that continue to affect many people. Now research helps to expose the issues and the cause behind them. Research is also relevant in our society, as a result, it helps us to improve the safety of the people. Government can look at challenges that citizens face and come up with a solution to reduce crime. Identifying the problem which is now considered a threat, is often due to the discovery found by researchers who researched a particular issue. For example, research can also explain the high rate of crime as a result of unemployment, the lack of policing in the low-income areas where most people are faced with inequalities, and which is where the majority of the working-class people live (see Giddens 2009). Furthermore, everything explains what is research and why it is relevant in contemporary society.

Now that we know what research is and its relevance in the real world. It's time to learn more about undergraduate students and their role in the field of research. This will help us to gain knowledge on what undergraduate research assistants do. For we know that undergraduate research assistants are undergraduate students who enroll at university (T.D.N. Silva et al, 2004).

For example, when I was an undergraduate student at the University of the Western Cape. I eye-witnessed that lectures in the Anthropology department worked with undergraduate students on their research projects, and this was a way to prepare students for their future research projects - should they become interested in specializing in the field of research. Because in undergrad we were taught research theories and how to apply them when doing

research. So lectures in the Anthropology and Sociology department employed students to research certain topics where they had to do a literature review before going to the field. It was a way students could learn and have practical experience in researching. In other words, undergraduates became part of those research projects in which they were asked to join to gain practical experience. As I discussed earlier, what is research and why it is relevant, we learned the duties of being a researcher that they need to have experience, not just a theory. This is why there are lectures and graduate programs that recruit undergrad students, which they saw potential in them. Undergraduate students can now learn to collect and analyze data, and write reports to address certain issues. Lectures and supervisors are there to assist and guide students, in that way they get to grow and know the expectations at the postgraduate level. Let me explain. During my second and third year as an undergrad student, we were given assignments that required us as students to do fieldwork. I had to choose a topic to research, in which interviews and field notes were necessary because all the information would be needed to write an essay and report my findings. However, I could have not managed how to do things if they were not explained to me, especially if I had not worked with lectures to become a research assistant. Because undergraduate research assistants learn to do things they must know before graduation. In my case, I was able to do my honors research with the knowledge and experience I learned in my undergrad. This is why I was able to find participants for my study and get to know them day by day.

The first thing I knew was that anthropologist researchers get to know people in a lengthy time. So when I worked on my independent research, I saw an opportunity to volunteer. Volunteer to work in my community for the Wesbank Women for Change project. That way I was able to do interviews with my participants in a conversational style, and I had volunteered not to make my participants feel uncomfortable - cause they would have seen me as an outsider and not want to disclose any information that I needed. My strategy worked because although they knew I was a

student doing research, they ended up seeing me as one of their own. After all, I was part of the team. Through walking ethnography, I was able to observe and collect as much data as needed. And walking ethnography is an interview between the researcher and the participant in a conversational style rather than doing a formal interview (see Jones et al, 2008; Yi'En 2013). The point that I make to use myself as an example, is to demonstrate the benefits of undergraduate students who become research assistants. Believe it or not, undergraduate research assistants learn to become better leaders of tomorrow. What benefits them also benefits the research companies and universities (see R.E. Landrum 2002). If we look at things from a broad perspective, we would note that many undergraduate students end up becoming lecturers while others become great assets to research companies.

We now get the idea of what undergraduate research assistants are all about. As we know, research itself it's broad and it depends on what field we focus on. As for social scientists, they do things the way I have discussed and explained concerning the scientific method which is the only way to validate the research. Therefore, undergraduate research assistants continue to follow up the instructions given to them either to do face-to-face interviews or to analyze the data they've collected. This also reminds me of the time when I had to do my sociology assignment. Now in this particular case, we were selected as a group of 17 students that had to focus on the budget of the low-income family. For this reason, our lecture was interested in the social determinants of health that concern higher-income families, middle-class families, and low-income families. Although as undergrad students we were divided into groups, our mission was to interview people from different backgrounds, do literature reviews, look at the statistics, and analyze the data. Based on our findings we were asked to write reports and do a presentation. The lecturer took all the information and included it in the chapters of the book she wrote. From that example, we assisted the lecture with information that was part of our assignment we had to do. Other than that, lecturers often ask undergraduate students who are

in the third year to assist with readings and marking tutorial assignments of the first-year students.

These expectations are there to assist undergraduates and prepare them for post-graduate studies. Yet in undergrad, students are still new and therefore they continue to learn lessons they do not know. This is why lectures take undergraduates and allow them to work on different projects, and there are also graduate programs that assist students throughout universities and colleges.

Another important point to take note of is the way of thinking. When undergraduates are exposed to research programs that benefit them, they become critical thinkers in the end. This shows the growth that has taken place in them. Even during office hours, students often help lecturers with marking and filing some of the important portfolios in the office or assisting the administration where help is needed. Everything clearly shows they are not only limited to working on research projects because there is a variety of other things they can do.

One of the professors I know from the University of the Western Cape, Heike Becker, in the Department of Anthropology. Back in the years, she conducted her research in the Cape Flats on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa. To look at new identities in post-apartheid South Africa. Her article called "How We See Our Culture: Photographic self-representation from the Cape Flats, South Africa" (2015), is a great example of ethnographic work in which you can see the qualitative research that she worked with people to find new information about new emerging identities in post-apartheid South Africa. I mention this because such research projects require lecturers to work with students in collaborating with participants, for we know that students are often there to assist the lecturers in their research projects. Now such opportunities are learning experiences to see how things are done. Put it this way. A student may see how the lecture speaks to participants in the field, then after interviews, the lecture can

show the undergraduate students how to analyze data by beginning to transcribe some of the interviews. Also to look at the themes that come up, and take those themes to see what academic articles that link to each theme. As time goes by, the undergraduate research assistant gets to see the missing gaps or what has changed over the past years, even come up with a solution to the problem or discover what was problematic that no one could see. Those are some fruits that undergraduates tend to benefit from. And of course, it's all because students partake in many research projects, working with professionals who continue to guide and show them how it's done.

In conclusion, you can see that this paper has discussed and revealed what undergraduates' research assistants do. I have provided examples and drawn on articles I have read. Most importantly, I had discussed what research is, to give a clear understanding before we jumped to the undergraduate research assistant. Also, I have made it clear why research is relevant in the contemporary world, and I had discussed the involvement of undergraduates in the field of research. And to conclude, it is obvious that undergraduate students benefit from taking the path of becoming researchers who have acquired knowledge and skills to make this world a better place. As I had discussed it is not only students who benefit, but also people they will be working with in the future. And it does not change the fact that they are future researchers and leaders of tomorrow.

Role of Medical Anthropologists Is Beyond Academic Research and Writing

In this section, I discuss that the role of medical anthropologists as beyond academic research and writing, looking at their involvement as researchers, brokers, collaborators, and health activists. This paper aims to discuss and demonstrate whether their direct involvement in the health field helps to strengthen or weaken the Anthropology discipline. I discuss each anthropologist listed above with a paradigm which is a model of explanation they are assigned to. Also, I use some examples to give a clear understanding of my argument and the position I take. In conclusion, I sum up the argument and state the role I would choose if I were to become a medical anthropologist and explain the drive that would cause me to make such a decision.

Medical anthropologists are professional researchers who work in health-related matters that concern people, going beyond the affairs of academic research and writing (Pfeiffer & Nichter, 2008). Meaning that their involvement with people is not only to study them but also to find ways and solutions to the problem. However, gathering information to address the issue and help the voiceless to be heard is the beginning of good work. Hunter's (2006) reading demonstrates to us that an anthropologist researcher goes beyond academic research and gets exposed to other issues when working with participants. The direct involvement with participants includes observation, face-to-face interviews, informal conversations, and many more. Take the example of qualitative and quantitative data, it is an anthropologist researcher who goes to the field to dig out the information where other Social Scientists refuse to work. For example, Hunter's (2006) work makes it obvious that when he carried out his research on 'Fatherhood' he was the kind of anthropologist researcher. Yet he intervened by using the political economy paradigm in explaining the absence of fatherhood with responsibilities that are left behind and as a result of that, it says much about the changing social-economic circumstances. Indeed, this substantiates the argument that an anthropologist researcher become more involved with participants in the field, and always report back to people who are

in power that hold a higher position like policymakers, government, and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) to decide on what should be done based on the findings of the researcher.

The direct involvement of an anthropologist researcher does have a good impact on the lives of many people including the discipline. For instance, “The flow of international aid from wealthier to poorer countries has increased dramatically over the last decade” (Pfeiffer & Nitcher, 2008: 410). Based on Pfeiffer and Nitcher’s argument, it demonstrates the involvement of government organizations and NGOs – in implementing health care services where it’s unavailable in the poor communities. The involvement is due to the research that was done by anthropologist researchers who were directly involved with the local communities. In addition to that, other medical anthropologists always ensure that people who need help have their voices heard. All the credit goes to anthropologists and researchers who conduct the research and do the fieldwork. The work of anthropologist researchers has also proven the fact that other medical anthropologists such as brokers, collaborators, and health activists cannot function without the researchers because they will not have something to work on without research being done by an anthropologist researcher. Nonetheless, an anthropologist researcher is often faced with challenges that concern the research he has done. For example, if he had researched HIV/AIDS among the male population in the local communities, that does not mean the gathered information will be considered useful. That is a downfall although researchers get funded to do the research. At some point, it could be argued that researchers have a disadvantaged side but they play a critical role as anthropologists who get involved beyond academic work. We also know that policymakers are to be blamed for disregarding most of the findings anthropologist researchers have brought into the light (Mercia & Emily, 2012). Even Mercia and Emily’s point of view supports my argument that anthropologist researchers go through difficulties to find acceptance for the research they have conducted.

Collaborators are also medical anthropologists who play a critical role in their position. These anthropologists are directly involved with many people including social workers, researchers, and practitioners. For instance, (Lobban, 2008: 176) argues that “Others view collaborative research through the lens of the same history of anthropological research and would argue that the approach reflects an increasing decolonization of the discipline.” Lobban’s argument is a clear demonstration that collaborators as medical anthropologists also get directly involved in areas that were excluded due to colonialism, and their main concern is the human population which was excluded in the past. Therefore, the collaborators visit the areas that were socially excluded to make them visible. For example, if research was conducted somewhere in the Eastern Cape city, the collaborators would go back to the Eastern Cape province and reach out to communities that were left out. Also, they work with social workers and the community to collect information on what is lacking in particular areas where clinics and other social services need to be improved or established. Regarding the article of Lobban (2008), it’s clear that she used a political paradigm in explaining history during colonialism where anthropologists were involved with the missionaries in defining many societies that were colonized. Her argument show and highlights the role collaborators play in decolonizing the discipline in the 21st Century. She also outlines the social changes that involve women as anthropologists which is something that was not accepted in the past. The role of collaborators in contemporary society, says much about the change in socio-economic circumstances with regards to women’s status and the rest of the population who were not exposed to such roles and opportunities. In addition, the change has helped those who were excluded to be included.

The critics of collaborators are that they collaborate with other social scientists regarding the information they have collected, but as medical anthropologists their power is limited. Meaning that when it comes to deciding to implement health services that are lacking, it’s not in their power to do so. Nonetheless, their involvement goes beyond the Academy since they collaborate

with other researchers and the human population who are being studied. It is argued that “The extent of community collaboration, aim for accessibility and increased dialogue with patients underlying all of Dr. Puloko’s strategies meant that the psychiatric unit was distinguished by comparison with a general dissatisfaction with hospital services” (Poltorak, 2014: 750). Poltorak’s (2014) argument supports the idea I mentioned earlier, that collaborators work closely with communities and social scientists. Poltorak also illustrates the fact that the work of the collaborators is concerned about the well-being of the people and aims to ensure they have access to social services in their community.

Brokers are also medical anthropologists who like to come in between people and social scientists. They associate themselves with the Health Public services and people who are considered to be patients. These anthropologists do not take sides but rather listen to both sides because they are supposed to be neutral. Poltorak (2014) played the same role when he interviewed a woman that was healed by the new evangelical church from mental illness. He was a broker because he had to distance himself from whatever he believed in by not taking sides as an anthropologist broker (Poltorak, 2014: 749). Indeed, Brokers are anthropologists who are expected to remain neutral although they get directly involved with both public health services and patients, and their downfall is that they are not to take sides which limits what they think of a culture or religious person they are expected to interview. Another example we can look at, is Professor Sakhumzi Mfecane from the University of the Western Cape, he was asked to research male circumcision but as a Xhosa-speaking person, he did not support the idea of what he was expected to do as a broker. Mfecane, however, researched male circumcision because as a broker he had to remain neutral by distancing himself from his cultural beliefs regarding the issue of male circumcision. It is easy to take note that Mfecane played a role that is not biased in taking any sides, he had to be neutral.

Now concerning the reading by Poltorak (2014), he intervenes by using folk beliefs in explaining the different beliefs that people have within the community he was directly involved in, and explaining people's different views and understanding they have about the causes of illness and diseases. The folk belief was a suitable paradigm, as a result, the woman who had a mental illness was believed to be possessed by demonic spirits in which the church managed to help her since they had their understanding of the situation.

Health activists are also medical anthropologists who play an important role in the health field. However, their involvement strengthens the discipline in the sense that the role they play differs from the rest of the medical anthropologists. For instance, "The activist impulse to 'do good, help others, save lives and 'make a better world has always been a running theme within medical anthropology" (Mercia & Emily, 2012: 14). Mercia and Emily's argument shows that health activists are concerned about the human population and that they often fight for health as a human right for people, so their role indicates that they are not neutral because they take the side of the people who can't speak for themselves. They fight for justice with regard to the issue of health that concerns all human populations. Also, they use their knowledge to question power but the downfall is that they don't work much like other medical anthropologists such as researchers, brokers, and collaborators. However, the involvement with people strengthens the discipline because they are doing what is right by being the voice of the people who need to be heard. Mercia and Emily used the political economy paradigm to explain why health activists fight for justice when it comes to the health system. Their direct involvement shows that there are inequalities that exist in the health system and therefore they are involved in fighting corruption. For example, the wealthy population tends to benefit the most from the health system. This is why health activists challenge those who are in power about the inequalities, and that is also why the political economy paradigm was necessary for highlighting the issue of

inequalities. And health activists have shown that they are involved beyond the academy and research because they protest with people on the ground in fighting for equality.

The role I would choose to become as a medical anthropologist is to become a health activist because they work and protest with people who fight for equal rights. The aim that drives me is the fact that these anthropologists fight for poor people who cannot afford a better lifestyle and access to things that concern their well-being. To conclude, medical anthropologists as researchers, collaborators, brokers, and health activists indeed get involved beyond academic research and writing. Due to their direct involvement, this brings a good impact on strengthening the discipline. And anyone who wouldn't want to become a medical anthropologist, then they are missing out on a lot of opportunities.

Creating Memory in Cape Town: Reflecting On The Past To Present Lived Experiences



This research is focused on memory and place in post-apartheid South Africa. Exploring people's lives in Cape Town communities to learn how they create meaning in their memory and the place they live in. Looking at South Africa's past and present, everyone has a story to share. This paper is to enlighten the readers on how people make sense of their past to present lived experiences, sharing stories about their life history. Life history focuses on the 'memory' of past events (Portelli, 1998). And 'place' plays an essential role in what people experienced in the past to the present (see Mesthrie 2000; Field 2012).

Memory is one of the most popular topics people tend to talk about or rely on when sharing stories and events of the past to demonstrate how they were affected by them (see, Mesthrie, 2000). Also, memory helps people reconstruct their reality about the past, and that is why we have an oral history (Portelli, 1998). It shows that the time has come to give voice to the voiceless, allowing them to reflect on the past and share stories about past experiences. As we know, new

reports will help reconstruct their history and help to override the colonial narrative that is biased about the past - when looking into South African History (see Fredrickson 1981; Cooper 1994).

Mesthrie (2000) and Field (2012) provide a clear example in their study as to why we need an oral history and how it has helped many South Africans who were under oppression by the apartheid system. Both studies have shown why 'memory' and 'place' are essential when speaking of the past and present lived experiences. Furthermore, this study further elaborates on the importance of oral history.

This paper firstly discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. I then discuss the methodology as to how the study was conducted during the fieldwork. Afterward, I discuss memories and places of the interviews I had with my participants that demonstrate the importance of oral history. We should know oral history to help us understand why people need to reconstruct their history and identity in the contemporary world. In conclusion, I sum up the argument in this paper and comment on creating a memory in a place.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study focuses on the participants' life histories from Mitchells Plain and Wesbank township, where I chose to do my research because many communities are in the Western Cape region. This research shows the importance of a relationship between memory and place in Cape Town communities. There is always a strong connection between memory and place in the theoretical perspective. Moreover, both memory and place are the conceptual frameworks for this study, which give a clear understanding of life history and past to present lived experiences (Portelli, 1998; Mesthrie, 2010).

Methodology

In September 2018, I researched the life history stories of Capetonians because I was interested in learning how they create meaning in their memory concerning their lived experiences. Get to hear what they had to share about their memory and place in post-apartheid South Africa. That is why I call this study 'Creating Memory In Cape Town: Reflecting On The Past To Present Lived Experiences.' During my fieldwork, the tools I used to collect data included field notes and voice recordings since the interviews were face-to-face or one-on-one with the participants. Before the discussions took place, I had explained my research study, and all my participants signed the concern forms. Meaning, in other words, we agreed on my research, but the participants have asked me to use false names to protect their identities. Furthermore, I use made-up nicknames in this research to fulfill their wishes.

On a Friday afternoon, after I left my Sociology lecture, I met with my first participant named Jake because we studied together at the University of the Western Cape. It was accessible to meet up at campus. We met to discuss a suitable day to interview and where the interview was to take place. Thankfully, we agreed to interview at the University of the Western Cape since the campus was empty and less chaotic on Saturdays. So Saturday morning, I took a taxi from Wesbank to Bellville. When I arrived at Bellville Station, I walked to campus and arrived at 10:43 AM. Jake called and informed me that he was on his way. He also used public transport (Bus), the best option to get to campus.

The University of the Western Cape's Library was open when we met, but we chose to interview at the Study Hall, the only place that was open 24/7. Before we began the interview, Jake went outside to smoke his cigarette, and I assumed he was a bit nervous about the interview questions. Perhaps he was not ready, but I had to ask if it was okay, although he knew the research topic I was conducting. When Jake stood outside, I thought of ways to address the

questions to make him feel comfortable. I suggested that it was best to proceed the way he wanted because it was his story he was sharing, his experience of living in Mitchells Plain.

For instance, it is argued that "Oral history is a history built around people" (Portelli 1998,63). Oral history is the life history of the people (Field, 2012). Based on this argument of Portelli, it does not suggest that oral history is only concerned with community and bringing the unknown into awareness. Nevertheless, it also implies that people who assign meanings to their memory are comfortable during the interview to share anything they want. That is why I have allowed all my participants to do what worked for them during our interview session.

Furthermore, Jake was a chosen participant to learn his side of the story as a Capetonian. To learn about who he is, and his identity, besides the negative picture of living in the Cape Flats. According to Portelli (1998), oral history is a narrative built around people who rewrite their own stories about memories they can still remember. One of the critical points is to bring the unknown into literature discourse. Nevertheless, this research shares the participants' experiences and memories they have still left. Their stories they can come up with based on their memories because oral history supports the notion of bringing the unknown into recognition and learning what the community has to say about themselves. Moreover, Jake followed the same example; he briefly shared his background and history to give a sense of who he is:

"My name is Jake from Mitchells Plain. On the 10th of October, 1991, I was born in Cape Town. But I can't remember what hospital. Anyways I grew up in Mitchells Plain; it's my home which I can relate to since I was a child. I attended Wespoort primary and grew up in my neighborhood in Mitchells Plain; the best memory I have and sometimes think of. It is when I used to go play games at the game shop as a child, and my favorite game was and still is 'King of Fighters' and Metal Slug. But things have changed now awe!"
(Interview with Jake, September 2018)

Based on Jake's historical background, it seems that he had a remarkable memory of his childhood playing games at the game shop. However, I noticed that he kept laughing when he spoke of himself—left me to wonder why he mentioned his hobbies, something I never expected. That relates to the oral history narrative of Professor Mesthrie (2010) on 'Urban Restitution Narratives: Black River, Cape Town' in the sense that the participants do not like to talk about everything. When they talk, they change the topic and become subjective. In other words, participants want to share what they feel comfortable with sharing, but they do not share something too personal. For instance, Mesthrie's research on restitution also reveals that her participants expressed different past experiences (Mesthrie 2000).

Oral history narratives highlight that participants often share a truth associated with the myth (Portelli 1998). Meaning that not everything interviewees share is entirely accurate. In other words, it is a partial truth they share with the interviewers like me. Jake and I proceeded with the interview, and he explained his belonging to Mitchells Plain and went on to share a memory about his personal life. Claiming he was a well-behaved child who grew up in Mitchells Plain. Jake became emotional and kept mentioning how much he misses Strandfontein High School, where he attended.

Nevertheless, he did not disregard that Mitchells Plain has a downside regarding violence like many other places in Cape Town. Moreover, growing up in the Cape Flats was not the main focus of his story, but instead focused more on his childhood life and the best years of his schooling. Jake's story relates to Zake's story, who is also from Cape Town but raised in Eastern Cape province. They share their sense of belonging to Cape Town as Capetonians and share memories of their neighborhoods. Also, I became aware of their childhood lives; they differ because they shared different experiences, although they are both from Cape Town, South Africa.

Zake's life history about Wesbank did not portray Wesbank as a dangerous place. Almost every day, we hear negative stories about Wesbank from people outside the community. However, Zake's novel depicts a different picture of Wesbank as a beautiful place. That relates to oral history narratives where people tend to create their truth, which is a partial truth. Meaning that not everything is entirely accurate to what they are saying. For instance, we can look at the example in Field's (2012) article 'From the Peaceful Past to the Violent Present: Memory, Myth, and Identity in Gugulethu.' Due to the Group Area Act, he argues about people's removal in Windermere during apartheid. Based on Field's (2012) argument, what is surprising is that participants shared memories about living a good life in Windermere.

On the other hand, participants said the opposite, which painted a different picture. They can remember the hurtful past experiences of removal from their homes. So some thought of good memories and others bad memories.

From a broad perspective, everything highlights the reality that oral history does produce not only truth but also a myth; in a sense, there is some exaggeration to what people say. Comparing Jake and Zake's story, we can note that participants are always subjective when telling a story or sharing past experiences. They take control of the narrative by creating an account that downplays certain issues in their communities. For instance, in my conversation with Zake, he said the following;

"I may be living in a lower-income area with so much violence taking place, but there is a lot of beauty in my neighborhood because big people and everyone else respect one another. The only issue is gangsters, and since we do not have a police station in Wesbank, the gangsters do as they please. But as a community, we stand together and support each other; it is one of the beautiful things about Wesbank. And since I moved back to Cape Town in 2005, I have enjoyed playing with my new colored friends, and in Wesbank, we are a mixed

ethnic group of people who live together as one. Sometimes I wish the whole of South Africa could have this kind of unity we have in Wesbank." (Interview with Zake, September 2018)

Zake's story reveals past experiences about living in Wesbank and reveals his daily life experiences in the present. In other words, memory is not just about the past but also the present and how people give meaning to the present. Zake mainly focused on sharing a memory about living in Wesbank instead of details about his personal life. According to Portelli (1998), oral history helps the less privileged people to share their stories whether there is a myth or not on what they say. They create their truth. For example, Zake's story challenges the false narratives that view Wesbank as evil; there is nothing good but violence. Because what we learn from Zake's story is completely different, and he has been a resident for 16 years and counting. It is best to listen to a resident than accept made-up assumptions about a particular place.

It was an honor and privilege working with Jake and Zake. Both participants are heroes of their own stories, all oral history. However, their story took me to a brief conversation with my participant Jane (not her real name) about her life history in March 2016. I wanted to know why people consistently moved from place to place. Nevertheless, I wanted to know which area they refer to as the home in the contemporary present. So Jane first introduced herself, and our conversation went as follows;

JANE:

"My name is Jane (not her real name), and I was born on the 10th of September 1972 in Cape Town in Ravensmead, which is where I stayed with my parents, but again we moved to Sea Point, and we live there in Sea Point for eight years, but I cannot remember the years we lived there. Ya! And then we moved to Eersterivier, but I cannot remember the year, but it was in the 90s after the first elections."

BERNIZE:

"Oh! So you cannot remember when you and your family moved to Eersterivier?"

JANE:

"No! Not really, but my son Dane (refer to her firstborn, not his real name) was three years old and lived in Eersterivier for around 4 to 5 years because Bane (her second child, not his real name) was born there in Eersterivier. And when we moved here in Wesbank, Buni was four years old."

BERNIZE:

"I see! So after moving from Sea Point to Eesterivier, your family didn't decide to settle in Eesterivier for good?"

JANE:

"No. It's because we didn't have our own house all these years; we were renting, that is why we moved from different places, but we were also affected by apartheid back then. So my parents finally got a house in Wesbank because there were new houses. Ya! When my family moved to Wesbank, I moved to Plumstead."

BERNIZE:

"Would you perhaps like to share why you moved to Plumstead?"

JANE:

"I move to Plumstead to live with my boyfriend. We have lived in Plumstead for eight years, and it is where Alexa and Kate were born (referring to her two daughters, not real names). But I had to move to Wesbank for good in 2010 as I used to visit only my parents and my two boys who stayed with them."

BERNIZE:

"I see. So based on your living experience, what is the difference between Wesbank and Plumstead?"

JANE:

"Ya! Plumstead was full of life, and it was quiet there, unlike here in Wesbank because it is not a safe place to raise kids, but in Plumstead, we could walk outside at night. About Wesbank (she paused for a minute!) Well, first of all, I moved to Wesbank in 2010, because my father died in 2010 and I had to move to Wesbank to look after my mother. Ya! Because my mother is the only parent, I have left, including my kids. And Wesbank is a nice place to live in, but this place has its good side and a bad side. But the good side about Wesbank is that we finally got our own house after all the years we have been moving from different locations. The other thing I love about living in Wesbank is that we different people living together like other cultures and our kids get to play together. For me, it is an experience which I never had during my childhood."

BERNIZE:

"Wow! That is an interesting story, Jane. Looking at your past to the present, I can now see the changes that have taken place in your life. And I have learned something about the history of your family."

After our informal conversation, I realized many people out there, like Jane and her family, have faced a similar situation during the apartheid era, which has caused them to move from place to place (see Mesthrie, 2000; Field, 2012). Scholars have also written on apartheid in South Africa, which concerns the issue of race, identity, and migration(see Bank 1997; Gibson & Gouws 2000; Becker 2008; Gillespie 2010; Mesthrie 2010;2015). For instance, Jane's story reveals how the apartheid system affected them because of her race and identity under the colonial government. Black South Africans were forcibly removed from areas declared for whites only

(Mesthrie 2000). In the present, Jane is thankful they have a house in Wesbank, a place they finally call home, which was established in 1999 (Blommaert et al., 2005; Dyers, 2008; 2009). Her life history is detailed compared to Jake and Zake's story. It could be that she is older than the first two participants and has more experience with South Africa's past, which affected her childhood. Everything relates to Portelli's(1998) argument that people tend to create meaning about their past because of what they went through and experienced. That is why there are people like Jane and others with painful pasts, but in the present, they have hope because of the changes that have taken place.

Furthermore, the informal conversation with my participants went well. I made a few changes by asking questions that made them feel comfortable. Also, I managed to complete my research without any delay and discovered new concrete information about memory and place. And lastly, I learned how people assign meanings to their experiences.

The research's findings are that when we speak of memory and place, we need to acknowledge people who play an important role in sharing their memories and experiences. People's memories are attached with a significant meaning to them. So oral history plays a huge role because people reshape their reality by sharing information that was never told before in literature. New information that was disregarded before about the unknown helps fill up the scholarship gaps. For example, Zake's story reveals new findings on Wesbank that there are good people with a sense of togetherness as one big family. Meaning there is a support structure for everyone in the community, such as Neighbourhood Watchers, Walking Bus Project, Social Workers, Nurses, and many others. It is not something new, but it is new information we have learned through research. That helps to reshape the way people would think about Wesbank

because there is something positive happening there. Despite the gangsterism issue, people like Zake and Jane are home to them with good memories.

With the academic scholarly writings, scholars such as Portelli (1998), Mesthrie (2000), (2012), and Field (2012), give a clear understanding of oral history and the use of oral history sources. The importance of memories to people has a significant meaning. To conclude, community members always play a very important role in oral history because we are interested in those who are less recognized with their stories. Their memory plays a significant role in them; everything they say also reflects who they are and what they went through.

MEANING OF PLACE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF WESBANK TOWNSHIP (MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY)



This section deals with the lives of Wesbank residents who live in a post-apartheid township on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa. The focus of this study was to see how people make sense of their new multicultural community called Wesbank which was established by the post-apartheid (RDP) 'Reconstruction Development Programme' in 1999 (Blommaert et al, 2005). This is why this research study is called; Meaning Of Place: An Ethnographic Study Of Wesbank Township (Multicultural Community).

My motivation for this research comes from a module I learned in my third year at the University of the Western Cape. There was a particular module I was interested in – a module that dealt with the idea of changing perspective in the way that many stories have been written and presented as a single narrative. But let me put it this way to cut the story short!

In my third year, the module I learned in Anthropology was called 'Changing perspective and Theorizing from the South.' The idea for the module was to teach decolonization of the formerly

colonized regions, and this also applied to the decolonization of the literature discourse across many disciplines (Harrison, 1997). The whole point was to reconstruct the African reality by bringing new perspectives that were non-Eurocentric in view. For instance, scholars like Mfecane in his article “Ndiyindoda” [I am a man] Xhosa masculinity” argue what it means to be a man from Xhosa's perspective (Mfecane, 2016). His article is one of the examples that theorizes masculinity from a non-Eurocentric perspective and in this sense he decolonized the Eurocentric thought to demonstrate that there are other ways to practice and theorize masculinity from the South (Mfecane, 2016). Mfecane's argument was one of the examples which helped me to understand the decolonization of the Eurocentric view by bringing a new perspective into literature discourse. Mfecane challenged Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to make an argument that in the South there are different ways of understanding masculinity (Mfecane, 2016). Theorizing masculinity in Xhosa's perspective was just another way Mfecane showed that other communities have their ways of doing things. Although my research is not based on masculinity, Mfecane's article serves as a good example of changing perspectives.

Also, I recall watching one of the African scholars, Adichie Chimamanda, who is from Nigeria on the Ted show. She talked about the danger of a single story that relates to her personal experience. It all happened when she was a student, having to travel to the United States where she had an encounter with an American student who had a single story about Nigeria. According to Chimamanda, the American student was her roommate who had the idea that Africa is where people are fighting a senseless war where there is also poverty and diseases. Yet she emphasized that it was only because people knew a single story about Nigeria while there is much more to acknowledge. And that is why Chimamanda became my motivation that led me to research Wesbank to dismantle the single-story presented by the media reports that it is a dangerous place. I mean, I believe there is more that we can learn from Wesbank residents who

are the insiders of their community. And this ethnographic study was a necessary approach to take for this research, so we can get an insight into the lives of Wesbank residents and learn from what they can share with us that needs to be acknowledged publicly.

Therefore, this research goes against media reports that had focused on a single story about Wesbank. A story that only has to do with issues of crime and gang violence. It's no surprise that people who live outside Wesbank get to read and hear stories that largely speak on the topic of gangsterism. And that causes people to believe nothing good comes out of Wesbank. Now that is a danger of a single story caused by the media.

I believe it is so important to go beyond the well-established narratives that tell a single story. On top of that, this ethnographic study is to help people learn more about the good stories of Wesbank. And the purpose of this study is to also look at how Wesbank residents construct meaning about the place they live in and which is why this study is called; 'Meaning of Place: An Ethnographic Study of Wesbank Township (Multicultural Community).

(WESBANK TOWNSHIP)

The Field Of The Study: Wesbank

This study was conducted at the Multi-purpose Centre in Wesbank. The Multi-purpose Center is a Community Centre that is situated close to the taxi rank just opposite Wesbank Clinic in the D – Block area. As you drive through Wesbank main road you then need to take a turn on the left side of the circle. The Multi-purpose Center it's a huge building painted in different colors which are visible enough for everyone to see who drives in that direction. The same community Centre it's where Wesbank residents hold their meetings, workshops, and other events that tackle issues such as poverty, crime, gangsterism, and unemployment. I also observed some of the events that were taking place at the Multi-purpose Center, in assisting the residents with their issues. For instance, there are social workers, trauma counselors, City Councillor, neighborhood watchers, and nurses that work in the community and whose main priority is to help and support people where it is necessary. And the community Center is where I volunteered to work for the Wesbank Women for Change project during the time of my fieldwork. The idea was to get close to my participants so they would not only see me as a researcher but also as their fellow workers. So the picture below was taken on the last day of their project because the contract was coming to an end. In the picture below, I am sitting on the right side of our late City Councillor, Ricardo Saralina [middle], and on the left side is Aunty Mary, the supervisor of Wesbank Women for Change, including the rest of the workers who are standing behind us.



(FIGURE 1.1 *taken at the Multipurpose Center*)

Furthermore, Wesbank is a post-apartheid township that was established in 1999 with an estimation of 25 000 people living in 5, 145 houses (Blommaert et al, 2005). But I could not find any recently available statistics. However, the houses are about 25 m² size with a corrugated iron roof and are built out of bricks. But one of the interesting things about Wesbank is the fact that many people are from different cultural backgrounds living together in one place and that makes the Wesbank community a 'multicultural community' (see, Dyers 2008). It is something that was not allowed during the apartheid period in South Africa, as a result, different racial groups were segregated and many people were removed from their homes. And Group Areas Act (GAA) that was sanctioned by the National Party is to be blamed for causing pain to many South Africans that were oppressed by the system (Mesthrie, 2000: Field, 2001). But we are now living in the post-apartheid period and Wesbank is the example that shows all South Africans can now live together peacefully! And Wesbank also demonstrates to us the idea of 'Urban life' with 'Great tradition' in the cities where different cultures have come together and the change took place

(see Redfield, 1954: Prato and Pardo, 2013). This is because it's a post-apartheid township that has become one of the earliest areas which created an opportunity for different racial groups to integrate after the abolishment of the apartheid system in South Africa (Slemming, 2010). So now many people have come to adapt to other people's cultures and learned more about each other, in that sense, this gives us a picture of what 'great tradition' is about which is likely to be seen in the cities (see, Redfield, 1954).

Where Is Wesbank Located On The Map?

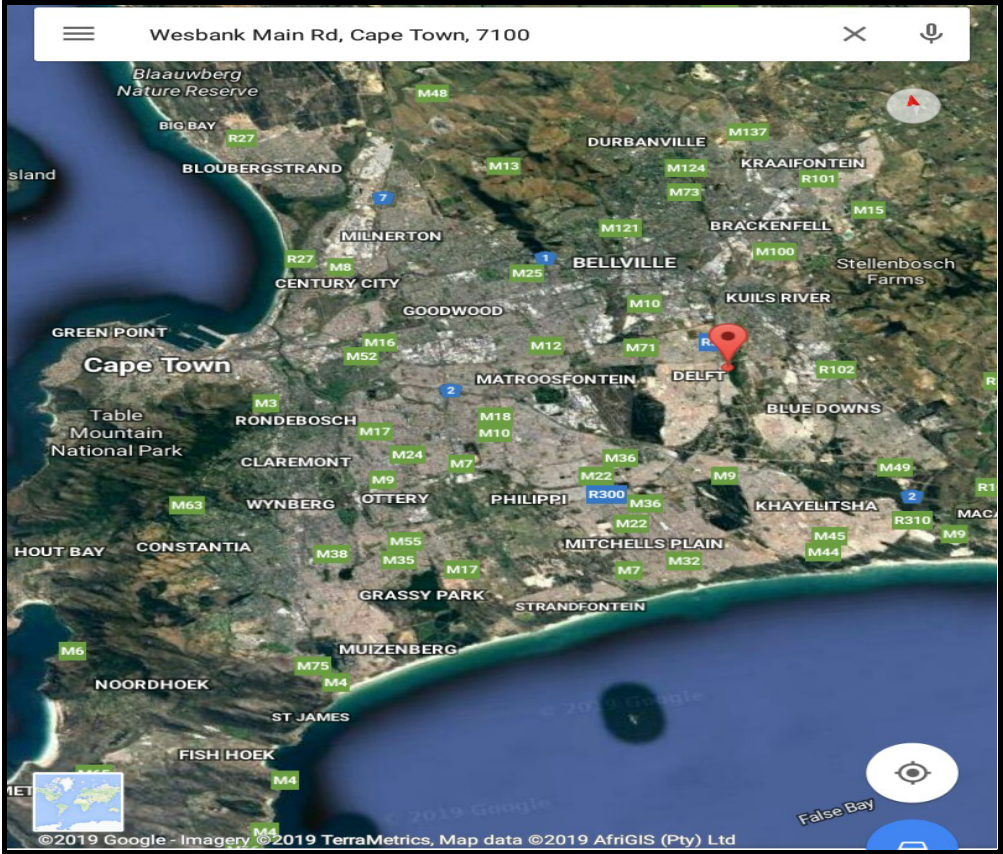
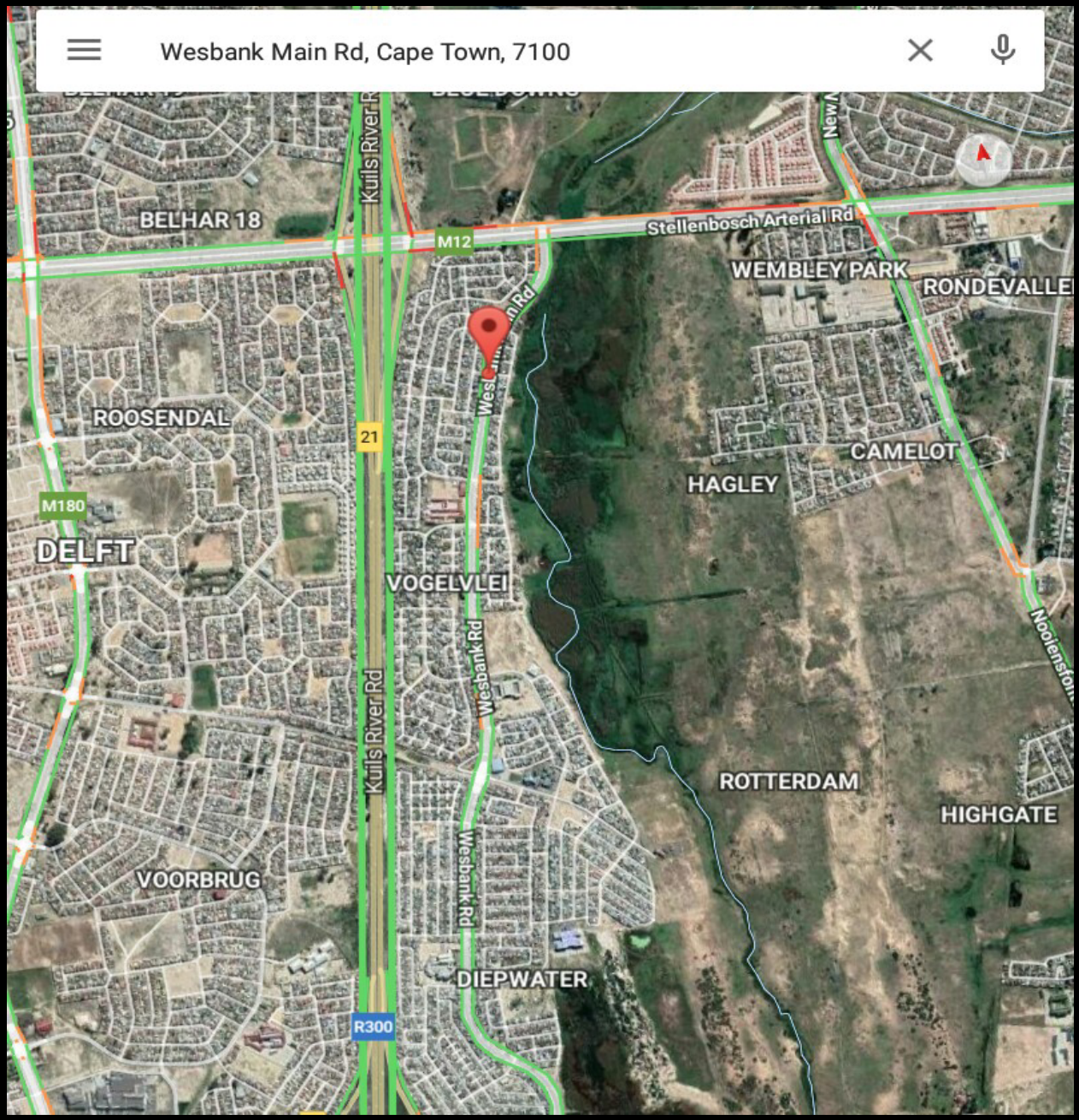


Figure 1.2 Map of Cape Town)

When looking at the Cape Town map that is provided in **Figure 1.2** above, you would see a place on the map that is called Delft which is the nearest place to Blue Downs. Wesbank is located opposite Delft across the R300 road just next to the Stellenbosch Arterial road. And we can

further see that in the illustration that is given in **Figure 1.3** below, in which both R300 road and Stellenbosch Arterial road are demonstrated in the picture.



(Figure 1.3 R300 road and Stellenbosch Arterial road on the map)

Description Of Wesbank



(Figure 1.4 Map of Wesbank Township)

Although Wesbank is one community as a whole, we should also know that it is a township that consists of sections that are given names to identify different areas within Wesbank. For instance, these sections are areas that are named from A-Block to E-Block which makes it easier for Wesbank residents to identify and address where they live in the community. As for me, I live in E-Block opposite Rainbow Primary school. But during the time of my fieldwork, I was curious and wanted to know about the names that are given to these areas in Wesbank. I wanted to hear the whole story so that I would get a clear sense of what was happening. So I had an informal conversation with two of my research participants who know so much about Wesbank. In our conversation, they informed me about how Wesbank looked at the beginning before it was fully established, and why there are different Blocks in the community that are called; A-Block, B-Block, C-Block, D-Block, and E-Block which are illustrated on the map in **Figure 1.4** above. So when I chatted to Edith Van Wyk and Aunty Mary, who are well-known and respected figures in the Wesbank community. This is what they had to say:

“When I moved to Wesbank in A-Block there were few houses. It was just bush before cleaning the area and it was just sand.”

(Interview with Edith Van Wyk, 11 July 2019)

“In 1999 got my house in Wesbank and in 1998 Wesbank was still a sandy area, but Wesbank was one of the first subsidized houses in the Western Cape. The building started in 1998 and it finished in 1999. I moved into Wesbank in 1999 but first Edith where she stayed in A-Block they completed that side then they moved to B, C, and D to E-Block at the same time but different contractors built Wesbank houses. Different companies built different sides of Wesbank because this was given to different contractors.”

(Interview with Aunty Mary, 10 July 2019)

Based on the conversation of my participants regarding Wesbank and the houses, I came to learn that the houses were built by different contractors. So this clearly explains the existence of the names; A-Block to E-Block, and the fact that Aunty Mary made it clear to me that A-Block was the first Block to be completed in Wesbank and followed the rest. And Wesbank houses are different from one another because there are semi-detached houses and free-standing houses. The behavior of the people who live in semi-detached houses often differs from those who live in free-standing houses. This is because free-standing houses are far apart compared to semi-detached houses. For instance, in semi-detached houses, a person has to consult with their neighbor if they wish to hang their washed blankets over the walls that create a barrier between houses. There has to be that good relationship and understanding. But for free-standing houses, people can do most of the activities that do not require them to consult with their neighbors. And Wesbank is one of the earliest subsidy houses in the Western Cape province – which is something I did not know of.

(DOING A WALKING ETHNOGRAPHY IN WESBANK)

Before Fieldwork In The Field: Wesbank

As we now acknowledge that this study is based on qualitative research that was conducted in Wesbank. It's best to explain how I entered the field before I began to do my fieldwork and work with my participants. First of all, I must admit that the most difficult part of this research was making a decision on where to begin, my fieldwork – since I had no participants in mind during the time I was busy constructing my research plans. Plans that would have made a way for me to see a clear picture of where this research is heading and who were to be my participants for this study. In that way, things would have been much easier but I went through a struggle to find suitable participants.

So I call this: '**Before fieldwork in the Field, Wesbank**' – because I live in Wesbank for almost 15 years now but I did not know how I was going to conduct this research. As I had stated earlier in my research proposal, I plan to examine each area in Wesbank by doing walking ethnography which I thought would be a useful method to learn more and collect as much data as I can. And I had spent so much time thinking about the participants I was going to work with, which is always the challenging part for most researchers because it is not easy to find participants although it depends on what the research topic is about.

However, one morning on my way to the University of the Western Cape, I met a lady near the stop sign opposite Rainbow Primary school. She wore black jeans, and black shoes and had on an apron which was written "Walking Bus Project", so I assumed right away that she was one of the workers who volunteered to assist in the community to help the children cross the road safely to school. After our brief chat, she invited me to go to the Multipurpose Center where I had to meet with her colleagues, so I would introduce my research study to see if they can help me to be my participants. Thankfully they were interested except for those who preferred to be interviewed in a conversational style which is an unstructured interview, and an unstructured

interview takes the form of a walking ethnography (see, Yi'En 2013). Although they had declined a one-on-one interview where I could have voice recorded them. I had to come up with a strategy, I saw and realized that walking ethnography would be suitable since this research study was an ethnographic study of Wesbank township.

Before I began with my fieldwork I had already asked the lady I met at the Bus stop to direct me to where I should go if I wanted to volunteer for the Walking Bus project. And after I met with 17 women at the Multi-purpose Center, I introduced myself as a student from the University of the Western Cape and stated my reasons why I wanted to volunteer. To be honest, volunteering it's not something I had in mind but I realized one thing being an anthropologist researcher I had to spend more time with my participants to get to know them better. And after I found out that during the day the ladies patrol the streets in Wesbank, I saw that as an opportunity to do walking ethnography which is another method I have recently learned on how to collect data for my research. But to take note, I was informed by the ladies with regards to the two projects they worked on, in which one of the projects called Walking Bus they volunteered and did not get paid. And to the present, they continue to volunteer in doing what they do for the love of their community.

So the example of a school learner from Hoogweg primary who was taken home for not completing his school work. It is an example of how they deal with the behavior of school learners who do not take their education very seriously. That is why one learner was taken to his parents so they would know what is happening, and I was there to see everything. But the whole point was to address the issue so parents would do something before things get out of hand. Wesbank Women for Change workers were therefore to assist both school teachers and parents. And despite that, I chose to work with Wesbank Women for Change workers not only because they patrolled the streets, but also because of the fact that these ladies had so much knowledge

about Wesbank – especially the streets and Blocks of Wesbank. In addition to that, I was also informed that the Walking Bus usually starts early in the morning until 8:15 AM. Because they ensure that all learners cross the road safely to school on time. Afterward, they would meet at the Multi-purpose Center to work on their second project called Wesbank Women for Change. They also looked at social issues such as; gang violence, crime, gender-based violence, and other issues that concern Wesbank residents. And lastly, they worked with Wesbank Neighborhood Watchers and the City Councilor of ward19.

Methods

Now with regards to my methodology, this research study is ethnographic research which applied walking ethnography as my research method. Walking ethnography is about interviewing in a conversational style more like unstructured interviews. Yet it could be an interview that takes place between a researcher and the participant who walks down the street in the community (Jones et al, 2008). But the main focus is the informal conversation that takes place between the two, and knowing the researcher is taking note of everything surrounding them, not just his participant (Yi'En, 2013). And the most important thing about the interview is that it is happening during the walk. Also, there has to be that shift in power relation between a researcher and the participant, in a sense, that the researcher allows the participant to take the lead (Yi'En, 2013). This also relates to my fieldwork because I took the same approach when I did walking ethnography with my participants and got to explore different areas in Wesbank.

On 19 July 2019, I joined the Wesbank Women for Change team to learn and know what they do in the community. Observing and learning at the same time what their mission was, helped me to get an insight into their project called Wesbank Women for Change. And when we walked on the streets from D-Block to A-Block (see *Map of Wesbank Township*), I had my bag on just like everyone else in the group. But the purpose of my bag was to keep my notebook which I used for

my field notes. Because I did not have time to carry my notebook while walking up and down and had to ask questions at the same time to my participants who happened to be also my coworkers since I had volunteered to work with them.

On the first day of my fieldwork, I was informed by the team that we had to go to Miss G's house which is located somewhere in A-Block at Lovemore street. She had to take home a chicken that she bought somewhere near the taxi rank, but nobody went into detail in explaining to me where they bought the chicken. I was just excited I had a chance to do a walking ethnography with them and get to explore different areas in our community, which is something I could not have done on my own. Therefore, I knew for a fact that it was all God who made it possible for connecting me with suitable participants for my research study. And it was then that I had my first opportunity to ask Miss G some of the unstructured questions I had about A-Block while we were walking to her home.

(Figure 1.5 taken in D-Block at Maybrook street)





(**Figure 1.6** taken in A-Block closer to Lovemore street)

Now as you can see in **Figure 1.5** to **Figure 1.6** above, It's clear pictures of the streets we walked on. For instance, “walking and photographing is rhythmical and brings our bodies into “conversation” with the environment we move through” (Yi'En, 2013: 213). Now with regards to Yi'En's (2013) argument, it is obvious that walking ethnography goes beyond walking interviews because what the ethnographer sees, touches, and smells during the walk needs to be taken into account. In addition to that, I have experienced that taking pictures during my fieldwork helps me to bring back some memories when writing.

The approach of walking ethnography is very helpful in describing the people, and the setting of the place of the research (Gaqa, 2018). And in Wesbank there are many residents but my research was based on the total of 21 people I had engaged with during my fieldwork. 17 of my participants were Wesbank Women for Change workers, while the other 4 participants were people whom I know personally. And right below in **Figure 1.7**, is another picture of me and my colleagues which was taken in Halfway street (D-Block). This is to show you the rest of my team I had worked with except for Aunty Mary who is only found in **Figure 1.1**. And on the picture

below we have **Bernize Siletile**, sister **Felicity**, Ouma **Billy**, aunty **Portia** (Miss G), aunty **Lorraine**, **Jesica September**, aunty **Louis**, **Edith Van Wyk**, aunty **Avril**, **Theresa Steenkamp**, **Cassidy Noble**, aunty **Sharon**, **Marie Schuurman**, **Katriena Daames** and the rest of the team.



(Figure 1.7 taken in D-Block at Halfway street)

Throughout my fieldwork, I had an informal conversation with Wesbank Women for Change workers. Also, I listened to stories they told concerning the issue of gangsterism in Wesbank and realized it was better to hear from them indeed than to believe what is presented in media reports. Noting the fact that there is often an exaggeration in most of the written newspaper articles. It's all about running a story, so to speak, intending to be biased. But bear in mind, as a researcher, I had to distance myself and act like someone who knew nothing, even though that was partly true because I knew less compared to my participants. So I asked questions about gangsters cause I wanted to acknowledge their understanding and take note of what they know. And to see what Wesbank Township means to them despite what is happening in the community.

As we walked back to the Multi-purpose Center, I began to hear stories concerning gang violence, but I also heard what is being done by the community projects such as Wesbank Women for Change, Walking Bus, and Neighborhood Watchers, to keep things under control since there is no police station in Wesbank.

Community workers and all those who continue to volunteer, aim to make a change in the community by helping one another as residents of Wesbank Township. Observation also became my fieldwork strategy, as a result, I had to observe most of the streets and houses that people live in. This is because we patrolled the streets every day, and I managed to get a better understanding of people's everyday lived experiences. Also throughout walking ethnography, I began to build a good friendship with Wesbank Women for Change workers. Our friends have helped me to collect enough data, and to get a better understanding of Wesbank Township from the point of view of my participants.

My Reflection

Throughout the journey of my fieldwork, I enjoyed using the set of skills or the method of a walking ethnography because I had realized it works well for both researcher and the participant. Yet it is where they get to gain confidence in themselves and end up talking about things they want to ask and address to one another. In my case, I went through the same experience with my participants only to discover that I was wrong about a lot of things. Therefore, I learned a lot from Wesbank Women for Change workers including the rest of the participants I had worked with. And language was not an issue because my participants spoke in English, but if they were to speak Afrikaans I would have understood to some extent what is being said. Perhaps if I needed any clarity on something they would have said in Afrikaans, then I would have requested them to explain it in English.

I have to admit, it felt awkward being the only man among 17 women who were my participants, but I got used to the idea in no time. And most importantly, my focus as a researcher was to make sense of the meaning that people construct about Wesbank through their narratives. Also to hear good stories that need to be acknowledged about Wesbank Township publicly, to break down the misrepresentation that is on media reports which have reduced Wesbank Township into a single story.

(NARRATIVES AND REPRESENTATION OF WESBANK TOWNSHIP)

Narratives Of Gang Violence In The Community

To understand the issue of gang violence in Wesbank, and not be confused by what we see and read in media reports. It is important to engage and interact with Wesbank residents, and that is exactly what I did at the time of my fieldwork. Because gang violence cannot be truly understood in Wesbank until we look at the social issues that contributed to gangsterism. Yet no conclusion could be made without having to interview the participants (residents) to hear what they have to say on the issue. They live in the community, taking note of the contributing factors in gangsterism, and they are daily exposed to what is happening. A theory, in this case, is necessary to further explain the underlying issue from a scientific point of view. Which would clearly show the root of the problem and where it all started. But first, we need to acknowledge the views of the participants, which would be helpful to lead us somewhere. But first, we need to acknowledge the views of the participants that would be helpful to give us a clear picture of gangsterism which often leads to gang violence in Wesbank.

During the time I was with my participants, I was informed that Wesbank used to be a quiet place with no crime and gangsterism taking place. But then, the township was still new with numbers of people migrating into the area in 1999 (Blommaert et al, 2005). Also note, it is one of

the earliest multicultural townships that have people who come from different regions in and outside South Africa (Dyers, 2018). This is why in the present, we have now both trans-local and transnational migrants who live together in one geographical space. Indeed, Professor Charlyn Dyers, she's completely accurate in suggesting Wesbank as a valuable site for research, concerning the diversity of the population that is found in that area. A lot can be done by the researchers to learn more from the community.

However, there had to be a clear explanation for gang violence – although Wesbank is a low-income area with a high rate of unemployment and poverty (Velghe, 2012). A clear explanation was also necessary to understand gangsterism. And some participants have shed light on the issue of gangsterism so we can acknowledge how it all began and resulted in what it is today. According to Edith Van Wyk, this is what she has to say:

"There was no gangsterism in Wesbank. And you could walk everywhere from A-Block to D-Block and B-Block, C-Block and E-block. Even at night, it was safe, no shooting. And then the problem is many people started coming in from different places and most of the people in A-Block come from Eersteriver."

(Interview with Edith Van Wyk, 11 July 2019)

First of all, Edith Van Wyk gave us a clue that everyone who lives in Wesbank comes from a different area. And scholars who conducted their research in Wesbank had also made that clear in their papers (see Blommaert et al, 2005; Slemming, 2010; Velghe, 2012; Dyers, 2018). In any case, through our interview, I also discovered from my participant that the wrong people began to move in and some of them were under the influence of drugs. While others were drug dealers that created a problem of gangsterism in Wesbank and noted that there is a lack of policing - gang violence increased rapidly over the years. But again, gangsterism succumbed due to the visibility of the neighborhood watchers and walking bus members in the community. I had a

similar conversation with Miss M when I did a life history interview with her. She shared her own experience before gangsterism became an issue in Wesbank. And this is what she said:

"It was so peaceful and there were no gangsters. I played dominoes by Auntie Abrahams on another side of the block and they brought me around the corner, then I walked alone there at 2 o'clock in the morning. And you could leave your door open and sleep with the door open. Ya! No gangsters or anything. Ya! We could sleep with the door open and I wish it can be like that again."

(Interview with Miss M, 10 July 2019)

As you have just read Miss M's statement above, you can take note that she agreed with Edith Van Wyk, given the fact that Wesbank used to be a quiet place with no gangsterism or gang violence, as a result, only a few people migrated to Wesbank earlier. But again, the number of people is not exactly the problem when examining these two accounts from Edith Van Wyk and Miss M. Rather what seems to be problematic here is that too many people moved in and some became trouble makers in the community. This is what Edith Van Wyk had said in our informal conversation. Miss M on the other side had already given details that explain how things used to be in Wesbank, and how safe and peaceful it was. Yet according to my participants, trouble makers refer to those that brought negative influence to the youth of Wesbank, infiltrating the minds of many youngsters to drop out of school, engage in substance abuse, and form different gang groups that already existed long before Wesbank township was established (see Roux, 2009; Ndlovu, 2010). It is nothing new in South Africa, especially noting that this problem never existed before in Wesbank, and my participants had shared their experiences to prove that since they had been living there for years. And on that note, not the entire Wesbank township used to be a dangerous place during the chaos, but that is not something the media will inform the public – since they like to spice things up for their news reports. And that is why the danger of a single story is more dangerous than what is considered to be dangerous. As a result, people are

often deceived without knowing the whole truth they need to acknowledge. This is why in-depth research is necessary in any case instead of accepting what is only presented in public display. I strongly believe that if people go deeper and beyond what is written, they could get new information that is not known. And it could be useful against biased media reports presenting a single story that is exaggerated and misleading.

Now with regards to gangsterism as a learned behavior, I thought I share this point of view that might help to see things differently. It is another way of looking at things. Through the use of the conflict theories, we can see the results of deviant behavior among youth groups in places like Wesbank, and we can see contributing factors to the problem. According to Giddens (2009), conflict theory provides a clear explanation and understanding that allows us to see the cause and consequences of crime and deviant behavior - it all leads to the capitalist system. Because deviant and violent acts are often encouraged by capitalism. For we all acknowledge that capitalism has created inequality in society, we also see this through gender, race, and class (Giddens 2009).

However, inequality had also caused an increase in gangsterism when looking at the low-income areas as a result of capitalism. Even (Giddens 2009:949) makes a similar argument that "people actively choose to engage in deviant behavior in response to the inequalities of capitalism." Earlier, I had claimed that gangsterism is a learned behavior because there are people who learn from those engaged in deviant behavior. And this does not imply to everyone experiencing inequalities but implies to those who choose to engage in deviant behavior they learn from others in response to inequalities as a result of capitalism. Social issues such as high rate of unemployment, dropping out of school, and lack of policing in low-income areas increase gang violence. And bear in mind that there is also a lack of resources in low-income areas that cause people to engage in violent protest in response to the government doing nothing, concerning

their situation as working-class people who struggle for equality. Yet they would be labeled as deviant.

Also, we can take note of this when we see the difference between low-income and affluent areas, looking at the social determinants of health which proves the existence of inequalities in the contemporary society we live in. Again, it all depends on the situation we are looking at, and in this case, we look at the issue of gangsterism in Wesbank that is exaggerated by the media reports concerning gang violence that used to take place.

Furthermore, I have discussed the issue of gangsterism in Wesbank with one of my old friends, who knows so much about what was happening until this day. Nonetheless, he asked to remain anonymous before he explained everything to me. This is why I identify him by his false name, Mike.

According to Mike, there is also a division between gangsters in the sense that some gangsters hold grudges against others because of their identity. For example, some gangsters identify as Americans while others as Mobsters, therefore they don't get along. Mike went on to say, some gangsters wave the American flag while others wave the British flag. They are not just waving the flags, it's way deeper than that. It's symbolic for them. Yet Mike informed me that it is another way gangsters use these flags to identify their sense of belonging which allows others to know where they stand, and which side they're committed to that now defines who they truly are. This means that it should be known whether you are an American or Mobster, but either way, you will be an enemy to one side that you don't choose if you become a gangster. That is part of the reason there is so much conflict in the past to the present (see Roux 2009; Ndlovu 2010), and yet this does not only apply to gangsters in Wesbank township - but also to other Cape Flat regions that became occupied by gangsters before Wesbank came into existence. They are all facing the same problem of gangsterism in Cape Town, South Africa. And this issue is mainly

found in low-income areas where the unemployment rate is high. Indeed conflict theory is relevant to look at this issue that causes disaster because of inequalities in our society.

I also recall one of the events I attended at the Multipurpose Center where City of Cape Town Officials had a meeting with Wesbank community leaders, discussing changes that had to be made concerning the structure of the taxi rank which needs to be improved. At the meeting, there were City of Cape Town Officials, Wesbank Neighborhood Watchers, Walking Bus members, and Wesbank Woman for Change workers. And through the grace of God, Miss M, the supervisor of the Wesbank Woman for Change project, invited me to the meeting since I volunteered to work with them. On the day of the meeting, as you can see in **Figure 1.8** below, the City of Cape Town Officials brought a map of Wesbank with tracing papers that were used to highlight dangerous places in Wesbank. The whole meeting turned into a focus group discussion I was planning to do with my participants.

So in the meeting things went beyond what I expected, and I did not waste any time but grabbed the opportunity right away by taking notes of every detail of my research. The interesting part is that I was also allowed to take photos during the meeting.

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(**Figure 1.8** taken at the Multipurpose Centre Hall)



Figure 1.8 above was taken during the introduction of the meeting, where everyone in the room had to introduce themselves. And in **Figure 1.9** below we proceeded with a group activity,

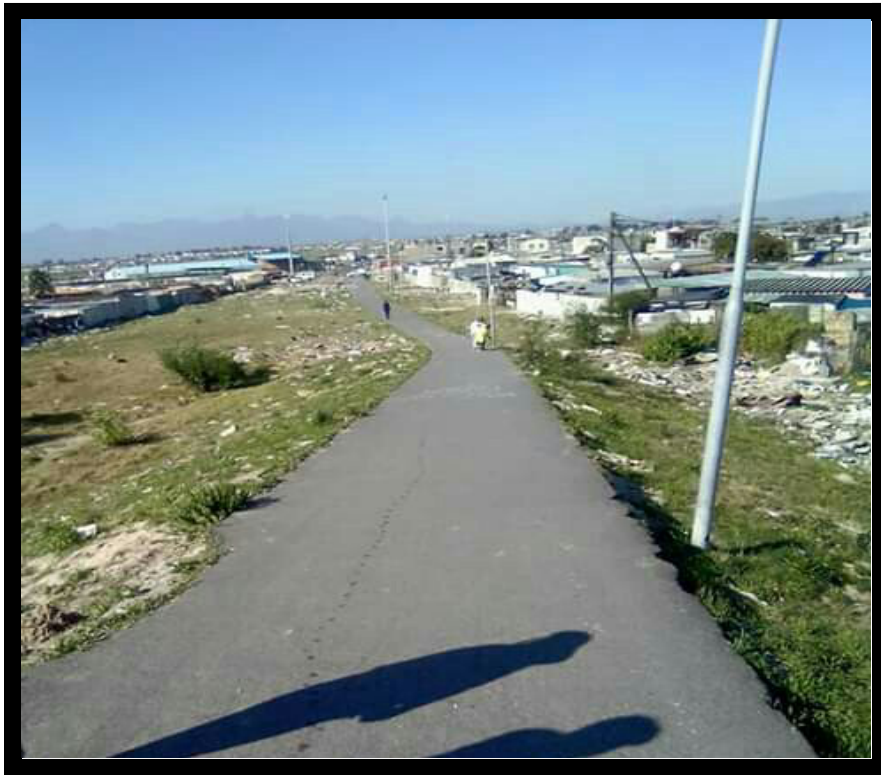


highlighting the red zone areas in Wesbank.

(Figure 1.9 Group activity)

I had to get close enough to take pictures while everyone was busy discussing the map. On the map, everyone identified the taxi rank and the footbridge as the most dangerous places in Wesbank. So those places are considered a red zone in the evenings when all taxis are gone and no one walks on the bridge. Because that is the time when gangsters roam around those areas looking for someone they can rob. Even leaders of Wesbank Neighbourhood Watchers added that there are youngsters who stand at the taxi rank to cause trouble. Yet City of Cape Town officials was also informed that there is a scrap yard with 95% of the stolen property. All other

issues were addressed and there was a demand that the scrap yard should be removed at the taxi rank because it is a public space. Although everyone raised their concern and opinion, the City Officials suggested that the taxi rank should be upgraded to improve people's safety. And the Bridge was also highlighted on the map and discussed as the most dangerous place in which no one should walk alone. It has been stated that a lot of bad things such as robbery have happened to people crossing the Bridge. Therefore, that is the reason it is considered a red zone area in the evenings. As you can see the images below in **Figure 2.1** and **Figure 2.2**, illustrates us the road of Wesbank that leads up to the Bridge and the inside of the Bridge. I took the photos a few days later after we had a meeting with the City of Cape Town Officials.



(**Figure 2.1** *Wesbank road leading to the Bridge*)



(**Figure 2.2** *The inside of the Bridge*)

The Bridge runs from Wesbank to Delft on R300 road. I was also informed by my coworkers that it's called 'footbridge' because only people can walk there while others prefer to ride their bicycles. The footbridge in **Figure 2.2** is the same bridge that was discussed at the meeting because it's where bad things happen to people. This is why it is considered a red zone area in the evenings. The photo was taken during day time when Wesbank Woman for Change workers became visible around the bridge to ensure people's safety, and that unwanted people who look for trouble don't come around. As you can see, a few of my coworkers walked in front of me when I took the photo.

One of the reasons the bridge is so important is that it helps Wesbank residents to get to Day Hospital in Delft because there is no Hospital in Wesbank. Wesbank Clinic itself is mainly there

to assist mothers with their babies (Velghe 2012) and help people with issues related to Tuberculosis. On the other side, the taxi rank is the heart of Wesbank township where informal businesses function daily, and it's where most people get to connect every day on their way to work.

Throughout the meeting, interviews, and my field notes, I came to acknowledge the fact that although there are gangsters in Wesbank, not the whole place is considered to be dangerous by Wesbank residents. Everyone shares a similar view about the taxi rank and the bridge that they are the most dangerous places in the evening. Yet this challenges the narratives that are not of Wesbank, that claim Wesbank to be a dangerous place based on the presentation made by the media reports. Because narratives of Wesbank clearly state that there are gangsters and gang violence that often take place in Wesbank just like in any other townships in the Cape Flats. But the difference is that only certain places at certain times in Wesbank are considered to be dangerous.

Positive Stories Of Wesbank

Wesbank also has so many good stories that are not acknowledged by the media and people that live in other areas. For instance, during the time of my fieldwork, I attended a Youth program at Rainbow Primary school - which is the first school that was established in Wesbank.

Before I attended the Youth program, I was having a conversation with Miss M who knows much about Wesbank. I asked her some questions regarding the schools in Wesbank township cause I wanted to know the story about the schools - given the fact that there is a school that is called 'Rainbow Primary', so I wanted to know what does the name mean to Wesbank community or what it says about Wesbank. And this is what she has to say:

"They came up with the name Rainbow because we are now different nations coming together. We came together as a community and of the name. We were now the structure, we came together as an organization and people were happy."

(Interview with Miss M, 10 July 2019)

Miss M provides us with a good background on how the school 'Rainbow' came up with the name and the involvement of different nations who came together in making that decision. For we all know that during the apartheid era it was not allowed for different nations to live together because there was segregation taking place (see Mesthrie, 2000). Now the name 'Rainbow' represents different nations coming together as oneness in a post-apartheid South Africa. Also having to look back on the past and all the things that have happened.

However, on June 16, 2019, I was invited to a youth program sponsored by the City of Cape Town which took place at Rainbow Primary school. Walking Bus members informed me that the program takes place each year in June. The program aims to support children and motivate them to make the right decisions in life because they are leaders of tomorrow. Also, other youth

programs were to keep children off the streets, because gangsters could try to recruit them to join the gang. This is also a conversation I had with Mike who shared the same idea that these programs are helpful for Wesbank youth. And he added;

"Sometimes there are programs that take children or youth out every year from the Multipurpose Centre. Ya! They take youth out on an excursion something like just doing anything to keep the children off the streets"
(Interview with Mike, 13 July 2019)

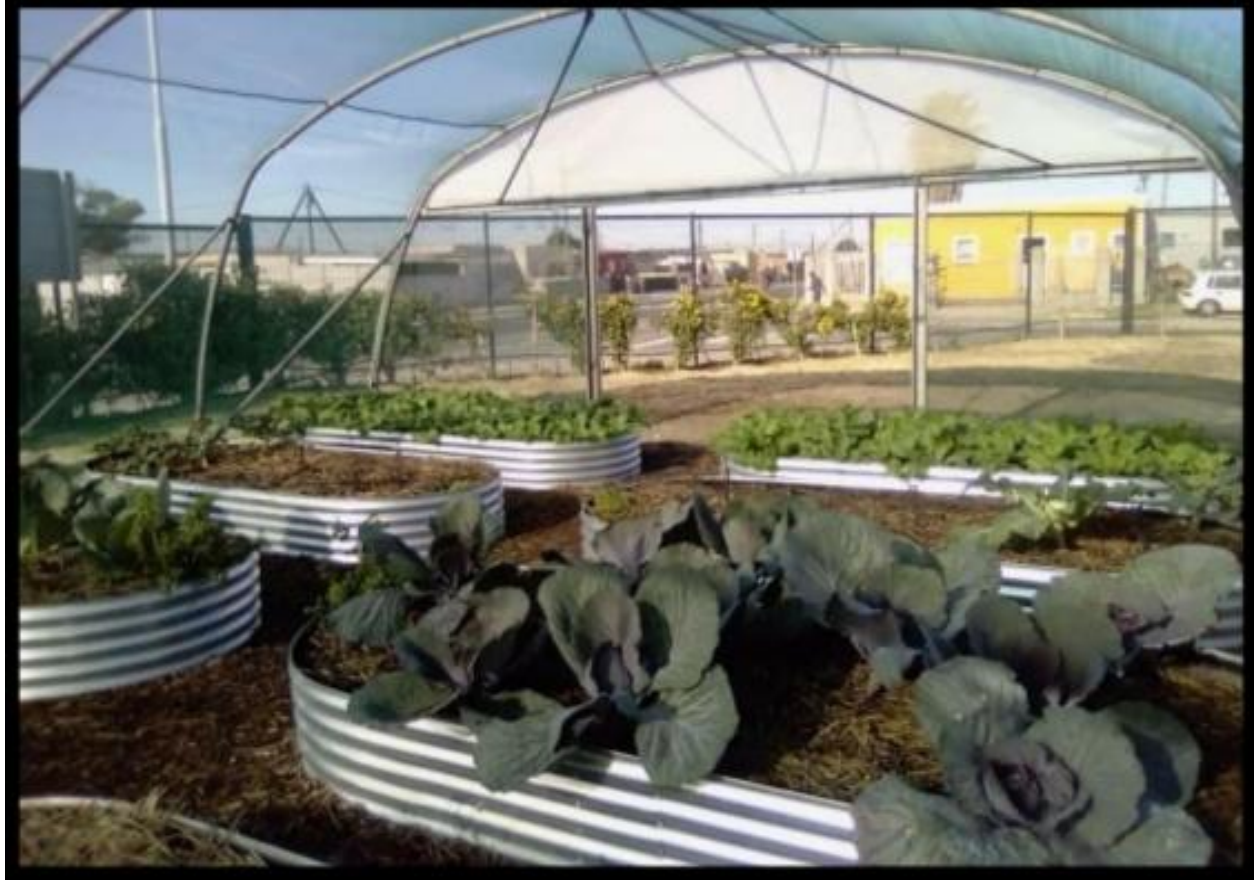
Based on Mike's point of view with my observation of the programs, I came to acknowledge that the programs were to empower youth with love and support. Meanwhile, I was at Rainbow Primary school. Children were dancing and singing songs in front of the classroom. They waited for the City of Cape Town Mayor, Dan Plato, who was on his way to give a motivational speech to Wesbank youth. I decided to do some observation around the school cause I saw that a lot has changed since I left the school in 2007 after I completed grade 7.

Rainbow primary school has a garden with vegetables such as cabbages, onions, spinach, and others. I became more interested in the garden because it was never there before, so it was something new to me. Thankfully I had a brief chat with Oupa Liz (not his real name) who works in the garden. A 72-year-old man shared his life experience with me about his love for gardening. Although we had a brief conversation I learned that the garden at school helps to provide food for the children at school. Yet he informed me that the garden was sponsored by Shoprite and everyone in the community is welcome to help themselves with what they need in the garden. But part of Oupa Liz's story touched me when explaining why he does gardening. And this is what he has to say;

"I grew up without parents and I never got to see my parents. I was raised by other people who played the role of being a parent and I am doing gardening because I am somehow reaching out to my parents and this not only benefits me but also the children who suffer and going to bed hungry and not getting proper care. It breaks my heart to see children suffer, going to bed hungry and not getting proper care because children didn't choose to be in the world"

(Interview with Oupa Liz, 17 June 2019)

Oupa Liz's account reveals to us his personality and character because the job he does tells us who he is. As you can see he loves children and sympathies with them, which is why he's doing something about it to make a change. And being a gardener helps him to provide for the children who suffer from hunger. This is an interesting thing about Wesbank because there are these individuals who contribute to work and uplift the community. Acknowledging the fact that poverty is still an issue in Wesbank township (Velghe, 2012). In addition to that, Oupa Liz has been gardening for over 50 years in his life. So although he has no papers for gardening, everyone acknowledges the work he does for the community (see **Figure 2.4** *The Garden at Rainbow Primary school*).



(Figure 2.4 *The Garden at Rainbow Primary School - taken on June 17, 2019)*



(Figure 2.5 Garden at Rainbow Primary School - taken on June 17, 2019)

The Garden at Rainbow primary school with the Soup Kitchen that helps the Wesbank community are both sponsored by Shoprite. That is what Oupa Liz informed me after I took the photos in **figure 2.4** and **figure 2.5**. And I also paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Davids who play a huge role in helping the community. They own a church on Happiness street which turned into a Soup Kitchen. According to Mrs. Davids, they use the kitchen to cook food for the children and the Shoprite truck comes once a week to bring soup to the community. And I had spoken to Mrs. Davids concerning the work they do in helping the community. Cause I was interested in knowing more about the Soup Kitchen to get the story. Other than that I was impressed by the

fact that Mr. and Mrs. Davids continue to cater food for the children to eat after school. She explained how everything works and this is what she said;

"Mondays we serve food to school children who are from grade R to grade 3. And Tuesdays we only cater for grade 4 because there are a lot. Wednesdays to Fridays then we deal with grade 5 and High School learners but only those who live in Wesbank"

(Interview with Mrs. Davids, 1 July 2019)

She and her husband do their best for every child to feel welcome, as many children come from homes with nothing to eat. They volunteer to make a change in Wesbank so that children can know they are well looked after and that there is hope. Throughout our conversation, she also informed me that they take children out to youth programs and go camping. This is also because they want to keep children off the streets and away from gangsters. So they have youth programs for both girls and boys.

The other day I went to observe the Soup Kitchen at Happiness Street because Mrs. Davids wanted to show me around the place. When I got there I saw a green trailer inside the yard written "VCO RECYCLING, Empowering our Communities, Plastics bottles are not trash". Her husband Pastor Hilton Davids owns a scrap yard that is located in E-Block near the robots in Stellenbosch arterial. They collect broken boxes and plastics in exchange for food because some people might use the money for the wrong reasons.

The Soup Kitchen has one bungalow with two mobile containers. I was informed that the bungalow is for someone that lives inside the yard because some gangsters break into people's houses. So one mobile container is to keep chairs and tables while the second one it's a storage room that keeps food only. There is also a stove that they use to cook food for the children and community when enough food is available. And she also added;

" Shoprite truck have their equipment when they arrive here in Happiness Street to serve people. This been happening for 3 years now and the Shoprite truck gets to serve at least 600 people in Wesbank every Wednesday"

(Interview with Mrs. Davids, 1 July 2019)

Oupa Lez and Mrs. Davids' account shows that there are good stories of Wesbank in dealing with the issue of poverty and hunger. This includes the rest of the youth programs which play the same role in the lives of Wesbank residents. Yet the media does not show any interest in covering these good stories that are happening for years now. Just like Hoofweg Learning & Resource Center which was officially opened in June 2015, you won't see that as a trending topic in media reports. Unless there is gang violence taking place then it would be easy to access that information, but what about the good stories of Wesbank that are left unnoticed? Well, we won't get an answer to that question.

And about the Hoofweg Learning & Resource Center, my coworkers informed me that there are computers with free internet available to everyone in the community. Since Wesbank does not have a library the Resource Center is there to fill that gap in the meantime. Also, they offer free-of-charge classes which creates an opportunity for people that never finished school to complete their matric to qualify for higher education.

Driving school at Multipurpose Centre it's another free-of-charge program sponsored by the City of Cape. The driving school in Wesbank aims to help people who have learners but struggle to go for their driver's license. Such opportunities help to uplift the Wesbank community to become employed once they get their driver's license. The unemployment rate on the other side starts to drop because something good is happening. And these are some of the good stories we

don't get to see in media reports. Indeed, Wesbank it's a township where there are these good stories we often hear less about.

Throughout the investigation and working with my participants, I came to acknowledge that Wesbank is not a bad place as the media tries to show it. Cause there are good things that are happening to improve the community. The Civic Centre that is also known as the Multipurpose Centre continues to help the unemployed with their job applications. At the same time, there is a Hardware Store in B-Block called '*Henry's*' which employed workers from Wesbank. And at the clinic, I saw people working there like the nurses and road cleaners are residents that live in Wesbank. Even the schools take parents that are sitting at home to cook food for the children at school. So there is also a good relationship between schools and the community.

Good stories of Wesbank also include organizations such as Wesbank Women for Change and Walking Bus project, which have a good impact on Wesbank township. According to my participants, the Woman for Change project was an initiative from the previous Mayor Patricia De Lille. She mostly thought of employment for women that are sitting at home. So the idea was to get a woman involved in community activities. My coworkers said that women can also make a change but all they see is the man all over the place. Therefore, the Women for Change project was to empower them as a woman to show what they can do for their community.

I became curious wanting to know the difference between the two projects; Women for Change and the Walking Bus project. Miss M made it clear to me that Walking Bus it's nothing new if you think about it. Because every parent takes their child to school, it became an organization where women stand together and support other parents that cannot take their children to school. So they have taken it further to ensure that every child gets to school on time. Since I worked with the Wesbank Women for Change team I saw no major difference because both

projects patrol the streets every day. But the Women for Change project is more concerned about the social issues of Wesbank residents.

In the contemporary present, gangsters have become less visible in the streets because of these organizations and the deployment of the army in the Cape Flats. I also reached the goal that I was researching. The aim was to get to see how Wesbank residents construct the meaning of place. Furthermore, to hear their thoughts on Wesbank irrespective of the misleading narratives. Their responses gave me an answer to my research question. Miss G, one of my participants, said that Wesbank is a better place compared to what she went through in her past. Mike and Edith Van Wyk agreed that it's a good place but there is a lot that needs to be done. And when it came to my last participant she said the following;

"I don't see Wesbank different from other places, we can't change everything what is happening but we can make a little change where you live and that is why I make change in D-Block because I live here. That is important! And my daughter she's a teacher in Russia and you see she comes from Wesbank which many people believe it's a bad place. Wesbank it's a nice place for me but people make it bad. And what about other places like Hanover Park and Wesbank is not bad as those places. For me personally, Wesbank is not bad but our community need to handle the issue of gangsters in this place"

(Interview with Katriena Daames, 10 June 2019)

Katriena Daames' point of view makes it clear that Wesbank is no different compared to other places. She assumed that other areas in the Cape Flats are faced with the same issue of crime and gang violence. Yet she believes that making a change where one lives it's a good start. The responses of my other participants made things clear that Wesbank is a better place because most people call it home. Given the fact that now everyone is living in their own houses (Blommaert et al, 2005; Dyers, 2018). But that does not erase the past experiences of having to

move from place to place during the apartheid period. As we know that in the past many South Africans were forcibly removed from areas that were declared for 'whites only' (Mesthrie, 2000). Wesbank residents often refer to Wesbank as a community instead of a township. I find that very interesting because this concept of 'community' it's complex to use, as a result, it's collective and yet excludes certain groups of people (see Baumann, 1996). But in Wesbank the term is often used in a collective sense by including all residents. Let me explain. In Wesbank some transnational immigrants own Tuckshops and Barbershops, but they are often excluded from the events that concern South African citizens, take the example of the elections. Although that highlights the notion of belonging and not belonging as a South African citizen. Wesbank has welcomed everyone to live together as one community in a collective sense. And despite everything else on Wesbank, at least you know now there are good stories in which some of them are discussed in this paper.

Conclusion

In response to negative media reports and narratives that are not of Wesbank residents. My argument is that it's better to get a sense of the place from people who live in it because they know everything better than anyone. On top of that, they have everyday lived experiences. And they construct a positive image about their township and know how much it means to them as a home. But the media reports have reduced Wesbank into a single story that shows no understanding of the place and its people.

Paying attention to what this research is responding to - I focused on the history of the place and the people who live in Wesbank township. Doing so, enabled me to acknowledge their life histories and everyday lived experiences that show who they are and where they come from. The issue of gang violence has been exaggerated by the media reports to paint Wesbank township as a bad place. However, my findings have shown that there is more to the story about gang

violence in Wesbank. This includes good stories that show the works of the people in dealing with the social issues in their community.

Throughout participation observation, I came across many good stories of Wesbank that dealt with the issue of hunger. This is something that's been happening for years now. The different organizations have become the structure of the community in dealing with gangsterism and other criminal activities. In conclusion, Wesbank is a post-apartheid township which means home to many people because they now live together as a multicultural community consisting of different cultures and ethnicities in one space (Dyers, 2018).

Acknowledgment

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ who made it all possible for the research to happen - by sending me in the right direction where I had found participants who volunteered to take part in this research. Also, I would like to thank the Wesbank Women for Change team for being a blessing that contributed to this research project throughout my journey. I believe it would have been difficult to do this research without their assistance because they know Wesbank township better than anyone. And I also want to thank my sister in Christ, Melanie Shirey, for the words of encouragement to get this research done. And lastly, I would like to thank Pastor Hilton Davids and our late City Councillor of ward19, Ricardo Saralina, for their continuous support during my fieldwork. I appreciate everyone else who played a part in my research study.

Thank you very much!

God bless you!

Race Is A Political Signifier Embedded In Our Minds

This section explores the concept of race to illustrate how problematic the concept is and the issues around it. This study aims to help the readers understand why race is not biological but rather socially constructed. Yet race has not only become a political signifier embedded in our minds but also became a reality that has been accepted worldwide. And this research study is to help readers understand more about race.

Introduction

Race has been one of many concepts that are misunderstood by the vast majority of people around the world. It's a concept that was never openly discussed before to most people or a topic that most people never acknowledge its complexities. For instance, most people are aware of the racial categories they use daily to identify themselves. But what most people fail to understand is the fact that race is a social and political construction (see Mesthrie, 2000). That is to say, race is not biological because it's not static (Boonzaier, 1988).

This research does not only focus on race as a social and political construction but also discusses the importance of race and why race matters in the postcolonial era. Firstly, I discuss the theoretical and historical framework of critical analysis on race from a global perspective. Then, I discuss the sociopolitical history of the concept and politics of race in the past to present South Africa. I then move on to briefly discuss my research study on Wesbank township to emphasize why race matters in post-apartheid South Africa. In conclusion, I sum up the argument and comment on why race matters now in the post-colonial era.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF CRITICAL ANALYSES ON 'RACE'
(IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE)

Race as a concept was used to mark people based on their social differences, physical appearances, and the way they behaved in society (Boonzair, 1988). This means that 'race' as a category was used to mark or classify people to identify their social differences by constructing their identities through the concept of 'race'. There is no doubt that 'race' is historically a European concept that was also used during the colonial period to dominate others which refers to nonwhites (Fanon, 1986). In the days of colonialism in the African continent, the concept of 'race' was used to place social order on the former colonized African people who were conquered by the Europeans.

In other words, 'race' was also used by the Europeans to differentiate themselves from the non-European people like the Africans. It is because of the physical appearances and other characteristics that show the differences between groups of people throughout the world (Fanon, 2004). This is why categories such as the 'Black' and 'White' race came into existence because of the Europeans who regarded themselves as 'White' and superior to any other race (Erasmus, 2008). For example, we can look at the work of Fanon in *'The Wretched of the Earth'* in which he demonstrates violence taking place between white and black people during the colonialism period in Africa (Fanon, 2004). For instance, the decolonization of formerly colonized regions was called by the black people who stood against the colonial government and at the same time, African people demanded their independence (Zeiling, 2014). Yet looking at the racial violence of colonialism was based on the social differences as different groups of people who belonged to different racial groups waged war on each other (Erasmus, 2008; Fanon, 2004). From a global perspective 'race' was and is still seen as the reality of the people, although it is a social construction. Through 'race' black people were also discriminated against and

treated as unimportant compared to other races. The apartheid system in South Africa illustrated such an example (Magubane, 2007).

However, there are also critics of the concept of 'race' although race was used as a marker of identities throughout history. Many scholars had written on the issue of race to illustrate how problematic it is. Paying particular attention to the issue of race from a global perspective, it is obvious that race was applied as a racial category to validate social differences by classifying people into different races (Boonzaier, 1988). During colonialism, black people were exploited, degraded, and regarded as 'savage' and 'uncivilized' by the European colonists (Rodney, 1972). In this sense, race was political in disadvantaging others by creating inequalities between races and colonialism in Africa which relates to the segregation between whites and blacks in the United States of America it is an example of that (Fanon, 2004). Because race was used not to only create division between whites and blacks but the whites benefited in terms of resources while blacks suffered (Rodney, 1972). This leads to the argument of 'race' as political rather than biological and the existence of racism could be an example that explains race as a political signifier of our differences (Boonzaier, 1988). According to Boonzaier (1988) race is used to classify groups of people based on the characteristics of their physical appearances. The critics of the concept of race are that it is treated as if it is biological but instead is politicized. For instance, (Boonzaier, 1988; 65) argues that "Similarly, the term 'black' - as in 'black power' or 'Black Consciousness' is generally used to define the common victims of oppression, rather than a 'natural' category sharing common physical characteristics." Based on Boonzaier's (1988) argument he criticizes 'race' to illustrate that the concept of 'race' goes beyond the physical characteristics of the body. For example, 'black' was referred to as the marginalized, oppressed groups of people, and colonialism and the Battle of Algiers is also a clear demonstration. The Battle of Algiers is another example in the sense that the Algerians were colonized by the French colonists. Therefore, they were marginalized groups of people who fell under the category of

black in this sense.

Although race is not natural, the ideas around it had been made to believe that race is just like ethnicities and tribes which many people believe are natural instead of being markers of identities that were created by the Europeans. We can reflect on the argument by Erasmus (2008) who also discusses scientific racism. He argues that "Race understood biologically in terms of genetic inheritance, descent, and physical features and culture understood as behavioural characteristics, as an expression of race, and in terms of the progress of civilization both became of primordial human superiority and inferiority" (Erasmus, 2008; 170). Erasmus's (2008) arguments demonstrate the fact that race is more complex than we ever thought. This also gives us an understanding that critics of 'race' also demonstrate that race is theorized through politics of difference and yet through physical characteristics of the body as if it is natural. In other words, scholars have also responded to illustrate how race was used and understood, and yet there are different opinions about the concept of race. This is because we can no longer escape the usage of the concept and it has become important in the contemporary world and is embedded in our minds. This also relates to Stuart Hall's argument on the '*floating signifier of race*', he suggests that by looking at the meaning of race as to how it is understood, there are other stereotypes that are associated with the concept of race. For instance, Stuart Hall argues that "Race is a major concept that organises people, based on the differences of the colour of their skin, either black or white." ¹ This reflects on the understanding of a political structure that has been put into place to form a stratification. For example, he argues about race in relation to language, that it has been socially constructed like language and therefore it is not static. Concerning Hall's (2001) statement about the floating signifier of race, he tries to demonstrate that race is socially constructed and has been forced and taught to an extent that it has been appropriated to people as some form of reality. For instance, Mamdani argues about the colonial conquest that it was not just about economic reasons but rather race and social

differences played an important role (Mamdani, 2001). I further demonstrate the issue of race in the following section, on the socio-political history of South Africa in the past and present.

SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY OF RACE IN THE PAST TO PRESENT SOUTH AFRICA

Paying particular attention to the history of South Africa, the apartheid system with its policy has divided the people in the past into racial groups (Alexander, 2006). The colonial government was in power during the apartheid period, the South African population groups were segregated in the sense that they were forced to live in certain areas based on their racial categories (Mesthrie, 2000). This gives us a sense of how the concept of race was used in South Africa during the apartheid period. In the South African context, 'race' was also politicised in the sense that 'Blacks', 'Coloureds', and 'Indians' were oppressed by the white colonial government (Alexander, 2006). In this case, white people had more advantages and benefitted more than any other racial group while the nonwhites went through humiliation and discrimination (Mesthrie, 2000). For instance, "In July 1966 some 300 coloured and Indian families in Cape Town constituting under 2000 individuals received the news that the area in which they lived, known as Black River, had been declared a group area for whites only" (Mesthrie, 2000;24). Based on Mesthrie's (2000) argument gives us a sense of people's removal from their homes as a result of the group area act during the apartheid period in Cape Town, South Africa. The removal of the people in their homes was politicised because the whole idea was centred on race and therefore it was politics of race. For example, black people who migrated from rural areas to cities had to carry their passes with them. The colonial government had ensured that the apartheid system with its policies had made it clear that they do not belong to the cities and which is why the group area act had also removed many people from areas declared for whites only (Mesthrie, 2000). South Africa was segregated in the sense that Coloureds were to live separately from the

blacks, this include their geographical region. One of the examples we often hear of Xhosa people who are in the cities is stating that 'I am going home, I am going back to Eastern Cape'. Since we acknowledge the history of South Africa then we surely understand what Xhosa people may mean by such statements. In South Africa, politics of race included stereotypes such as if you are black then you are not intelligent as a white person, it speaks to the ideology of race that illustrate others as superior and others as inferior. The whole point about the politics of race in the South African past demonstrates the discrimination that was directed towards other races that were the marginalised groups of people by the apartheid government (Mesthrie, 2000). As I had argued earlier race is not natural however it has become the reality of the people and looking at the history of South Africa during the apartheid period. We can acknowledge the fact that the idea of race as a concept and identification to some extent was to create division between people in the societies in many ways that inequalities came into play to illustrate distinct values. This is why in the South African context, blacks, coloureds, and Indians were discriminated against during the apartheid period because they were less valued compared to whites (Mesthrie, 2000; Boonzaier, 1988).

Although race was politicised in the past to control the nonwhites by the whites, it still matters and is relevant in present South Africa. This is because post-apartheid South Africa has become a new phase where the colonial government is stripped away from power. The new government has taken charge to empower those who were oppressed as a result of their race (Mesthrie, 2000). 'Black Consciousness' is an example of a movement that fought for the oppressed during the struggle in South Africa (Boonzaier, 1988). In general, South Africans who suffered at the hands of the apartheid government can now use their racial category to redefine who they are and promote self-pride about their race. It is because of the historical past that race still matters especially to victims of oppression who can now continue to use race to claim their rights and

equality in the societies (Luke, 2000). Race will not only teach us about our social differences but most importantly about our history which is a lived experience of the past that says much of who we are and what we went through. Take the example of the removal of the Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians from white areas, it says a lot about their history and who they are and shapes their identity (Mesthrie, 2000). Indeed, race matters in present South Africa because looking at history enables an individual to have a sense of belonging other than being excluded (Luke, 2000). Although critics of race might argue that it is a classification or social construction. However, our social differences are natural, and therefore race is there to identify those differences (Hacking, 2005). In the real world, we are also aware that race matters in our everyday lives because it is embedded in our thoughts whether we deny it or not. The fact that racism itself exists as a social issue demonstrates that we are well aware of our social differences through racial categories (Magubane, 2007). Racial categories although they are a social construction of our reality, they are very important as many people still live by them (Alexander, 2006). In the next section, I further discuss how race matters in relation to my fieldwork research.

RACE MATTERED IN MY FIELDWORK

Wesbank is one of the post-apartheid townships in Cape Town, South Africa. It is where there are different groups of people coming from all over South Africa and outside South Africa (see Dyers, 2018). Diversity is also one of the reasons I believed race mattered during my fieldwork. For example, in Wesbank there are groups of people such as follows; Coloureds, Xhosas, Zulus, Sothos, Ethiopians, Nigerians, Somalians, Pakistanis, and many more. In other words, Wesbank is a township that demonstrates super-diversity in the community as there is diversity due to all the groups of people who live together and having the knowledge of who they are and where they are coming from (Vertovec, 2007). Despite living in a community like Wesbank,

everyone or perhaps most people live there. They are aware of their race and for them, it gives a sense of who they are. For instance, the majority of the people in Wesbank are Coloured people and during my observation, most of them often identify as Coloured when someone asks about their identity. In this sense race matters to them as I have come across many people stating that my mother she's Coloured and my father is Xhosa. Yet in the end, they still choose to identify as Coloured, although most of them have memories and experiences regarding apartheid in South Africa. They are not aware of race as a social construction, instead for them race is natural as if it is genetic and it is the reality of their identities. Alexander (2006) makes the same argument that most individuals are not well aware of the history and politics of race. Even so, people have been taught about race to an extent that it is the only way they can identify themselves as if it's biological.

Despite anything that has been written on race or culture and ethnicity. Wesbank is where most people use race to identify themselves. An example of this includes some of the participants I had informal conversations with and life history interviews during my fieldwork. They all had used racial categories to give a sense of their identities and where they come from before moving to Wesbank. Out of all the participants I interviewed, one woman identified as a Tswana woman while others as Coloured women. Reflecting on my fieldwork, I realised that race matters to the people I have worked with including the culture that says much about them.

Therefore, race matters because it also helps to understand people's sense of belonging as they identify through racial categories. Race is also relevant in the present because without the concept of a race then how people would have identified in the first place. Things would turn out more complicated than it is now. For example, during my fieldwork, I noticed that in terms of identifying my participants, race came into play more than coming across someone who would identify as a South African through citizenship rather than race. When people mention their race these days they don't even pay much attention to their belonging in terms of their clan. In

general, this also relates to the younger generation of today. Like the Xhosa mother-tongue speakers, they often use race to identify as black people before moving to their ethnicities. In the life history interviews, I also learned that some of my participants when they spoke of the apartheid experience it was centred on race. For instance, because of race, my participants had informed me that they were socially excluded and removed from where they used to live. This relates to the removals of Coloured people from areas such as Black River (Mesthrie, 2000).

Conclusion

Furthermore, I strongly believe race matters because let's think about the groups of people who were previously disadvantaged and silenced, they are now able to speak out without any fear and shame. They can now challenge and address issues that affect them and now it is time for them to show themselves and speak out. In addition, the victims of oppression can now be treated equally as other races and discard the eurocentric thoughts that were implemented in their minds. Therefore, race matters in the present world and not just in South Africa. Although we are one human race we live in a society where we have different racial categories we use to identify ourselves and others when it is necessary.

Economic Anthropology:

Ethnography of Debt and Violence About State and Market



This section is a research that was conducted and authored by my colleagues Chloe Meyer, Jaymee Lee Jafta, Jene Andrews, and myself. It was a group work research project for the Anthropology module. This study explores the underlying issues of debt and violence in the field of Economic Anthropology. Examining Graeber's (2009) statement on violence and debt in relation to the state and market, this study is to help readers understand the history of debt and its connection to violence.

GRAEBER (2009) ON VIOLENCE AND DEBT IN RELATION TO STATE AND MARKET

Money has become a source that creates power relations. The person who has more money will have the power to control or dominate the other (Hart, Ortiz: 2014). It is due to this reason that everyone strives to attain more money for them to gain leverage. It is the economic system of the past that introduced debt to maintain the power relations, so the rich continue to become

rich and the poor continue to grow poorer. Violence is how debt is enforced, violence ensures repayment or subservience (Graeber, 2009). Economic history is shaped by both debt and violence, the economies today are founded on the violence and debt relations of the past. Thus market and state are fundamentally rooted in violence and debt relations. Graeber (2009) argues that throughout history, debt and violence have had a social consequence, and only recently have we entered into an era of a functional administrative system. He discusses the rise of the credit system over the past 5 000 years of Eurasian human history. The following essay will seek to explain the following statement by Graeber (2009) “Economic history can be read as a history of debt and violence and neither states nor markets can exist without the threat of violence”. The essay will draw from Graeber’s (2009) article as well as other relevant articles to substantiate. The statement will be analysed through a discussion on debt, a definition of debt, and the history of debt. Later the essay will look at examples of debt. Then the essay will discuss violence since violence played a key role in debt historically and economically. Lastly, the essay will provide examples of violence that took place in relation to debt. In conclusion, this essay will comment on Graeber's (2009) statement with examples.

THE HISTORY OF DEBT

Debt is referred to as a predatory lending system according to Graeber (2009). It refers to an obligation and occurs as a social relationship where one owes the other. This indebtedness may be for example material or monetary. The debt leads one to be obligated to the other, who may redeem the owed. To discuss violence and debt, the relationship between the two ought to be clarified. Debt refers to the obligation where violence is how debt is enforced, violence ensures repayment or subservience (Graeber, 2009).

The origins of debt are grounded in slavery, where human life is indebted to another under conditions such as war (Graeber, 2009). Here a human life is valued as property or material

goods, violence is perpetrated to enforce a slave's obligation to the master. This debt is perceived to be absolute and non-redeemable (Graeber, 2009). Slavery began the movement towards commoditization and debt was invented as something disembedded and of value, on these grounds the market erupted (Graeber, 2009). Because slaves could be bought and sold the market was quantifiable (Graeber, 2009). This was an example of primitive money, a system of trade not reliant on a specific currency, this was used as a means to trade commodities where currency or specific material was uninvolved (Graeber, 2009). Money was used as a means of measurement to indicate obligation and debt, referred to as credit money (Graeber, 2009).

Graeber (2009) discusses conquest and the royal system of owning human life, this owning of human life led to indebtedness to the state. Masters exerted control over slaves but were not the ruling authority, royalty exercised absolute power between the indebted and the state. Modern society is comprised of a population belonging to a state, this state exerts full control of the population's economic activities. This resembles the system of conquest. However, here instead of slavery we see a system of social debt (Graeber, 2009). This system arises from the notion of indebtedness ascribed at birth, a debt owed to our creators and the state. Money is the physical form of social debt, aiding in the management of debt (Graeber, 2009).

There is a transformation in debt and violence. The participants of debt have transformed, initially, the debt relationship occurred between the master and slave, then the proletariat and the bourgeoisie or royal, and later the debtor and the collector in the market (Graeber, 2009). Historically physical violence was perpetrated, however; in modern society structural violence is perpetrated. Here the royal power, master, or authority are not single figures but rather the state and market.

According to Graeber (2009), there are five eras between 3500 BCE and the contemporary era. The Agrarian Empires between 3500 and 800 BCE functioned on a

system of virtual credit money, here money of account was established (Graeber, 2009). The Axial Age between 800 BCE and 6000 CE functioned on a money form of coinage and metal bullion, markets were created for exchange (Graeber, 2009). In the middle ages between 600 CE and 1500 CE returned to a system of virtual credit money, and social relations began to be intertwined with the market system (Graeber, 2009). The Age of European Empires between 1500 CE and 1971 returned to the money-form of precious metals, the state-controlled credit (Graeber, 2009). The current era or contemporary era from 1971 onwards functions on a system of debt, currency was established to maintain the virtual credit money system (Graeber, 2009). In the contemporary age debt continues to be associated with power relations, illustrations of debt are namely the gift, reciprocation, and everyday communism (Graeber, 2009). According to Graeber (2009), the contractual obligation arises to create an economy where debt is a result of failure to reciprocate. Communisms and communistic relations imply a mutual indebtedness (Graeber, 2009). Debt can have many different forms. For example, gift-giving is a form of debt because the giver places a responsibility, whether direct or indirect, on the receiver to give back. More examples of debt are to follow.

EXAMPLES OF DEBT

According to Graeber (2009) debt refers to the understanding or idea of a loan (money), gift-giving, or credit, but the whole idea of debt is about owing. For instance, there is household debt, which includes all the responsibilities of the household members such as electricity bills, school fees, rent, water payments, and others. Those are a few

examples of household debt. (Gregory 2012: 393) argues that “When single moms need money for everyday expenses, they have two options: informal loans from family and friends or formal loans from the banks and retail outlets.” Based on Gregory's (2012) argument, it is a clear example of debt. As a result, people tend to lend money because they have other duties to fulfill, like paying back the amount of money they owe to certain people or companies. This also relates to the idea of household debt.

An important question we need to ask is how are these debts created and by whom. According to Gregory's (2012) argument, he uses the example of credit which suggests that through the given amount of credit, debt is also created by people. For instance, (Gregory 2012: 383) argues that “When the requestor is deemed trustworthy and is granted the loan, the credit becomes history and takes the form of debt.” Based on Gregory's (2012) argument, illustrates how debt is created by people who see themselves in situations owing other people or the companies. For example, debt can be understood and seen through the form of exchange, we can look at furniture as an example. When one buys furniture, he/she receives the furniture in exchange for money, meaning that since they received the furniture, now they have a debt. The debt they have to worry about is paying for the furniture with the money they have bought, as a result, the furniture they have bought has been given value by the owner who sold the furniture to the buyers. The value of the furniture that has been sold is seen also through costs, meaning the amount of money that needs to be paid off is the debt.

However, according to Graeber's (2009) argument about debt, clearly illustrates the idea that debt is not limited to the understanding of financial issues or the use of money. Graeber (2009)

argues the following, “So the analogy between debt and slavery seems to occur to people because slavery itself is conceived of as a permanent, absolute, and unpayable debt, a life debt.” Based on Graeber's (2009) argument, it does not only teach us about other types of debts but rather also teaches us how other different types of debts are being repaid by the people who owe debts. This leads us also to an understanding of the different views many religions have but religions don't save anyone, only Jesus Christ saves.

For instance, as Christians, we believe that we owe our lives to God and once we repent we need to be born again. It's more like a life debt no one can repay on their own because the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has already paid the price on the cross for all humanity. Because of that, the Bible teaches us that we are not of our own for we have been brought with the price. In return, we are called to turn away from our sins and live holy and live a righteous life that is pleasing in the sight of God for the rest of our lives. All we need to do is to believe in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and walk according to God's commandments daily until we are called back home. In this case, Graeber (2009), calls it a life debt. As Christians, we are servants of God and we live this life to serve and worship God, share the gospel, and win souls for the kingdom of God. It's an example that demonstrates different kinds of debts but for Christian, Jesus Christ paid the price. That clearly illustrates the fact that debt is not only limited to the use of money to repay debt. (Gregory 2012: 385), argues that “The debtor is by definition, someone who needs money and history tells us that they are ever ready to receive money, but not always ready to pay it back.” Based on Gregory's (2012) argument, I disagree that debtors are limited to the idea of owing money since there are a variety of debts. For example, the Christian faith clearly illustrates that everyone must turn away from sin and believe in the gospel they shall be saved. As a result, there will be a punishment in the afterlife for those who do not repent and believe in the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ.

Social debt is another way of understanding the issue of debt. Social debt also provides an understanding of human relationships and an understanding of the human economy. For instance, (Donal 1962: 532) argues that “The notion of being indebted to someone for a given sum of money is a familiar concept in many cultures.” Based on Donal’s (1962) argument, it reflects the continuation and understanding of cultural norms in the contemporary present. For example, in most cultures in South Africa, African men are expected to pay lobola money for the woman they want to get married to. This is somehow another representation or example of debt although it is not seen in that way. As we know that the parents decide to give their daughters to the men who want to marry their daughters, in exchange the men owe a debt to the parents and he has to give the parents money if they want money or he has to buy cows and give to the parents if they request for cows, once he's done paying the parents, then his debt is settled. The above are each examples of debt both historic and current.

THE HISTORY OF VIOLENCE WITH STATE, ECONOMIC MARKET, AND DEBT

According to Graeber (2009:1), when studying the economy and its history, “we tend to systematically ignore the role of violence” and this is however known as what creates wars and slavery. We may not always see the violence taking place, but it lies within the common sense of the economy. Graeber (2009) also argues that violence is maintained by the contemporary state and used to get power, which is desired by many.

Slavery is known to be a key role in the idea of debt and violence related to it. When “owned” by someone, known as your “conqueror”, you are now expected to obey him and whether violence is involved, you need to do as he pleases, because you owe your life to your master or conqueror (Graeber, 2009:1). Graeber (2009) argues that slavery is one of the consequences that come from war and war is a form of violence. We are also made to understand that even though money could create violence for wanting more of it, money could also be used to stop violence or feuds

amongst the people when it is presented as a peace offering (Graeber, 2009). The people in power often used violence to scare those who owe them into paying their debt or even kill those who did not pay their debt. However, “only rulers could have arbitrary power over life and death” (Graeber, 2009: 2). Graeber (2009:3) also brings up the idea that “neither states nor markets can exist without the constant threat of force”. It is understood that “historically it is commodity money that has always been most directly linked to violence” (Graeber, 2009:3). One of the main reasons for money being so closely linked to violence is because, from the start, it could and still can be stolen, and oftentimes to take what is not used and to get away with it- violence is most commonly used.

Within the age of the first empires, the debts of the people were often paid off over time or wiped to a clean slate with new rulers. There was not much violence involved in trying to receive the money owed to the people (Graeber, 2009). Within the time of the axial age, this is where it was known that silver and gold could be stolen, and with this came the violence for purchasing power. Also, “now that states no longer periodically wiped the slate clean”, the state then had more power over the people who owed them money and often became slaves (Graeber, 2009: 4). Then, within the time of the middle ages, “religions began to take over the market systems”(Graeber, 2009: 5). Graeber (2009:6) argues that “money changers, one might say, were invited back into the temples, where they could be monitored. The result was a flowering of institutions premised on a much higher degree of social trust”. Then, in the age of the European empires, wars of major destruction and “rapid return of gold and silver bullion as the main form of currency” took place (Graeber, 2009:6). War is a common form of force to push people to do as was requested by the dominant party involved. Because of these sudden changes, there was a lot of social unrest which created many revolutions and shows the link between war, capitalism, and slavery. War, slavery, and capitalism are interlinked and when either has issues, more violence/uneasiness is created amongst the states. Within the current era, many economies are

driven by debt (Graeber, 2009). Lastly, Graeber (2009:8) argues that “a world less entirely pervaded by violence would rapidly begin to develop other institutions”.

Some of the big questions raised by Graber (2009) are, “in a society in which that foundation of violence had finally been yanked away, what exactly would free men and women owe each other? What sort of promises and commitments should they make to each other?” (Graeber, 2009:8). We can therefore come to an understanding that even if societies try their utmost to keep violence out of the equation, there will always be a possibility somehow that something else will fill the gap of commitments toward people within the societies. Also, there would possibly not be all these drastic changes within the states and markets if there were not certain acts of violence/wars that took place. It is thus brought to our attention that violence was used to enforce things on people and was known to be very brutal. In today's context, however; violence is more indirect or contextual.

EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE IN RELATION TO THE STATE, ECONOMIC MARKET, AND DEBT

It is an intellectual crime to speak of the market, state, or debt without mentioning the role of violence. Before we delve deeper into this topic we need to understand what exactly violence is? Violence is not only behavior involving physical force intended to damage, kill or hurt someone, violence can also be indirect meaning it is a punishment or consequence the pupils are aware of for example jail. Indirect violence is more common in contemporary state or market systems.

History shows that violence was the driving force of the economy and the maintenance of the particular system that exists at a particular time. Violence played a key role in the market and state as they enforced debt upon the people. Debt refers to the obligation where violence is how debt is enforced, violence ensures repayment or subservience (Graeber, 2009). Grabber (2009)

explains that war and slavery were at the centre of creating and shaping the basic institutions of what we now call the 'economy'. Violence in the current or present-day economy may be invisible but according to Graeber (2009), it is inscribed in the very logic of our economic common sense.

Slavery seems to be the origin of debt. Slavery refers to the slave owing his life to the owner or conqueror. Slavery in some instances is birthed through war hence if the nature of war is death, punishment, and violence then the same characteristics find themselves in slavery. Although slavery is an example of debt, it is also an example of the historical violence surrounding debt, the market, and the state. A slave's debt according to Graeber (2009) is permanent and irredeemable or lifelong. Violence upon slaves was used or perpetuated to force the slave to commit to his/her obligation towards his/her master. Hence without violence slaves would have sooner or later disobeyed the master and the master's value/riches would decrease since the slaves he owned represented his wealth. War in itself is a form of violence and is often how governments settle catastrophic differences and disputes, hence we have two countries at war. However, when a country's army overthrows another they are then indebted to the conquerors. Here we see that in this sense war can also be a form of debt or rather a form of creating debt. We know that at the heart of war is violence, serving punishment, and death. War incorporates all the traits of violence and can therefore be seen as an example of violence in the market or economy. Another representation of violence in contemporary society is as follows. A person who makes a loan from a loan shark (a moneylender that charges extremely high rates of interest and it is often an illegal operation). Loan sharks typically enforce violence upon those clients who fail to repay the loan with interest in due time. The clients are often aware of the consequence of violence and the violence is used to reassure that the clients will repay the money/loan. Contemporary violence that the state or market enforces is not always physical violence such as war but rather jail time for example. If a person fails to repay their debt or bank

loans they will be sentenced to jail. Jail can be an emotional destructive roller-coaster therefore people commonly seek to pay off their debt to avoid jail time.

The hierarchical exchanges of the past have transformed however the notion of debt remains. Each age illustrates respective money forms and administrative systems which have transformed throughout the past 5000 years. Money was previously a measure and later became the relationship between obligation and debt (Graeber, 2009). The form of violence has also transformed from direct and physical to indirect or structural violence. It can be concluded that there is a clear relationship between debt and violence, although it is debt that is scrutinized it is violence that is the force enabling debt.

Chapter 2: Why Social Science Theories Are Important?

This chapter is focused on research studies I have conducted that fall within the mainstream of the Sociology discipline. Here we learn about Social Science theories and how they are useful. And in this section, we also learn how Sociology touches on other topics to demonstrate certain issues that need to be addressed and resolved. Also, help us to understand complex subjects we take for granted. However, the whole point of this chapter is to give a similar demonstration as in chapter 1 about Anthropology research studies.

Now as to why Social Science Theories are so important, they help us to learn how society functions (Downes, 1971). For example, I recall doing assignments for Anthropology and Sociology modules where each student was required to come up with a topic to research on. In Sociology, I had to use social science theories to explain any social event that affects certain groups of people. At first, I did not know whether to choose functionalist theory, labeling theory, or conflict theory to analyze situations in the world. Out of the three, I thought it was best to choose conflict theory which I find easier and more beneficial to understanding the world we live in.

As someone coming from a low-income family, I learned that social science theories help us to understand our circumstances and the factors shaping our reality. For instance, through social science theory, we can now understand why there is a high unemployment rate in low-income areas compared to high-income areas (see Giddens, 1987). Conflict theory reveals to us we live in a society where there are inequalities between the working class and the ruling class (Giddens, 1987; 2010). Through social theories, we can analyze any social issue and come up with solutions to eliminate the threat. Like in many low-income areas, social science theories such as conflict and functional theory have recognized the issue of crime caused by inequalities that exist

between people (Downes, 1971). In other words, the working-class people often lack access to resources that can sustain them while others are jobless. That creates a problem where many would join gangsterism to survive (see Birkbeck and LaFree, 1993). For example, in South Africa, gender-based violence against women and children is still an issue but the government is taking the necessary steps to prevent Gender-Based Violence. That is why countries around the world need social scientists such as Anthropologists and Sociologists to study people and the underlying issues facing numbers of people. All the knowledge that comes from scientific research, shows the relevance of social science theories in the contemporary world. Social theories are truthful and reliable.

Take, for instance, functional theory helps us to understand that we live in a society where everything functions like body organs (Giddens, 2010). Social scientists believe that for the body to function well, everything needs to work properly inside the body. This includes the lungs, stomach, heart, and the rest. At first, I did not understand what they meant until it was explained to me that if my heart stops beating then I will immediately collapse. Because if my lungs stop working then I will struggle to breathe. So that is to teach us to be aware and acknowledge why all the body organs should function properly. The same applies to the society we live in, if we have a problem somewhere it will rise if nothing is being done. Like in the community where I live, I can detect factors that contribute to crime and the unemployment rate. Such as lack of jobs, dropping out of school, and many more. Many young people are sitting at home while others breaking the law by engaging in illegal activities that can send them to jail. The issue of crime has escalated because there is no police station in my community, which is why things are not functioning well. And the fictional theory has revealed why it is so important for organs to function (Giddens, 2010). It makes perfect sense if we think about it. I mean, we have seen and heard about someone who was rushed to the hospital due to lung

failure or heart attack. It's because something went wrong inside their body and that explains why all body organs need to function properly. They all need each other to maintain the body. Just like no one can drive a car with an empty fuel. You can have all you need but if the fuel is empty, it's not going to work. You will not make it to your next destination. And that is what functional theory is all about.

Sociology of Crime and Deviance in South Africa

This is a Sociology of Crime and Deviance. This section seeks to discuss the problem of crime in South Africa as it has been described by previous scholars as unique, not due to the ideology of prevalence but due to its violent nature. An emphasis on violence against women and children in South Africa. The aim of this research is to critically discuss and view the inequalities between men and woman that leads to violence in society. This discussion will include some illustrations and demonstrations by looking at the views from conflict theory, functionalism, control theory and. The major theory in this discussion is a conflict theory which will assist in explaining the domestic violence in South Africa, with emphasis on violence against women and children. Firstly, the conflict theory will be discussed in relation to the problem of crime in South Africa. It will be followed by functionalism with its perspectives regards to the problem of crime. Control theory will also highlight its issues with regard to the problem of crime. This discussion will also include arguments from other scholars to support this discussion. In conclusion, the position taken will be discussed with regards to domestic violence in South Africa, with emphasis on violence against women and children.

According to Giddens (2009) using or applying conflict theory in understanding the causation and consequences of crime and deviant, all leads to the understanding of the capitalist system. It is often acknowledged that crime, deviance, and violent acts in most cases are often encouraged by capitalism. Capitalism is one of the systems that has contributed to creating inequality in societies. This leads to the understanding of the inequality between gender, race, and sex. (Giddens, 2009: 949) argues that “Rather, people actively choose to engage in deviant behavior in response to the inequalities of capitalism.”

For example, looking at the system of crime control in South Africa. It is easy to acknowledge the system controlling crime in South Africa is systematically corrupt for releasing men that commit crimes against women and children. In fact, These men get arrested and released repeatedly, and by doing so, they continue with the violent acts even towards their family members, and in most cases, they are often less reported. Conflict theory shows the outcome of gender-based violence crime is the result of inequality within a male-dominated society.

Conflict theory enables us to observe the fact that in society, women and children are often in danger with regard to crime and violence as most theories always fail to address this. When looking at domestic crime in South Africa, this also explains why women and children are often the victims in s different cases that include rape, verbal abuse, and others. Due to the understanding of conflict theory with regards to crime and deviant behavior which is often caused by men towards women and children. Giddens argues that “Domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape are crimes in which males use their superior social or physical power against women (Giddens, 2009:963).” This argument from Giddens also supports the ideology of conflict theory which shows the inequality with regard to crime and violence against women and children in society as they are often the victims. For example, when looking at the issue of crime in South Africa with emphasis on violence against women and children. According to recent studies, it is also acknowledged that many South Africans have protested in the past years with regard to violence against women and children. The protest has not really helped at all, because crime and violence have escalated in South Africa. According to Giddens (2009) within conflict theory, it is illustrated that there’s inequality between classes which is likely to be found as the result of the capitalist system. However, in relation to domestic violence in South Africa. This also explains why domestic violence or violence against women and children often occurs in lower-income areas than higher-income areas. We can use ‘Khayelitsha’ township, where most people living in this location fall under the working class. While there is

also a high rate of crime because it is a poor area where most youngsters are unemployed and engage themselves in criminal activities. When comparing the issue of violence and crime between 'Khayelitsha' and any other high-income area in Cape Town, South Africa. Conflict theory will indicate that there is less crime and violence in other high-income areas. Conflict theory views the issue of crime in South Africa by paying attention to the inequalities with regard to gender, race, and sex in the capitalist system. This does not only view who the system favors but also views where domestic violence and any other crime against women and children is likely to occur in different societies.

However, functionalism theory has a different view in regards to crime and violence which differs from conflict theory's perspective in demonstrating the problem of crime and violence in South Africa. For instance, (Birkbeck and LaFree, 1993:114) argue that "criminality is necessary but not sufficient condition for crime to occur because crime requires situational inducements in the form of motivation and opportunity." The argument from Birkbeck and LaFree suggests that crime is necessary for society to function although there are some challenges that face many people. (Giddens, 2001: 207) argues that, "Functionalist theories see crime and deviance resulting from structural tensions and a lack of moral regulation within society." Giddens (2001) explains why violence against women and children occurs in lower-income societies like Khayelitsha. By looking at functionalism, it is easy to see that although functionalism accepts the ideology of crime as necessary for society to function. Nevertheless, this gives an understanding of the issue of structural tensions and moral regulation which are weak compared in high-income areas. Therefore, this also causes people to react differently due to the social forces that are beyond their control, causing them to act in certain ways which also brings social change with new challenges. This takes us back to conflict theory, which suggests that violence and crime are due to inequality and unfairness in society. Moving to control theory, control theory has its own view on the issue of crime. Giddens (2001) explains control theory as

the theory that rejects people's motivation to engage in crime or deviant behavior in the first place. When looking the domestic violence in South Africa with emphasis on violence against women and children. This also explains why the system controlling crime is corrupt. It has been argued by other scholars that the situation of crime against women is often less reported. The same men who are likely to engage in behaviors that violate women always continue with their deviant behavior every time they get a chance. So, control theory is relevant with regard to the deviant acts that men often commit toward women and children in South Africa.

Downes and Rock (1971) argue about the ideology of social change that brings a change in society, there becomes a loss of integration between people which contributes to deviant acts or committing of crimes. In fact, they argue, "social change in industrial society can be viewed in terms of a progressive loss of social integration (Downes and Rock, 1971: 352)." Downes and Rock's argument, also clarify with regard to the problem of crime in South Africa. For people in the lower-income areas, there has been an increase in loss of integration. Rather, people often feel excluded by other members of their social life. That causes people to react or engage in deviant behavior. This also gives an understanding as to why most men often enforce themselves on women. Due to the growth of individualism and becoming selfish, whatever crime they commit, they do not care, as long as it satisfies their needs.

Furthermore, the problem of crime in South Africa is caused by social inequality, which conflict theory was a necessary tool to grasp an understanding. Although other theories such as functionalism and control theory have a different perspective with regard to the issue of crime in South Africa. Nevertheless, domestic violence in South Africa on women and children can be analyzed with conflict theory. It is easy to acknowledge that women are often victims as a result, they do not share the same power as men. Through conflict theory, it is easy to acknowledge

inequalities due to the capitalist system. It can be determined who is safe and who is not. Security measures between lower-income areas and higher-income areas differ. For example, women in higher-income areas are safer compared to women living in lower-income areas. According to scholars like Giddens, Downes & Rock, and Birkbeck & LaFree. Based on their argument combined, it is obvious that conflict theory plays a huge role in discussing violence against women and children. So countries like South Africa will continue because of the corrupt system and other factors playing a huge role in this issue of gender-based violence.

Sociology of Technology in Society: The Impact of Technology on Society



This research compares and contrasts the theoretical framework of technological determinism and cultural materialism. Technological determinism refers to the idea that technology is an independent and autonomous agent that brings social change (Murphie and Potts, 2003). Cultural materialism refers to the notion that it is the way technology is developed and used by society that should be considered and looked at, but not only the idea that technology is autonomous and an agent of social change on its own.

This paper aims to compare and contrast the theoretical framework of technological determinism and cultural materialism. To look at the similarities and differences between technological determinism and cultural materialism to provide an argument for the possible synthesis. This discussion covers three aspects which are technological determinism, cultural materialism, and critical theory of technology as this paper argues for the possible synthesis.

Introduction

This paper will first briefly discuss the theoretical framework of technological determinism by paying attention to its perspective on technology. Secondly, I will also include the theoretical framework of cultural materialism with its view. Siletile will provide the illustrations with examples from other scholars to substantiate the argument. The similarities and differences between the two will be discussed, including the third aspect, the critical theory of technology, and the possible synthesis will be stated. In conclusion, I will sum up the argument and further comment on the synthesis.

Technological Determinism

The theoretical framework of technological determinism claims and suggests that technology is independent and far ahead of society. It can do things that society cannot do or manage to do independently. This notion refers to the idea of hard determinism, which portrays technology as an invention that is free and independent from social, economic, and political decisions. For instance, (Murphie&Potts 2003:10) argue that "Technological determinism is linked to the idea of progress; in this sense it was forged as a social attitude in the used technology, in the form of tools and weapons, to transform their natural environment." Murphie & Potts's (2003) argument states that technology impacts people's lives. For example, the emergence of cell phones and washing machines has caused a social change in the sense that society relies much on technology in the contemporary present and that technology does all the work faster and independently. These are the views of technological determinism that differ from cultural materialism. However, Heilbronner's concept of 'soft determinism' clearly shows that technological determinism should also consider other social pressures that relate to the

development or existence of that technology itself. Hard determinism overlooks the soft determinism and the aspect of cultural materialism.

Cultural Materialism

Cultural materialism highlights the fact that technological determinism with its views is one-sided. As a result, it does not consider the importance and the role that society and culture play concerning technology development. That is an example of hard determinism rather than soft determinism. In the contemporary world, the development of new types and kinds of technologies such as transport, cellphones, and computers, to name a few. The development and existence of these technologies are taken for granted by technological determinism and hard determinism. As (Murphie & Potts 2003:20) argue, "In other areas, as we have seen, the state has direct decision-making powers regarding technology and its development in the contemporary world." Murphie & Potts's (2003) argument, highlights what technological determinism disregards to look at and the fact that it is a one-sided aspect with its claims. In the contemporary world, this explains the examples of new technology that are being invented, like new kinds of cell phones and other gadgets introduced every year and every month. Cultural materialism claims that technologies are more neutral than independent and autonomous, which means that technologies are there for a reason in the real world. They do not just come into existence on their own, although there is social change. However, their existence came about decision-making, which also looked at social cultures, economics, and politics.

Technological Determinism vs Cultural Materialism

Technological determinism considers technology more dominant and independent from the society or culture, which this notion portrays the distinction between technological determinism and cultural materialism. For instance, Heilbrunner (2003) uses the idea of 'institutional lag' to demonstrate the relationship between technology and culture. In this case, technology is seen as the one that leads society, and society follows the technology. According to Heilbrunner (2003), this process he calls 'Technological Congruence' refers to the notion that society has no other choice but to adapt to the technology that is seen as dominant, which causes a social change in society. For example, in the real world, this notion refers to how people communicate through technology, the invention of other transports, cooking machines, music, and many more. The two theoretical frameworks clearly illustrate more differences than similarities. As a result, there is a disagreement between the two theoretical frameworks. For instance, (Castells 2001: 118) argue that "The Internet has been appropriated by social practice." That is an example of cultural materialism; as a result, the internet might be found useless without its use by the people. However, (Feenberg 1995: 5) argues that "Determinism rests on the assumption that can be explained without reference to society." That is another point raised by Feenberg's (1995) argument that draws more on technological determinism.

Critical Theory of Technology

Feenberg's (1995) argument also shows that technology is seen as independent and has its control under determinism, not society's social control. That still highlights the differences between technological determinism and cultural materialism regarding their views about technology and culture. It is easy to acknowledge that the theoretical frameworks of technological determinism and cultural materialism somehow can relate to one another. For

example, technological determinism maintains that technology is autonomous and independent from social control. However, technology would not have come into existence without the society or culture's input or decision-making about the development of that technology.

Regarding Feenberg's (1995) critical theory of technology, this aspect also outlines the faults that are not looked at or taken into consideration by either one or both theoretical frameworks of technological determinism and cultural materialism. That points to Feenberg's (1995) idea of interpreting technology, which looks at the two dimensions: social meaning and functional rationality. For example, the invention of technology such as cell phones, transports, bicycles, and others carries the two dimensions of social meaning and functional rationality. As a result, through understanding these double aspects, one dimension applies to technological determinism, and the other applies to cultural materialism. That clarifies the synthesis that a combination or mixture shows the two aspects coming together, with each side reflecting a different view.

Therefore, it could be argued that the two theoretical frameworks differ in their views; both aspects need one another to function. For instance, Feenberg (1995) uses the example of a coin that consists of two sides. It is easy to acknowledge that a coin cannot only have one side, so it needs both sides, heads, and tails to be recognized as true. In other words, coins have both sides which reflect different meanings. According to Feenberg's (1995) argument, although technological determinism and cultural materialism have different perspectives, the two theoretical frameworks are dependent on one another. For example, suppose technology brings social change into society. People are the ones that come into that decision-making of inventing that technology that causes a social change in their lives. It also applies to whether few people get to make those decisions due to qualification, class, and social power to control society.

Furthermore, the combination of technological determinism and cultural materialism also leads to what Feenberg (1995) calls 'technical code,' which is the mixture of determinism and cultural materialism. As argued above, the differences and similarities between technological determinism and cultural materialism, their synthesis suggests that although the two aspects differ, they rely on one another and note that their mixture makes total sense rather than being separated from one another. That concludes that technological determinism made an error claim about technology being independent and autonomous. Technologies are not of the same standard, and most are being replaced by society. Furthermore, Willson's (2006) 'Technically Together' portrays the same notion that technology has caused a social change. However, decision-making always comes from people for technology to exist, whether technology is good or bad.

Sociology on Eurocentric Thought with its False Assumptions

In this research, I critically discuss and reflect on Serequeberhan's (2002) critique of Eurocentric thought with its false assumptions. With regard to Serequeberhan's (2002) argument, false assumptions are claims that are not true, but however likely to contain errors. In understanding Eurocentric thought, it is the way the Europeans viewed the world or different cultures from their perspective which was in a Eurocentric manner. According to Serequeberhan (2002) knowledge of production, it is how the different understandings through rationality were produced throughout the world, for instance, European knowledge is one of the examples which was produced through the colonialism era. I will draw on Serequeberhan(2002), Kaphagawani(2002), Carroll (2014), and Mangcu(2013) to support my argument. I will add examples and also include implications for knowledge production of Eurocentric thought. I am going to conclude by summing up the argument and providing some ideas that might help non-European societies to become self-reliant.

According to Serequeberhan's (2002) argument, eurocentrism is problematic regarding the false assumptions of Eurocentric thought, that Europe knowledge is universal and superior to non-European knowledge. In other words, Europe is considered better and more advanced than non-European societies. For instance, (Serequeberhan; 2002, 64) argues that "Broadly speaking, Eurocentrism is a pervasive bias located in modernity's self-consciousness of itself." Based on Serequeberhan's (2002) argument, this also explains in the contemporary present the ideologies of the West which have been accepted and practiced by the non-European societies.

However, this does not mean European knowledge is superior to non-European societies with the way of understanding and doing things. This is because Europe colonized and conquered non-European societies, through colonialism, they enforced their European knowledge on the

non-European societies, who had their own ways of understanding and doing things. In non-European societies like Africans, their epistemic knowledge was regarded as the unreality, wrong, uncivilized, and primitive ways of understanding and doing things. For instance, (Serequeberhan; 2002,65) argues that “Indeed, in its global invasion and subjugation of the world, European modernity found the *unreality* of myriad non-capitalist social formations, which it promptly shattered and replaced with its own replication of itself.”

Based on the above argument by Serequeberhan (2002), clearly explains the false assumptions of Eurocentric thought as the only knowledge or universal knowledge. In pre-colonial, the non-European societies had their own ways of understanding and doing things, and their own knowledge. As in the contemporary present, the non-European societies have accepted the Western ways of doing things, to the extent that although African cultures have their own knowledge and understanding of things, they still rely on European knowledge.

For example, in countries like South Africa, things have changed compared to the precolonial era. South Africa is now under the influence of doing things in western ways. The way medical doctors do medical procedures in hospitals is just the whole ideology that came from the West or European knowledge in other words. In the contemporary present, there is less number of Africans who rely on traditional medicines, and traditional doctors other than that we are all taken by the Western knowledge as if it is the only right way of doing things and accepting it in a civil way.

Another example, we can look at the education system in most African countries like South Africa. It is likely to be found that even in the use of language, many South Africans are not being taught in their own African language how to do the math. Instead, the English language itself has been universalized to an extent that it is even recognized as an international language. Those are some of the markers we need to look at in the contemporary present. That shows the

change which has taken place. However, reflecting back on Serequeberhan's (2002) critique of the false assumptions of Eurocentric thought, it is easy to acknowledge the fact that Europe was no superior as they have claimed to be. According to Serequeberhan (2002), Europe conquered non-European societies and disregarded what was knowledge and rational to the Africans therefore European knowledge and way of doing things were introduced. For (Kaphagawani; 2002, 222) argue that "On the other hand, we must ensure that our African cultures are alive and progressive, renewing themselves by discarding outworn practices and ideas, taking what they need from other cultures to adapt to changing circumstances." In regard to Kaphagawani's (2002) argument, it clearly shows that there are African cultures that have their ways of understanding and doing things therefore there are different cultures with different knowledge.

Based on Kaphagawani's (2002) argument, although we try to decolonize Western knowledge, we will still continue to use the western ideas because the ideology of Europe is still embedded in the African societies and there is no escaping it. For example, countries like South Africa continue to import more from the West rather than export more, in terms of trade. In the contemporary present, globalization plays a huge role with the spread of technology itself has made it easier for today's generation to have an interest in the Western ways. The way we do things and practice them, we always look at or take from the western ideologies, assuming that their way is the civil way to do things and discarding our own cultures' practices and knowledge. Serequeberhan's (2002) argument also shows scholars like Kant can be biased by praising Eurocentric thought as if it is indeed better than non-European societies and superior, which of course is inaccurate and therefore it is a false assumption. Carroll (2014) argues about the existence and ideas of Africans which could contribute to the upbringing of the history and beliefs of African people in the African context. For instance, (Carroll; 2014, 265) argues that "However, given the advances within African-centered knowledge production, discussions of normative philosophical assumptions can be the basis from which we discuss the function of

social theory within Africans-centered sociology.” Based on Carroll’s argument, promoting African-centered sociology could bring about change, but going through that process at some point, will reflect on Europe’s ways of doing things, using their ideas as a tool that can guide us.

In addition, African scholars themselves take steps to decolonize the Western ideologies and knowledge and start to promote African knowledge, African ways of doing things, and understandings. If we look at this from a macro perspective using our sociological imagination, the only thing we would acknowledge is that we are stuck with the western ways within ourselves because we are already exposed to a lot of things in this world. For example, living in the 21st century, today’s generation admires the ways things are being done by the west which is somehow considered a truly modern way. Globalization and the media itself influence the behavior of the non-European societies further and not forgetting the fact that we live in a capitalist society, in which capitalism itself is the knowledge production of the west.

In broader understanding, there is different knowledge from distinct cultures with their values, beliefs, and way of understanding. According to Serequeberhan (2002), the issue is that Europe considered itself as the only reality with its knowledge and that is a false assumption that he tried to highlight in his argument.

Furthermore, it is also obvious that Eurocentric thought with its false assumptions has proven how biased it is and this also explains the way African societies were defined by the west. For instance, (Mangca; 2013, 56) argues that “Historically, South African sociology has been a conversation among White academics how to analyze Black society.” Based on Mangcu's (2013) article ‘*Decolonizing South African sociology*’ it is clear, also based on the argument that African societies were defined by the Europeans themselves. This supports also the argument that the non-European societies were declared primitive, uncivilized, and backward.

Furthermore, reflecting on Serequeberhan's (2002) critique of the false assumptions of Eurocentric thought, indeed Eurocentric thought is not superior rather than discarding other ideas and ways of understanding and doing things by the non-European societies. The only advantage of Europe is the fact that European knowledge has become recognized in different parts of the world. Although we may try to discard the western ways, the ideas will remain. In looking at the implications for knowledge production, as I have discussed, European knowledge has been accepted by most non-European societies, especially the younger generation as the civil way of doing and understanding things.

For non-European societies, the idea we can use is to become self-reliant as Mangcu (2013) has provided examples in his article *Decolonizing South African sociology*, decolonizing African philosophy by promoting its own knowledge and understanding that is not Eurocentric. This could take time but, at least non-European societies have more advantages than in the past and now it is time to be self-reliant and decolonize African philosophy.

Sociology of South Africa

In this research, I am going to critically discuss and reflect on Mangcu's (2016) view that South African Sociology is responsible to place the "shared text of blackness" at the center of its curriculum, in order to decolonize the discipline. South African Sociology refers to the study of South African society which has been studied and explained from a sociological point of view, however, South African Sociology has been studied from a Eurocentric perspective. According to Mangcu (2016), South Africans are to be responsible to write and share their own experience of apartheid, oppression, and domination by the West. Mangcu's (2016) view is that South African Sociology should theorize the African experience in the education system through schools and universities. This is to decolonize the discipline by bringing the unacknowledged African experience into existence and awareness.

The aim of this study is to not only critically reflect on Mangcu's (2016) view but also to provide an understanding as to why Mangcu has such a view about South African Sociology that it needs to be decolonized from its discipline at the center of its curriculum. I will draw on Mangcu's (2016) argument, which is the argument of the topic. I will include; Carroll's (2014), Kaphagawani (2002), Webster (2004), and Nyoka (2013), and Alata (2003) to support my argument. I will include some examples to further elaborate on Mangcu's (2016) view. I will conclude by summing up the argument in this paper and present a comment in regard to Mangcu's (2016) view and argument.

According to Mangcu's (2016) South African Sociology, it is still controlled by white academics who write about South Africans from a Eurocentric perspective. The issue is that South African Sociology is still colonized and only the white academics get to decide what's important and

theorize about South African reality. For instance, (Mangcu; 2016, 56) argues that “Historically, South African Sociology has been a conversation among White academics on how to analyze Black society.” Based on Mangcu’s (2016) argument, it clearly illustrates that South African Sociology is dominated by white academics who are in control of making decisions. This also raises ideas about the apartheid regime, when the Europeans had power over the African native people on their own native land. The issue that Mangcu (2016) highlights about South African Sociology is that it is white-dominated and the African shared experience on ‘text of blackness’ is not acknowledged.

However, in regard to Mangcu’s (2016) view and argument is that when Mangcu urged South African Sociology to place the ‘shared text of blackness’, it meant that African scholars should also take control to promote and theorize the African experience. In referring to ‘blackness’, in the South African context, it is mainly referred to those who were oppressed like the Africans and other ethnic groups and being dominated by the Europeans. The problem in regard to South African Sociology is still in a Eurocentric perspective. For instance, (Mangcu; 2016, 46) argues that “In June 2014 the Council of the University of Cape Town (UCT), the highest decision making body in the university, voted to replace the term ‘race’ with ‘economic disadvantage’ in its affirmative policies.” Mangcu’s (2016) argument clearly supports the idea that indeed South African Sociology is still white-dominated. This also indicates the fact that since Apartheid and post-apartheid, nothing has changed much because the “shared text of blackness” is not well recognized in fact it has been discarded by Western scholars.

In regard to Mangcu’s (2016) view about the concept ‘race’ being replaced with ‘economic disadvantage’, this is done by white academics who claimed the concept of ‘race’ was unscientific to use. However, even in deciding to replace the concept of ‘race’, the decision

should have not been a conversation among white academics only. Speaking of South African reality, there are distinct understandings when it comes to race. For instance, (Mangcu; 2016, 47) continues to argue, “To be sure, the rejection of the validity of race is not limited to White academics.” Mangcu’s (2016) argument clearly supports the idea that ‘race’ should not be only a conversation among white academics.

For example, according to Mangcu (2016) talking about the Black Consciousness Movement, the movement did not represent what the Apartheid government thought, instead the movement represented politically all those who were oppressed during the apartheid system. This includes many other ethnic groups who were also discriminated against; Africans, Coloureds, and Indians who fall under one category of blackness. According to Mangcu (2016), the Black Consciousness was not based on the notion of biological race, instead, it was a political movement for all the South Africans who were oppressed. Mangcu’s view also suggests that South African sociology should include a “shared text of blackness” at the center of its curriculum, the Western knowledge, and history itself still dominates. Therefore, for South Africans who urge to place the ‘shared text of blackness’, this could help to decolonize the discipline by talking about both black sociology and white sociology by looking at South Africa’s reality. For instance, (Carroll; 2014, 265) argues that “However, given the advances within African-centered knowledge production, discussions of normative philosophical assumptions can be the basis from which we discuss the function of social theory within Africans centered sociology.” Carroll’s (2014) argument clearly supports the idea to place the ‘shared text of blackness’, which mainly focuses on the Africans and their shared experience of blackness. For example, looking at South African Sociology since it is dominated by white academics, there is less or nothing at all about African heroes of the struggle, nothing about African experience, cultures, and values of the African people as if they were silenced from speaking. Whatever is written about black society is vague and erroneous. The South African Sociology under White

academics, is biased and this is why the history of black thought is not recognized in the global scholarship.

In addition, the replacement of 'race' with economic disadvantage illustrates the notion of the class taking over and the class itself presents the existence of inequality. Yet, the decision of replacing race worked in favor of the white academics, who are privileged and have positioned themselves in the opposite of what economic disadvantage implies. For (Kaphagawani; 2002, 222) argue that "On the other hand, we must ensure that our African cultures are alive and progressive, renewing themselves by discarding outworn practices and ideas, taking what they need from other cultures to adapt to changing circumstances." Based on Kaphagawani's (2002) argument it does not only speak on the idea to sustain African cultures, in relation to Mangcu's (2016) view, it supports the idea to place the "shared text of blackness" in South Africa's sociology discipline. The African scholars, especially black scholars need to take charge and decolonize South African sociology at the center of its curriculum. For example, according to Mangcu's (2016) view, there were texts about blackness but however, but they were never brought into acknowledgment and recognition in South Africa's curriculum. Mangcu also argues that "The shared 'text of blackness' was not expressed only in newspapers (Mangcu, 2016:54). Mangcu's (2016) argument clearly indicates that the shared 'text of blackness' existed in different genres of literature writings. However, South African sociology has left out a 'shared text of blackness' at the center of its curriculum. This is where Mangcu's (2016) view comes in to address the South African sociology department to include 'text of blackness' in its curriculum.

Alatas' (2003) article on '*Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences*', mainly argues about academic imperialism. For instance, (Alatas; 2003, 60) argues that "Academic imperialism in this sense began in the colonial period with the setting up and direct

of schools, universities and publishing houses by the colonial powers in the colonies.” Based on Alatas' (2003) argument, in relation to the South African context, explains the continuation of the colonial rule on South Africa's education system. This, however, correlates to Mangcu's (2016) view about the white academics in South Africa, who made a decision on replacing 'race' with the term 'economic disadvantage'. This also shows where the power lies and the existence of South African sociology from a Eurocentric perspective. The absence or lack of shared 'text of blackness' in the curriculum clearly demonstrates that South African sociology is still in the hands of white academics.

Mangcu's (2016) view on South African sociology is to take responsibility for sharing the 'text of blackness' because the Europeans do not want to bring it into awareness in literary writings. As a result, the Europeans knew the truth, the reality of South Africa, however, they discard the reality of the shared 'text of blackness'. As for (Nyoku; 2013, 3) argues that “Africa is almost always presented as a representation of the West's negative image.” Based on Nyoka's (2013) argument brings to the understanding what Europeans have in mind about Africa and the Africans. In relation to Mangcu's (2016) argument, this relates to the idea of why the White academics are still Eurocentric when it comes to studying African societies, especially South Africa as one of the examples.

Furthermore, even Webster (2004) in his article, *'Sociology in South Africa: its past, present and future* highlights the fact that black sociologists were excluded in conversation and decision making among white academics. This also relates to Mangcu's (2016) argument about the white academics from South African universities who came to the decision of placing 'race' with the notion of class. Therefore, reflecting on Mangcu's (2016) view that South African sociology is responsible to share the 'text of blackness' at the center of its curriculum in order to decolonize the discipline. As it has been reflected in Mangcu's (2016) view of South African sociology, it is clear why it is important for South Africa to decolonize the discipline at the center of its curriculum. This also gives an understanding that the 'text of blackness' is important as a result,

it is part of South Africa's reality and therefore it should be theorized in the global scholarship of literature writings. And Mangcu (2016) makes such a statement when he urges South African sociology to take responsibility by doing what it should have done over the years since South Africa has become a democratic country. The shared 'text of blackness' of South Africa's reality, therefore, needs to be exposed to the South Africans and in global scholarship writings.

Social Inequality in South Africa

Social inequality is one of the major current issues in South Africa. Social inequality refers to the notion of inequality in the distribution of resources amongst the population groups of people. This paper aims to discuss and highlight the relevance of the data gathering tool, which in this case survey research is the chosen set of techniques for the collection of data. The relevance of this tool will be explained as to why it is the relevant tool for data collection and also its relevance to other users of tools. The survey research method is also one of the best techniques that helps in providing the information needed for research purposes.

This paper firstly discusses social inequality which seems to be a current issue in contemporary South Africa. Then, this discussion will draw on the examples of both the low-income and higher-income that demonstrate inequalities in the Western Cape region. At the same time, the relevance of the survey research will be addressed and explained as to why this tool is relevant. The arguments from other scholars will be included to substantiate the discussion on this paper. In conclusion, I will summarize the argument in this paper and further elaborate on the importance of data collection through use of the research tools in order to provide sufficient information that is required for the research.

In contemporary South Africa, social inequality is the current issue which many South Africans continue to face on a daily basis. When speaking of social inequality, we look no further than the ways in which resources are being distributed amongst the population groups in South Africa. For instance, South Africa's income or economy and the health system are the critical example in showing the social inequality in South Africa. For example, the division of a health care system into two different sectors; private and public, contributes to social inequality. For instance, we do acknowledge the fact that private health care is mainly in favor of the rich wealthy ruling

class other than the poor working class. As a result, the working class cannot afford medical aid for the private health care services. This is due also to the results of inequality in income. This also reflects back to South Africans history, in which the majority of the working class are black people and the wealthy population is white people.

The above argument clearly illustrates on the example of black people who were moved to the townships and Cape Flats by the apartheid government. These are also lower-income areas in which many black South Africans have less access to resources or are often socially excluded. The survey research plays a major role because looking at the inequality in South Africa, the social scientists have statistics proof which shows the quantitative analysis about the social inequality in the Western Cape. More research can be conducted in the lower income areas to find out more about people's daily experience since they do not have enough access to resources. The survey research technique, it is a relevant technique, as it also involves the set of interviews with questionnaires. As for (Bhattacharjee 2012: 73) argues that, "Survey research is a research method involving the use of standardized questionnaires or interviews to collect data about people and their preferences, thoughts, and behaviors in a systematic manner."

Based on Bhattacharjee's (2012) argument, the survey research technique helps us to discover new information that is not available in most cases. The set of questionnaires' which people are urged to answer, could determine certain results. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) the survey research method is more linked to quantitative analysis. This research tool is relevant in gathering data from the people in lower income areas in order to dig out new findings. For instance, people can be asked questions in two different ways. The researcher can use unstructured questions and then structured questions. As for (Bhattacharjee 2012: 74) argue that, "Unstructured questions ask respondents to provide a response in their own words, while structured questions ask respondents to select an answer from a given set of choices."

Bhattacharjee's (2012) argument, the survey research technique helps us to discover new information that is not available in most cases. The set of questionnaires' which people are urged to answer, could determine certain results. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) the survey research method is more linked to quantitative analysis. This research tool is relevant in gathering data from the people in lower income areas in order to dig out new findings. For instance, people can be asked questions in two different ways. The researcher can use unstructured questions and then structured questions. As for (Bhattacharjee 2012: 74) argue that, "Unstructured questions ask respondents to provide a response in their own words, while structured questions ask respondents to select an answer from a given set of choices." With regard to Bhattacharjee's (2012) argument, that is why the survey research method is a relevant and useful tool for collecting the data. As a result, the tool will consist of both qualitative and quantitative analysis about what people think and also their shared experience and understanding of the cause of social inequality and how it affects them.

Through use of this tool it will enable the researchers, policy makers and government to see what else is needed in the income areas. For example, through use of unstructured questions, the informants/ people will be able to express themselves more deeply in stating their difficult challenges and also address what is needed in their communities. The survey research is a relevant tool for data collection, basically this tool assists us to see the social inequality in South Africa, specifically in the Western Cape region. Through use of this tool we are exposed to high rates of crime in the lower income areas and high rates of unemployment which contribute to the social problem in South Africa.

The survey research tool indeed is one of the relevant data gathering tools in acquiring knowledge. This includes the examples of interviews which are unstructured interviews. As for (Oguonu & Anugwom 2012: 45) argue that, "As an instrument, the greatest advantage of the

interview (especially the unstructured one), is that it enables the researcher to gather in depth information.” Based on Oguonu & Anugwom's (2012) argument, it also relates to the unstructured questions which allow the people to speak freely of other personal matters to the researchers. The unstructured questions also help to broaden the researchers' understanding of the social inequality in the Western Cape region from the perspective of those who get to experience the inequality in the system. For example, in the Western Cape region, it is often found that people who live in the lower income areas, the majority still live in the informal settlements (shacks) and do not have access to proper housing. While looking at the higher income areas, people have access to proper housing and it is often hard to find any informal settlements. Instead the houses are big enough with a huge amount of spaces given. This is the kind of social inequality found in the Western Cape, South Africa and of course it is due to the researchers' involvement and use of tools to collect the data. However, the survey research with its methods and instruments, assists us in studying society and gives an explanation of certain phenomena rather than coming up with assumptions. For instance, (Oguonu & Anugwom 2012: 45) argue that, “Since it is usually a face-to-face interaction, the skilled researcher can use the follow-up technique, probing questions and the repetition strategy, to elicit information that would not have been possible with other instruments.” Based on Oguonu & Anugwom's (2012) argument, it refers to the use of an interview instrument as part of the survey research method. This clearly illustrates the relevance of this tool data collection and its advantage it has than other use of tools. According to Anugwom's (2012) general argument, basically it is about the use of tools, tools that are important because they follow a certain procedure of a scientific method, in order to validate the research as scientific knowledge.

The social problems such as high rate of crime and unemployment in the Western Cape region, especially in the lower income areas, all link to the issue of social inequality in South Africa. Poverty itself in the lower income areas, causes people to react and behave differently to the

system that has a negative impact on their lives. All these issues in our society are seen through the information which has been made available by the social scientists researchers. As for (Kleinhans, M. Verbeek,.P.P., Putten,M. 2012: 13) argue that, “The wide-scale application of scientific knowledge and its role in politics and policy make it important for everyone to be aware of the impact science on personal life and on society as a whole, and to be able to arrive at a well-founded opinion regarding that impact.” Based on Kleinhans et al (2012) argument, it clearly supports the use of a data collection tool which follows scientific method, as result, this tool is relevant in explaining certain phenomena that occur and cannot be explained outside the understanding of scientific knowledge. However, besides the survey research with its methods in providing information for research purposes. The use of any tool in doing research or collecting of data, it is relevant in this case as a result we had acknowledged earlier in this discussion that scientific knowledge has to be verified by following the important steps which are the process of conducting a true scientific research. For instance, (Salkind 2011: 70) argues that, “As a good scientist, you should be intent on collecting data that reveal as much of the truth about the world as is possible and letting the chips fall where they may, where you agree or disagree with the outcomes. Based on Salkind's (2011) argument, scientists should follow the protocol of being a good scientist. But the main important thing is the kind of tool used to collect data and its relevance shows where it helps during the time of data collection for the research. Without these tools or techniques, it would be difficult to collect data in the field for the research.

Furthermore, with regards to social inequality in South Africa it shows a lot needs to be done to make improvement. Arriving on that conclusion, it is all due to the survey research with its methods, in assisting by gathering information. This however points out or highlights that any tool is important in providing the necessary information needed for the research. With regards to this argument in this paper, we have focused on survey research as one of the best tools for

data gathering. The argument on this paper has also shown how relevant is the tool for data gathering. Social inequality is one of the current issues in South Africa we have drawn on. The point of the argument in this paper was not only to address the issue of social inequality, but was to illustrate the importance of using a tool for data collection and as to why it is relevant. As it has been discussed, the techniques of collecting data are very important, because they play a huge role in providing information for the research.

Example of a Low-Income Black Family



This section of the paper is to illustrate an example of a low-income black family in South Africa. It is a group work I did with my colleagues namely; Amore Pieterse, Ambeso Nomlomo, Kent Messina, and other members who participated.

LOW BLACK INCOME FAMILY

A low-income black family, on the face of it, implies that there is a real sense of struggle. In this specific family, a family of twenty-one members is situated in a small rural town of Graaff-Reinet, in the Eastern Cape. The family currently lives in a low-cost (RDP) house that has a few flats at the back. It is clear that the family is living under poor conditions. Due to the standard of living due to low income, the family might be affected by a lot of socio-economic factors such as low income or budget or lack of breadwinners that middle to high-income families do not experience. In the following report, an idea of the low-income black family's budget will be given. The characteristics of each and every member of the family will be briefly

touched upon. The health status of each family member will also be provided. There are many factors that contribute to the families' health conditions. Access to health care facilities is another problem. As a result, many of the family members suffer from certain illnesses and diseases. The family members vary in age and they have different experiences in life circumstances. In this report various socio-economic and environmental factors and policies that affect low-income black families are discussed.

The Grandmother (Nangamsa)

The main member of the family tree is the Grandmother, who is 83 years old. She has three sons the names of Themba, Mphilo, and Melukhanyo. She receives a social grant for elderly people, but the money that she receives monthly is not used by her because her two youngest sons (Melukhanyo and Mphilo) take a large portion of her money and use it for their own personal needs. A grandmother is a God-loving person and she frequently attends church. She also leads prayer meetings with her church members. The grandmother, however, has a few health complications that can be seen as age-related. These health challenges have made her life more difficult. She has diabetes, but due to her age, she is not able to travel and fetch her diabetes treatment. For this reason, her daughter-in-law fetches her treatment and helps her to get around.

The Father (Kent)

The eldest son of the grandma is Themba and he is 60 years old. He is the head of the household and the sole breadwinner of the whole family. The father dropped out of high school and was only able to complete standard 8. The father has been working at Anglo Gold for almost 40 years. The father has been used to living on his own, miles away from his family. He sees his family every 3 months.

The father has children outside of wedlock. He has a son and a daughter who is disabled. The father has recently found out that he has been diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB) due to his working condition in the mines. The mining company provides a Medical benefit of R800 per month, thus it is not enough to cover the family. This grant does not cover even a small percentage of the medical costs for private doctors and hospitals.

THE MOTHER (Lindo)

The mother of the family is Nokhaya and she is the one that buys groceries and makes sure that the food she buys will last until the end of the month. She is 58 years old and is married to Themba. Themba and Nokhaya have four children the names Vuyokazi, Amanda, Thembela, and Dilindokuhle. The mother makes sure that she buys cheap products only, in order to make sure that there will be enough food to feed the family. The mother does not only look out for the food but also looks out for the well-being of the whole family. She looks after her children, grandchildren, unemployed uncles, and her sick husband. The mother also looks after the grandmother who is too old to take care of herself.

First child (Yanathi)

The firstborn child of this family goes by the name is Vuyokazi, who is 30 years old. She works at Shoprite as a packer since she did not complete school. As a result, she finds it difficult to find a decent position at any job she obtains. She has one child and is living with HIV/AIDS. She just discovered recently that she has been living with this disease for almost ten years now. If it weren't for her son becoming sick, she wouldn't have found out that she is living with this disease. She now goes for check-ups frequently but it can be a bit difficult getting there because the clinic is too far from where she lives and they don't have transport. The service at the clinic is extremely poor as well. Sometimes the patients are not sure whether they will get helped or not.

In summary, the composition of the household constrains their well-being and their access to health care. Firstly, the clinic is too far. For instance, the family struggles each month when they

need to go to the clinic to get their medication. Second, the house in wintertime gets cold. This affects the family members because they end up catching the flu, and it gets hard to go to the clinic for medication. Lastly, the environment is not that clean, so it is easy for the kids to get sick.

Economic determinants of health also impact the well-being of the family. It is difficult sometimes to afford medication because the money that the family makes is not enough. There are few people working in the family, and these people have to take care of the entire family with their salaries. After everything has been bought, there really isn't much money left to afford to buy medication for the family members who get ill.

The second child (Amore)

The second eldest child goes by the name of Amanda. She is 27 years old. She has a seven-year-old son named Lwando. She works part-time at a tavern in which she makes approximately R1400 a month. Her monthly income is not stable as she gets called in on certain weekends when she is needed. She contributes R350 a month to the household. She is a single mother and spends the rest of her money on his son and other basic needs.

The Third child (Shaneil)

The third child's name is Thembela. She is the second youngest out of the four children from the mother and father of the household. She is 25 years of age. She recently lost her job as a house cleaner. She is currently three months pregnant and found out that she is infected with the HIV. She is constantly sick from her difficult and problematic pregnancy. The cleaning service needs to let her go due to taking too many days off from work. The father of the unborn child has not paid damages due to the fact that he is also unemployed. He has two children from two different women. Due to her losing her job she cannot contribute money to the household for food and

other basic needs. She needed to leave school in grade 6 to assist with the household activities and contributions.

The third child has been unable to find a job because most jobs require a matric certificate. This makes unemployment a prevalent factor in life. The environment plays a huge role in her health and pregnancy, making her very vulnerable to infections and bacterial viruses. There are times when she skips going to the government clinic because of the overflowing lines at the clinic. There are times when she needs to go back home without seeing a doctor, because of a lack of resources and shortage of staff members at the clinic. The clinic is far from her village and transport is expensive. This forces her to walk from 5 a.m. to go for her monthly checkups.

The last born (Kuhle)

The last born's name is Silindokuhle. She is 20 years old and is currently doing her first year at the University of Fort Hare. She is the first member of the family to go to university. The reason why she decided to go to university was to help her family and she wanted a way out of poverty and less desirable living conditions. The decision to further her education came with the price of leaving her family behind. Some of the challenges she experiences from being someone that comes from a low-income black family are financial, psychological, and academic difficulties. Due to financial constraints back at home, she also had to apply for financial aid. His father sends her money every now and again. Coming from a low black income family has been the most important motivator to study to obtain a degree.

Alcoholic Uncle 2 (Bernize)

The middle son of the grandmother and brother of the father is Thobelani. He is 47 years. He is currently unemployed. He also has a son by the name of Mpilo who is 15 years old. He is currently in high school. Uncle Bernize did not finish school, so finding a job has been really difficult. This has led him to become an alcoholic as he spends most of his time drinking. Sometimes he smokes weed which keeps him a saint on a day-to-day basis. He drinks most of

his social grant money, but when he feels like giving the family money, he will contribute R100 or maybe R200 from the R1500 that he gets monthly from SASSA. He has a sickness called “amafufunyana” which makes him unconscious at certain times.

Son of Alcoholic uncle 2 (Rowan)

The second eldest uncle's son is Mpilo. He is 15 years old and is in grade 9. He attends a small local high school. He also plays sports, football to be specific. The fact that his father is an alcoholic makes it hard to afford soccer boots because he uses all of his money on alcohol. His short-term goal at the moment is getting a sports bursary because he has aspirations of playing for PSL team Chippa United and playing for Bafana Bafana in the future.

Daughter of Alcoholic uncle 2 (Sinovuyo)

Thobelani the middle has a daughter by the name of Sinovuyo, she is 11 years old and attends a primary school in her village. Getting to her school is one of her biggest challenges is the fact that getting to her school is a mission. She lives 2 hours away from her school. She sometimes cannot attend school because there is only one bus that travels to her school in the mornings.

Alcoholic Uncle 1 (Ambeso)

The youngest uncle and brother of the father goes by the name is Melukhanyo. He is 35 years old. He is also struggling to find a job and this leads him to alcohol. He believes that this is the only solution to all his problems. He sometimes makes this comment, “Yes, alcohol does the job for me.” Because the fact that he is not employed, he gets paid a social grant and he also takes some of his mother’s social grant money. His social grant pays him R1500 per month. But he contributes R500 to the family every month, and he stats usually drinks or gambles with the rest of the money. All he does every day is drink and smoke boxer, that’s what makes him feel better about himself. He has two children by the names of Thandi and Siphon. His wife and mother of

his children left him when they were young. This uncle lived in rural areas and is suffering from gout.

Son of uncle 1(Uzair)

Melukhanyos's youngest child is Siphosho. He is 14 years of age and works as a taxi guard during the day so that he can contribute to the household income for his family. He dropped out of school because his father couldn't afford his school fees and was denied a bursary. He finds it very difficult to contribute to the family because the money he earns is very little. Something that helps make that money is by joining a gang. His family needs the money and it's the only way he can earn the money to keep the family going.

The Disabled child (Melissa)

The father's (Themba) other daughter is Mhlabi. She is nine years old and is a child outside of marriage. Being a child born as a result of a parent cheating means she was not planned or expected. Being disabled and not having access to a disability grant means there is not much to live for. Not having a disability grant means that she is yet another expense to the family. She was diagnosed with osteoarthritis when she was four years old. She has osteoarthritis in the spine making it difficult to walk and use any of my joints. Not having medical aid or money for necessary treatment and therapy limits her chances of ever being able to walk.

The school drop-out ()

The other outside of wedlock child is Ntsikelelo. He is 15 years old and does not attend high school. She dropped out in grade 9 due to substance abuse and has not stopped. She is one of the two children that were born out of wedlock. At home, he sleeps and most of the time he helps Ntobeko take care of the cattle.

Grandson (Zuhayr)

Sinalo is 12 years old. He grew up in a low-income area in the Eastern Cape. He attends a small school in his area. His mother works at Shoprite and is one of the breadwinners of the family. He inspires to be like his older cousin studying at the University of Fort Hare and to make something of his life to take his family out of the poverty-stricken area. He works at a local spaza shop on weekends to get extra income for his family.

Cousin (Tylor)

Sandiso is the nephew of Nokhanyo. He is nine years old. In 2008 his mother and father were killed in a motor vehicle accident and as per traditional customs her mother's family had to take him and his siblings in and raise them. It has been quite difficult growing up because he knows they are quite a big household that is solely supported by his uncle's salary. He is a mine worker and only comes home every three months with his paycheque. This money has to cover all of the expenses of the family, including school fees.

Growing up in the Eastern Cape under these circumstances has been quite stressful for him because he feels like he is a burden as he is unable to work for his family to bring in an extra source of income. Also, he notices how the family is struggling with water and sanitary issues because the government only provides them with 350 liters of water per week which has to be divided by all family members. The water has to cover their bathing, food, toilet, and drinking water.

Cousin 2(Aaqil)

The second cousin is Siya. He is 14years old and is one of the three children who lost their parents in a car accident. Growing up under the care of his uncle was tough, as he supported them through schooling and at home. Living in the Eastern Cape under these circumstances is

quite stressful because he is not able to contribute to the family. He tries to help out where he can by cleaning and cooking in the house as well as trying to work hard in the classroom to become something in the future.

The Cousin 3 (Jason)

The third cousin of the family is Ntobeko. His parents died in a car accident, and he has two younger and one elder sibling. He is 20 years old and he is unemployed. He takes care of the cattle and sometimes he manages the garden. He's one of the healthy children of the family.

Cousin 4 (Simthandile)

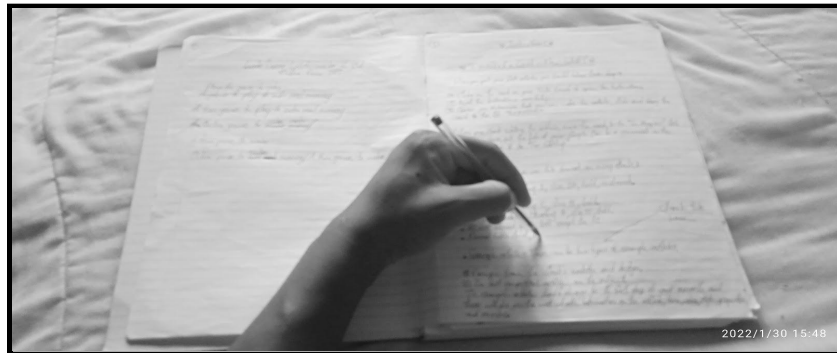
The eldest cousin is Simthandile. She has three siblings and she is the eldest. Both her parents died in an accident. She is 22 years old and one of the breadwinners of the household. During the day she works at Shoprite and at night she works at a bar. When her parents died she was 16 years old. She needed to become an adult and dropped out of school and she also fell pregnant with her three-year-old son. She does not spend much time at home, but she is fully aware of her circumstances at home. It is very tough but she has a positive attitude to life.

Conclusion

To conclude, the life of this low-income black family is very difficult. The mother must resort to buying cheap products so that they are able to get the food and essential things for the whole month. In terms of health, we notice that most of the family has some sort of illness or disease, but the painful thing is that this family's living conditions are so poor that getting basic health care is even impossible. This is proven by the fact that they cannot get to clinics due to distance or lack of transport, or even by the fact that even when they at the clinic, it's never sure that they will get assisted.

The whole family is constantly ill due to environmental factors. The area is very dirty and it gets very cold. The financial status of the family makes it extremely difficult for them to attend a clinic. The majority of the family does not meet the minimum requirements for decently paid jobs so they cannot find a decent-paying job. For this reason, I conclude by saying that being born in a low-income family contributes highly to the type of health care one has, despite the fact you will find families which are healthier than those of rich income families.

Sociology of Health: Re-Examining The Life Esidimeni Tragedy



The Gauteng Department of Health formally ended its contract with Life Esidimeni Health Care Centre on the 31st March 2016. However, from the 1st April to 30th June 2016, an estimated 1371 chronic mentally ill patients were moved to hospitals and NGOs in Gauteng, including unregistered institutions. A certain number of patients transferred to hospitals and NGOs in Gauteng died, which caused an increase in the mortality rate. Yet the number of patients assigned to other institutions experienced poor health service, which lacked standard care, violating patients' rights to better health care (Makgoba, 2017). And in February 2018, at least 144 patients died (Dhai, 2018).

This research critically discusses and re-examines the Life Esidimeni tragedy explaining the sequence of events and the various role-players' actions. Also, it highlights what could have been done to avoid the disaster. At the same time, I asked how this happened and who would be held responsible for the outcomes. Since the MEC announced that the death rate escalated, which caused a shock to the nation and pain to family members who lost their loved ones, we could argue that the tragedy's outcomes were mainly caused by various steps undertaken concerning the ill patients.

Introduction

This paper will reflect on the experiences of mentally ill people in South Africa, particularly those who were admitted to health facilities. The issues of inequalities in health facilities will be discussed to look at the difference between the public and private health care system in South Africa, which serves as the best example to understand the Life Esidimeni tragedy. This paper will also review literature from other scholars who have written on the subject. In conclusion, the discussion will be summarised, and new ideas will be shared on what should be done in the future to avoid issues related to the Life Esidimeni tragedy.

How Can We Understand Mentally Ill Patients?

Mentally ill patients are people who are abnormal in their state of mind due to various reasons that include genetic conditions, which cause them to behave abnormally (Insel and Wang, 2010). In other words, they need to be looked after because they cannot do that for themselves. According to Dhai (2017), mentally ill patients will suffer the most and are often denied better and standard health care. The Life Esidimeni tragedy is one of the critical examples in South Africa. Looking at the health care itself in South Africa, it is easy to acknowledge the inequalities in the healthcare system. For example, the Life Esidimeni tragedy demonstrates that mentally ill patients were not treated. That is the issue between public and private health care services in South Africa. Public health care services always offer slow service, which causes ill patients to wait long hours to be assisted. No matter how sick a patient may be, they are careless, and there is so much chaos because the facilities are always overcrowded. But paying attention to private health care services, patients often get access to better quality health care, which is quite the opposite of what is happening in the public health care services.

Life Esidimeni Tragedy

The Life Esidimeni tragedy explains what circumstances mentally ill patients were situated in. It is argued that "An investigation into the LE tragedy conducted by the health ombudsman of SA revealed that patients died of severe dehydration and that they did not have access to adequate drinking water and sanitation facilities" (Dhai: 2017, 53). It is a fundamental human right that all the human population gain access to adequate drinking water and access to sanitation facilities. Dhai's (2017) argument concerning the Life Esidimeni tragedy also supports the idea that mentally ill patients are often treated less important when looking at the health institutions in South Africa. That takes the dignity away of the mentally ill patients in getting the same equal respect and treatment just as the rest of the population in South Africa.

Causes Of The Outcomes

We need to look at what caused the tragedy to understand what happened. For instance, "Patients were transferred too far away from their homes and their communities, at times without the knowledge of the families, often bringing additional financial burden and stress on the family" (Makgoba: 2017, 2). Makgoba's argument reveals that ill patients were transferred carelessly. Yet the family members were unaware of what was happening to their loved ones. It became an issue because patients did not receive good care. According to Dhai (2017), the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) is to be blamed for the tragedy. Because of their actions, the outcomes "led to some patients dying prematurely" (Dhai:2017, 53). Dhai's research paper exposes the Gauteng Department of Health about the damage they caused. Most discharged patients had not received the medication they relied on to cope with the illness they had (Dhai, 2017). This relates to the issue of the public and private health care system in South Africa. As a result, the public health care service often lacks medication for the patients. On the other hand,

private health care services offer better quality health care services and prescribe the best suitable medication to patients.

The Issue of Inequality in South Africa's Health Care Service

The issue in South Africa's health care system is that most patients have a bad experience in public health care. Especially patients who suffer from chronic severe diseases wait for hours to be assisted no matter how ill they are. Something needs to be done to improve the public health care service because most working-class people rely on it. This inequality issue highlights that most families cannot afford private healthcare services. The only place for patients to get proper help without being delayed for hours to be assisted. There is an article I read called *Socioeconomic-related health inequality in South Africa*, which argues, "Studies on the burden of ill-health in South Africa have shown consistently that, relative to the wealthy, the poor suffer more from disease and violence" (Ataguba:2011, 1). Ataguba does not only highlight the inequalities between population groups in South Africa when looking at health. He also highlights the reality that demonstrates that we live in a capitalist society where different classes exist. Each class determines our socioeconomic status, which would state our social position in society and the resources we have access to. According to Dhai (2017), mentally ill patients were removed from Life Esidimeni facilities to facilities that were ill resourced, which is the opposite of what private health care would offer to their patients. And that explains why most patients died.

Why We Should Blame the Gauteng Department of Health

The Gauteng Department of Health is to be held responsible for the reckless decision about the outcomes of the Life Esidimeni tragedy and the staff members who were also involved. Yet it is argued that "the personnel at the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that they were placed in were not trained medical personnel" (Dhai:2017, 53). Ill patients were transferred to ill-resourced NGOs facilities and were treated by people who were not professionals (Dhai, 2017). It could be argued that the non-professionals were not sure what to do to take care of patients. However, we have to acknowledge that "At least LE did have access to reasonable services with professional people" (Makgoba: 2017, 13). It is now clear that ill patients were in good hands at Life Esidimeni but in a worse situation under NGOs.

According to Makgoba (2017), one of the most significant issues that led to a breakdown was removing ill patients in LE because the Gauteng Department of Health terminated its contract with LE. This affected the patients transferred to facilities belonging to NGOs (Dhai, 2017). That clearly explains the inequalities in South Africa's health care system discussed earlier. On that note, if any patient cannot afford medical aid or does not have medical aid, he will be socially excluded from the private health care service. We all know this because of the policies that have been implemented. Social exclusion now forces people to go to public health care where it's not guaranteed to get help immediately since the facilities are always overcrowded with patients. Regarding the Life Esidimeni tragedy, we can acknowledge the issue had to do with the ending of the contract and the transfer of ill patients because of capital reasons.

The tragedy could have been avoided if the LE Health Care Centre patients were not handed over to the incapable and irresponsible NGOs. Dhai's (2018) research study, *The Life Esidimeni tragedy:*

Some ethical transgressions, clarifies that NGOs who cared for the patients were unlicensed. That allows us to conclude that their main interest was money rather than caring to save lives. If they cared about the patients, they would have left things the way they were at Life Esidimeni Health Care Centre.

Furthermore, the Gauteng Department of Health and the non-governmental organization are responsible for the tragedy with everyone else who participated. Yet the shocking news is that the Court had played a role in the reckless decision made. Dhai's (2018) article called *The Life Esidimeni tragedy: The courts are also to be blamed*, exposes the involvement of the Court and the verdict that was undertaken which led to the tragedy. It is argued that "The Johannesburg High Court ruled in favour of the GDoH, which continued with its plans to discharge and place those who still need medical care to different facilities" (Dhai: 2018, 156). I strongly agree with Dhai that the Court is also to be blamed for the tragedy. On top of that, Dhai did an excellent job linking all the guilty parties so we can know whom to blame. If the Court had not favored the GDoH, it would have been a different story instead of how things have turned out.

Conclusion

Since it is discussed what led to the Life Esidimeni tragedy, which resulted in an increased number of patients dying, it is clear there was more than just one party involved. Although different steps were undertaken which led to the disaster, the family members of the patients were not aware of what was happening. It was because of a reckless decision without investigating the facilities where patients were taken. Again, if the Court and GDoH did the opposite, this would not have been news by now. The issue about the terminated contract could have been resolved, but we live in a world where money and contracts matter more than saving

lives. In the future, let us hope everyone learns something from the Life Esidimeni tragedy because it can happen anywhere in the world, not only in South Africa. Therefore, doctors, Nurses, Judges, and others in power need to make wise decisions, not reckless decisions. We all should consider saving lives instead of running after money, contracts, and other unnecessary things which are less valuable. We all got problems. We all have bills to pay, but we should not be greedy and think less about other human beings. We know the rich continue to get rich, and the poor continue to suffer. Something can be done to improve health care services for the working-class population. Moreover, issues related to the Life Esidimeni tragedy must not happen anywhere in the world. We all can do better, even if it means helping those who cannot afford private health care services or medical aid.

To avoid incidents related to the Life Esidimeni tragedy in the future. The first point, all patients should be placed in a better quality health care service since it is a fundamental human right for everyone. Nevertheless, everyone should be regarded highly as necessary, just like every other human being on this planet. The second point is that family members should always know everything concerning their loved ones in healthcare institutions. The third point, NGOs, GDoH, and the Court of law should not make decisions on behalf of patients. The family should come first as the main priority to consult. Lastly, the government needs to ensure the unlicensed NGOs are closed down and not to be allowed to treat patients since they are incapable and irresponsible, not to mention they are non-professionals employees who are not trained.

Conclusion: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

This book has covered various topics in the field of Social Science to show how Anthropology and Sociology have contributed to the contemporary world. Analyzing social issues through the use of scientific knowledge to solve certain events and learning more about different communities. This book has not only shown readers how Anthropology research is conducted but also how Sociology studies are done. Nevertheless, this book taught us that valid research follows the scientific method to reach the outcomes. Because only scientific knowledge helps to understand a situation and come up with a solution.

Although chapter 1 of this book has dealt with studies of Anthropology, we can see the relationship between Anthropology studies and Sociology studies in chapter 2 is similar and related to one another. Both disciplines in the Social Science field are mainly focused on people and events affecting people in their daily lives. We learn how Anthropologists and Sociologists tackle these issues by looking at the inequalities in South Africa, and how people create meaning in their community. Yet, both disciplines help us understand issues concerning race, gender, and class. However, most intellectuals who have written papers in this field also give a clear picture of how Anthropology and Sociology have changed to the present. And with all the research I have conducted to write this book, I could not think of a better name but to call it *Social Science Research: Anthropology and Sociology in*

ENDNOTES

¹ Notes from the video: Stuart Hall 'The Floating signifier of race'

² Notes from the film: Battle of Algiers 1966

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