

https://dspace.org/

"Its like nyaope is pointing a gun at you, telling you 'go there..." :morality and the use of nyaope amongst the youth in Soweto

Peete, John Keketso

2019
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/29388

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/



"It is like nyaope is pointing a gun at you, telling you 'go there…'": Morality and the use of nyaope amongst the youth in Soweto

By

John Keketso Peete

1964977

Submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree for the Masters of Arts in Social Anthropology, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Supervisor: Dr Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg for the degree of Masters of Arts. This research report has not been submitted for any other degree, or for examination in any other university.



John Keketso Peete

1964977

15 March 2019

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my participants: Boy, Thabo, Kgeleke and Khaya for their time and for sharing their life experiences with me. Without you, this research would not have been possible.

To the group of the *bomtsubi*, thank you for welcoming me and for allowing me to be around you to learn what your daily lives entail.

To SANCA Rockville Treatment Centre's management and staff, thank you for granting me permission to use the centre as my fieldsite.

To my family, I would like to send words of gratitude to all of you for the care and support you have shown me throughout my life to the point where I find myself where I am today.

To my supervisor, Dr Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon, thank you for your constant guidance and support you have given me throughout my Masters of Arts studies and in the development of this report.

To my dear friends: Rinsuna, Pauline, Thelma, Thapelo. I really appreciate the support you always give me. I am lucky to have you all as my friends.

Table of Contents

Declaration....2
Acknowledgements....3
Abstract....7
Chapter 1....8
INTRODUCTION....8
What is nyaope?....11
The state and impact of nyaope use in South Africa....12
Actions taken to resolve issues presented by nyaope use in South Africa....13
War declared on drugs as an international phenomenon....15
Literature review....16
Youth in Africa....17
Morality and policing....19
The role of anthropological research about drug use: South Africa and the world....22
Argument and outline of the report.....24
Chapter 2....27
Theoretical framework and research methodology....27
Theoretical framework: Phenomenology....27
Methodology: The fieldwork process....29
Challenges encountered....32
Inference solicitations....34
Chapter 3....36
Nyaope the drug and nyaope the body....36
Introduction....36
The phenomenological experiences of using nyaope: The individual body....37
Chasing a nyaope high: *Pikara*....37
Running away from nyaope withdrawals: *Down*....38
Making sense of *pikara* and *down*....39
An etic point of view of nyaope: Making use of the users' bodies....39
The individual body as a social body....41
A moral panic caused by nyaope....42
Using nyaope equated to being a criminal....43
The influence of nyaope stories and rumours in the media on the perceptions of people who use nyaope....44
People who use nyaope having no place in society....44
Conclusion....46

Chapter 4 48
'Looking out' - The *bomtsubi* of Valleydale 48
Introduction 48
Bomtsubi: 'The smokers' 49
The moral practices and principles of the *bomtsubi* 50
The moral way of consuming nyaope amongst the *bomtsubi* 50
Hustling as a car guard 51
The morality behind guarding cars. 53
Looking out for each other. 54
Conclusion 57
Chapter 5 59
Nyaope and personhood: The impact of nyaope on the self 59
Introduction 59
Personhood: What it means to be a person 60
Boy, Khaya, Kgeleke; Thabo and their articulation of personhood. 60
Being invisible and not being respected 60
Feeling less of a person: Name-calling 61
Bodiliness as the basis of my participants' sense of personhood 63
The viewpoint of personhood according to African thought: Making sense of Boy's, Khaya's, and Kgeleke's perspective of personhood. 63
Conclusion 64
Chapter 6 66
Sickness as a moral justification 66
Introduction 66
Nyaope withdrawal symptoms as sickness 67
Suffering from pain of nyaope withdrawals 67
The body invaded: losing agency over nyaope withdrawals 69
Justifying what is 'inappropriate' through sickness 70
Smoking nyaope when you 'do not' supposed to 71
Committing crime for the 'right' reasons 73
Conclusion 75
Chapter 7 77
Remaking oneself: Seeking rehabilitation at SANCA 77
Introduction 77
Nyaope use restricting personal progress: The story of Boy 78
Boy's hope on SANCA in becoming a new person 78

SANCA and its role in the issue of drug use in South Africa....79
Other drug rehabilitation institutions available....81
Ethnographies on drug rehabilitation centres and drug treatment....81
Becoming a new person: The story of Kgeleke....83
Conclusion....84
Chapter 8....86
CONCLUSION....86
REFERENCE LIST....90

WITS UNIVERSITY

"It is like nyaope is pointing a gun at you, telling you 'go there...'": Morality and the use of nyaope amongst the youth in Soweto

Abstract

Keywords: South Africa, Soweto, Nyaope, Morality, Phenomenology, Body.

The goal of this research report is directed towards expanding our understanding of the use of an illicit cocktail street drug called nyaope beyond the common discourse about it in the South African society, to show the complexity that lies in the behaviour of its users. I do so by paying a close consideration to the phenomenological experiences of people who use the drug, specifically the youth from a Soweto Township I call Valleydale. Under the circumstances where nyaope use is a condition of moral panic in South Africa, condemned through moral public opinions and judgments, and by the law, I argue that there is a need to suspend the influence of these if we are to understand nyaope use better, beyond classifying it as wrong, illegal or immoral, as according to the norms or rules set by informal and formal institutions, including public discourse. The situation of people who use nyaope is far more complex to be classified or understood according to predominant ideas of morality. This report uncovers this complexity by sharing the personal stories of my research participants that include those about struggling to quit a drug they do not want to use anymore, and stealing for money to buy nyaope, even though they shamelessly know that by doing so they are breaking the law. Through such reveals, the report further shares insights about what a life of person who uses the drug nyaope entails, from the position of my participants, and how they are physically impacted and socially affected by their use of an addictive drug such as nyaope, which happens to also be associated with so much deviancy and delinquency in South Africa.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The word nyaope in Valleydale is as common as the phrase 'Amen' is in church. It forms part of the vocabulary, daily happenings and discussions of people living in this Soweto Township where I grew up and reside, in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is not unusual to stand in a queue in a supermarket, to walk in the streets or to be sitting at home and hear people talk about nyaope, or about the people who use the drug – the so-called "bonyaope"; "nyaope boys" or "nyaope". Most often than not, what is said about the people who use nyaope or even the drug itself is not positive, but complaints and expressions about how much of a nuisance either or both are. Sometimes in such conversations, the word 'nyaope' is not directly articulated, almost out of shame, or contempt.

I have heard people speak about nyaope in a manner that articulated it as a source of trouble and evil, as a substance infused with demonic spirits, and the people who use it to be possessed by these. I have witnessed young people, who were my schoolmates and childhood friends drop out of school, give up hope on their dreams and lose jobs due to their dependency on the drug. I have seen their social status change: from being young people who were the pride of their families; children who carried the hopes of a better life for their loved ones, to becoming a shame to the former, and an irritation and pain to the rest of the neighbourhood, accused of stealing anything from valuable items in their households, to rubbish bins of their neighbours.

My daily encounters with such events and stories about such led me to be clouded in them, to the point where I could not avoid them, even when I tried. They affected me. They made me to want to be part of the conversation. As a community member of Valleydale, the stories about the demonic and dangerous nyaope and distraction that its users cause in community made to fear the drug and to feel empathy for the people who use it. On the other hand, as an Anthropology student, what I heard about nyaope and people who use it troubled, fascinated and distracted me. The everyday hype of the discourse about both posed questions to me, which demanded my attention. As I did not have answers for them myself, I was forced to seek for them. I became curious about what this drug nyaope comes from, what it could possibly be, why is it so

common amongst the youth, and why people who use it are associated with so much delinquency. As a result, I then decided to carry out an ethnographic research on the topic of nyaope use amongst the youth in Valleydale in 2017, for my BA Honours in Anthropology research report (Peete, 2018), the first of two. The outcome was an ethnography titled '*This thing has the devil in it': An ethnography of nyaope in 'Valleydale', Soweto*.

This thing has the devil in it is a product of a month-long ethnographic research in Valleydale. Through it, I managed to find answers for the questions mentioned above. After being exposed to the individual and communal experiences of drug use based on the lives of young male nyaope users from Valleydale between the ages of 18 and 35, in the ethnography I share these. From my participants' personal opinions about what nyaope is, to stories about how they started and why they continue to use the drug. The ethnography further documents the daily activities and struggles that the youth which spent time with– whom mostly are high school dropouts and unemployed –undergo every day as individuals and as a group, and highlights the predominant role that hustling for money and for the next joint of nyaope significantly plays in their daily lives, as a strategy for survival . Driven by the chase of the high and mostly the fear of the painful nyaope withdrawal symptoms, some would resolve to stealing and selling anything they may get to survive another day. *This thing has the devil in it* shows that it is this act of stealing for money for nyaope that is a major the reason why people who use nyaope in Valleydale are known or identified to be criminals and why nyaope is regarded to be a source of evil.

This thing has the devil in it is a significant in anthropological studies of drug use because it provides key personal life experiences of people who use the drug, which is a sphere that to me and most people it was unknown, and still remains to be to most. The ethnography thus fills this gap of the uncertainty about the lives of nyaope users. This report develops from the foundation that *This thing has the devil in it* has set. It is directed towards expanding the research, through looking into and analysing nyaope as a drug and its use more deeply, theoretically, in relation to morality.

I saw the need to discuss nyaope use in conversation with morality after being exposed to both the outsiders and personal (insiders) perspectives of nyaope use. Through etic and broader observations, I came to note that nyaope and its use seems

to be a condition of moral panic in South Africa. While nyaope use has presented a scare towards the state of health, it users have come to pose a fright towards social stability due the various deviant and delinquent behaviours they are linked with. Like in Valleydale, local and national newspapers for instance are flooded with stories of the havoc, trouble and fear the people who use nyaope impose in many predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged black townships and rural areas across the country such Soshanguve in Pretoria, KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal, Witbank in Mpumalaga, Klipgat in the North West and Venda, Limpopo. However, on the other hand, through my first ethnographic research, I was exposed to the emic perspectives around nyaope use. Although it might appear on the eyes of the public that people who use nyaope consume the drug and engage in 'immoral' behaviour as the result of their liking, I came to be aware how this is not the case, especially with regards to how some of my participants were morally conflicted. Some wanted to quit nyaope, which they recognised as causing harm on their bodies, relationships and social identity. Yet at the same time, they made I striking point that under their circumstances and for a variety of reasons, they had to continue using the drug. That is where I recognised that the issue of nyaope use is not as easy as choosing to do what is 'right' – refraining from or quitting nyaope and not stealing – over what is 'wrong' – starting to use nyaope and committing crime for money for nyaope – as per the expectations or the moral norms; standards of society. For the users, the situation is far more complicated than that. Therefore, it then came to my attention that, under the South African context whereby nyaope use is recognised as a social problem that requires to be controlled and remedied, the starting point should be perceiving the behaviour from the personal experiences of people who use the drug, so that we can understand the behaviour better. This is what this report does. It furthers our knowledge of nyaope and the use of it, impinging our perceptions thereof, through documenting and sharing the moral viewpoints and justifications of young people, as they talk and reflect on their lives, their use of a highly addictive, publicly disapproved and criminalised drug nyaope, and other drug-related activities.

The report is directed towards exploring the life experiences and moral standpoints of people who use the drug, but not by being ignorant to the moral reasons the public use to justify nyaope use as 'wrong', rather through paying close consideration to the former. The main question I am therefore asking is:

- What are the moral experiences that shape perceptions towards, and of, nyaope users in Soweto?

The sub-questions are:

- Through embodiment, what can the body of people who use nyaope inform us about the drug, its use, and about the users themselves?
- How can an emic perspective from a group of people who use inform us about them being their own moral community and therefore advance understanding about their behaviour and circumstances?
- What possible impacts does an addictive, socially disapproved and criminalised drug such as nyaope have on people who use the drug?
- How do people who use nyaope make sense of their nyaope use, dependency or addiction, and the delinquency associated with the behaviour, attached to their bodies?

Chapters of this ethnography are about unveiling answers to these questions. However, to set the ground, let me offer an in depth discussion about nyaope and nyaope use in the broader context of South Africa.

What is nyaope?

Nyaope is classified as a highly physio-biologically addictive street cocktail drug. Physically, it can be yellowish or cream white in appearance (Mthembi et.al, 2018: 115; Nevhutalu, 2017: 43) and it can come in a form of a rock, brick, in crumbs or as powder. The drug is commonly found in South Africa and it is mostly used by black youth from predominantly black urban and rural areas of the country. The names for this drug differ across all the provinces of the Republic. In Gauteng, Free State and some parts of Limpopo for instance it is known as 'nyaope'. However, another name for it in Limpopo is 'pinch'. Moreover, in Kwa Zulu Natal they call it 'whoonga' or 'sugars'; 'ungah' in the Western Cape and 'kataza' in Mpumalanga (Nevhutalu, 2017; Mokwena & Fernandes, 2014: 42).

Nyaope is called a cocktail drug because of the diversity of ingredients it includes. Although there seems to be a consensus that its main component is (third-grade) heroin, there some speculations that substances such as powder from plasma TV

screens and also from light bulbs, including chlorine, are used as ingredients of the drug (Mokwena, 2015: 251; Grelotti et.al, 2014; Nevhutalu, 2017: 43). In addition to those that have been rumoured, ingredients that have been scientifically proven include tetrahydrocannabinol, caffeine, phenacetin; and nicotine (Mthembi et.al 2018) caffeine, methyl-dioxy, amphetamine, heroin, antibiotics, dextromethorphan, codeine/metabolites and amphetamine (Mokwena, 2015; Khine et.al, 2015: 53). These ingredients were discovered after samples of nyaope from urban and township areas in Gauteng were collected and tested. As diverse as the chemical composition of nyaope is, so are the methods that it is consumed. While others choose to smoke it orally as a joint, some heat and inhale its burning smoke through the nostrils (Peete, 2018), or liquidise and inject it in the body through the veins, using a syringe (Nevhutalu, 2017, 43; Mthembi et.al 2018: 115; Peete, 2018).

The state and impact of nyaope use in South Africa

In the larger context of South Africa, nyaope and its use are noted to be a 'social problem' in the country. Both are a case of a moral panic in the Republic. By moral panic, I mean that nyaope use and the people who use the drug have emerged to become perceived as a threat to societal values and interests (Cohen, 2011: 1; Garland, 2008: 10). Considering that the appearance of nyaope in South Africa is believed to date back as far as the year 2000 (Mokwena & Fernandes, 2014: 42), it is only relatively recently that nyaope; its use (and dealing) came under the limelight as a major issue in society. In the last decade, there has been an increasing attention towards the drug, the users and their related behaviours from the media, the public and government, whom together consensually convey messages that express how the drug is damaging the country, needing urgent resolutions.

Nyaope is said to destroy the lives of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are recognised to be the main users (Monyakane 2016: 229; Mokwena & Huma 2014: 354). Prior research indicates that the youth that use nyaope eventually drop out of school, and lose jobs, as the result of their dependency on the drug and pursuit for the next fix (Peete, 2018; Mokwena, 2015: 251). At the same time, in the media, the users are noted to be problematic deviants, and hazardous delinquents in society, because of the unlawful and risky activities they commit to obtain nyaope, to consume the drug and while under its influence. The method of sharing the psychoactive effect of nyaope

by drawing nyaope-infused blood from one person and injecting it into the other, using a syringe – the Bluetooth method, which received a lot of media attention – caused a lot of concern in the country, raising alarms of being an highly risky activity that presents the possibility of the spread of blood-borne diseases like HIV (Mafu, 2017). Furthermore, there are several reports from the media, including academic literature, indicating that nyaope users may steal from their households and from communities, as a way to obtain money for their drug use[1] (Mokwena, 2015: 251; Chinouya et.al 2014: 115; Grelotti et.al 2014: 5; Peete, 2018; Boshoff, 2016). Some newspapers have also reported that people who use nyaope steal ashes of cremated human bodies from cemeteries to add to the drug as an ingredient (Venter & Lotriet, 2017; Luhanga, 2017). Additionally, others report stories about some HIV patients who claim that they have been robbed their ARVs by people who want to use the medication for the manufacturing of nyaope/whoonga (Matsena, 2015).

The alleged stealing and use of human ashes as an ingredient of nyaope has caused a fright in communities such as Kempton Park and Krugersdorp in Johannesburg (Venter & Lotriet, 2017). Additionally, the recreational use of ARV medication, especially efavirenz, for the manufacturing of nyaope/whoonga, is noted to have consequences of causing ARV resistance to HIV-uninfected people exposed to the medication (Grelotti et.al, 2014: 7). All these events contribute to and are the basis of a moral panic towards nyaope use in South Africa.

Actions taken to resolve issues presented by nyaope use in South Africa

The accounts above report of the menace that makes nyaope use to be perceived to be in South Africa, associated with so many social and health-threatening activities. The state of South Africa and its different levels of government have since took certain actions, some quiet recently, to resolve the problems that nyaope and its use have come to pose. This includes, but not limited to, using the punitive/correctional system. In 2014 for instance, nyaope was criminalised under the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act 140 of 1992 (Department of Justice and Constitutional Justice, 2014; Vahed, 2015: 267). The criminalisation implicates that as from 2014 nyaope users– like drug

[1] The reputation of people who use nyaope that they steal to finance their drug use is accounted in the statistics provided by South African Police Service in their 2016/2017 annual crime report. The report indicates that nyaope is responsible for ten percent of 548 drug-related cases in Gauteng, recorded between 2007 and 2017 (2017: 84)

traffickers – can be arrested and imprisoned for their drug use (Monyakane, 2016: 227), should they be found in possession of nyaope (South African Police Service, 2013: 60). Additionally, in 2016, in the Gauteng province, the City of Johannesburg came under the management of a new regional government and political party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), under the leadership of Mayor Herman Mashaba. Since his inauguration as mayor, drug use has been one of mayor Mashaba's focus areas, who went on "declaring war on drugs and the druglords". In 2016, Mashaba launched what he termed as a "re-energised" K9 narcotics unit at the Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD) academy in Booysens, to serve the duty of detecting any hidden illicit drugs, amongst other responsibilities (Chernick, 2016). Similarly, the State together with the City of Johannesburg have also sought to make use of the rehabilitative/medical system to attend to the issue at hand.

During the 2017 State of the Nation Address, the former president of South Africa ,Jacob Zuma, spoke about drug use during his speech. He described the issue as a 'social ill' that needs to be resolved for the sake of saving the youth from drug use. In the speech, the former president placed an emphasis on the opening of new drug rehabilitation centres across the country, to treat this 'ill' (The Presidency: Republic of South Africa, 2017). He said:

> Government working with society is fighting social ills that are tearing communities apart such as drugs and substance abuse. From Soshanguve to Rosettenville or KwaMashu to the Cape Flats, communities are in difficulty because of the drugs. Other than law enforcement, the provision of treatment and prevention services is also critical. The Department of Social Development is building new public treatment centres in provinces where there are no such facilities, in the Northern Cape, North West, Limpopo, Free State and the Eastern Cape. Working together we will save our youth from drugs.

On the same note, recently in 2018, Mashaba opened three (out of five) new substance abuse treatment centres across the City of Johannesburg's regions, directed towards curbing drug/substance abuse. The opening of the first centre in Tladi, Soweto, has been described as an initiative taken to fight the escalating drug

"scourge", especially nyaope addiction amongst young people (Sithole, 2018). Furthermore, the mayor has mentioned that he plans to use job creation as one of the strategies "to fight drugs" such as nyaope/whoonga in the City of Johannesburg, so to 'fix broken lives' (Mashaba, 2019), which mostly happen to be of youth. This is after he highlighted his awareness of the close relationship between using drugs and being unemployed or living under low-socioeconomic conditions.

The complicated nature of nyaope, as a drug, indicative in the variety of ingredients both claimed and proven to be used to manufacture it, has been however a possible challenge to measures taken by the government spheres and the State in terms of addressing issues around nyaope and its use, efficiently. The studies cited above in this regard (Mokwena, 2015: 251; Mthembi et.al 2018; Khine, et.al, 2015: 53) which sought to identify the ingredients of nyaope, are said to provide the necessary relief in making the process of intervention possible and effective. Through providing the required validated and reliable data about the composition of nyaope, they enable the provision of appropriate medication for treatment of withdrawal symptoms during rehabilitation to be achievable. But also, they present the scientific prove that may be needed about the chemical classification of nyaope to make it possible for dealers, and the users as well, to be criminalised if found in possession of the drug (Khine, et.al, 2015: 55).

War declared on drugs as an international phenomenon

Mayor Mashaba's declare of war on drugs is not something that is new but a trend that has been in existence in the world for many years. The so-called War on Drugs approach, which is based on the prohibition of the trade and use of certain drugs noted to cause problems in society, by criminalising them; policing and arresting those who use or trade them, has been a dominant strategy that has been used by many countries in the globe as a response to the issue at hand in the last fifty years (Horsfield, 2019: 4). One of the leading countries popularly known for using this prohibitionist criminal justice approach is the United States of America (USA). The USA's War on Drugs, which is directed towards stopping illicit drug use, is actually stated to be the oldest war the country has ever been in (Singer & Page 2014). Some leading anthropologists in drug studies have since however criticised the use of this strategy in the USA where it is highly applied, arguing that the criminalisation of certain

drugs has turned the people who use them into dangerous and immoral individuals, who righteously deserve to be punished for their immoral behaviour, through imprisonment. In the USA alone for example, it is believed that people arrested on drug offenses and drug-related crimes make up almost half of the population of prisoners (Singer & Page 2014).

Like in the USA, the War on Drugs approach has been receiving a lot criticism the world over, mainly for failing to reduce illicit drug use and trading, and for causing harm on the people. The approach is said to cause the othering of users (Singer & Page 2014), leading to their state of health and well-being to be negatively affected. Furthermore, it is noted that the poor are incarcerated in massive numbers because of the strategy. As such, in recent years, the War on Drugs approach has been experiencing a backlash. Many countries are now abandoning the prohibition of illicit drugs for new approaches, along the lines of harm reduction approach, which prioritise and protects people's health and wellbeing (Horsfield, 2019: 4), through the utilisation of certain harm reduction strategies. Amongst those are the establishment of drug consumptions rooms and needle exchange programmes, which serve to reduce the risks that comes with drug use, and provide a safe place where this behaviour can be monitored (Schatz & Nougier, 2012: 2).

Literature review

This literature review is dedicated towards discussing some of the key terms of this report, namely 'youth', 'morality' and 'illicit drug use'. As my research is on youth, who use nyaope, I discuss and highlight the identity and status that people who fall within the category in Africa have and occupy. I reveal how most are noted to be in crisis, to be a lost generation and a threat, thus a topic of moral concern, mainly due to their behaviour. I highlight how 'youth' living in a post-colonial African countries have responded to the everyday life challenges of the lack of economic opportunities, marginality and exclusions and how this makes them to be noted as troublesome. I do so as a measure to draw the similarities that South African youth who use nyaope share with their peers in the continent. On the discussion of 'morality', I lay down the broadness in which the term has been defined and how it is closely related to the policing of society, to ensure that individuals adhere to the ideology of 'good' behaviour and of being 'good' humans/citizens. Afterwards, I clarify how the term 'morality' will

be applied in the report. Since this is of course an anthropological research report, I subsequently talk about prior research on illicit drugs use by leading anthropologists in the topic, to reveal the significant role that the discipline has played on the issue of illicit drugs. Throughout the report, I will be drawing back to the literature reviewed for analytic purposes.

Youth in Africa

The classification of youth tends to vary from one context to the next. However, the term 'youth' is largely used as a rigid age-defined category, usually spanning the years fourteen and twenty-five. In the report, I have extended the cohort to up to the age of thirty-five years. In socio-anthropological literature, 'youth' is defined in terms of social and family hierarchies, independence and responsibility. As vague as the concept of youth is, it however mostly coheres around the notion of transition between childhood and responsible adulthood, and as a phase of socialisation (Glaser, 2000: 3-4).

There is an immense amount of literature on African youth, of which those identified to be in the phase or fall within the cohort are noted to be in crisis – in need of assistance and guidance. There is a common thread of youth in post-colonial African societies of being perceived as a threat, and of provoking moral and civic panic, because of their deviancy against social norms, law and association with violence or diseases. In Niger, for example, youth occupy the identity of being problematic beings, carrying seeds of evil and sabotage. They are considered to be also a class of people who are at risk and in need of rescuing from the world of violence, immorality and exploitation. As such, the 'youth' in the country are recognised to be in need of continuous guidance along the 'rightful' path for them not to stray into sinful ways. This moral guidance increasingly takes the form of sermons exhorting young Muslim audiences to live a life of piety and sexual restraint (Masqueler, 2005).

Di Nunzio's study about young men living in the inner region of Ethiopia's capital city: Addis Ababa, who embrace uncertainty or the inability to know or even predict the outcome of events, reveals how circumstances that youth live under has a greater impact in the social identity they occupy of being trouble and being in trouble (Diouf, 2003: 3; Boesen, 2008: 112; van Dijk et al, 2011: 3). Living under the condition of marginality, continuously excluded and subjected, the young men who were participants in the study did not know what their future would look like, and they did

not have much expectations of the future. To them, therefore, embracing uncertainty served as a ground for action and hope. They waited for a 'chance' or a 'stroke of fortune' that will give them some knowledge of where their life could be heading (in Copper & Pratten, 2015: 10; 5). Di Nunzio argues that these young men embracement of uncertainty is part of their everyday exercise of reflexivity. In moral terms, their embrace of uncertainty is explained as the means of them making sense of the fact that getting by in Addis Ababa's inner city sometimes involved cheating and stealing – which they acknowledged that it would not make God very happy– as what they needed to do for survival, under their circumstances of being poor (in Copper & Pratten, 2015: 4; 11).

Like the youth living in Addis Ababa's inner city, urban youth of Nairobi, Kenya also face uncertainty and challenges in their everyday lives, and as a result, they live a life based on hustling, to deal with the former (Threme, 2018: 529; 540). For the first post-independence generation of youth born and raised in informal settlements of Nairobi, in the absence of formal institutional support of any kind, Threme (2018: 531) shows how this particular youth self-identified with 'hustling' as an assemblage of everyday struggles, dealings and opportunistic practices. They used the activity as a measure to navigate precarious urban environments beyond the 'paid job' and advance their own individual and sometimes shared interests, under the context where the odds were against them (2018: 529). More often than not, this implied defying the rules (2018: 531).

In South Africa, like other people who fall within the category in Africa, the youth have been a source of fear and concern throughout the history of the country. During the period of apartheid, black youth in particular were seen as a social and political threat by the white society and the regime. This is from the so-called *tsotsis* (gangsters) of the 1940s and1950s to the 'youth' and comrades of the liberation struggle period in the 1970s until the dawn of democracy (Seekings, 1995: 25). The *tsotsis* represented someone who is an urban 'juvenile delinquent', who is disrespectful towards the elders and laws (Glaser, 2000: 20; 51). In the 1940s and 50s 'tsotsiism', 'juvenile delinquency' and 'youth' were mostly used synonymously in administrative jargon (2000: 20; 5).

Between the period of 1976 Soweto Uprising and February reform initiatives, black urban youth were a worry because of the extent of anomie and criminality noted

amongst them and they were a central theme in the political and sociological analysis as a result. The so-called comrades, who acted as troops of resistance, made townships ungovernable and proved to be problematic to the security forces and the regime, which they defied (Glaser, 2000: 1). Later, black urban youth became increasingly represented in the newspapers as a 'lost generation'. To newspapers such as Sunday Times, the portrayal of black youth as a 'lost generation' was bounded with violence, disorder and anarchy. To others like Sowetan, they were a lost generation because of the inadequate schooling system they were under (Seekings, 1995: 28; 34) and few years after transitions into a democratic South Africa, because of to their high levels of unemployment (Glaser, 2000: 1).

Not much has changed since then with regards to the social identity that people identified as 'youth' occupy today in South Africa, specifically black youth. Like their peers in other African countries, they still maintain a reputation of being troublesome due to their associated 'inappropriate' behavioural activities, which goes against social or cultural moral norms, and the law. Concerns towards South African youth's engagement in sexual intercourse before the 'appropriate' time (Mkhwanazi, 2014: 109-110) are exemplary, including participation in crime; violence (Scheper-Hughes, 2004) and of course their use of illicit drugs such as nyaope (Mange, 2013; van Zyl, 2015). The issue of the immense use of nyaope amongst black youth in particular is currently one of the major factors that make the group to be seen being in crisis, therefore needing to be guided and transformed (Temudo & Abrantes, 2015: 465) into disciplined bodies, as popularly documented in recent academic literature and the media.

Morality and policing

Morality is itself a slippery term as youth is. The term has been defined and discussed in a variety of ways by scholars from a range of disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and anthropology. There seems to be a consensus however, amongst many scholars that morality functions as a guideline for distinguishing good from bad behaviour, and therefore, for ensuring appropriate conduct and order in society. Emile Durkheim's, whose strong moral stance is known, frame of morality as an integral part of social life, as he recognises people to be governed by moral rules, communicates this (Lailaw in Boddy & Lambek, 2013: 173). He is seconded by Keen (2015: 333) and

Dave (in Lambek, 2010: 373). Both respectively refer morality as what has to do with the evaluation of persons and conduct in terms of 'good' and 'bad' and what people are ought to and not to do for moral reasons; and as a system of imposed codes and norms, legitimatised through texts, scriptures and custom, deployed in order to maintain social stability and the reification of already-existing relations of power.

In anthropology in particular, there is a lack of agreement or coherence amongst anthropologists who study moralities regarding what they are attempting to study and how to do so (Zigon, 2009b: 78). Zigon however, has stated that from a phenomenological point of view, morality (and even ethics), cannot be considered as a total and unified concept, but rather what can only be found in the social world in its various and distributed aspects (Zigon 2011: 31). He mentions that morality can be considered in at least three different but interrelated spheres: the institutional, public discourse and embodied dispositions. The first includes both formal and informal institutions, social organisations and groups found in all societies, which are wielded with varying amounts of power over individual persons, proclaiming the truth or the rightness of a particular morality. Governments, organised religions, village elder councils and schools are examples of such institutions (Zigon, 2009b: 80). The second involves the public articulations of moral beliefs, conceptions, and hopes that are not directly articulated by institutions, such as the media, every day articulated beliefs and opinions, and parental teachings (Zigon, 2009b: 81). The last aspect Zigon describes it in reference to *habitus*. By considering morality as *habitus*, Zigon aims to make the point about morality being a product of human endeavour rather than revelatory experience or natural temperament. Furthermore, this is to also highlight that morality is acquired through the repeated performance of actions that entail a particular virtue (2009b: 81).

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that morality (moral rules, norms; beliefs) has to do with policing people's behaviour so that they conform to socially standardised appropriate ways of acting, as set by "moral entrepreneurs" (Brinkerhoff et.al, 2008: 128) who use formal and informal institutions to impose and legitimise certain codes and norms about what is right and wrong, through texts, scriptures and custom. The public articulations of moral beliefs of nyaope use being 'wrong', 'demonic', and the criminalisation of nyaope by South Africa, through using the judicial system to imprison people who use nyaope are exemplary. Gillespie has indeed

indicated how in post-apartheid South Africa, prisons have come to be given an ideal type of image as a benevolent moral institution, capable of providing a developmental remedy for all "anti-social" behaviour through rehabilitation, so to produce good and productive citizenship (2008: 70; 74). Although Gillespie mentions crime (2008: 70), I would like to add nyaope use as one of those behaviours sought to be corrected through imprisonment, especially since the latter is noted to lead to the former, including the fact that people who use nyaope can get arrested for their drug use.

In this ethnographic report, I do not consider morality to be total but as what can exist in variety of forms from one situation to the next, as Zigon mentions (2011: 31).Thus, I promote and embrace the perspective of 'morality' being variable, and so the talking of moralities. Therefore, I will be using the term more openly. That is, I will be looking into those moral norms, beliefs and laws (as legalised norms) at play and dominant in Valleydale that are the basis of how nyaope and the people who use it are perceived by the public. But also, I strive to uncover and present other alternative moralities, which arise from the people who use nyaope themselves, based on how they make sense of their nyaope use and circumstances, through their own moral standards, principles and justifications.

With all that said, I therefore approach nyaope use as a "moral experience" (Zigon & Throop, 2014: 10), by not solely perceiving it according to the binaries of what is 'good' what is 'bad', as per the totalised standards set by formal and informal institutions and public discourse, but by also considering the moral standings of nyaope users. I give priority to the latter here as they have not received much attention, and because I believe acknowledging the reality of the existence of morality in plural terms and in other alternatives, specifically those of the users, can help promote a better understanding nyaope use and other drug-related activities. More especially since I have experienced that, from the user's point of view, what is 'right' or 'wrong' tends to clash and can differ from the dominant ideas of morality in society, with the classification heavily laying upon the personal circumstances situation one finds themselves in, at specific moments.

The role of anthropological research about drug use: South Africa and the world

Anthropological studies of drug use, specifically illicit drug use, have been helpful in revealing the consequences and socio-cultural significance of the behaviour (Page in Singer & Erickson 2011: 367). Anthropologists that pioneered the field include Philippe Bourgois, Merrill Singer, and Bryan Page. Their contribution in drug use studies provides valuable insights about the history of drug use, the culture and the economy of drug dealers and people who use illicitly deemed drugs, globally and in specific locations, predominately the USA. Some of their work are about the use of specific street drugs. Others go further to discuss and at times criticise certain measures that have taken to regulate, address or resolve the 'drug problem'. Additionally, other ethnographies have argued that drug users or addicts are not only the source of delinquency and a burden, as they are commonly classified, but have a value in society.

Singer and colleagues wrote a paper about a street drug called phencyclidine (PCP) used in Hartford, USA, which has many similarities with South Africa's nyaope. Despite its popularity, the chemical composition of PCP remained uncertain since it first appeared as a street drug in the late 1960s. PCP is commonly used by urban youth and is known by the slang 'embalming fluid' and others such as 'fry', 'dust', or 'matrix' (2005: 74; 75). The paper reports on the new findings of the use of embalming fluid mixtures in Hartford, and the dilemmas the drug created, to establish an evidence-based community response to the emergent drug use trends (Singer et.al, 2005: 77).

Bourgois conducted a long-term ethnographic fieldwork with Schonberg (2009) about the homeless drug addicts of San Francisco. The result, *Righteous Dopefiend*, narrates their current state of their lives whilst unveiling the history and factors that eventually led them into using drugs and becoming homeless. The book shows how the participants' lives are based on the 'moral economy' of sharing drugs with each other and on the engagement in petty crimes, such as burglary, for money for drugs, in order to escape the withdrawal symptoms of heroin. Some would get arrested in the process or ended up in hospital, due to drug overdose. *Righteous Dopefiend* further documents the damage that drug use can have on the relationships of the users with their families, reporting how some only had temporary contact with their loved ones,

whereas those who lived with their family members would occasionally be thrown out of their homes and invited back after few months or even years, due to stealing from the household (Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009: 177, 45, 248 & 253).

In another ethnography, Bourgois (2003) spent time amongst structurally oppressed Puerto Rican migrant men in the USA who became crack dealers to earn money and gain respect, in pursuit of the American dream. Although the men had work experience, many of the potential jobs in factories and construction were reserved for non-Hispanics. Under such conditions, Bourgois (2003) shows how crack dealing came to be perceived as the most realistic route to upward mobility, and how this offered them a sense of autonomy, position and rapid short-term mobility.

Singer and Page (2014), present a rather different perspective of drug users in their book *Social Value of Drug Addicts: Uses of the Useless* from how both the media and government reports in USA often portrayed them. That is, as worthless and as threats to the survival of society. In the book, the authors critically reveal how communication platforms and institutions play a key role in constructing the drug addicts as the deviant "other", responsible for their habits and deserving to be punished accordingly for their immoral character (2014: 207). Such discourse, commonly articulated in US drug laws, Singer and Page argue that it contributes to social suffering by shifting the blame to the addicts. To them, they perceive the blame directed towards drug users as the cause of social ills in society as a scapegoat and diversion from the real issues that underlie social problems. This is because, they argue, although drug use amongst the poor maybe viewed as an individual choice, it is ultimately a response to structural violence and social suffering caused by the detachment of capital from social responsibility (2014: 217).

The above literature reviewed provides the background of the significant role anthropology has played in advancing the understanding of the behavior of illicit drug use (and dealing), even beyond the stereotypical perceptions or general notions about it and the people who use such drugs, through good ethnographic fieldwork and critical analysis. I draw inspiration from these anthropologists and their work to advance the value of the discipline further in critical anthropological studies of illicit drug use, and to make the required contribution in this regard, from the context of Africa, as there is not much anthropological work done on the topic in and from this region.

Argument and outline of the report.

The goal of this ethnography is to expand our understanding of nyaope use beyond the common discourse about it in society, to show the complexity that lies in the behaviour. Applying our own perceptions and moral judgments might lead us into classifying nyaope use as wrong and into perceiving the users as deviants who choose to do what is 'wrong' over that is 'right'. However, what I argue is nyaope use is far more complex than that. It is not something that can be simply characterised as being good or bad, right or wrong, or a case between choice and constraint (Zigon & Throop, 2014: 10) as according to some universal system of morality. It has to be sought to be understood from the moral point of view of the people who use the drug. Especially when considering that the use of nyaope use has led to the emergence of social groups that are their own moral circle, operating on certain moral norms and principles, which can differ from the ones of the larger society they fall within. Furthermore, the intentions and motivations of the users for their nyaope use and their other drug-related behaviours can be far more complicated than being a matter of choosing to defy and go against those social expectations, norms and law as set by formal, informal institutions and according to public discourse. To elaborate, there are some people who use and are dependent on nyaope for instance, who are aware of the harm their use has on them and the community but yet find themselves in a position where they still *have* to continue to use the drug and steal for the drug. Therefore, what I say here is, for us to understand the issue of nyaope use better, we should look into to it from the angle of the circumstances that the users find themselves in due to their addiction or dependency on the drug. Firstly, this implies changing our lens, by detaching ourselves from our moral standings, which can hide the complexity of nyaope use, presenting it to us as a two-dimensional issue, and start looking into the behaviour from the life experiences and moral viewpoints of people who use the drug. Only then can we begin to deeply comprehend why people who use the drug do so. Or why others even go to greater lengths of committing crime so to obtain money to buy the drug that it is noted to damage them and the society at large; or why the groups of people who use nyaope, visible throughout the country – whom are noted to be a threat and not to have a place in society – exist in the first place.

Chapter 2 presents and discusses the theoretical framework of this research, phenomenology, and the methodology utilised to conduct fieldwork, which is ethnography. I highlight the importance that paying attention to the body, and embodiment, were in this study as a mode of expression and meaning and to source for information, respectively. After detailing the methods used and introducing the participants and fieldsites of the research, I talk about the challenges I encountered before and during fieldwork. I present new term I coined 'inference solicitations', which arises from my own reflections of my fieldwork experiences, and what it implies.

Chapter 3 serves as an introduction to the topic under study. It talks about the uncertainty behind nyaope, its various interpretations and the phenomenological experiences of using it. I argue that under the conditions where people struggle to make sense of what nyaope is, the users come to embody or represent the drug, as much as the rumours about nyaope influence how the public perceives them. I substantiate this by showing how the bodily actions and appearance of the people who use nyaope serve as a point of reference which the public use to comprehend nyaope in Valleydale. As such, the chapter identifies these aspects of the uncertainty about nyaope, rumours around it and what people see through the bodily appearance and behaviours of nyaope users as the source of the moral panic towards nyaope use in the South African society.

Chapter 4 provides an insiders' perspective about the socio-economic life of a group of youth nyaope users in Valleydale who refer themselves as *bomtsubi.* It shows how the group is its own moral community, based on how the engagements with and the relationships amongst the members are grounded on certain moral practices and principles which I sum up to be mostly motivated by *looking out* for each other.

Chapter 5 reveals how my participants' individual nyaope use has affected their sense of personhood: making them feel as if they are seen to be less of a human, if at all, due to their association with the drug nyaope. Appearing as someone who uses or is known to use nyaope made my participants feel as if this turned them into not being worth the respect of others, based on how other people in their families and the community treat them. I point out that therefore my participants' sense of personhood can be understood as being centred on 'bodiliness' – on the state of relations of their bodies with other bodies in the community.

Chapter 6 discusses nyaope withdrawal symptoms from the point of view of being a state of sickness, as according to my participants' perception and explanation of the withdrawals, characterised by pain, suffering and abnormality. I argue that my participants refer to the state of experiencing the withdrawals as 'sickness' so to allow people who lack the subjective experience thereof to have some idea of what they go through daily, to seek empathy from them. I further reveal how this state of sickness is used as a moral justification by some of my participants, as a reason put forth to explain why they at times behave in ways that are socially considered to be immoral or unlawful.

Chapter 7 documents the aspirations that some of my participants have for themselves which have to do with remaking oneself into new person who would live a 'normal' life without nyaope and its negative impacts. I show how they sought to approach formal institutions to help them remake themselves in this manner by becoming rehabilitated; educated and formally employed. I discuss into detail the role that SANCA as South Africa's largest drug treatment organisation serves in the country and how drug rehabilitation centres and treatment have been analysed by other anthropologists.

The final chapter, the conclusion, offers a summary of what each chapter was about. Furthermore, I talk about how looking into nyaope use from the phenomenological experiences of the users themselves and as a 'moral experience', through suspending our own moral judgements, as I have done through my research, can further advance our understanding of the behaviour and thus provide clarity to the common questions directed to the behaviour. For instances, such as why people, especially the youth, use the drug in the first place and why they are associated with so much wrong doing in their communities and in South Africa at large.

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework and research methodology

Theoretical framework: Phenomenology

My research project is framed on the theory known as phenomenology, which is about studying phenomena as they appear to people's lived experiences (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011: 88). The framework is suitable for the study and what it aims to achieve, as it is based on understanding the life experiences of young people who use nyaope in Valleydale, in relation with morality. Phenomenology originates from the study of human consciousness. Edmund Husserl, who is considered one of the foundering fathers of modern phenomenology, showed how the Cartesian idea of human consciousness as an 'enclosed globe', which receives information only through sense, distorts our understanding of the way consciousness works. His successors such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty had their own individual views on what phenomenology is and how it should be practiced. Merleau-Ponty expanded the study of human consciousness to the role of the body, by framing the body as consciousness-projected-in-the-world (Knibbe & Versteeg, 2008: 56). He identified the role of the body as the ground where meaning and existence meet, which manifest themselves in a form of non-verbal and unconscious communication and other non-conceptualised bodily ways of knowing (Cargonja, 2013: 23).

Merleau-Ponty's work has influenced the work of anthropologists who had a great impact on anthropological phenomenological studies like Thomas Csordas. Csordas coined one of the most referenced concepts in anthropological theory, that is, embodiment (Cargonja, 2013: 23). Csordas describes embodiment as the human beings' fundamental existential condition and corporeality in relation to the world (in Mascia-Lees, 2011: 137). Embodiment emphasises the fact that human beings are and have bodies. It places priority into studying the body, as a source of information, since meaning is produced through the body (Knibbe & Versteeg, 2008: 50).

The interest of phenomenological anthropology on experience makes a body and embodiment to be central to its studies (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011: 93; Cargonja, 2013: 33). The (living) body is prioritised because it is not considered just a mere object. It is appreciated as an existential null point from which the various human

engagements with the world are transacted, whether social, physical or otherwise, as a living entity by which and through which people experience the world (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011: 89). These bodily experiences are studied through embodiment, by paying attention to patterns of behaviour inscribed on the body or acted out by people to express themselves in bodily form (Strathern & Stewart in Mascia-Lees, 2011: 389).

Previous work on phenomenological anthropology that has been done are broad, covering a range of topics such as medical knowledge and healing, pain and suffering, social exclusion, dying, and even morality and addiction. Throop for example (in Fassin, 2012: 160) conducted a long-term fieldwork to explore what it means to feel pain and suffering in Yap. He discovered that both pain and suffering are embedded within the constellation of themes such as care, compassion and humility, with suffering for one's family, community or chiefs for instance, being held to be one of the central virtues underlying local moral modes of being. Jackson (2005:332) has also conducted some studies on pain, which led him into discovering that certain features of chronic pain can result in sufferers being seen to transgress the categorical division between mind and body and to confound the codes of morality surrounding sickness and health.

The concepts of the body and embodiment are also key in this report too. Beyond the body being a biological and material entity (Knibbe & Versteeg, 2008: 50), I paid a close attention to the body as a mode of expression and meaning. This is communicated through in the ethnographic accounts provided. Furthermore, I refer to a variety of types of bodies that have been theorised by anthropologists for analytic purposes. One of those is the individual body, understood in the phenomenological perspective as lived experience of the body-self, and the other, the social body. The latter refers to the characteristic of a body being used as a natural symbol to think about nature, society and culture (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). The third body that Scheper-Hughes and Lock also identify is body politic, which notes the human body as a tool or weapon of identification, subjection and resistance (van Wolputte, 2004: 254). Body politic is also about how bodies (individual and collective) are regulated, put under surveillance and controlled in forms of deviance (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987: 7-8) such as drug use, crime; sickness and how such deviance *is* punished, formally and informally.

Additionally, I bring into conversation the theorisations of the body by Nora Jones. That is, the body as spectacle; and the body as patient. The body as spectacle serves to widen the lens from isolated body parts back to whole bodies, to the extraordinary bodies that exist in and are referenced by popular culture. This view of the body highlights the relationship between the individual and the social, which therefore makes bodies, according to the ethics of looking, to be the source of emic meaning (in Mascia-Lees, 2011: 77). By the body as patient, Jones aims to emphasise the importance of understanding other worldviews on what illness means to people, thus how they make decisions, through paying close consideration to people's stories (in Mascia-Lees, 2011: 80).

I apply these theorisations of bodies to communicate the lived experiences of people who use nyaope, as I take priority to their bodies, as biological, social and material entities by which they exist and live in the world, thus a means in which they (as human beings) come to interact with other people, are perceived and classified. I also use bodies as a channel to uncover how they as users utilise them talk about their nyaope use and its mental, physical and behavioural impact on them, as conscious beings.

Methodology: The fieldwork process

The research presented here is a product of roughly three months of a roller coaster of formal fieldwork, which rather started late, on the beginning of October 2018, and lasted until mid-January 2019. During the period of fieldwork, I had several meetings with my research participants who use nyaope in public spaces in Valleydale. These individuals were however all males. I worked only with males because within my social network I knew of males who used nyaope than females. Additionally, I found that working with males such Boy (in his mid-30s), Khaya, Thabo, (both in their mid-20s) and Kgeleke (in his late 20s) –whom are the main participants of the research – would make us able to relate with each other better, since I am also a male.

Since I knew of all the participants prior to the commencement of the research, I approached them individually for recruitment. I carried out constant visits to the public spots were they gathered with other users to smoke nyaope. Notably, a taxi rank and market place in Valleydale, which I refer here as Rebang and the area where some hustle for money, Valleydale shopping centre. I also met with some at their homes and in the streets of Valleydale, both during and after the recruitment process. To protect

their identity and for the assurance of anonymity, I have given my four main participants pseudonyms. Boy, Khaya, Thabo; Kgeleke are not their real names. The same applies to the name of the Soweto Township where I carried out the fieldwork, 'Valleydale', and the fieldsites within it.

I had other interlocutors in addition to my four main participants, two to be exact. Both are employees of the largest organisation for alcohol and drug dependence in the country: the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA). I worked with a social worker by the name of Richard and a social auxiliary worker, Puleng. I visited them at SANCA treatment centre located in Rockville, Soweto and the SANCA satellite office in Valleydale for interviews. Furthermore, I attended a community meeting, a Narcotics Anonymous rally and an anti-nyaope campaign, which all were hosted in Valleydale, to learn more about how people view nyaope and the people who use the drug in this community.

All my interactions with my participants involved some interviews, which mostly were semi-structured and unstructured. The former interviews involved the use of predetermined questions to guide the direction the interaction during interviews took, to source for specific information. To allow the conversation to flow, I avoided asking other additional questions, unless when a necessity for that arose. The latter interviews were much more open since they were not structured on any pre-formulated questions (Carruthers et.al, 1999: 149; 121). When I had informal interviews with my participants I did more of listening than talking. Altogether, the languages we used for communication varied from Sesotho, English and isiZulu. Sometimes we would code-switch between and code-mix these languages, and in most cases, myself and the young people who use nyaope would use terminologies of the slang *Tsotsitaal* (gangster language). The local terms that the group I immersed myself with were also featured a lot in our communication. I introduce some of them here.

While in the field, I also did many observations. I paid close attention to the activities happening around the areas and events I visited, on what was said and on people's bodily conduct and articulations. For instance, during fieldwork, I recognised that my presence around the people known to use nyaope made some people assume that I use nyaope too. To most people who know me, seeing me with the *bomtsubi* evoked shock on them. One family relative of mine once saw me amongst the *bomtsubi*.

Shocked, she immediately went to a family member to enquire about what they could have possibly done to me, which led me into using nyaope. The family relative happens to be staying with her nephew who uses nyaope in the same yard and on a number of times I have heard her confide to the family about the troubles that her nephew's use of nyaope has caused at her home, mostly because he would steal and sell items from the home to gather money for nyaope.

For recording purposes, I refrained from writing (detailed) notes while in the field because recording notes in public; amongst my participants and as the interview took place, would disrupt the follow of the conversations, draw too much attention to me and make people to be suspicious of my presence. Occasionally, I would note down key points on a jotting notebook as I conducted the research. But most of the time I waited until I had left the fieldsite or have completed the interview to privately write the main themes and jot down what I saw, heard and was told, in detail.

In most instances, I coded my data as I jotted down notes (Emerson et.al, 1995:143) – linking what I was writing to certain concepts and categories that come to mind at that moment (Weiss, 1994: 154). I would for example create headings and sub-headings for the notes, according to topics that have been inspired by what I have seen, heard or was told. I would also write comments in a form of words or phrases and associate some data with prior research or certain academic terms/work. In some cases, however, I would code my notes when I revisited them later on, to refresh my mind of the information I had already had. This allowed me to be able to draw links between older and newer data, as it accumulates; and to organise data according to themes.

I used a similar procedure of coding data for data analysis too. I sometimes would analyse the information collected just after I have finished jotting down notes, by trying to interpret and make sense of them. Sometimes this involved jotting down memos as I write notes, specifically initial memos: writing any ideas, terms or points that comes to mind (Emerson et.al, 1995: 155) and in some instances, referring back to read previous coded notes to highlight any relationships between them (Emerson et.al, 1995: 162). Coding and analysing data as I go allowed me to keep up with the information I had and develop an idea of the arguments I could make. It also informed me of the sources I could consult for analyses, and how I could organise the report

later on. As such, these processes played a huge role in the formation of the chapters presented here, what they argue and how they are organised.

Challenges encountered

Being born in and being the resident of Valleyale, together with the fact that this was the second fieldwork I was doing on nyaope in this location, made carrying out the fieldwork in this Soweto Township a little easier for me. Some of the people I have mentioned as participants are my former schoolmates and friends, whom I have known for more than 15 years. Others I have known before, but we began to establish a relationship as friends during the fieldwork I did in 2017 for my BA Honours research project. My lifetime residency in Valleydale and the already existing relationship I have with my participants subtracted the need of gaining access into 'the field', and gave me a massive advantage of knowing the people that I could work with from the onset. However, such advantages did not make me immune to challenges.

I encountered many challenges, before and during fieldwork. I had difficulties in obtaining ethical clearance for this research from the University of Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee (non-medical). I had to resubmit my application for ethical clearance for my research three times before it was eventually approved. After a rather strenuous and sometimes frustrating process of constantly readjusting and incorporating the input from the Committee in my research proposal, ethics form, informed consent forms and participant information sheets, I finally received ethical clearance on the 12th of October 2018, three months after the first submission. Although the ethical process is important, the relatively late approval of my research presented some delays, as I could only formally start with my fieldwork after receiving approval.

Initially I planned to use SANCA treatment centre in Rockville as one of the fieldsites for the recruitment of young people who attend an aftercare programme there for their recovery from nyaope use. I had already received formal approval from the Centre's management to use the centre as a fieldsite as early as June 2018, but receiving late ethical approval from the University for my research caused some delays in finding people to work with in this regard, as I could only recruit participants only starting from the 12th of October 2018. Furthermore, following the approval, I struggled to find participants, mainly because of the lack of attendance and commitment from them. Starting as late as October, poor attendance did diminish any chances I had of finding

people to work with from that moment onwards. For instance, I revisited the centre seven times since then, most often on a weekly basis, and on all occasions, attendees did not show up.

Before I received ethical approval from the University, I regularly visited the centre on Fridays, since group therapy sessions were held every Fridays at the centre from 9H00 until 10H00, to meet with potential participants. I did eventually meet an individual Kebone, a 36-year-old male hairdresser from Soweto, who wanted to be a participant. It was on the 1st of June 2018. However, there was no developments on the day and thereafter, mainly due to Kebone's expectation of receiving money from me so that he could be a participant.

On the first day I met with Kebone, he told me that he was on a rush to go to work and he was shot of money for taxi fare. He asked me if I could assist him by giving him some cash. I refrained from giving him cash that I had with me at that time as a potential participant of the research, since doing so goes against the ethical conduct of being a researcher. Our conversation ended on an agreement that we will meet on the following Friday, which was the 8th of June, for a chat. But this never happened. Kebone never had time to sit down and talk. He kept postponing the meeting to the following Fridays, to the 15th and then the 22nd of June, even when I suggested for a different day to meet. The last time I saw Kebone was on the 15th of June 2018.

The asking for money from potential participants and my actual participants was the greatest challenge I faced during fieldwork. Not only did this hinder my chances of finding people to work with, but my lack of reciprocity with cash did also damage the relationships I had already had with some interlocutors, something which I similarly experienced initially nearly two years ago, when I was conducting a research on the use of nyaope amongst the youth from Valleydale. In 2017 most of the individuals who initially wanted to be participants and 'randomly' asked for money after our conversation would end up being uninterested when I told them that I do not have any money with me or I cannot give them cash, as stated in the participant information sheet. Therefore, Kebone's request and loss of interest to talk with me after I did not give him money did not come as much of a surprise. The constant occurrence of these events of asking for money from actual and potential participants has led me to coin the term 'inference solicitations', as the result of my reflection on them.

Inference solicitations

Inference solicitations refers to those 'random' requests for money from (potential) participants, which rather have a hidden purpose and agenda in them. That is, of serving as a measure to ask to be rewarded or rather paid (financially or in other ways) in return for providing the 'services' as a participant. The actual intent of *inference solicitations* may not be easily picked up by the researcher on the onset, since they are often phrased in an implicit and indirect manner. It is for this reason why I refer to such articulations as *inference*[2] *solicitations* because, their actual meaning and message is not obvious, but require the listener, to whom they are directed, to draw a connection about what they actually imply.

The miscommunication presented by the inability to make the association about what the *inference solicitation* is about, including not meeting the request, has the potential to hinder the development of or damage the already established relationship between the researcher and the participants, as I have experienced with Kebone. But Khaya too. Khaya would usually ask me for cash whenever we met. I typically responded by telling him that I do not have any money with me or that I cannot give him any due to our research-participant relationship. On a certain day when I visited Khaya, he cracked. He shut me out and refused to talk with me because he felt like he had nothing to gain from our partnership. He said, "I no longer want to be of your assistance. What do I have to gain after all [pause]...nothing. I am human too". This statement by Khaya expresses that he somewhat felt used, as I would visit him and we would chat. From our chats, he would provide me with the information I sought, but on his end, he felt that he gained nothing valuable to him from me by sharing this information with me, since I refused to give him what he constantly wanted from me every time we met, especially after such interactions, money.

As a researcher, although I know that I cannot offer any money to the people who I am in the process of recruiting or who are my participants – due to ethical standards of conduct – I do understand that *inference solicitations* are essentially about one of the most important aspects in anthropological research, since it is based on building

---

[2] The term *inference* is borrowed from the discipline of Linguistics. Within linguistics, the term is used in pragmatics or the study of 'invisible meaning', to refer to a certain way of speaking that will require the listener to be able to go beyond what the speaker has just said, so to understand what the speaker actually means (Yule, 2010: 132). This often requires shared knowledge.

and maintaining good relationships. That is, reciprocity. Thus, even though I refrained giving my participants money, I bought and shared soft drinks, refreshments and food with them. Others I tried to assist enrol into drug rehabilitation centres after they asked me to do so. What *inference solicitations* does is, it exposes the implicit reciprocal expectations of – even from the side of the researchers themselves -- 'you have to give in order to get' or 'I gave you, therefore you should give in return', which are central to ethnographic fieldwork.