

EXPLORING ONLINE MEANING MAKING OF MARIKANA

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own independent work and has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this University or any other academic institution, or published in any form.

It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Community-Based Counselling Psychology by Coursework and Research Report at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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ABSTRACT

Violence is a complex, universal phenomenon. Whilst it has been considered an inevitable part of the human condition, it has nonetheless been difficult to define. However, second wave violence scholars propose that a comprehensive analysis of how risk factors interact with individual and collective subjectivities which enable the enactment of the violence may serve as a starting point for better understanding this phenomenon. With a growing interest into internet-mediated research (IMR), this study aimed to explore the vlogging and polylogal interaction based website YouTube, which provided a rich textual environment to explore how commenters made meaning of the forms of signification portrayed in the video uploads depicting collective violence. These comments served as the units of analysis from 6 naturally occurring data elicitation videos that depicted the raw footage of violence that occurred in Marikana, Rustenburg on 16 August 2012. The Marikana event thus served as a key contextual post-apartheid event that provided the basis for a rich and comprehensive analysis of such online meaning making of violence. The study's research objectives were achieved by adopting the epistemological stance of interpretivism in the analytical framework of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis.

The findings of this study demonstrate how morally contingent the justification for the use of violence is in contemporary South African life. More specifically, in an environment underpinned by the economic and political discourse of neoliberal capitalism, the sanctity of human life was contested against wealth accumulation and personal greed. In addition to this, racially provoked commentary as mediated by the internet and further incited within the performativity of racial classification and differentiation provided the basis for the development of different orders of morality to impose moral sanctions on the acceptability and justifiability of the use of violence in certain circumstances. The results of this study thus

contribute to deepening current understandings of the moral frameworks that constitute and contest violence in South Africa.

Keywords: Violence; internet-mediated research; YouTube; Marikana; interpretivism; thematic analysis; race; moral frameworks.

ACRONYMS

AA	Affirmative Action
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
AMCU	Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSVR	Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation
IMR	Internet Mediated Research
NUM	Nation Union of Mineworkers
MEC	Minerals-Energy Complex
SAPS	South African Police Service
SWOP	Society, Work and Development Institute
TA	Thematic Analysis
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRVH	World Report on Violence and Health

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND AIMS

1.1 Introduction

On 16 August 2012, thirty-four miners lost their lives with a further seventy-eight being injured by gunfire at Lonmin platinum mine in Marikana (du Preez, 2015). This event was precipitated by a wildcat strike¹ which began six-days prior that involved approximately three-thousand rock drillers from two competing mine unions, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) demanding an increase in remuneration from R4, 000 per month to R12, 500 per month and improvement of working conditions (Marinovich, 2012; Muswaka, 2014). Consequently, this led to the violent altercation between striking miners and the South African Police Service (SAPS), which was captured from multiple perspectives by the media (Marinovich, 2012).

The “transsensational” (Dubin, 2012, p. 24) nature of the Marikana event as globally relevant and traversing across national boundaries, histories and cultures may best be understood in terms of its performative value in the larger socio-political factors at play. What is more, Wagner-Pacifci (2010) believes that the eventful trajectory of historical events such as the one that occurred at Marikana create “diverse characterisations and interpretations” (p. 1353). As such, it would be inconceivable to view the Marikana event through one interpretive frame as “events form, reform and deform” (Wagner-Pacifci, 2010, p. 1356) depending on the myriad and differing perspectives one could take with regards to understanding the event in its entirety.

The events that transpired at Marikana has received considerable coverage both locally and internationally in which it has been frequently compared to the Sharpeville massacre of 21

¹ A strike begun by workers spontaneously or without union approval.

March 1960, in which sixty-nine people were gunned down protesting against the passbook policies of the apartheid government (Swartz, 2015; Sorensen, 2012). However, drawing comparisons between events can only go so far and seems to fail in accounting for the contextual differences during these respective periods of time in which the events occurred. Most notably, is the discrepant difference in rule from an oppressive government to one, which is grounded in democratic underpinnings (Magaziner & Jacobs, 2013). The Marikana event may represent an epiphenomenon in South Africa's democracy, as the event highlights the political unrest that has been further complicated by new economic and class divisions within the country, leaving many of its citizens with bouts of "critical dystopianism" (Stobie, 2011, p. 370) towards the currently elected government: The African National Congress (ANC) and its respectability in addressing this growing divide.

This critical mood of dystopianism has created multiple competing and dissenting viewpoints that are intrinsically attempting to gain hegemonic dominance (Jay, 1988). Buitendag and Coetzer (2015) propose that instead of viewing the Marikana event as a "turning point in South African history" (Alexander, 2013, p. 605), it should rather be conceptualised as a reassertion of the legal power of law in preventing and deterring violence. The Marikana event seems to contest the legitimacy of violence in post-apartheid democratic law and thus poses a significant challenge for social scientists and researchers towards understanding this phenomenon. Piketty (2014) recalls the 1886 Haymarket Square and 1891 Fourmies events where police opened-fire against striking workers and ponders further whether "this kind of violent clash between labour and capital belong to the past, or will it be an integral part of twenty-first century history?" (p. 39). In a similar vein, Arias and Goldstein (2010) propose that 'violent democracy' characterised by 'violent pluralism' may be a crucial resource for members of society beyond the apparatus of the state to gain ascendancy in unregulated democratic matters. Therefore, what seems apparent is that violence is not a phenomenon that people wish to see eradicated

from our society but rather is antithetically perceived to be an effective tool in solving a wide range of social problems (Collins, 2013).

Although there appears to be a mood of critical dystopianism, it is nonetheless important to open up the possibilities of analysis from the outset in order to prevent a complete foreclosure of meaning making of the event itself. While it may be objected that violence in democracy nullifies the praxis of democratic order in society itself, it is also unhelpful to adopt this antithetical claim as it prevents gaining an understanding of the emerging dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa today (von Holdt, 2013). One possible direction of analysis to turn to is Benjamin's (1978) critique of violence. Benjamin (1978) notes that violence should be examined as a means to an end and not purely as an end in and of itself. For Benjamin (1978), if we can understand and rationalise *why* violence was used in the first instance then we can justify its end result as well.

1.2. Research Aim

The aim of this research report was envisioned towards exploring the myriad ways in which individuals make meaning of the use of violence, with the Marikana event providing the contextual basis in which such an analysis could occur as captured and relayed online. In accordance with the growing use of IMR, this project sampled specific YouTube videos, which depicted the violent altercation between striking mineworkers and the SAPS and analysed the videos accompanying commentary as data for the study. The study further attempted to understand how consumers of these videos make meaning of the events of Marikana.

1.3. Rationale

It is estimated that every year 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives due to violent altercations (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002). Violence appears to be a universal and complex phenomenon, which leaves no country or community unscathed. On 16 August 2012, South

African television sets were flooded with images and media accounts of the Lonmin wildcat strike, which ended in bloodshed. This event like many others can be viewed as reflective of the pervasive nature of violence, which is often considered an inevitable part of the human condition (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002).

However, defining a diffuse and complex phenomenon such as violence has largely been determined according to matters of judgement and not solely based as a public health concern (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002). Violence seems to be a culturally influenced and morally enforced standard of what is considered acceptable or unacceptable. The focus of public health approaches is towards understanding violence by broadening its focus on addressing the root causes of such behaviour in an attempt to ameliorate it.

In 1996, the World Health Assembly (WHA) declared violence as a public health concern. This declaration is further supported by numerous epidemiological studies highlighting violence as a major threat to public health (Nell & Brown, 1991). The public health approach towards violence prevention involves implementing interventions that are context specific by defining what the problem is and measuring the subsequent magnitude of the event through identifying the various risk factors that are associated with its enactment (Mercy, Rosenberg, Powell, Broome, & Roper, 1993).

Advocating for a public health model towards tackling violence will henceforth attest to its success in accounting for the ecological and systemic organisation of a collective approach as opposed to being primarily individually focused (Dahlberg & Butchart, 2005; Krug & Dahlberg, 2002; Villaveces et al., 2000; Matzopolous, Thompson & Myers, 2014). The epidemiological research on violence prevention in South Africa has primarily focused upon the broad influence of social and economic risk factors for initiating violence (Bowman, Stevens, Eagle & Matzopolous, 2014). The focus on primary prevention has however,

neglected the importance of understanding the mechanisms that translate risk factors into violent enactments and specifically how the social subject acts autonomously in these specific violent enactments.

Conversely, Ruttenberg (1994) stipulates that there are several limitations imposed by the public health approach towards violence. This approach is considered to be suitable insofar as it is able to ascertain the social, political and economic factors that are at play but is deemed to be inadequate with regards to being sensitively attuned to moving beyond the factors that frame violence or enabling it to explain the variations in rates of violence (Ruttenberg, 1994; Ratele, Suffla, Lazarus, & van Niekerk, 2010). In other words, researchers within the public health domain frequently report violence statistics without offering any explanation as to why this might be so (Gadd, 2015). Thus the above-mentioned factors are extremely complex and interwoven within each other and so in order to provide connections between these factors and data collected around violence, a rich in-depth contextualised set of analyses need to be performed (Bowman et al., 2014).

The mining industry in South Africa serves as a starting point for which this advocated type of rich in-depth contextual analysis can be performed. The mining industry in South Africa has a deep-rooted legacy of institutionalised conflict resulting from an entanglement of various intersections among categories of class and race. A pertinent illustration of this is the 1922 Rand Revolt, which culminated in 25, 000 white miners protesting against the removal of the ‘colour-bar’ and the promotion of white-black solidarity among mineworkers. Approximately two hundred strikers were killed in the process (Béliard, 2016). The targets of these protests were the mine managers themselves. So, quintessentially, the events that transpired on 16 August 2012 in Marikana provides researchers with a high-profile and locally-rich context in which to explore and extrapolate the embodied risks, motivating factors, intersectionality of categories as well as uncovering the polymorphic nature for this violence to be enacted.

Moreover, many studies have been concerned with the macro-level analyses of Marikana, which involve the way journalists, and news broadcasters have portrayed the event both locally and internationally (see Van Baalen, 2013) whilst others have focused on a political framing of the event (see McBride, 2015). However, very few studies have attempted to provide a more detailed and information-rich analysis of the micro-level factors (such as the interpersonal and situational factors). Butchart (2011) advocates for an inter-disciplinary approach towards the effective implementation of interventions that can prevent and repeal violence. Although considerable research has focused on addressing the issue of violence as a public health concern, the ever-increasing recalcitrant high rates of violence indicate that this critical social issue has yet to be concomitantly addressed and solved in its entirety.

Bowman et al. (2015) purport that while numerous studies have explored the nature of violence and its utility in revealing both descriptive and inferential data on the potential risks and correlates for the enactment of violent altercations to take place, it is argued that these analyses may not be adequate enough for providing a rich and detailed account of the numerous risk factors at play and their interconnections in producing violent enactments. If different societies place different values and meaning on the sanctity of human life then analysing these different sectors within the broad and overarching general population will be important in understanding what is considered to be a violent enactment and furthermore whether this enactment was justifiable or not (Stevens, 2008). This type of study and analysis will identify what forms of violence are worthy of attention to public health officials as well as policy makers at the national level. Furthermore, by providing a comprehensive and holistic examination of violence, social scientists and policy makers will be in a more informed position to decide upon creating and implementing a suitable intervention within the community and larger social format (Bowman et al., 2015). The public health approach to environmental and behaviour-related health problems has provided the necessary scope in order to implement interventions,

which indirectly influence the reduction and prevention of violent behaviour (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002).

In addition to this, a more nuanced analysis should include the numerous risk factors and their interconnections but also take account of the situational context as well as the individual and collective subjectivities that are functioning in creating these translating risk factors into the enactment of violent altercations. This type of data analysis will be used as an attempt to understand the variability of the enactment of violent altercations and in doing so, explain why it differs from event-to-event. Moreover, in order to uncover the complexities at play within a violent enactment, careful consideration and a strategically focused approach towards the analysis of a particular event should be adopted. Therefore, whilst acknowledging that the current study will not contribute towards a more nuanced analysis of situational mechanisms, it did aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the context in which people comprehend the limits of violence based on their own variegated moral code. Hence, it is for this reason that an explorative study of how individuals contest and make meaning of the violent atrocities that took place at the Marikana has been adopted as event for further analysis in order to come to a greater understanding of how violence happens.

We can only tread the water for so long before we are constrained by the limitations of what survey data reveals to us in terms of the individuals' subjectivities and the types of contexts in which the enactment of violence occurs. For this reason, Bowman et al. (2015) argue for a qualitative methodological approach to complement the epidemiological violence research that is primarily characterised by quantitative methodology. The present study employed qualitative methodology that enabled the researcher to evoke a more nuanced and fine-grained analysis by making use of an event-based approach towards understanding the meaning of violence and its use in the Marikana event (Ayres, Kavanaugh & Knaf, 2003). What is more, the motivation behind using a qualitative methodological approach is based on an attempt towards generating

a much deeper appreciation of the complex ways in which numerous and intersecting factors such as interactional, contextual, evolving and historically-time based causes converge to result in the violent atrocities that took place on 16 August 2012 in Marikana.

Furthermore, it has been argued by Bowman et al. (2015) that violence studies have reached a point of theoretical saturation in terms of identifying risk factors that often result in violent acts within analysing data. This is a key gap within our cannon of violence literature. However, what Hamby (2011) and other '*second wave*' violence scholars have proposed is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the numerous risk factors and how they specifically translate into the enactment of violent acts, whereby these enactments involve both individual and collective subjectivities for their performance. It is thus important to contextualise the context of the violent enactment. By acknowledging a whole host of perspectives, it provides us with a more comprehensive understanding for intervention. Specifically, by employing a thematic analysis of Marikana, this study aims to further inform and shed new light on the agenda of '*second wave*' violence studies insofar as attempting to map an understanding of the manner in which consumers of vlogged posts on YouTube make meaning of the events that transpired on 16 August 2012 at Marikana.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Context

A brief background history is necessary, in order to contextualise the current study. The Marikana district in Rustenburg, Johannesburg was traditionally comprised of a number of surrounding villages that relied solely on cattle ranching as a source of income. With the advent of Lonmin plc's acquisition of a lease agreement to mine platinum in Marikana in 1969 and with the gradual development of mines in 1971, drastic changes to the socio-economic and political landscape of Marikana's inhabitants took place. Lonmin is essentially leasing the Marikana land to mine platinum from the Bapo Ba Mohale traditional authorities. Lonmin pays royalties to the Bapo clan, a Tswana tribe having its ancestral origins in the land for over 200 years) and that have been deemed as having full and comprehensive custodianship over the land (Chinguwa, 2013). Contemporarily, Marikana has over 350, 000 inhabitants.

Lonmin plc has the third largest mining operation in the world and undoubtedly has a colossal presence in the mining fraternity, with a total of 28,000 fulltime employees as well as 10,000 contractors (Lonmin, 2012). With the advent of mining in the Marikana area, a number of villagers were forced to relocate where mine leases were soon to be erected (Chinguno, 2013a). An influx of people into the area ensued due to the emergence of a number of job opportunities in the mines. The platinum boom of the 1990's resulted in a proliferation of informal settlements in-and-around the surrounding areas of the platinum belt. What is more, Lonmin's Marikana operations account for more than three-quarters of its production (Lonmin, 2012).

Lonmin's mining operations have created a geographic divide with its inhabitants along the lines of either being considered a villager and part of the local community or a migrant worker whom illegally occupies land owned by traditional authorities (Chinguno, 2013a). The divisions between local communities and migrant workers have resulted in altercations over

land disputes as well numerous other issues such as access to resources and differences in culture. Moreover, migrant workers inhabit informal settlements around or leased areas of the mine with differing cultures to that of the local community, which makes it difficult for these people to assimilate and for them to be fully accepted into the community (Chinguno, 2013a).

In August 2011, the Bapo villagers withdrew their labour, claiming that Lonmin discriminated against locals in terms of job recruitment, where they claimed that preferential treatment was given to migrant workers. In light of this, the above-mentioned statistic of Lonmin having 28,000 fulltime employees are reflected in 83% of these workers coming from South Africa however, only 18% of Lonmin's employees originate from the greater Lonmin community (Lonmin, 2011). Thus, the geo-political and socio-economic dynamics can serve as the basis for understanding the inherent contextual complexities occurring within the communities of Marikana and provide insight into how grievances and disputes may arise.

Living conditions for a miner in Marikana is described as “appalling” according to the Bench Marks Foundation Report (2012, p. 74). Moreover, the Lonmin platinum mine is marked by “a high number of fatalities” (Bench Marks Foundation, 2012, p. 74). Life for a Lonmin employee is short and difficult where a third of employees are migratory labourers originating from Mozambique, Lesotho and the South African province of the Eastern Cape (Bench Marks Foundation, 2012; Chinguno, 2013a). The mining industry continues to operate on the system of migrant labour that was employed during the apartheid regime that actively regulated miners and subjugated them to a vulnerable and marginalised position. The migrant labour system raises a number of concerns for the socio-economic implications it has as well as the legitimacy of miners working without citizenship in the country (du Preez, 2015; Nash, 2015). The Lonmin mine and its migrant labour system can be viewed to represent particularly complex forms of the post-apartheid dispensation and workforce.

2.2 The Migrant Labour System

South Africa's road to industrialisation primarily began after the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly in 1866 and was fuelled by the migrant labour system (Calilincos, 1985). Migrant labours were afforded a hostel system of accommodation (compounded labour) in which black workers stayed in close proximity to the mine to allow for a provision of measure by their white masters to ensure maintenance of optimal levels of productivity. The migrant labour system was designed to alleviate the labour shortages and lack of permanent settlement near the mines at the time (Burawoy, 1976) and thus ultimately provided the mines and manufacturing industries with a continual supply of cheap and affordable labour (Wolpe, 1972). The constant influx of workers into the mining area was regulated and controlled through pass laws that forced migrant workers to return home after a designated period of working time within the area (Burawoy, 1976).

Migrant workers at Marikana often originate from rural Eastern Cape, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland and due to their low or non-existent educational levels are forced into mining in order to survive and earn an income, as they can no longer be reliant on their rural economies respectively (Chinguno, 2013a). Many migrant workers have two families that they need to support financially. One where the worker is situated for work and the other from where the worker originates. Chetty (2016) notes that on average a single miner is the breadwinner for at least ten other family members. Lonmin introduced a policy that if a worker passed away while on duty or decided to retire then a family member could replace them. This policy can be seen to deeply entrench intergenerational subjugation of these people despite it being implemented to afford loyalty across generations (Chinguno, 2013a). Lonmin's (2011) sustainable development report highlights that an important aspect that will contribute towards promoting employee well-being and self-esteem, is providing its workforce with affordable housing. Also relayed within this report (2011) was that approximately 50% of Lonmin's workforce live

within a 15-kilometre radius of the mine but have limited access to tarred roads and basic municipal services like running water and electricity. This finding of which Lonmin is fully aware of, accentuates the current lived reality of workers' living conditions.

The calamity of workers' living conditions is by-and-large the outcome of the platinum boom of the 1990s as well as the attainment of neoliberal policies. With the transition to democracy, some of the hallmark features of the Mining Charter (Government Gazette, 2010) were to enhance the human dignity and privacy of mine workers by improving their housing and living conditions. Three major objectives were set for attainment by 2014 in this regard: First, to convert or upgrade hostel accommodation (compounded labour) into family units. Second, achieve a one miner per room occupancy rate (fragmented labour). Third, to promote home ownership aimed at all mine workers who were considered to be part of organised labour (Government Gazette, 2010). However, as Chinguno (2013a) argues, many of these objectives have failed to be met, with mine workers often being paid a living out allowance as an alternative to Lonmin providing company accommodation. This has consequently resulted in a proliferation of informal settlements (Chinguno, 2013a). The proliferation of informal settlements is further grounded in the ever-present precariousness of the mining industry that is poised within the fluctuating trends of the global economic market.

2.3 Dread-Diseases and Peri-Urban Poverty

Due to the harsh subterranean territory that miners have to negotiate underground, "miners are almost automatically conducive to early death since the years of breathing in dust will inescapably catch up to you soon after you have left the subterranean depths" (Paquette & Lacassagne, 2013, p. 251). Numerous studies validate this claim inasmuch as high mortality rates are associated with contracting illnesses such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and silicosis in the mines (Mbembe, 2004). Rock-drill operators are deemed to be the most crucial component of the mining process, involving the most challenging and inhospitable of work conditions

(Hartford, 2012; Chinguno, 2013a). In addition to this, rock drill operators are literally and functionally illiterate, as this job does not require skill or expertise. Rock drill operators remain stuck in this category of unskilled labour, as they have not obtained the necessary skills or training to become miners (Breckenridge, 2012). Hence, they are paid less than their more skilled colleagues and often are left to financially support two households (i.e. one in their native land as well as one at the mine) to compensate for migratory status of homelessness (du Preez, 2015). Working underground renders these miners invisible from public sight and further their irreconcilable struggles to public discernment: “hidden from view, whose visibility is always already negotiated or overseen by global operators” (du Preez, 2015, p. 432). However, the Marikana event put what has been previously omitted within full public view.

Rock drill operators represent perturbing features of the mining industry as embodied by their illiteracy, poverty and migratory status (Hartford, 2012; Chinguno, 2013a). Lonmin platinum mine continuously makes use of migrant labour and like most mining corporations that are multinational in nature, continue to produce and reproduce social divisions through sustaining the colonial infrastructures perpetuating the division of labour as sustained through colonial infrastructures (Paquette & Lacassagne, 2013). Lonmin plc, a transnational corporation, is listed on both the Johannesburg and London Stock Exchanges respectively, and operates globally through neo-colonial practices and has no social commitment to local communities that hold the desired resources for extraction (Bauman, 2003).

2.4 Democracy, Mining and Violence

The events that transpired at Marikana on 16 August 2012 are not uniformly reported. As such, this study aimed to comprehensively explore and uncover individuals’ meaning making and their contestation around the violence enacted at Marikana.

The attainment of democracy is usually associated with the broadening of political participation, extension and equalisation of political rights, regularising of non-violent means of making claims and the establishment of third parties to intervene against violent resolution of disputes over claims. (Tilly, 2003, p. 44)

It seems logically coherent to believe that the terms ‘democracy’ and ‘violence’ should be inversely related and juxtaposed to each other by their mere definitions alone (Langa & Von Holdt, 2011). However, violence remains a common means of conflict management even in the advent of our democratic transition, two-decades after apartheid. Violent behaviour is said to be deeply rooted in a cacophony of behaviour that is responsive to psychological conditions of vulnerability, oppression and marginalisation. Martin Luther King (1967) purported that “violent revolts grow out of revolting living conditions” where “violence is the language of the unheard” (cf Smith, 2002, p. 6). Apartheid envisioned a period of systemic violence where one had to use physical violence in order to survive. Many political analysts anticipated that the transition to a democratic constitution would involve the dissipation of violence (Van der Merwe, 2014). However, this proved not to be the case.

Butchart, Hamber, Terre Blanche and Seedat (1997) argue that the 1990s saw the end of the sovereign forms of political violence that were embodied under apartheid. In post-apartheid South Africa, violent fatalities are associated with the wealth discrepancies and economic inequality that resulted from the oppressive regime of the apartheid state (Butchart & Engstrom, 2002). Crime levels remain high due to intractable poverty and the masses of people are becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of basic services (Van der Merwe, 2014).

2.5 Defining ‘Violence’

There are myriad forms of violence. These range from self-directed (i.e. suicide) to interpersonal and even collective forms of violence that involve physical, sexual and/or

psychological harm (Bowman et al., 2015). Collins (2013) argues that violence has shifted in South African society from being viewed as a crime to it being a legal and socially acceptable strategy and ‘language’ of negotiation. Researchers generally characterize violence as being subsumed under a category of crime. However, while some crimes are intrinsically violent (homicide, assault, rape) there are others which are not (fraud, theft). What is more, instead of viewing violence only as a criminal behaviour, violent behaviour should rather be considered as a significant hindrance not only to human health (both mental and physical) but to the development of it as well. This locates violence as a human rights challenge.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) segments violence into three overarching categories. These are self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence (Rutherford, Zwi, Grove, & Butchart, 2007). However, it is important to note that the (WHO) typology of violence should not be considered as an exhaustive and/or universal framework for understanding the myriad forms and complex patterns of violence. It does nevertheless provide us with a useful framework towards understanding how violence manifests within our everyday lives (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002). A noteworthy concern is attempting to define violence whilst accommodating the various different ways in which it can manifest but at the same time not be limited to a definition of infinite inclusivity as this will ultimately lead to ambiguity and further obscurity when conducting research on the topic of concern (Bowman et al., 2015). After subsequently and adequately defining violence, a comprehensive approach that incorporates all potential factors that can translate into a violent enactment must be adopted. There exists a range of difficulties with regards to the collection of data on violence (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002). Some of these challenges include assessing the health and mortality among rapidly changing populations, restricted access from various services and personnel with which data can be collected. Hence, the development of a new approach should acknowledge the frequency of

polymorphic violence, or that various forms of violence can be simultaneously enacted within a given event or across many events (Bowman et al., 2015).

Violence as an object of analysis is not always clear or consistent and as such “in both research and practice, the dividing lines between the different types of violence are not always so clear” (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002, p. 7). Moreover, the definition of collective violence was adopted for the purposes of this study, in light of examining the enactment of violence, which took place at Marikana. The WHO *World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH)* defines collective violence as:

The instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group – whether this group is transitory or has a more permanent identity – against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives. (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002, p. 215)

Swartz’s (2015) provides us with a critique of the segmentation employed by the WHO’s typology of collective violence, as he believes that the term ‘structural violence’ provides a broader and possibly more accurate understanding of violence within a South African context. Structural violence encompasses processes, which include “discrimination, dispossession, disenfranchisement, forced removals and confiscation of land and property, humiliation and denigration” (Swartz, 2015, p. 382). The reverberating effects of this type of violence, in the form of poverty and inequality is associated with the development of a vast array of psychological disturbances (Lund et al., 2010; Peterson, Bhana, Flisher, Swartz, & Richter, 2010a; Peterson, Swartz, Bhana, & Flisher, 2010b).

Furthermore, Bowman et al. (2015) have identified numerous risk factors and causal pathways that often result in the production of a violent enactment and its consequent mental health implications. These range from the social acceptance and tolerance of violence as part of one’s

culture to structural inequality rooted in the oppressive administration of the apartheid government, beliefs associated with what it is to be a 'man' as well as other notions surrounding masculinity, discontent and disdain in one's community and having a disrupted family life.

2.6 Constructions of Masculinity, Risk of Perpetration and Victimisation

Men dominate the mining industry. This may be due to the type of work that mining demands, such as, the need for physical strength as well as endurance (Chinguno, 2013b). The call to heed for masculinity in the mining industry and more broadly by men to assert these above-mentioned characteristics is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural and historical legacy of apartheid, in which, constructions of militarized masculinities permeate in all spheres of life within a South African context involving males as both perpetrators and victims in violent enactments (Bowman et al., 2015).

[The widespread tolerance of violence] reflects widely held norms and beliefs, which see violence as a necessary and justified means of resolving conflict or other difficulties.... [including] the perception by young men that they need to be able to use violence to protect themselves and to obtain the respect of others.

(CSVR, 2010, p. 4)

While there appears to be a majority consensus that violence is accepted and widespread in the country, young men in the country seem to endorse it the most (Faull, 2013). This may be due to what Seedat, van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla and Ratele (2009) interpret to be caused by diverging constructions of masculinity influencing disproportionate levels of violence and victimisation being inflicted upon young men in the country. For instance, across gender, men are more susceptible to committing and being victims of homicide than women are whereas women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence than men are within a South African context (Dartnell & Jewkes, 2013; Norman, Matzopolous, Groenewald & Bradshaw, 2007).

However, it is not entirely clear as to how these factors specifically translate into violent outcomes. In order to understand how these factors translate into violent enactments we need to incorporate epidemiological data that describes violence with rich case material or incident analysis (Bowman et al., 2014).

The current expectation is that men ought to be virile (both physically and mentally strong), show leadership qualities and provide for their families (financially) (Ratele, 2008; Muntingh & Gould, 2010). However, a substantial proportion of young black males are unable to live up to the expectation that society envisions for them. This compounded emasculation often results in low self-esteem and insecurity, which has been shown to elevate risk factors for interpersonal violence (Bruce, 2006). In addition to this, aggressive behaviour is emblematic in their attempt to re-assert their masculinity in-part through violence (Morrell, 1998; Breckenridge, 1998).

2.8 Violence and Mental Health Practice in Contemporary South Africa

South Africa continues to remain one of the most violent countries in the world despite its transition to democracy (McLean & Walker, 2012), with some commentators going so far as claiming ‘violence’ to be South Africans’ 12th official language (Molopyane, 2013). In contemporary South Africa, violent configurations have shifted State violence to widespread criminal violence and discrimination (Swartz, 2015). Amongst the upsurge of violent protests against wage disputes and poor service delivery in the country (Jürgens, Donaldson, Rule, & Bähr, 2014), South Africa faces a number of challenges with regards to gender-based violence (GBV) and the associated risk of victims contracting the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). Hamby and Grych (2013) argue that all forms of violence that involve both a perpetrator and victim should be considered constituents of wider polymorphic violence that involves a number of risks for its enactment and the severity of injuries sustained by both parties based on the type of attack.

2.9 Polymorphic Violence

Post-apartheid South Africa boasts polymorphic forms of violence which have been well documented in the media and represent both poly-perpetration and poly-victimisation as a confluence of criminal, interpersonal, collective, political and historical violence that simultaneously intersect with each other seamlessly (Hamby & Grych, 2013; Bowman et al., 2015).

In addressing polymorphic forms of violence in South Africa, we have to inevitably begin by asking why South Africa is such a violent society. Van der Merwe (2014) argues that citizens of the country resort to violence as a means in which to have their voices heard and thereby communicate a pertinent message when all other avenues of expression have been explored but have failed to reach a consensus. The Labour Relations Act (1995) sought to guarantee collective bargaining structures with constitutional and legislative protection towards reducing violent behaviour, prior to which, characterised numerous industrial relations incidents in South Africa (Du Toit et al., 1998; Buitendag & Coetzer, 2015). However, according to police statistics, the number of strikes are rising per year with 11, 000 reported ‘crowd management incidents’ in general urban and rural settings in 2011/2012 (Alexander, 2012b).

Furthermore, a survey conducted by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 2012 found that 60% of interviewed workers alleged that violence was a necessary strategy when striking (NALEDI, 2012). In other words, when negotiations break down, people are said to strike back even harder with violence in order for their messages to be conveyed. The notion of violence as a form of communication has also been understood to describe acts of terrorism (Schmid & De Graaf, 1982) as well as the psychological motivation of criminals (De Haan, 2011).

2.10 The Language of Violence & Its Excessive Usage

Collective violence occurs in multiple forms and has detrimental effects on people's health in terms of psychological and physical effects such as mental anguish, physical injuries and death (Krug & Dahlberg, 2002). The history of violence in South Africa can be characterised by its 'excessive' use as contained in the language used in discursive spheres. In order to contextualise this point further, in the 1980s, many of the liberation movements against the apartheid government used excessive violence to express a deep sense of hatred and disregard to the other's humanity among racial lines. Not only was violence used to entrench the liberation movement's contempt towards the apartheid government, but it also further adopted a moral indignation towards the sanctity of human lives in order to induce terror and ultimately change (Van der Merwe, 2014). 'Necklacing' was often a form of brutal violence administered by ANC supporters against their enemies. Many policemen today construe that the use of violent force is a necessary means of gaining respect amongst the community members that they serve (Faull, 2013).

2.10.1 Student Movements & Public Protests

The problem of violence is still rife and ever-present in contemporary South Africa. It appears evident that in the post-apartheid era, South Africa has inherited its predecessors' violent tendencies as a means to deal with conflict (Van der Merwe, 2014). This can be understood as "repetition compulsion" in which one experiences overwhelming urges to re-enact violence (Ngcobo et al., 2013, p. 176). The social structures that systematically subjugate and oppress individual's rights to basic needs is often mirrored through physical violence both at an interpersonal and collective level. For instance, South African's have become accustomed to the frequent wave of protests that erupt during any given year, with the proliferation of students' movements arguably forming the basis of a new and popular brand of political praxis that is resonant of "mass-based people's power movements of the 1970s and 1980s" (Naicker,

2016, p. 54). The recent *#Feesmustfall* campaign which led to students protesting annual tuition fee increases of (11.5% for 2016) and (8% for 2017) at most Universities in the country indicates that many citizens of the country appear frustrated, displeased and dissatisfied with the current state of service delivery by the ruling ANC government.

In addition to the crisis faced by higher education institutions in the country, numerous housing, sanitation services and provision of health care have turned violent (De Visser, & Powell, 2012) as a fervent response to the structural inequalities left behind from the apartheid system (Alexander, 2010). What has become increasingly clear is that disillusionment amongst the marginalised and excluded have resulted in more direct and participatory forms of political praxis, with the outright rejection of representative politics as authorized under South Africa's democratic and liberal constitution (Naicker, 2016). This form of insurgent citizenship (Holston, 2008) reflects the fight against the severe wealth discrepancies in the country that has imbued the class struggle for equity in post-apartheid South Africa (Alexander, 2010; Naicker, 2016).

2.10.2 Violence and The State

Furthermore, great cause for concern is the manner in which the police have dealt with suspects and public protests. Many of these public protests have often resulted in the excessive and brutal use of force by policemen to dissipate the crowd. A week prior to the events that occurred at the Lonmin Platinum Mine in Marikana on 16 August 2012, Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa fervently spoke of the need for his colleagues to use maximum force:

Police must return fire with fire. We will use maximum force based on the law itself.

Those who want to break the law, such as cash-in-transit heists and bank robberies, must think again. They should know that we will not waver in continuing to let them feel the heat and that we squeeze them with maximum force. (Neethling, 2012)

In light of the timing of this statement, it remains dubious as to whether or not the perturbing events that transpired on 16 August 2012 in Marikana can be considered a tragedy of miscalculation or a failure of effective police management. *The Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) and Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP)* (2011) suggest that blame can be attributed to the confrontational strategies that the police employ when engaging with peaceful public protests that inevitably spiral out of control once police officers are deemed to exacerbate the situation further. The Marikana event, as a tragedy or a massacre, remains contested but is the most serious incident of police violence since the transition of democracy in the country.

2.11 *A Culture of Violence?*

Does all this violence that appears endemic to South African society say something about its inhabitants being a violent people? Do we resort to violence too easily? Have we become hardened as to accept violence as a normal part of everyday interaction and of political and social discourse? Have we become so hardened to the supposed inevitability of poverty and inequality that we accept these as the norm and view their eradication as a distant goal? (Van der Merwe, 2014, p.72).

Violence in South Africa has been valorised in our patriarchal society in such a way that we have come to accept it as a fact and norm of our everyday lives, something which is not viewed as exceptional, but something which rather in-and-of-itself is not problematic in nature (Molopyane, 2013; Collins, 2013). For instance, workers' violent actions often become inadvertently validated when management concedes to their demands (Bond & Mottiar, 2013). Our society thus accepts and endorses violence as a legitimate means to resolve its issues whilst receiving little condemnation for it. Violence is used both by society as well as by the State to advocate the seriousness of their respective positions on controversial matters at hand. Van der Merwe (2014) proposes that the morality around the

decision to use violence is ascertained as to whether or not it works as opposed to its justifiability. Under certain conditions, society applauds individuals or groups for being violent.

Bruce (2010) infers that the 'degree' of violence is a significant correlate associated with injury outcome where, for instance, an injury severity scale will be used to produce a quantifiable numerical score (Sleet et al., 2010). However, what is important to note here is that these quantified scores are unable to illuminate the complexities surrounding the violent enactment such as the perpetrator's motivations for violent action. From a psychological point of view, we need to understand how the consequences of the wider social structure affect individual and group subjectivities, their motivations as well as their differing moralities in affecting the production of violent enactments. As such, an appreciation towards the situational determinants in violent enactment is important in developing a theoretical model that can contextually account for violence when it occurs (Bowman et al., 2014). However, the study's research objectives and focus were upon achieving an understanding of the inherent complexities at play in the Marikana event and how people make sense of the violent enactment between striking miners and the police.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

With an unprecedented rise in digital environments and the ever-increasing influence of social media technologies within our culture, Giles, Stommel, Paulus, Lester and Reed (2015) propose that the development of a methodological tool to perform micro-analyses of online data will allow researchers to conduct rich, in-depth qualitative analyses of online interactions that can be scrutinised to the same degree of rigorous analysis that offline talk has been subjected to. Social networks exist in both online and offline interactions. Wellman (1996) argues that both types of interaction are important analytic constructs for understanding social dynamics. In particular, the study of online interaction is of paramount importance for numerous reasons. Firstly, many people find safety in interacting exclusively online due to fear of judgement or of stigmatisation that may result from controversial points being made or simply a disinclination towards expressing oneself in face-to-face interactions (Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2012). Secondly, the quest to conduct macro-level analyses aimed towards understanding phenomenological and ethnographic factors thus loses sight of the differing interactional dynamics that occur on a micro-level of analysis (Bou-Franch et al., 2012). Hence, for this reason, it is imperative to track the numerous ideas and comments that circulate in real time coverage of events happening both locally and on an international level.

Since its inception in 2005, YouTube has become a popular culture social networking site through its public online video-sharing facility (Bou-Franch et al., 2012). In 2017, YouTube has approximately 30 million visitors watching almost 5 billion videos daily on the website (Donchev, 2017). As the third most visited website in the world, YouTube's influence continues to traverse a broad range of social domains, with its popularity perhaps being principally attributable to its video-sharing (vlogging) facility (Donchev, 2017; Bou-Franch et al., 2012). Burgess and Green (2009, p. 53) regard vlogging as the “emblematic form of [...]

participation”, that is, complex, flexible and unpredictable (cf. Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2004). In addition to this, YouTube also has a text-based facility where YouTuber’s can post their comments whilst choosing from a range of possible responses such as sharing, agreeing, negotiating or even challenging opinions on previously uploaded video material. Due to YouTube’s open accessibility to the public and its largely anonymous manner in which to vlog or participate in a comment thread, multi-participation is promoted and continues to trigger interaction over an undetermined period of time due to the textual record it generates (Herring, 2007).

What is more, interaction is said to occur either actively or passively as YouTuber’s can choose whether to comment or not but in both cases commentators are aware of the distributed reciprocity of their postings (Hutchby, 2006). However, there is a paucity of research into this area of YouTube as a text-based facility, notably in the linguistic field (Zelenkauskaitė & Herring, 2008; Androutsopoulos & Beißwenger, 2009). In addition to this, minimal research has been conducted on YouTube text-based conversations (Herring, 2010) and how social interaction is facilitated in YouTube text-based polylogues (Bou-Franch et al., 2012). Academic attention has focused on various aspects of YouTube vlogging such as its social networking function (Adami, 2009; Paolillo, 2008) and its role as a form of post-television (Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly, 2009; Tolson, 2010) in cultural production (Burgess & Green, 2008; 2009; Lange, 2008; Paolillo, 2008) and individual identity construction (Lange, 2008). YouTube as a social networking site, provides the forum in which rich discursive dialogue occurs on everyday matters and events as well as the means to recover the social meanings expressed in various discourses. As such, it also offers the researcher the appropriate medium in which a comprehensive analysis of the contextual factors occurring at Marikana could be understood and how the enactment of violence occurred between striking miners and the police.

3.1. Research Question

What are the meanings made of the events that transpired at Marikana on 16 August 2012 in an online interactional environment?

3.2 Research Design

The present study was solidly embedded within a qualitative framework. According to Holloway and Todres (2003), qualitative approaches are varied, multifaceted and nuanced whereby the employment of a qualitative methodological approach in the current study was appropriate for this research as it concurs with detailed, meaningful and context-rich words, language, descriptions and video commentary as data (Whitley, Kite, & Adams, 2012). The micro-analysis of textual-data around the events (see Ricoeur, 1973) that transpired at Marikana on 16 August 2012 provided a degree of specificity with which the researcher could then attempt to explain and provide richer understanding of the meaning making around the use of violence. An advantage of using YouTube video data as a collection tool supported the objective of the study towards allowing data to emerge in the process. Thus, a thematic analysis (TA) enabled the discovery and illumination of the hidden meanings and interpretations within the YouTube based commentary on the raw footage on display of the Marikana event.

3.3 Methodology

The methodological approach utilized in this study is TA, as theoretically underpinned by an interpretivist approach of knowledge acquisition. However, before proceeding any further, it is important to first delineate its core philosophical assumptions, in order to, understand why this particular methodological approach is valid and how it is appropriate for the development and acquisition of knowledge in the current study. The researcher is fundamentally against subscribing himself to 'naïve realism' (Fine, 2002) that assumes that the YouTube commentary represents a 'real' and readily accessible reflection of the reality of the events that they describe. As such, the philosophical assumptions of an interpretivist approach within TA will not only

inform the choice of the chosen methodology of a reality that exists independent of observers but also provide a reliable and valid analytic framework that employs various theoretical principles, which guide the analysis of this study.

The use of film and video equipment within social research in the past has been curtailed by the costs involved in its usage (Jewitt, 2012). However, video has increasingly become an integral part of many people's everyday lives through its increased accessibility in low cost but high-quality video facilities on most technological devices such as on mobile phones. Due to its ability to capture the sequential and multimodal nature of human interaction, video recording has been permeated beyond the private realm into institutional spheres as well as in public environments which means that researchers often have access to 'naturally occurring' video data (Jewitt, 2012). Videos have been used by researchers for a variety of different studies. For instance, Adami's (2009) study explored how people produce, share and comment on YouTube videos.

YouTube is essentially an online public video upload-watching website that is accessible to all. However, only logged-in members with a YouTube account can leave their comments on particular videos. YouTube commentary thus represents a stratified sample of the entire population of site visitors and global internet community more broadly (Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus & Garcès-Conejos Blitvich, 2012). Stratified samples ensure that only certain segments (i.e. strata) of the population are not overrepresented or conversely underrepresented and serves to reduce the sample bias (Neuman, 2014). YouTube members generate various synchronous/asynchronous discussion threads in the comments section below a specifically watched video. Moreover, YouTube, has two specific features that researchers are said to acknowledge and account for when applying a micro-level analysis on interaction. First, YouTube is polylogical. What this means is that due to the vast number of infinite interactions that can occur over the social media website's lifetime, membership is almost irrelevant, as

people will comment as they so wish in some circumstances but not in others. Second, YouTube is designed for double articulations. Individual's comments and opinions may be in response to the 'opening post' (Antaki, Ardévol, Núñez & Vayreda, 2005) or open-ended towards a wider audiences input.

YouTube, as an online and digital site for knowledge production provides interdisciplinary researchers with the ability to conduct a multimodal analysis through both multiple representation modalities as well as different forms of interaction modes (Jewitt & Price, 2012). Multimodal analysis refers to an applicatory field rather than a detailed theory, with a specific concern in the socio-cultural constructions of meaning (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). Social interpretation and meaning making of context specific situations and events can occur through a wide variety of communication forms (i.e. visual data, video based data, naturally occurring video data) (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). However, for purposes of this current study, naturally occurring video data forms the central component of the researcher's multimodal approach to video analysis.

While each individual is embodied within a larger environment, the role of technology in mediating experience allows these individuals to become context aware (Jewitt & Price, 2012). Naturally occurring video data provides a permanent and re-accessible record of the complex interactions taking place in a representational context. Social linguistic approaches to multimodality advocate for the central mode of representation and communication being the social and situated use of language. However, to avoid the possible limitations of such an approach whilst acknowledging the contributing effects of simultaneously operating modes, this study has adopted a social semiotic perspective on representation and communication (Scollon & Wong-Scollon, 2003).

A social semiotic approach to multimodality involves extending the social interpretation of language to a whole new range of culturally embedded modes of communication and representation (Kress, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2005). Jewitt and Price (2012) purport that a social semiotic approach to multimodal video analysis is underpinned by three core theoretical assumptions. First, social semiotics assumes that communication and representation always draw upon multiple modes for articulating the individual and social affective meanings made within different contexts (visual, spoken, gestural, written, three-dimensional, and others). Second, multimodality assumes that all these forms of communication (modes) have been shaped or influenced in some way by social, cultural and historical trends over time to be used in mode-specific ways. Thus, different modes shape the meaning to be realized in mode-specific ways. Third, individuals select and utilize mode-specific ways of interaction to produce meaning in a communicative event.

Moreover, it is important to consider the potentials and limitations inherent within multimodal research as an eclectic approach to data analysis. Perhaps, the main argument leveled against multimodal analysis is its limitation in terms of scope and scale (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). A comprehensive understanding of modal resources that hold meaning-making potential may be abdicated by focusing on the workings of one specific mode or vice versa (Halliday, 1978; Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). However, the potential of social semiotics as a multimodal approach can be developed further to widen our understanding of human meaning making.

3.3.1 Basic Philosophical Assumption of TA: Interpretivism

Interpretivism is an approach aimed towards providing an understanding of the complex world of lived experience from the subjective point of view of those who live in it (Schwandt, 1998). Interpretivism promotes the pursuit of knowledge and aligns appropriately as an epistemological approach in the present study towards understanding the rich qualitative data corpus. Studying the social world through an interpretivist lens allows for multiple perspectives

of subjective reality to emerge, rather than one reality as posited under positivism (Greener, 2008). The intersubjective character of social reality is one in which is dynamic and constantly evolving over time (Heath & Devine, 1999). “Man [sic] is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Thus, individuals are said to make meaning out of events and phenomena at particular places and points in time through social interaction using language as a means of structuring the way in which the world is experienced by individuals (Schwandt, 1998; Burr, 2003). Individual’s interpretation of action elicits the creation, negotiation, persistence and modification of the complex processes, which inevitably inform and determine the motivation of certain behaviour within social life (Schwandt, 2003).

Interpretivism differentiates its study between the social and natural sciences, with its goal being towards understanding the meaning of social phenomena and not the elicitation of natural laws or questions around causation (Andrews, 2012). However, in order to solve the seemingly intractable issue of realism versus relativism, this study has adopted Hammersley’s (1992) ‘subtle realism’. Subtle realism acknowledges and accepts that there exists a reality (natural world) that is independent from human being’s perception of it. However, by adopting an interpretivist approach necessitates interpreting how social actors make meaning through their apprehension of the social world and as a result of this, generating an ontological (being) perspective is not the central focus of this approach (Hammersley, 1992).

The purpose of utilizing an interpretivist approach in this study was to gain an understanding of the context in which the violent enactment at Marikana took place. The interpretation of this data relates to the *situatedness* of knowledge acquisition (Willis, 2007). *Verstehen* supports an understanding for conducting research using an interpretivist approach. *Verstehen* is a German word for ‘understanding’ the complex world we live in through studying the lived experience of individuals in the cultural, moral and social spheres as opposed to providing an explanation for such a reality from an etic perspective (Willis, 2007). One such aspect in which we can

foster understanding is through an individual's use of language, which can be analysed thematically "for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). It organises and describes the data set in an informative and concise manner according to the interpretive lens required by the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998).

Thematic analysis is a theoretically flexible approach towards qualitative data analysis that remains open and accessible for analysing a data set based on a specific epistemological and ontological grounding held by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Despite thematic analysis being implicitly framed as a realist/experiential method (e.g., Aronson, 1994; Roulston, 2001) it is nevertheless compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology. Thematic analysis is often critiqued for its method of flexibility insofar as it does not provide clear and concise guidelines as to how to analyse qualitative data and has limited interpretive power beyond its mere description (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2002; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Pragmatically, the researcher wished to uncover the contestations and meaning making of commentators' commentary under a YouTube video depicting the events that transpired at Marikana. The researcher thereby decided that the employment of a thematic analysis that is theoretically grounded in interpretivism will be the most sophisticated methodological framework driven by the present study's research question and broader theoretical assumptions for allowing research findings to emerge.

3.2 Sample

Markham (1998, 2004) established that the internet offers researchers a tool for gathering information, a context in which the exchange of information occurs whilst it constructs a way of being or identity for its users on an online interface. However, the study of online interaction is not without its limitations. Especially, within a South African context, access to the resources

needed to interact effectively online may be severely limited to designated groups of people and as such only, a select aggregate of attitudes can be accumulated on this basis. In addition to this, online interaction often takes its form in “asynchronous discussion forum threads” (Giles et al., 2015, p. 45) that nullify a spontaneous response that a researcher would attain in a face-to-face interview or focus group. Furthermore, online interaction is noticeably different from face-to-face conversation insofar as paralinguistic cues are arguably substituted by punctuation and emoticons to establish inter-subjectivity.

The selection of sample is justified and purposeful inasmuch as the researcher had actively sought after the most productive sample to answer the research question using a two-stage sampling (subsampling) approach due to its flexibility and efficiency of method (Marshall, 1996). The sampling strategy was founded upon developing an understanding of the phenomenon of violence and through the data collection and analysis process, build upon theoretical knowledge from the emerging data.

The first stage of the sampling strategy was selecting the units of analysis containing the raw depiction of violence within videos. YouTube served as an online vlogging website in which videos could be conveniently and purposively sampled for its content in terms of being required to depict raw and uncut violence being enacted at Marikana. The researcher consigned himself towards an element of uncertainty concerning the amount of comments that would have been generated per YouTube video selected on the Marikana event. Six YouTube polylogues were selected that were respectively triggered by the raw-footage depicting the violent altercation between the striking miners and police at Marikana on 16 August 2012. These videos were selected upon the basis that they contained raw-footage of the events that transpired at Marikana and as such attempted to reduce any bias in shaping commentators’ meaning making of the event. However, it is important to note that the ‘raw’ and unmediated video was not possible to be produced consistently throughout the report. The six YouTube videos were

selected based upon using the search term “Marikana” and its affiliated search terms commonly sought by people on YouTube as well as by the number of views and comments generated. This information was gathered from Google Trends 2016 in order of popularity (relevance, view count and rating): ‘marikana massacre’ (100%), ‘marikana commission’ (40%), ‘marikana mine’ (35%), ‘marikana documentary’ (25%), ‘marikana shoooting’ (20%), ‘marikana shootings’ (15%), marikana 2012’ (15%), ‘malema at marikana’ (15%), ‘lonmin marikana’ (10%) and ‘marikana report’ (10%). Furthermore, video selection was not restricted to YouTube filters pertaining to upload date, type of video (‘video’, ‘channel’, ‘playlist’, ‘movie’, ‘show’), duration (‘short <4 minutes’, ‘long >20 minutes’) and features (‘4K’, ‘HD’, ‘Subtitles/CC’, ‘Creative Commons’, ‘3D’, ‘Live’, ‘Purchased’, ‘360°’). There are a number of ways of using video for research however for purposes of this study, the use of existing videos depicting the violent altercation at Marikana embeds the video data within post-apartheid workplace order and provides debate around the trajectory of violent practice. The second stage of the sampling strategy was sampling was collecting commentary which served as the data in which to be analysed within an appropriate interpretive framework. The ‘re-purposing’ of existing video data from YouTube allowed the researcher to elicit the subjective reflections and meaning-making around the Marikana event towards addressing the phenomena of the enactment of violence in question (Roth, 2009; Tochon, 2009).

Hence, an ideal sample size was indeterminate, and all video commentary was incorporated in the researcher’s unit of analysis until data saturation was met. The sample of commentary is based on the YouTube videos selected in this study would inevitably constitute a broad range of both local and international commentary from individuals, traversing multiple nations, cultures and legal jurisdictions. In order to address issues related to the validity, distortion and affect of the video, YouTube videos were selected with the intent of depicting as much raw footage as possible of the Marikana event. The video data consequently involved camera

movement and tension to the event. Multiple videos were chosen depicting the violence that took place at Marikana to reduce the partiality of video bias and generate diverse points of view in which multiple perspectives could be collected (Goldman, Erikson, Lemke & Derry, 2007). Although, Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff (2010) argue that multiple points of view can overcomplicate and fracture the sequences of interaction, the advantages of multiple perspectives prevents bias, misrepresentation and missed representations in the video.

A notable strength is the ecological validity of this study as, “an exchange in a discussion thread is part of a specific named thread within a thematically-oriented forum that is linked to a specific website” (Giles et al., 2015, p. 48). In other words, every piece of information generated online and collected within this study can be considered naturally occurring data and has no intrinsic relationship to the researcher. The YouTube video commentary provides a real-time sequential record that can “preserve the temporal and sequential structure which is so characteristic of interaction” (Knoblauch, Scnettlar, Raab & Soeffneer, 2006, p. 19). The preservation of time through digital technology provides nuance ways of examining ‘naturally occurring events’. The quality of videos depicting the violent enactment at Marikana captures the temporal and sequential structures in which the visual depiction of people’s actions and the event itself unfolds.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher selected six YouTube videos as the units of analysis in which individual’s commentary on the raw footage of the violence that took place at Marikana was analysed using a thematic analysis. Unlike Adami’s (2009) study of YouTube as an online forum for interaction, this study was focused primarily upon how individuals constructed violence in the context of watching videos pertaining to its use at Marikana. Adopting an interpretivist stance in this research has allowed the researcher to explore the vicissitudes of what commentators interpret the videos to mean and how this inevitably influences upon the moral character of

violence within wider social structures. As a data collection method of choice, YouTube videos make the micro-level analysis of temporal-sequential events possible to infer to larger societal issues. Relevant to this, representational commentary of certain themes from the original webpage were reproduced as a screenshot in the research report to ensure transparency of reported results obtained within the data corpus.

3.4 Data Analysis

The YouTube videos selected for the purposes of this study depicted the enactment of violence at Marikana on 16 August 2012 and served methodologically as ‘naturally occurring’ data elicitation instruments (Jewitt, 2012). Accordingly, the re-purposing of existing videos meant that no ‘real’ commentators were used in this study. Hence, the units of analysis were the meanings signified in the commentary of the videos portraying the violence at Marikana. The commentary was then subjected to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis to elicit recurring themes of the interpretations commentators used to interpret what the videos meant.

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide researchers with a six-phase guide as to how to effectively carry out a thematic analysis. The analysis itself is not simply a linear process where the researcher moves from one phase of the process to the next but rather is a recursive and iterative process, in which the researcher moves forwards and backwards as needed within the phases three-to-six to refine and focus video data:

3.4.1 Phase 1: Data Familiarisation

The researcher immersed himself within the data in order to be familiar with “the depth and breadth of content” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 16). Immersion within the data necessitates reading and re-reading of the YouTube commentary, actively searching for themes/patterns and meaning inherent within the data. Despite this being a time-consuming phase, a thorough read through of the entire data-set was considered necessary before embarking upon the coding

process as the identification of possible patterns were shaped through this process and formed the foundation of the rest of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although, in the current study, data is already generated in text format, transcription of data is nevertheless seen as “a key phase of data analysis within interpretivist and qualitative methodology” (Bird, 2005, p. 227).

3.4.2 Phase 2: Coding Data

Once the researcher familiarized himself to the data, he then could start coding the data. Coding of data refers to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). In the present study, the theoretical knowledge drawn from the literature review of violence guided the identification and reliable coding of data-driven themes (Jewitt, 2012). The coding process allowed the researcher to identify certain features within the data, whether semantic content, latent content or combinations of both that were present within the data and organise them accordingly (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tuckett, 2005). Due to the recursive process, the coding of data was continually developed and defined more comprehensively throughout the analysis using a thematic map that conceptualised data patterns and relationships among the patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.4.3 Phase 3: Extrapolation of Themes

This phase involved sorting through all the different codes into potential themes and providing descriptions of coded data that was relevant within an identified theme (see Figure 1). Moreover, analytic scrutiny and consideration was given towards how different codes combined to form an overarching theme. Codes were considered in relation to themes and between the different levels of themes (i.e. main overarching themes or sub-themes) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, in order to maintain parsimony and coherence, codes constituted either part of the main theme or sub-theme or were discarded altogether.

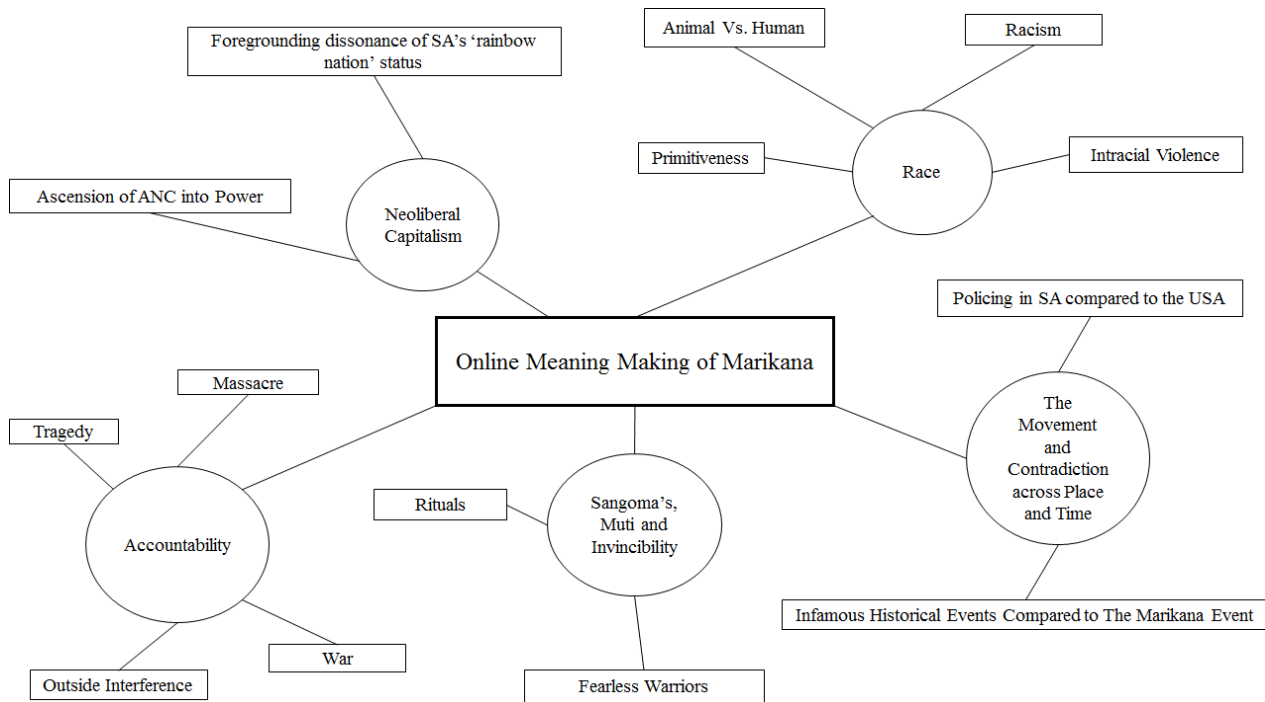


Figure 1. Initial thematic map, showing five themes.

3.4.4 Phase 4: Theme Revision

Phase-four involved the revision and refining of themes; the data within themes was made logically coherent with a clear delineation of one theme from another one (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Consideration was given towards the validity of the main overarching themes in relation to the data set as well as whether or not themes identified, accurately reflect the meanings implicit within the data set as a whole. The creation of a thematic map (see Figure 2) facilitated identifying different themes, their relationship to each other and how they aided in the overall reflection of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

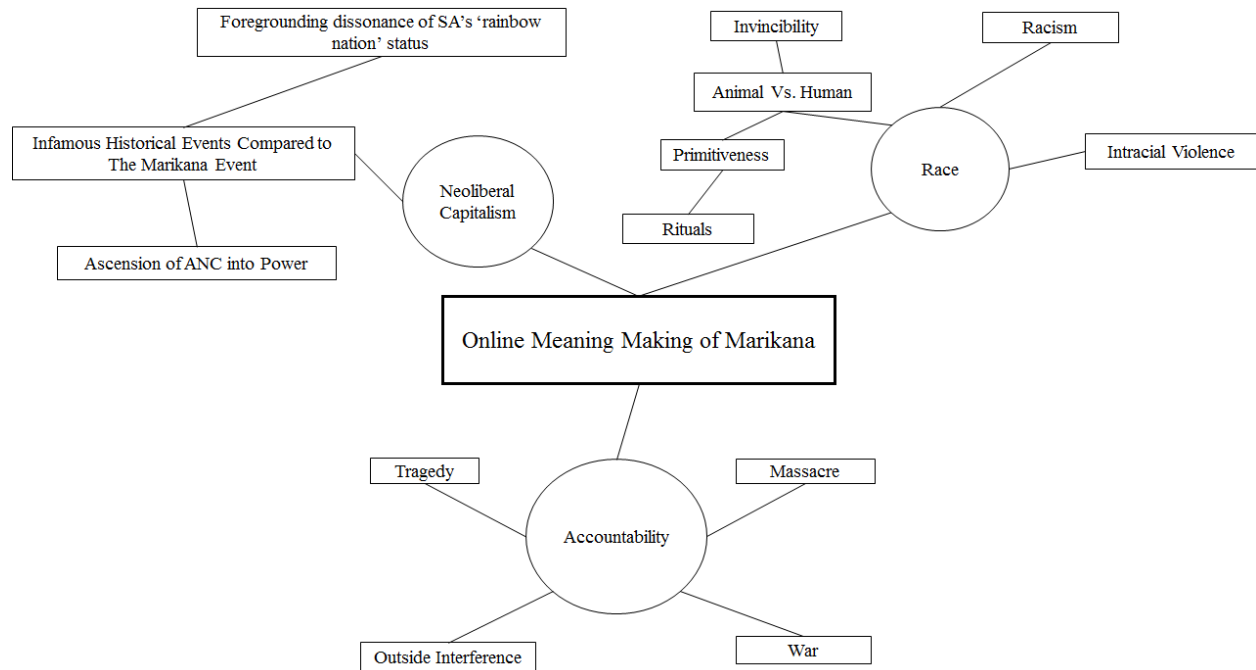


Figure 2. Developed thematic map, showing three main themes.

3.4.5 Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

In phase-five, with the development of a satisfactory thematic map, the researcher then proceeded to define the essence of what was encapsulated within each theme and determine what aspect of the data each theme captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each theme included a detailed analysis of what it is depicting as well as how it falls within the broader context of the data corpus (see Figure 3). This involved considering each individual theme in relation to the others as well as identifying whether or not a particular theme was contained within a sub-theme (i.e. a theme within a theme). This process provided structure to the complexity inherent in the themes identified within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

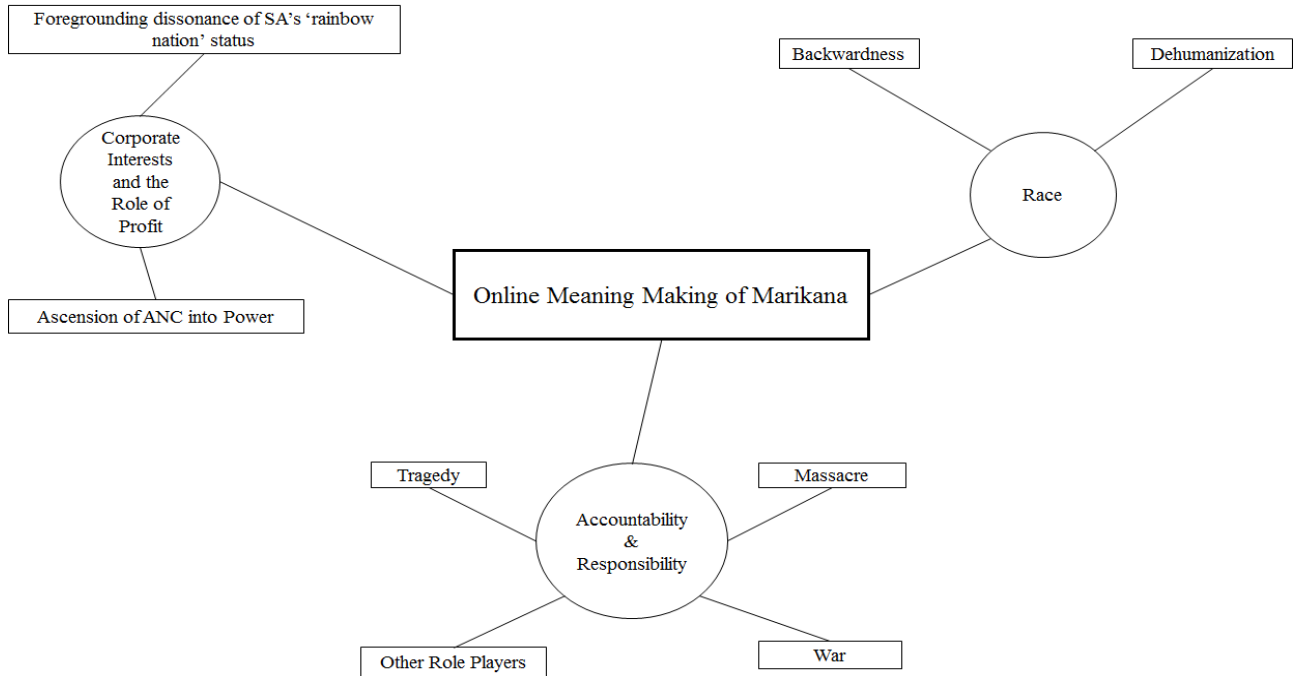


Figure 3. Final thematic map, showing three main themes.

3.4.6 Phase 6: Report Reproduction

Upon satisfactory completion of the above-mentioned phases, phase-six culminated in the analysis process and involved the report write-up (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through a thematic analysis, the researcher attempted to provide a clear and concise account of the video data set and report findings in a coherent and logically informative manner.

3.5 Researcher Reflexivity

Reflexivity is often claimed as a methodological virtue and source of insight within qualitative research studies (Lynch, 2000). The researcher however is of the belief that self-reflexivity does more to undermine than enhance the objectivity strived for in this study. The researcher was interested in understanding how participants made meaning of the violence depicted at the Marikana event, with the event itself providing the means with which such an analysis could occur. Meaning making is inherently a human quality. It is an embodied practice that allows

individuals who are located in a particular socio-historical position and time to interpret and make sense of the object of study. This process however is neither fixed nor is it final.

It would be counter-intuitive to provide an explication of my fixed position and socio-cultural intersection as white, middleclass male because the researcher is not the primary object of study and that such an elucidation would only at best offer the reader a limited understanding from an intersubjective perspective from the researcher and thereby foreclose all other potential meanings held by the participants in the study. In addition to this, a self-consciously reflexive pronouncement containing thinking about my own moral ascriptions and virtues would be pretentious and unrevealing (Lynch, 2000).

Moreover, Flewitt (2011) highlights how multimodality shapes how researchers can understand what is signified in micro-social aspects of meaning making. The reflexive potential of multimodal approaches is vast and encompasses a post-positivist inquiry of what constitutes and counts as knowledge, evidence and the appropriate set of methods to answer the research question and broader goals of a research study (Anderson, Stewart & Binte Abdul Aziz, 2016). The multimodality (visual; text) through which this event was captured and relayed online provided the researcher with the opportunity to unfurl and harness different interpretations made by the participants as expressed through their commentary (Jewitt, 2009; Kress, 2011).

The subsequent analysis of comments was grounded in an interpretivist theoretical approach and not strictly through an auto-ethnographic gaze. As such, the participants themselves were afforded an explicitly privileged vantage point in which to develop the readers understanding of ways of seeing and knowing from their respective moral ascriptions given. Kress (2003) argues that the meanings made through a multiplicity of modes is consequently a product of both cultural and affective matters contained within social reality.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Although no physical commentators were directly involved in the current study and as such no ethical clearance was necessarily required to be obtained, the ethical principles for conducting research were abided by and followed as outlined by the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974). It must be noted that technologies are increasingly developing and advancing at an exponential rate and thus the associated research ethics that are attached to them must constantly be revised in accordance with the rapid changes that occur (BPS, 2013). The accessibility of the internet and in particular to online social forums has extended numerous opportunities for psychological research to be conducted. However, IMR is not without its complexities around the adherence to ethical principles. Four key ethical principles were considered in the current study, described each in-turn below:

3.6.1 Respect for Autonomy and Dignity of Persons

Researchers studying online interactions are forced to contemplate over certain ethical dilemmas such as considering whether or not an individual's communication thread is limited to the context of members within the particular online environment or applicable to a wider audience viewing (Markham, 2012). YouTube is an online website service that allows video uploads and comments to be made about respective videos. YouTube effectively falls within the public domain as it is not protected by copyright law (i.e. it is readily accessible and visible to anyone), it is traceable and provides permanent communication thread (Bou-Franch et al., 2012). In the current study, it is indubitable that users of YouTube are aware of how far reaching their comments can be on an open-ended and public interactive communication thread (Bou-Franch et al., 2012; Giles et al., 2015). YouTube as a social networking site appears to be "eroding the boundaries between 'publicity' and 'privacy' in fundamental ways" (Weintraub & Kumar, 1997, p. xi). What is more, according to Gal (2002), the erosion between the public/private domains has resulted in a distinction that differs according to an individual's

perspective and more productively visualised today as a ‘fractal distinction’ (Lange, 2008). The researcher is of the belief that individual’s anonymity and confidentiality cannot be duly upheld in this study as any potential published verbatim quotes, even once anonymised, could nevertheless be traced to the discussion forum of the video in which it originated from on YouTube, thus potentially compromising an individual’s identity. However, within the realm of possibility, anonymity and confidentiality can be enveloped to some degree insofar as an individual user could create his or her own pseudonym and false-identity to protect their own true identity whilst on YouTube and surfing the internet more broadly (Lange, 2008). What is more, for purposes of this study, all individuals’ identities (real or pseudonym) and personal information were anonymised in relation to the commentary that was made within the data corpus and reproduced herein this research report. Reference to the comments thus takes the form of [C] in the results section of this research report and its placement is reproduced in the numerical sequence in which it was posted.

3.6.2 Scientific Value

The potential risk/harm that can be imposed on commentators must always be weighed up against the scientific value of disseminating authentic research findings (BPS, 2013). The current study unobtrusively consumed and analysed commentators’ comments on YouTube videos that depict the violent atrocities of the Marikana event and as a result, any potential risk/harm that commentators could experience was restricted to their witnessing of the traumatic visuals and sounds that were depicted in the specific videos. As such, the researcher was not actively producing and manipulating a setting in which to evoke harm or discomfort for the individual commentators. However, it must be acknowledged that the researcher himself was highly susceptible to incur harm as a consequence of repeated exposure to the YouTube videos of the Marikana event, a term Nicholas Mirzoeff (2011, p. 20) denotes as “post-panoptic visuality” and could have potentially traumatic psychological effects on the researcher.

3.6.3 Social Responsibility

Due to the unobtrusive and non-reactive nature of analysing YouTube commentary pertaining to specific videos depicting the Marikana event, social responsibility to the avoidance of disrupting existing social structures has been adhered towards.

3.6.4 Maximizing Benefits and Minimising Harm

All unintended consequences of this study have been appropriately acknowledged and accounted for by the researcher and are further believed not to have adversely affected the commentators in any way whatsoever. The publication of names, quotes and the specific URL of the videos may draw greater censorship among readers of the disseminated research findings, which may have a negative effect on the online community of YouTube members. However, in the present study, the potential risk was viewed as relatively low due to the ubiquitously large social networking site of YouTube.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Marikana event has provided us with a special vantage point and space for South African citizens and commentators of the world alike to examine the inherently complex structures and deep frictions at play on that day. Hence, events such as Marikana, afford us with not only historical and theoretical significance but provide us with methodological value to analyse and interpret the various actions and structures that generate the event itself (Alexander, 2013).

Many commentators' have appeared to have used powerful statements to express their initial shock and reactions to viewing raw footage of what transpired at Marikana on 16 August 2012. Take for instance: "WTF!! That full video is so brutal" (C1; Poh, 2012); "OMG this is so insane" (C2; Poh, 2012); "What a tragedy" (C3; CNN, 2012); "Saddening and disappointing to see this..." (C4, ODN, 2012) and what a "SAD SPECTACLE INDEED FOR A POST INDEPENDENCE SOUTH AFRICA!" (C5; SABC Digital News, 2013). The resultant themes demonstrate the way commentators made meaning of the Marikana event. The 6 videos selected below had accumulated 455, 308 views and comprised of 424 comments made from across the world. This commentary was subsequently analysed for purposes of this study as of 3 February 2017.

Table 1

Videos selected for further analysis depicting the enactment of violence at Marikana

YouTube Video	Views	Comments
1. "Marikana Brutal Massacre (unseen footage)" - Poh (2012) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbenAJv2xco	28,580	36
2. "Examining the Marikana massacre" - CNN (2012) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPBMtLE-x4k	41,174	18

	35,382	24
3. “Marikana massacre: police shooting video footage” - Channel 4 News (2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA2DVSV1GXs		
	140,700	150
4. “eNCA SA Seeks to Understand Marikana Massacre” - eNCA (2012) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt11f7p13f0		
	68,861	75
5. “Unseen footage of Marikana shooting” - SABC Digital News (2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCGYMdkrZfk		
	140,611	121
6. “Horrificing footage of Marikana platinum mine shootings in South Africa” - ODN (2012) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXpAiMOyb8w		

The main themes and findings are presented visually in Table 2 below from the 6 videos chosen by the researcher. Although the themes intersect with each other, they are nonetheless presented according to no hierarchical order. Each main theme contains subthemes that provide a clearer picture of what the commentators made meaning of in the context of the raw footage that they saw, depicting the violent enactment that took place at Marikana.

Table 2

Online meaning making of Marikana themes and subthemes

Overarching Themes	Subthemes: Meaning Making
Corporate Interests and the Role of Profit	• Ascension of ANC into power • Foregrounding dissonance of SA's 'rainbow nation' status

Accountability and Responsibility	• Tragedy: Police acted in self-defence • Massacre: Miners were murdered • War: Miners and Police both bore arms • Other role players: The State, Politicians/Political Organisations & Multinational Corporations
Race	• Dehumanization • Backwardness

4.1 Corporate Interests and the Role of Profit

Comment 6

To add insult to injury, the National Prosecuting Authority, revealing the cold callousness of the state, initially attempted to press murder charges against the arrested miners for the death of their own comrades, under the notorious Doctrine of Common Purpose used by the apartheid regime. Marikana is the brutal reality of capitalism in South Africa!

Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

With the advent of neoliberal globalisation, labour has become increasingly fragmented while job security remains precarious in nature (Chinguno, 2013a). The post-apartheid workplace was fueled by expectations that previous injustices and inequalities under the apartheid regime would be rectified, such as liberation from exploitation, economic development as well as social reconstruction (Buhlungu, 2010; Chinguno, 2013c). However, the rampant injustices and inequalities still remain, two decades into democracy, with resources continually being distributed unevenly in favour of a new black political elite (Dixon, 2015; Plaut & Holden, 2012). C7 reports feeling that, “it's hardly about survival but rather about greed. These unskilled workers see black bosses driving fancy cars around & want the same for themselves” (eNCA, 2012). Feasibly, the Marikana event may be as C8 mentions “another massacre of the working

man by the elite” (ODN, 2012) or perhaps it could have been attributable to an existing white minority that controls the flow of capital, essentially conflating race, class and capital to be analogous interpretations:

Comment 9

RICH WHITIES KILLING BLACKS, THIS STUFF OCCURES ALL THE TIME IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERIKKKA.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE WHITE MINORITY IN SOUTH AFRICA CONTROL'S MOST OF THE ECONOMY OF SUID AFRIKA AND TAKE THE MENY ALL TO THEIR FILTHY SELVES.

Reply •  

(Poh, 2012)

The intersections of race, class and the accumulation of capital has been questioned by other commentators such as C10 who comments, “I’m trying very hard to understand why “white people” are being blamed for this? What exactly did the “white people” contribute to this? Please can someone explain this to me?” (Poh, 2012). According to Terreblanche (2012), the political negotiations around the successful transition of power from the outgoing National Party government to the incoming ANC government involved economic discussions to keep South Africa’s economy rooted in the tenets of global neoliberal capitalism. The motive behind adopting such a stance was to accumulate as much capital/profit as possible whilst minimizing any and all risks towards its collection (Harvey, 2005; Muswaka, 2014). As C11 seems to suggest, “Capitalism is FREEDOM. I can spend my money anyway I please or keep all of it If i wish. That is personal power which real slaves in a socialist system don't have...” (ODN, 2012). However, C12 appears to detest this, “we ruled by pigs that just want more from people ho have less” (CNN, 2012). C13 seems to share similar sentiments, “Greed has indeed poisoned men's souls” (eNCA, 2012). LenkaBula (2005) tersely summarises these comments by highlighting that the hierarchy and designations of apartheid will remain if socio-economic justice is not taken as a core activity of the democratic government to redress inequality in the country.

In the mining context, South Africa's Minerals-Energy Complex (MEC) continues to drive the politico-economic system of post-apartheid with a cheap labour regime designed to maximise surplus value (Marais, 2011; Chinguno, 2013b):

Comment 14

To the owners of the mines:

How stingy are you guys to let these people work so hard trying to make ends meet, digging holes so deep, some even being in critical working conditions due to whatever unforeseen illnesses they'd come across down there, to find this product aimed to enrich South Africa and "yourselves" that they only get peanuts out of all that? Really now...

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

Neoliberal economic policies in the country have not gone uncontested. A major critique of the free market is that it is considered to be a defective mechanism and an inadequate moral response to apartheid, in failing to produce the radical redistribution in income, wealth and other resources that are needed to provide the redistributive justice to the vast majority of black South Africans (Graff, 2012; Swartz, 2006). Since the democratic transition, the partial de-racialization of wealth is foreshadowed by intractable poverty, which remains a central feature highlighting how unequal and polarized South Africa still is as a society (Dixon, 2015). "You know in what conditions workers live??" (C15; ODN, 2012). The Gini coefficient, which provides a measure of inequality, rated South Africa as more of an unequal society than during the years of apartheid (Calland, 2013). The Marikana event led to many an individual to question South Africa's 'rainbow nation' status (Graham, 2016). Gentle (2012) describes this further as the 'massacre of our illusions'.

Comment 16

your sound both stupid and ignorant. when one is living below the poverty line do they not have the right to stand up against a system of self interest organizations? whether or not they are representing others or themselves is besides the point. r1200 (\$170) can hardly sustain an individual let alone a family! So before writing senseless junk know the reasons that led to such a brutal end before calling people gangs and not representing anyone or better yet shut the hell up.

[Show less](#)

Reply • 1  

(eNCA, 2012)

The Marikana event may best represent an outright rejection of the system in which workers have come to locate themselves within a perpetual order of inequality and instability. This is perhaps best represented in the symbolic value of R12, 500, which is the average income of white South African citizens and three hundred percent higher than the average income paid to their black counterparts (Magaziner & Jacobs, 2013). Alexander, Lekgowa, Mmope & Xezwi (2013) further note that the miners' demand was approximately ten times less than the wages of miners in the United Kingdom and Australia. The authors highlight this point as they conclude that economic inequality based on race due to a legacy apartheid and colonialism was at the core of the protest and strike action for what Broster (2016) terms a 'legitimate living wage'. The Marikana event came to represent workers' resistance to the disenfranchisement and dehumanisation that they had come to experience by being reduced to factors for production in their plight for this so-called 'legitimate living wage' (Alexander, 2013).

Comment 17

This brings me to this: The system that we were brought up in is the cruelest I've ever known. 99.9% of hard labours work ththeir sweat off to make a living as well as to enlarge the wealth of South Africa & their employees but they are the ones who get close to nothing! This is the saddest & most painful nightmare ever... Money has really brought so much greed into the world that no one sees how close we've come to the end of this generation due to this violence.

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

When glancing at the data obtained from Statistics South Africa's Household Survey, the median wage in 2011 was R3, 800 within the formal sector which was comparatively the same wage in 1997 in terms of equivalent pricing (Reddy, 2013). Therefore, despite apartheid's demise, the statistics indicate that workers have not benefited in terms of their income. C18 comments that, "you really dont know what you are talking about if you say the whites control most of the economy!" (Poh, 2012). However, with rising unemployment levels, race and class conflict remain among the pertinent issues in protests today (Alexander, 2013). Furthermore, there appears to be a growing widespread resistance amongst people. Alexander (2012a) notes that since 2005, South Africa has had more strikes in days per capita than any other country in the world.

Comment 19

CAPITALISM. Wherever this tuckin fail of a system reaches, destroys human lives. Workers will definitely smash it worldwide sooner or later... Cos no capitalist exists with no workers, but workers do exist without a capitalist.

Reply •  

(Poh, 2012)

In a classic Marxist vein, a class revolution and rebellion by the proletariat and the poor is the only means with which change can occur within the capitalistic system and it seems as though the development of a class-consciousness is challenging and contesting the existing order in the country. As Žižek (2014) notes, "People do not rebel when 'things are really bad' but when their expectations are disappointed" (p. 20).

4.2 Accountability and Responsibility

Two dominant but highly contested themes that arose through media and had subsequently emerged again here within accounts of how the striking miners responded to the police. The theme of accountability is primarily organised around who is responsible for what transpired

and may be best represented by C20's comment: "no matter who you are or where your from if you were in that position of a police officer what would you do" (Poh, 2012).

4.2.1 *Tragedy: Police acted in self-defence*

Use of the term 'tragedy' implies an accident or unexpected catastrophe. The first narrative is that striking miners charged at the police with the intention to cause harm to them and what translated was an expected anomaly causing 34 deaths:

Comment 21

+masego sha If you are deliberately ignoring the facts, which I suspect you are, then yes you are acting stupid.

The evidence is there of what happened, recorded on camera, if you still choose to ignore the fact that the miners charged the police then I'm wasting my time trying to be reasonable with you. You made up your mind and that ain't going to change. Good day sir. My personal email is not a debating platform, youtube comments is. Stick to it.

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(Channel 4 News, 2013)

Testimony from police members at the Farlam Commission of Inquiry, argued that the striking miners were equipped with weapons such as machetes, knobkerries, pangas and even guns. In addition to this, the police claimed that the miners underwent sangoma rituals, which they believed would make them invincible (Chinguno, 2013a). Furthermore, in support of the police's testimony, many commentators believed that there was nothing peaceful about the way the miners were protesting:

Comment 22

Peaceful protesters???!!!! These peaceful protesters hacked 2 cops and 1 security guard to death with machetes a few days before this. Watch at 5.27 into the video, a protester fires a shot at the cops. Just a shame the police didn't get a few more. Idiots!!

Reply • 11  

(SABC Digital News, 2013)

As depicted in the above quotation, commentators alluded to specific reference points in the respective YouTube videos that they watched and commented on as a means to justify the sway of their respective narratives. Both C23 and C24 refer to 5 minutes and 20 seconds where they proclaim that some miners are seen to be shooting the police and media personnel (SABC Digital News, 2013). Whether this is true or not, C24 indicated that the police used: “shotgun rubber rounds and teargas, that is the standard procedure and this was used on this day, this same group you see shooting is the same group who seconds later were shot by the TRT (SABC Digital News, 2013). The police were “clearly attacked” (C25; eNCA, 2012) with many commentators seemingly supporting their use of force as a measure of self-defence:

Comment 26

for those of you who have a mouth full to say about the polices action, think again and do your damn research! all the actions by police was done in the right way, when water canons and rubber bullets didnt work they had to protect themselves. seen as 10 non protestors had already been brutally murdered! two of whom were security gards at the mine, their JAWS were forced apart whilst they were still alive, and many more were doen too, there video footage to prove it!

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(eNCA, 2012)

Although it may seem easy, enough to ascribe blame in retrospect, commentators nevertheless reported to what they regarded to ascribe and align towards most. Amid this dichotomy is the common comment that “Both parties are guilty” (C27; eNCA, 2012).

4.2.2 Massacre: Miners were murdered

The second narrative is that the striking miners were *not* assailing the police by charging after them but rather were running away from them, “This looks like a tactical assassination of innocent poor mine workers!” (C28; eNCA, 2012). Hence, by this account, the police would have opened fire on the striking miners without there being any substantial risk posed by them (Alexander, Lekgowa, Mmope, Sinwell, & Xeswi, 2012). “this is a massacre, enough said..” (C29; eNCA, 2012). Hence, using the term ‘massacre’ implies that here there was an imbalance

of force resulting in many of the striking miner's deaths. Evidence presented before the Farlam Commission of Inquiry revealed that many of the striking miners that were killed that day were killed outside of the original kill zone (Marinovich, 2012; Alexander et al., 2012). This evidence suggests many of the striking miners were hunted down and murdered as was stressed further by C30's commentary, "This part has some minor disputes, but there is no questioning the deaths of the other 12 the police hunted down" (eNCA, 2012). In addition to this, the National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega's appointment was called into question:

Comment 31

When Phiyega was appointed, there was an outcry about her lack of experience. Today, all is at peace with the majority handing medals and praises. What changed? She is a banker and still has no experience in policing nor necessary qualifications. Her decision proves this fact. Probably it was a strategic move for her to receive endorsement for job well done. Atleast the whole world knows who she is and will scrutinise her credentials. Probably she landed the job giving superb BJ to Showerhead

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(eNCA, 2012)

Furthermore, a significant proportion of commentators expressed emotive language when commenting on why the miners were murdered as opposed to shot in an act of self-defence. Take for instance, C32's comment that the police are, "Fucking hangmen" (eNCA, 2012) or C33's utterance of the police being, "Fucking murderers" (eNCA, 2012). Amidst indirectly witnessing the gunfire in the YouTube video, C34 noted observationally: "It's interesting how the cops all back off AFTER gunning everyone down... like they're literally taken aback at what they've just done" (Poh, 2012). C35 calls the police "heartless" (eNCA, 2012) while C36 appears to focus on condemning the police towards being culpable for their actions, "This was a tragedy and complete violation of human rights - the police were scared to death, did not know how to handle the situation, and then it escalated. Time for the SAPS to take accountability" (eNCA, 2012). Many of the accounts in the study delegitimised the police's actions on the basis

of what they deemed to be the unnecessary and lethal use of force on the striking miners in response to real or perceived threat:

Comment 37

The police in SA trapped and shot dead workers and tried to drown the strike in blood. "That's where the majority of strikers were killed, with nowhere to run. Some were killed after raising their hands in the air while others were lying injured and then finished off. There were only survivors among the injured because police thought they were dead and threw their bodies on a heap. 34 strikers were killed, 79 injured and 234 arrested."

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

What is more, the role of the SAPS can be considered crucial in maintaining public order and more broadly, the fundamental rights imbued within the country's democracy (Newham, 2015). In line with this, 'policing' may then be referred to as "the work of the public, civilian (non-military) institution that is empowered by government to enforce the law and ensure public order through the legitimized use of force" (Casey, 2010, p. 11).

However, the police's perceived impartiality and non-transparency was highly disputed after the Marikana event, given the fact that many commentators in the study commented that the police were in conflict between performing their duties and acting in a politically partisan manner. Hornberger (2011) suggests that the coercive use of power by the state is often deployed through police violence as a means to resolve disputes and promote compliance through intimidation. Many commentators reported that the police 'panicked' and acted out of fear but nevertheless reported for duty "by the side of the government" (C38; eNCA, 2012). Chetty (2016) denounces the SAPS as a reshaped mechanism for oppression against the working class by the ANC government in post-apartheid South Africa.

Newham (2015) calls for the 'depoliticised appointments' (p. 46) of SAPS officials. He argues that the principle of 'non-political partisanship' is necessary for the police service to abide by

in order to maintain its *legitimacy* and secure the public's *trust*. Numerous interpretations are centered upon whether or not the police can be considered trustworthy after what transpired at Marikana, "To hell with the SAPS, I will never trust police officers even if my life depends on it" (C39; eNCA, 2012). What is more, among the elevating crime rates and high levels of misconduct by the police, overall, it appears that the South African public has become untrusting of the police (Newham, 2015). This was uncovered further in a 2014 website-based survey reflecting that the police frighten 33% of people, with three-quarters of commentators considering the police as undutiful civil servants (Future Fact, 2015).

4.2.3 War: Miners and Police both bore arms

The two hegemonic themes (massacre and tragedy) that were elicited in the data corpus set, appeared not only to be informed by media discourse but also served to compliment the main arguments generated through public opinion. However, notably, an alternative unwritten narrative and counter-hegemonic narrative emerged in the study that positioned both the striking miners and police as accountable for the violence that ensued on the day, "this is no massacre... this is war... both sides had weapons..." (C40; ODN, 2012):

Comment 41

THE POLICE DID THEIR JOB! THE PEOPLE WERE ON WAR NOT IN A PROTEST!!!

Reply • 13  

(SABC Digital News, 2013)

Comment 42

the protestors were already profiled "armed and dangrous" due to the killings they acrried out on police. I do not believe that they were peaceful at all. However, our police men approached this situation as a war and went too far. they had the upper hand already but what they did at the mountains is just disturbing. If you hate South Africa, you will love this but if you love this country, you will hate tis.

[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(SABC Digital News, 2013)

Consequently, many commentators in the study conceptualised the Marikana event as a ‘war’ and did not warrant it to be a protest, “A workers strike stops being a workers strike when the strikers arm themselves. Spears? Swords? It's neither strike nor protest.” (C43; eNCA, 2012). Commentators appeared to draw this inference in light of what they believed were both the striking miners and policemen bearing weapons that could cause damage/harm. Chinguno (2013a) contextualises this point further by explaining the underlying meaning of the striking miners carrying traditional weapons with them. In many cultural groupings in South Africa, it is customary for some men to carry traditional weapons. When going on strike, workers treat it as if they are going to war and as such no worker then can go to war without a weapon. By this view, the Marikana event was no different from normal striking behaviour that occurs in the country except perhaps that the striking miners were incorrectly interpreted to be armed and dangerous and not merely carrying traditional weapons for their symbolic value and meaning (Chinguno, 2013).

4.2.4 Politicians/Political Organisations & Multinational Corporations

The ascription of blame by commentators in the study varies beyond holding either the miners and/or the police accountable for the violence that transpired at Marikana on 16 August 2012. However, other significant stakeholders were identified as key role players in not abiding by their respective duties in preventing the Marikana event from occurring in the first place. C44 called the actions of the presiding government into question by saying that the “ANC government massacred this Marikana miners ...its responsible for this deaths” (eNCA, 2012). Additionally, commentators in the study were cynical of the ANC-led government in what they considered a farcical collusion of State interests with that of private businesses.

Comment 45

The ANC government presided over this massacre. A corrupt, degenerate government of big business is now finished in the eyes of big numbers of the working class. As well as returning the country back to the dark days of apartheid repression the disgusting flaunting of wealth and privileges by ANC leaders is exposed in the media every day.

Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

In 2014, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) stated that the Marikana event was not an anomaly and incidents of such magnitude take place in other parts of the world. What is more, the CIVICUS' State of Civil Society report highlights that elite interests drive violations of citizens' rights and as a result, governments and international institutions fail to address issues among the people they govern (Tiwana, 2015). C46 seems to expound upon this finding when stating, "Death to African colonist, and death to those Africans who sell their own people out for financial gain.." (CNN, 2012). Consequently, this has resulted in an escalation of protests around the world (Tiwana, 2015).

During the years of the apartheid struggle, union activists such as Cyril Ramaphosa were closely connected to the people they governed in the community (Chetty, 2016). However, there appears to be a growing divide between the black middle and working classes in contemporary democratic life in South Africa. "I was researching and found that the vicepresident of South Africa is a shareholder of the mine. the government reported that they were rebels" (C47; eNCA, 2012). This discrepancy is possibly best understood with the previously marginalized working class being granted greater social mobility since the transition and implementation of democracy in the country. Bond (2013) argues that South Africa has transitioned from racialized apartheid to class apartheid. Additionally, as unions grow their membership base, they may gradually divert away from their mandate towards colluding with capital (Michels, 1911; Buhlungu, 2010). Wright (2000) classifies this distinction further as the difference between 'class compromise' and 'class capture'. The term class compromise

denotes accepting industrial relations conflict and an endeavor towards finding common ground amongst competing classes. While, class capture refers to the shifted relations from consensual to slanted benefits. As a consequence of class capture, representatives of the people do not live or come to experience the harsh realities of everyday life for workers' as their upward social mobility and growing social distance has afforded them the opportunity to move from high density areas to live in more affluent areas than they previously could (Tiwana, 2015; Vavi, 2012). "u are a dogs Ramaphosa and Zuma ...you will pay for this one day..." (C48; CNN, 2012). Citizens have become increasingly angered and frustrated by the state apparatus that seems to act only in the interest of a small minority of individuals, further entrenching inequality amongst its people. In principle, this is what Michel's (1911) terms the iron law of oligarchy. Michel's (1911) suggests that regardless of the ruling party that all democratic organisations will eventually come to be ruled by a few elite individuals and C48's comment may be a reflection of this principle in reality.

Among those regarded as accountable for the massacre was Lonmin Platinum Mine as well as the trade unions with which the miners were affiliated. C49 denounces both the trade unions and Lonmin Mine management for not facilitating a cordial and peaceful negotiation of the wage dispute, "Responsibility for this tragedy lies with the Unions and Mine (The Unions for always coming to protests armed to teeth , and the mine for refusing to negotiate with them)" (Poh, 2012). This apparent withering of institutionalisation of industrial relations has resulted in a significant amount of industrial conflict within the country. The Marikana event highlights how ineffective the trade unions (that act as collective bargaining structures) are in managing their workers' discontent (Von Holdt, 2010; Chinguno, 2013a). This may also be due to the greater social distance between representatives of the people and the people themselves that has threatened union hegemony (Chinguno, 2013c). However, in the South African context, institutionalisation of industrial relations is poised within a backdrop of high levels of poverty,

inequality and unemployment that undeniably limits its capacity and power in containing workers' discontent.

The high levels of poverty and inequality that undeniably form part of the lasting legacy from the apartheid regime were fuelled by oppression and exploitation of black people for cheap labour, which arguably still exists today. C50 reports that the Lonmin Platinum Mine should be held accountable for the Marikana event:

Comment 50

Fuck London greedy corporations...money before human lives!! This is democracy!!

Reply •  

(eNCA, 2012)

The Marikana event raises a number of pertinent issues with regards to how South African governance and political mechanisms operate in the country. Tiwana (2015) deduces that what transpired at Marikana is a visual illustration of when government and private business collude together to constrict and constrain democratic rights and constitutional principles that have been written into law.

4.3 Race

South Africa's history of racialised conflict remains a salient feature of the post-apartheid era through its reproduction in a variety of everyday interactions (Cresswell, Whitehead & Durrheim, 2014). The concept of 'race' bears sociocultural significance in contemporary South Africa but poses numerous challenges in terms of its analysis (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). A lack of agreement on defining 'racism' is compounded by focusing predominantly on individual psychological factors (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004), social-structural factors (Bonilla-Silva, 1997) or on a combination of different factors (Omi & Winant, 1994).

It is for this reason that Durrheim et al. (2011) advocate for a more inclusive theoretical framework of 'racism' to comprise of 'race trouble' which characterizes racialized conflict, antipathy, insults and strong disagreements as either implicitly or explicitly occurring in social interactions. This theoretical shift has important analytic ramifications in terms of moving beyond an a purely theoretical definition of racism towards focusing on more on situated practices in which racial divisions occur and the ways in which racism may be taken into account to provide understanding for this (Durrheim et al., 2011; Cresswell et al., 2014). Bentley and Habib (2008) purport that due to South Africa's long history of racial segregation and its ongoing legacy of social injustice, everyday social phenomena are easily explained and accounted for with reference to 'race' or 'racism'. The online meaning making of Marikana exemplified how commentators used the concepts of 'race' and 'racism' in their comments on YouTube both explicitly and implicitly (see Whitehead, 2009; Durrheim, 2012 for further discussion) between each other in the comment thread as well as to inform their viewpoints on what transpired on 16 August 2012.

The analytic focus of the study was not on the particular individuals involved in it but rather the manner in which they made meaning of the raw footage of violence at Marikana as depicted in the YouTube videos. Although, it is important to point out a few naturally occurring observations within the data in relation to the theme of race. The first of which is that commentators frequently formulated their opinion of what transpired at Marikana as depicted by the raw footage on YouTube by referring to other commentators perceived attributes along racial lines. In particular, commentators profile name and image were recurrently treated as markers of racial identity and the basis for category-based inferences to be made. This naturally occurring phenomenon happening within the data corpus may be indicative of Sacks' (1989) depiction of how names can be treated as indicators of ethnic or racial identities. Burgess and Green (2009) expand upon this by arguing, "YouTube is a potential site of cosmopolitan

cultural citizenship – a space in which individuals can represent their identities and perspectives, engage with the self-representations of others, and encounter cultural difference (p. 81).

4.3.1 Dehumanisation

The materiality of race in our everyday lives serves to prevent ourselves from being ignorant to its construction. It is upon this basis that race is not the issue but rather the performance of race in South Africa (Maart, 2014). Take for instance, C51's comment that "the general population is so uneducated they think they are doing the right thing but they are screwing everything up and just acting like a bunch of wild animals" (ODN, 2012). Drawing inference from C51's comment, it seems apparent that at no point does he explicitly refer to a racial category. However, C51's comment involves an unstated implicit racial theme (Whitehead, 2009). We can infer that from his comment that he is comparing the miners to 'wild animals' and more generally assumes that the miners are uneducated as they make up part of the general population of residents in the country. Moreover, C51's comment thus suggests that the miners were acting in an irrational and violent manner and did not consider the broader effects of their actions (Whitehead, 2013). Furthermore, many of the commentators in the comment threads across the selected videos compared the miners to 'animals' or referred to them along feral lines. C52 reportedly said "shoot the animals" (eNCA, 2012) whilst C53 reported that the police acted in the right capacity in shooting the miners as according to him they should, "shoot the fucking savages that wanted to cut you up with pangas. xD" (eNCA, 2012). C53 appeared to rationalise that the miners "killed 2 police officers with families before the shooting even started.... i say KILL THE WHOLE FUCKIN LOT! ANIMAL CUNTS" (ODN, 2012), with C54 reported feeling proud that, "our police that defended themselves from a 3000 strong barbaric army" (ODN, 2012). Disparagingly, "The most funny thing is to hear some comments saying they deserve to be killed, the people making these comments are primates with no

empathy or feelings, to my sense at the same level than animals.” (C55; ODN, 2012)

Highlighting the inhumanity of many commentators’ comments about the miners being animals, C56 reported:

Comment 56

Ey listen here buddy, I'm South African, I'm black, I don't a tail, I don't walk with four legs, i don't shit whlie standing, I don't go around calling white people "Hello Kitty personified, junk yard predictable junkies, sniffers" or anything like that, i call them humans or by their names, so pleas take back what you wrote about blak people being animals, we are not animals, we are not indigenous people you son of a bitch, go back to school and learn the diffrence between "woof woof" and "helo"

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Reply • 1  

(Poh, 2012)

Furthermore, the miners displayed in each YouTube video respectively are tacitly denoted by historical and contemporary representations of black people as exhibiting primitive behavioural characteristics whilst being interpreted to be uncivilized human beings in the process (Dubow, 1995, Bowman, 2010, McKoy, 2001). A case in point, is the seemingly negative association made by C57 that the miners are no different to ‘monkeys’, “So the cops should have got their camping chairs out and waited for those bastards to hack them into pieces??? Each and every person would have reacted the same way if his/her life were threatened by a bunch of dancing monkeys” (eNCA, 2012). A further sense of antipathy towards the miners and African people as a collective is perhaps best encapsulated by C58’s comment that “A bullet is the only way to deal with a wild animal, start acting like civilized human beings and you won't constantly find yourselves in this types of situations, africans” (ODN, 2012). C58 appears to later catastrophise the situation by saying that “Africa should be wiped from the face of the world. It's a shame AIDS and malaria didn't pan out” (ODN, 2012). Although, this appears to be somewhat of an extreme statement, C59 cynically speculates how, “Those poor bullets are probably covered in AIDs” (SABC Digital News, 2013).

Moreover, C60 stereotypically infuses the commentator's preconception of black people as primitive behaviourally within their expression of sexuality:

Comment 60

These savages keep breeding like rats. Then, when there isn't enough money to feed their 20 kids and 5 wives, they go on the rampage ! Currently there are 1.9 million black orphans in SA. Who the f**k is going to feed these bats when the work runs out ? If these monsters would please stop mating and multiplying, then there will be enough food and money for everybody to go around. How about adopting... Oh wait... That is only for rich Hollywood celebs, keen on a bit of extra publicity.

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Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

A significant amount of rage and frustration was commonly shared amongst commentators towards the miners. Take for instance, the statement: “gutless pieces of shit and need to be executed” (C61; eNCA, 2012) or “im horrified by this.what a waste of bullets.let the niggers fight and kill its what they do best” (C62; ODN, 2012) may be interpreted as abhorrent views to the miners actions and behaviour. The miner's actions may be inferred as ‘barbaric’ and ‘savage’ in nature, where many of the comments conceptualised and equated the miner's behaviour as ‘sub-human’, displaying animalistic tendencies that should be removed from our society:

Comment 63

Fuck you and your human rights, what about the 2 cops and security guards that were killed by these miners? You blacks are 2 faced pricks that need to start understanding your the lowest form of human beings. Why dont you all find an island somewhere far away from us whites and destroy yourselves there?

Reply •  

(eNCA, 2012)

Despite C63's overt racial slur, this particular comment also contains an interesting differentiation of race. The comment alludes to how miners killed 2 policemen and security guards, which were of the same race as them, and hence speaks to intra-racial violence. As

historical patterns of violence continue, intra-black violent repertoires have accommodated a new meaning alongside other patterns of violence that have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa (Kynoch, 2008). The image of black policemen shooting at black mineworkers serves as an anomaly in the post-apartheid democratic period (Buitendag & Coetzer, 2015; von Holdt, 2013). For Maart (2014), the intra-black conflict at Marikana may symbolize “the disenfranchised slave killing the previously disenfranchised slave brother who refuses modernity and postmodernity” (p. 21) and further demonstrate the violent pluralism in contemporary South African lives through the emergence of subaltern violence (such as violent protest, vigilantism and xenophobic attacks) (von Holdt, 2013).

In contrast to the ‘sub-human’ assertion made towards the miners, emanates a seemingly more ‘compassionate’ and alternative claim of “I just hate when they kill black people like animals unfairly” (C64; Poh, 2012). Added to this claim is the elucidation that perhaps “A black man soul means nothing to the world” (C65; CNN, 2012). This statement by C65 suggests that black people are not only dehumanised but also viewed as inferior in a predominantly White, Eurocentric world. With the advent of Affirmative Action (AA) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies, many White South Africans in the country have come to view these policies as ‘reverse racism’. In relation to this, C66 is reported to be of the opinion that the Marikana event was “Social Justice” for the Afrikaners who had their jobs taken away from them by Blacks” (SABC Digital News, 2013) and C67 reportedly reminisced over the old ruling system, “Apartheid was a beautiful thing” (SABC Digital News, 2013).

The online meaning making from commentators challenged and contested the commonly bestowed upon notion that black people are inferior to the superiority that is frequently afforded to white people as conveyed through the media and the lay-public alike. An example of this is provided by C68 when supposedly hypothesising, “if those 34 miners were White, you would be screaming of genocide, and not be saying they "barbarians who deserved it" like we have

been reading in these comments” (eNCA, 2012). C69 reports believing that, “Of course it's Racism, if you do not believe it, Just ask yourself, you think that if the murdered people in this video had been white, the police would have shot to kill?” (Poh, 2012).

The rhetorical question posed to us is intended to be thought provoking given South Africa's history of institutionalised racism. C70 however, seems to attempt at qualifying what constitutes racism in this scenario when it is mentioned that, “Racism???? Aren't most of the police officers that you saw not black?? Isn't the top brass of the SAPS not black?? Isn't the government of SA not led by a majority black party?? IGNORANT.” (Poh, 2012). In support of this comment, C71 may divert our attention away from an argument that is along racial lines towards pertinent issues regarding fragmented and precarious working conditions for the miners as well as the delegitimation around the exploitation of workers that has fuelled such violence:

Comment 71

I dont think its a matter of raice her, the cops are black, the protesters are black, I'm sure we "black" people have a much better car to pukk with regard to this issue, like lack of comunication and respect from mine manager to mine workers. how many of us "Black or White" can raise a family on 5000? work long hours in unbearable conditions... I blame ignorance from all parties involved in this saga for the death of the cops and the miners
[Show less](#)

Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

Finally, among the commentators, in an attempt to draw all lines of argumentation together was promoting a human rights approach towards grounding the Marikana event for analysis. The human rights approach not only provides a universal identification for all human beings but also in addition, allows a reflective process to take place when making meaning of transpired in Marikana on what 16 August 2012. “You have to know that these workers on the field are human beings not just workers, numbers, victims or whatever else you like calling

them, nothing more nothing less! This was a really tragic day for mankind!” (C72; eNCA, 2012).

As a theme, race and racism appears to obtain its meaning, in part, within the social context in which it is used (Cresswell et al., 2014). The current study revealed that the striking miners were racially categorized as being black and by virtue of this categorization were associated with a number of stereotypical traits that were used by commentators to understand and account for what transpired at Marikana on 16 August 2012. Among these stereotypes was the zoomorphic conflation of the miners to animals, savages and barbarians. This may be seen as an attempt by commentators to ‘dehumanise’ the miners and portray their mentality as not adequately developed. Thus, race continues to permeate in the social fabric of contemporary life in post-apartheid South Africa with its salience forming the basis of further solidarity and division (Durrheim & Dixon, 2004). However, the degree of cohesion and division among predominantly the white-black racial group has been offset by the contestations to this meaning imbued by racism.

4.3.3 Backwardness

In traditional African culture, sticks and/or knobkerries were used in warfare in order to protect oneself from threat or injury (Chinguno, 2013a). Hence, striking may be epitomized as modern-day warfare. C73 expresses discontent over the number of strikes that occur at any one point of time in South Africa:

Comment 73

Don't worry next month they'll find something new to strike about. They strike that they don't have jobs then when they get jobs they strike that they want more money then when they get more money, they strike about the fact that they want free houses, then when they get free houses they strike that their neighbours house has more windows & so on

All evidence points to one fact; doing as little as possible while being perpetually discontent seems to be the natural state of the black man.

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Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

Moreover, Chinguno (2013a) asserts that the workers' demands for an increase in pay were not solely economic based but intricately intertwined with their desire to be recognized as human beings and citizens of the country, worthy of being treated with dignity and respect. Many of the mineworkers were perceived by commentators to be 'inferior' and 'backward', stereotypical traits luminous of racist beliefs and attitudes of the commentators. This appears to be reflected in C74's question of how he "still don't understand these protesters stupidity as to where it came from... If you're willing to die for an increase, have you ever thought of whom you'll be leaving behind?" (ODN, 2012). Families with no one to support anymore, meaning it's going to be worse than it already is currently". Perhaps, "They are just fucking idiots and they died for free" (C75; eNCA, 2012). These commentators appear to indirectly refer to a lack of 'intelligence' and appropriate planning of what the possible consequences of the miners' striking may be. As C76 reportedly says, "You don't bring a spear to a gunfight". This single act is understood to be indicative of showing "the intelligence of the "other" colour" (C77; SABC Digital News, 2013). It seems apparent that a lack of intelligence is associated with backwardness and according to C78 a sense of entitlement, "You want everything handed to you. Black people have no money because they are lazy and want handouts. Only few have broken this cycle, more power to them" (ODN, 2012). However, C79 seems to make meaning out of black people's so-called lack of education in terms of historical exploitation and unequal affordances to opportunities to learn and develop further:

Comment 79

The racist comments on this video are pathetic. You guys are just ignorant and think you're superior. Black people have contributed culturally to the world. The reason some are not as educated as you guys (And I use the term educated loosely for you imbeciles.) Is because their ancestors did not get the same education due to racist assholes forcing them into slavery. Not to mention living in poor countries. What creates the kind of people you compare blacks to is a poor environment of living.

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Reply •  

(ODN, 2012)

Lack of education and illiteracy is identified in the Mining Charter as an area of concern requiring urgent curtailment. Despite most mines implementing the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes, a significant proportion of mineworkers remain functionally illiterate (Chinguno, 2013a). The majority of mineworkers are unskilled and fall under union representation.

The Marikana event highlighted the spectacular nature of violence, which seemed to amplify an underlying tension within an intrepid moral system around the legitimacy/illegitimacy of using violence in achieving social justice. The interpretivist approach adopted in this study has explored how individuals make meaning out of the use of violence in the context of the Marikana event. As such, it has produced practical knowledge and local truth that has no general application outside the context of its usage (Willis, 2007). Some of the findings of this study such as the identification of deep processes (corporate interests, the role of profits, accountability, race) operating contingently may inform the questions asked and the interpretation of data in future studies.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Whilst numerous and complex causal pathways have been identified by epidemiological theorists to date that lead to violence, this thesis endeavoured to understand how many of these mechanisms specifically translated into the violent enactment that occurred at Marikana on 16 August 2012. The original focus of this study was on investigating the situational factors at play in the Marikana event however, this proved to be more challenging than initially thought. The researcher was unaware at the time of how video reduces social processes to two-dimensional audio-visual reproduction of an event and does not record the situational factors of a social interaction. Schindler (2009, p. 136) terms video recordings the “visual impression of a situation” inasmuch as what is captured visually through the lens of the camera or video recorder and not what is seen or understood by the individuals involved in the situation. From this perspective, the YouTube videos contained a digital trace of complex history and practices as opposed to an observable record of reality that can infer understanding based on an individual’s lack of prior knowledge of the situation. What this report has provided is a useful response to the research question of how meaning was made of the representations of the Marikana event in an online environment. An analysis of commentary was then represented thematically.

What the results relayed through the online meaning making of Marikana was how individuals construe the violence that accompanies Marikana and how morally contingent it is. For instance, how are different ‘moral orders’ (Stevens, 2008) weighted when they are in conflict with each other in a social event such as Marikana? How does violent conflict as portrayed in the media affect South Africa’s moral compass towards accepting violence as just or unjust in

our society? The practical implications of arriving at such questions poses challenges for defining violence in an apparent heterogeneous moral economy. Hence, the curtailment of violence would mean obtaining a consensus on a seemingly acrimonious debate between citizens of the country who subscribe to moral representations on opposite ends of the continuum (Karandinos, Kain Hart, Montero Castrillo, & Bourgois, 2014).

5.2 Study Limitations

The analytic framework of the current study was limited in only being able to capture the active (message-sending) users of the YouTube text-based polylogues (Grosjean, 2004). Many people may watch YouTube videos but do not necessarily participate in the accompanying comment forums found under the video description. As such, passive participation in the polylogal interaction could not be reproduced in this research report. Perhaps individuals only participate if they have a vested interest in the matter at hand or consider participation to be worthwhile (Cresswell et al., 2014). As a result of this, these forums will involve potentially emotive and even conflicting interactions among commentators. YouTube videos have the power to create an audio-visual record of an event however; its partiality can be considered to be related to the restricted view of events depending on where the camera lens is focused (Jewitt, 2012). As such, video data will inevitably always be limited in its partiality, in including and excluding certain elements within the immediacy of the context of the event.

YouTube polylogues have been noted previously in the literature to pose “a challenge to all methods of formal analysis” (Marcoccia, 2004, p. 144) with “successive accessing approaches” required on different levels to unveil the complexities inherent within it (Traverso, 2004, p. 53). One notable limitation in this regard, within the present study, is the removal of commentary selectively by the respective YouTube commentators and thus serves to alter the textual record that was originally generated. This creates challenges for reproducing reliable and valid results (Herring, 2007). Despite this, the shareable nature of YouTube videos enables

multiple viewpoints to emerge in the data discovery process. This is the process whereby video becomes data rather than an information source (Goldman & McDermott, 2009).

As such the data analysis of the active participation in these YouTube polylogues have provided a tangible but undeniably restricted view of the configuration of the participant structure and meaning making within the data corpus (Zelenkauskaitė & Herring, 2008; Herring, Kutz, Paolillo & Zelenkauskaitė, 2009; Bou-Franch et al., 2012). Added to this, many individuals were indirectly excluded from participating in the current study on the basis that they do not have the means to access to the Internet. However, it is worth remarking that increased access and accessibility to smartphones and free Wi-Fi in designated areas is relatively widespread in the country, including informal settlements (Cresswell et al., 2014).

5.3 Future Implications

Researchers in the social sciences are increasingly turning towards online environments to explore long-standing social phenomena whereby *conversation* is not seen solely as the mechanism through which information is conveyed but rather the conversational topic itself is deemed to be a focus of most contemporary research studies. As Markham (1998, 2004) identifies, the internet is a convenient medium through which researchers can collect data on a topic of interest. Analytic scrutiny has however been ascribed to the manner in which a YouTube comment or opinion is generated and produced online as a contingent behaviour. Online interfaces unlike face-to-face interaction afford the user the ability to convey something in words, appropriately delay their response, revise or even omit their comments, opinions or statements. Although, it remains unclear as to what the impact of editing has on online interaction (Meredith & Stokoe, 2013; Snejder & te Molder, 2005).

The added benefit of online interactions for researchers is to what Erikson (1999) calls '*persistent conversations*' in which trace comments are digitised in a written form and as such

can be stored and retrieved for later analysis. Using video data has allowed historical comparisons to be made between data sets and enables researchers to revisit events and reanalyse them within their complexities (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). Furthermore, this study has elucidated the start for future work on how socio-economic rights, moral virtues and notions of citizenship come to interact with each other in creating a pragmatic social reality that requires moral regeneration.

5.4 Conclusion

South Africa is bequeathed within a legacy of inequality due to colonialism and apartheid rule which has resulted in an oversupply of labour being generated. Labour in general is a crucial means with which to produce products and services (Mohr, 2010). Depending on how much the labourer is willing to sell his/her labour to derive an income and how much a business is willing to buy that labour will determine the amount of profit being made. Boëttger and Rathbone (2016) argue that the capitalist system has increasingly come to be viewed under a general reductionist anthropology in which human beings who sell their labour have been reduced to 'functions of production' that allow businesses to increase their profits. This appears evident in the Marikana event.

If people are viewed as features of an economic system then the labourer will be less inclined to work for a wage that does not reflect his/her effort or need to make ends meet financially (Smith, 2013; Boëttger & Rathbone, 2016). Nevertheless, with high levels of unemployment and gross economic inequalities, South African labourers have limited opportunities for employment and as such often become exploited because of this in order to survive. Were the miners who were striking for a living wage subjected to structural violence? Tarnas (1991) provides a deeper understanding of this reductionist anthropological view by observing how capitalism as an economic system fails to account for the complexity and dynamism of human beings as labourers within the overall economic system. The Marikana event provided the

appropriate contextual backdrop with which to examine and explore further how the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa have come to reproduce old forms of violence in a nuance way, in producing a ‘violent democracy’ (von Holdt, 2013). The present study aimed to create an understanding of how people made meaning of these complexities and how these complexities influenced and constrained their justification of violence through YouTube as an online vlogging and polylogal interaction-based commentary website.

Moral philosophers postulate that people’s decisions between right and wrong originate from within formal moral systems, which have been socially constructed and enforced for centuries (Bentham, 1948). However, it appears indicative from the results of the study that most perceptions of justice were not based on a strict adherence to a prescribed set of morally appropriate rules and behaviour (Zillman, 2000). The rule of law is difficult to define (Tamanaha, 2004). Thompson (1975, p. 267) describes the rule of law as “an unqualified human good” because although it involves the imposition of class power, its existence depends upon conferring meaningful rights to all. It is necessary but insufficient. It is intrinsically contradictory because it promises equality whilst precluding it (Gumede, 2015). What is clear from the results of the study is that many commentators’ commentary involved employing less formal ‘moral sanctions’ as opposed to more formal ‘moral judgement’. Where moral judgment may be characterized as continuous scrutiny towards a particular act, which involves specific rewards and punishments, moral sanctions may be differentiated from moral judgment as including any behaviour or action with which a person is willing to accept (Zillmann, 2000). Thus, most commentators in the study derived meaning from their own personal appraisals of the event as morally justifiable or unjustifiable and not purely on the basis of a clear-cut judgment by an exacting moral code. This possibly provides insight into why many commentators in the study interpreted it to be less important killing the security guards than the miners and police.

Moreover, individual's values will undoubtedly differ from person-to-person and this implies that certain behaviours or actions will be considered as acceptable or unacceptable depending upon the individual's own sense of moral propriety (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). One of the central tenets of Zillmann's (2000) moral sanction theory is rooted in a teleological ethical view of how people judge an event or action as right or wrong and whether this moral obligation is good or desirable as an end to be achieved. Due to the diversity in the reported participant makeup (in terms of gender, race, age, geographic location) and in the valence of judgement claims made, different morality subcultures within the YouTube membership base were found to show uniformity in particular topic points in the commentary. The meanings associated with the violence were largely contested and depicts that something as apparently plainly violent as the Marikana event demonstrates the way in which violence is always intimately entwined to meaning and the morality of its justifiability. It is the conscience and moral concern for YouTube members that extends beyond merely producing a morally intelligent citizenry.

In this apparent moral dilemma, the complexity of violence is emphasized and its polymorphic nature is surfaced. The acceptance of violence seemed to be dependent upon which disposition one took towards viewing the striking miners as either perpetrators or targets with the intent to murder or defend themselves. This complicates the problem for defining violence itself and mobilising support for its prevention. South Africa as a multicultural nation appears to accept and place emphasis on violence as an embodied level of practice (*habitus*) in response to resisting encompassing fields of power and the hegemonic side of law (Bourdieu, 2000). This form of subaltern resistance thus renders violence as morally appropriate and a justified means in bringing about and raising a collective consciousness, solidarity and conflict resolution. The utilitarian and cultural value of violence becomes both a risk and a resource (*risk-surplus value*) to those who employ it (Karandinos et al., 2014).

The Marikana event recalled the type of violence that was reminiscent of the apartheid order. It sparked controversy and public debate on the terse range of social, economic and political problems, which would suggest that the transition to democracy was built upon a constitutional compromise that culminated in national liberation without the necessary socio-economic revolution required for the majority of people in the country (Adelman, 2015). The Marikana event, its multiple meanings and significance appears not to have been predetermined nor random (Nash, 2015). However, its true significance depends on where and how we define violence and where its complex relationship to the events of Marikana start and end? With the protection of miners lives on the one hand, and capital and personal gain on the other being morally justified motives for the enactment of violence at Marikana, the very possibility of defining violence beyond its historical and morally anchored meanings becomes challenging. Thus, violence cannot be apprehended without a strong appreciation of the meanings that animate and complicate it. Perhaps this accounts for its resistance to a range of concerted efforts to prevent it.

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