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SMALL TOWN GEOGRAPHIES

RETHINKING SOUTH AFRICAN URBAN IMAGERIES

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Science at the University of the
Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. In
fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**

MUNEEBAH KARA

SUPERVISED BY
DR ALEX WAFER



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18

Declaration

I, Muneebah Kara declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

Signed on this day, the 10th of JANUARY in 2019.

Muneebah Kara



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Abstract

South African small-town settlements are an integral part of our urban and rural landscape; providing important trading and service centres for the surrounding communities. Although widely researched under a variety of banners, the 'small town' remains an elusive construct that is seemingly caught in the midst of the rural and urban debate, resulting in a crisis of identity and terminology for small towns. Whilst many have attempted to remedy the situation, the innate plurality and ambiguity of these not-urban and not-rural spaces has yielded no intellectual nor pragmatic consensus as to how they should be defined.

Traditionally, small towns are understood in terms of a broader urban hierarchy. However, traditional positive-functional approaches are proving to be less and less effective in capturing the heterogeneous complexity of small towns. The consequence is very much a slowing of the progression of knowledge within the field to continue to 'move with the times' and remain a competitive discipline.

The aim of this research was to challenge the way small towns are understood, investigated, constructed and represented within the field of human and urban geography. In principal it is to initiate a conversation on the potential of imploring different methods and how this could act as a catalyst for a more nuanced and dynamic understanding of small towns.

This document makes reference to two films, which can be found at: <https://youtu.be/CKMJX6cmgms> and <https://youtu.be/gYGwLLkx3k4> .



CE 20
EE 18

Dedication



*In memory of the lost generations of my lineage,
pioneers who ventured out, braving the unknown
in search of a new world,
and a better life*

Acknowledgements

So often this task has been an exercise in sustained suffrage, testing the limits of my will power. A page is simply not enough to acknowledge all the emotional, mental and intellectual supports, both immediate and beyond my borders; who stood by me and walked this journey with me. I cannot say I was ever alone.

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A very special thank you to my grandfather: Adbu-Samid and grandmother: Gayroon, to whom I owe my interest and intrigue in small towns.

Then, to an individual who has always remained positive, supportive and a constant source of calm and composure, I must thank my supervisor Dr Alex Wafer for his patience, dedication and investment in me.

A sincere thank you to all those who participated in my research, without your contributions I would have very little to write about and to the NRF for your assistance.

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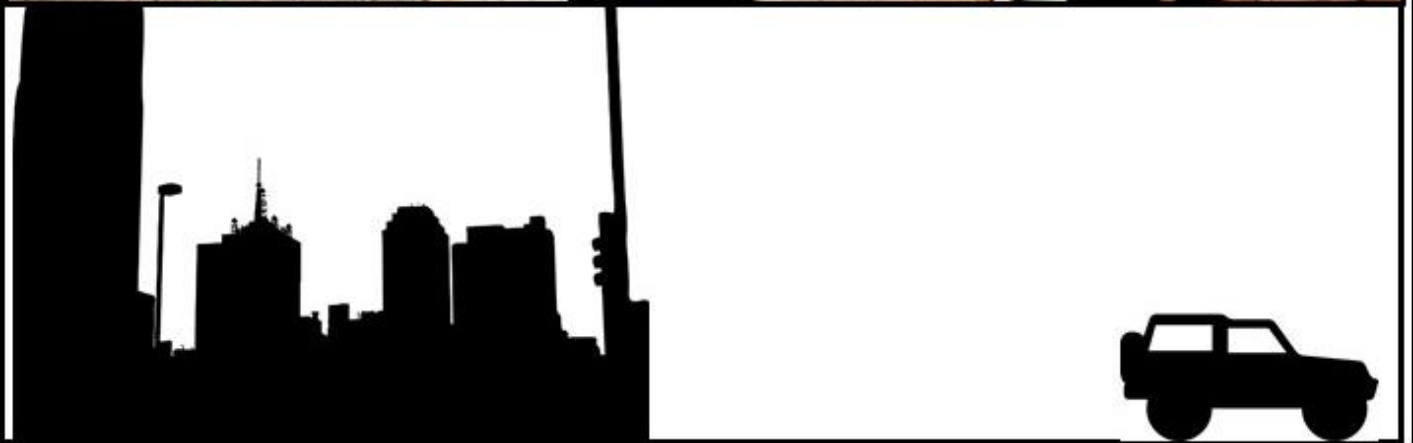
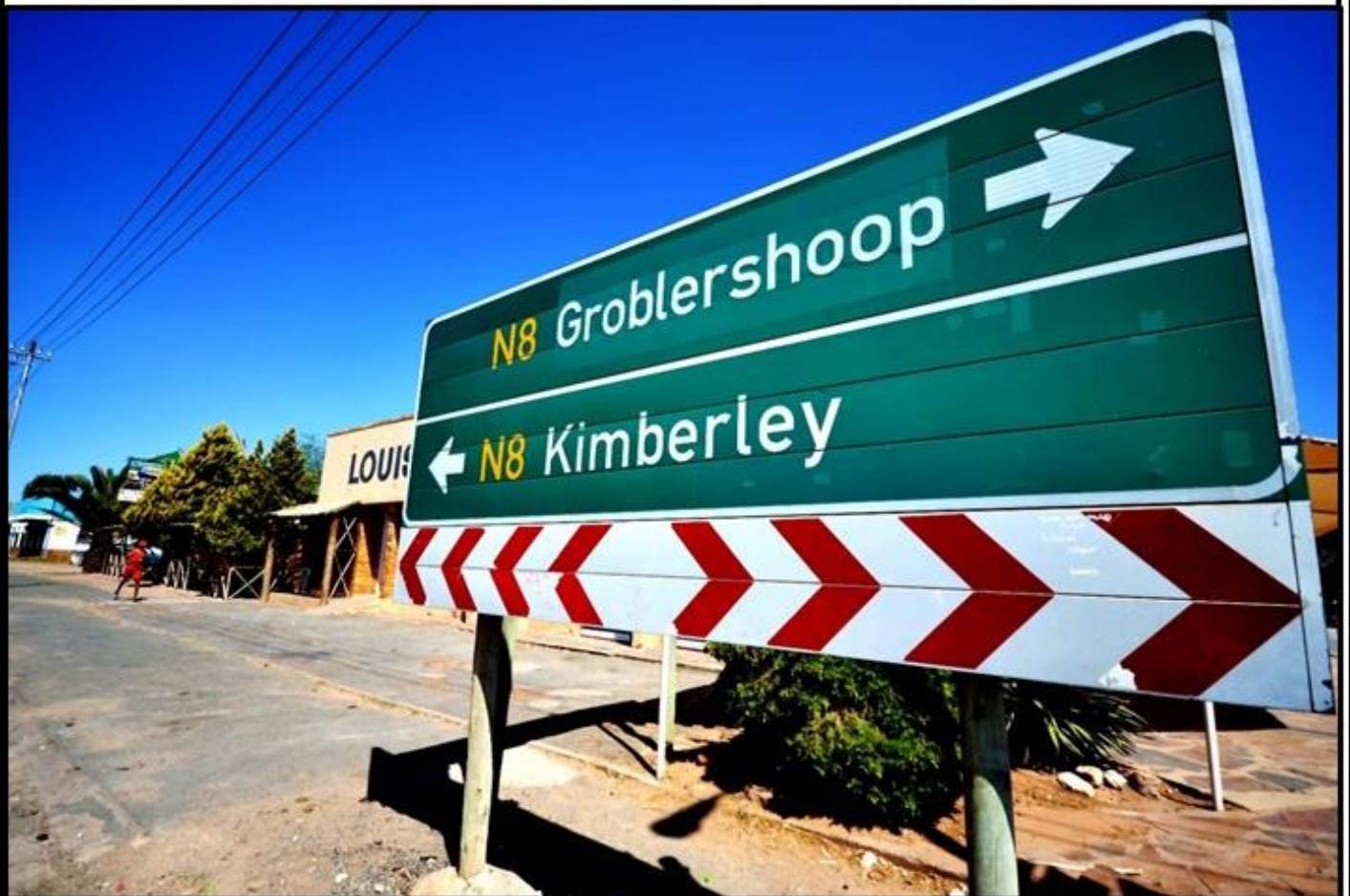
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Abbreviations and Glossary

B&B	Bed and Breakfast
BPDM	Bojanala Platinum District Municipality
COGTA	South African Department for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DKKDM	Dr Kenneth Kaunda DM District Municipality
DM	District Municipality
DRSMDM	Dr Ruth Segmotsi Mompati District Municipality
FDDM	Fezile Dabi District Municipality
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPL	Food Poverty Line
FSPSDF	Free State Provincial Spatial Development Framework
FSSDF	Free State Spatial Development Frame Work
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LBPL	Lower-Bound Poverty Line
LBPL	Upper-Bound Poverty Line
LED	Local Economic Development
LM	Local Municipality
LMD	Lebwajeputswa District Municipality
NMMDM	Ngaka Modiri-Molema District Municipality
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SANRAL	South African National Roads Agency Ltd.
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TMDM	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality
UN	United Nations
XDM	Xhariep District Municipality

1

An Introduction to South African Small Towns



1. AN INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH AFRICAN SMALL TOWNS

1.1. Introduction

The *Small town*; has in the field of urban geography remained a largely contested sub-topic of inquiry. This already combatant genre has been further complicated in South Africa by a chickened history separatist spatial development during the pre-apartheid and apartheid years.

Over the past three decades, and most recently the last ten years or less, there has been a steady reprisal of interest towards settlement areas beyond the metro as geography has progressively moved towards accommodating more diversity with regard to thought and varying approaches to South African small towns. Admittedly however, despite the peak in interest, small towns have remained a relatively niche and nuanced field, with only a handful of theorists steadily and progressively engaging with the topic. This can be seen in the firm development of a theoretical foundation for the delineation of the position, role and relationships of small towns within a broader urban hierarchy. It is at this point that the literature appears to slow in its momentum and sink slightly under the weight of the task – leaving the field almost trapped in a cycle of rethinking the already re-thought elements of small towns in South Africa.

It is at this juncture that this thesis finds its premise. A review of the literature; which will be further discussed in chapter 2 reveals a cyclic academic approach to small towns; which teeters back and forth between defining an urban hierarchy and redefining the hierarchy by including and excluding varying elements. Whilst this can be considered fundamental ground work, it equally signifies a need to move towards more nuanced approaches to small towns. It is with this in mind that it is important to understand that this thesis is not an attempt at discarding existing models by presenting a new one, nor is it meant to ‘debunk’ many well established approaches to small towns, but rather this

thesis is more a small town redux – with an added eclectic or whimsical look at South African small towns.

To achieve this I would like to use the concept of urbanism. Urbanism, by which I mean - the shape life takes in urban areas, did not emerge as a fully-fledged idea from a single source, but rather has developed over time as a child of many parents; being heavily influenced by the numerous theological and ontological offerings of different academic discourses. The idea of urbanism as it weaves rather effortlessly through varying literature, has evolved and come to denote a particular feature of urban conglomerates like cities, as opposed to the very pragmatic encapsulating-descriptor of lifestyle it once was. It goes without saying that in following on the principles of urbanism; many geographers, urbanists, historians, economists and politicians have drawn on their own disciplines and embarked on the journey to isolate the characteristics of urban life – with sociologists trying desperately to demonstrate the inter-relationships between the many emergent definitions of urbanism. Whilst it is true that the key features of urban life manifest most prominently in larger urban areas, specifically cities – the *obvious* and abundant nature of the *urban* signifiers in cities has left the understanding of urbanism tied to a physical entity and limited within conceived boundaries.

The question which arises, is: how urbanism can be used in the context of small towns? Allow for the following explanation: Urbanism as an exceedingly fluid progenitor of thoughts and ideas geared towards the continued unpacking of the urban into a multitude of dimensions, and which ensnares in its philosophy a desire to demonstrate linkages amongst elements active within the urban has brought about an awareness of urban theory that is both physical and metaphysical; and has produced a deeper and greater acumen of the urban. Therefore, a large part of the philosophy of urbanism is a willingness of the observer to see the urban as being an intrinsic entanglement of experiences and experientiality; pragmatism and pedagogy and as being a space of deeply seated ironies, crisis, contentions and rhythms as it encompasses all features of

human life in the urban. Urbanism is a function of urbanity and not a symptom thereof; therefore it is unbridled by political boundaries, and self-imposed conceptual limitations of the urban sphere as we envision it. After all, it was Louis Wirth who explained that any serviceable definition of urbanism would lend itself to encapsulating the characteristics of urban life taking cognisance of the variations of urbanism as they appear in different cultural and geographical contexts; rather than limiting it to a particular cultural or academic rendition.

It is not that there is a lack of literature on the subject, quite to the contrary, in reality there is an abundance of literature on the subject and a variety of approaches - all of which is pulling in its own theoretical and ontological direction. However, the further into the theoretical doldrums of independent economic, geographical and planning academic construct of small towns one goes, the more observable the inability of the literature to capture that 'certain quality' or *je ne sais quoi* of small towns becomes, and remains inexplicable, almost illusive and utterly un-caption-able in the majority of existing literature.

Small towns, particularly in the case of South Africa - have proven to be highly homogenous in their form and function within broader urban hierarchies and traditional urban-centric conversations; making for a difficult topic to pinpoint and isolate from other broader urban and geographical discussions. In an attempt to coalesce many of the discussions surrounding small towns, and expand on the existing literature by using the idea of urbanism as a lens through which to examine small towns – it is hoped that this thesis will provide a more dynamic view of small towns in South Africa.

This chapter will provide a brief introduction and rational outline for this research. Beginning with a brief overview of how we currently position and contextualise small towns in a broader urban geography, thereafter we will ring-fence some core theoretical arguments which will provide a basis for part of the literature review in chapter two, thereafter on to the aim and research questions guiding this project. Finally, we will revisit

some of the key ideas and themes in the conclusion before moving on to the detailed literature review of chapter two.

1.2. Locating Small Towns within a Broader Urban Geography

Before moving into the discussion, I would like to note that the conversation regarding small towns in South Africa is highly diverse and incredibly intricate. This section will provide a high-level overview of the context of small towns in urban geography, touching on major themes that will be discussed in further detail in chapter two.

As a starting point for this section, it will be valuable to first define what geography is, and what we may expect from the discipline based on a definition. 'Geography' comes from the Greek word meaning 'earth description'. This broad definition quite literally encompasses all aspects of the earth from the study of the atmosphere, land and oceans to the interactions and activities of the humans and animals that inhabit the earth; as well as the way the physical environment and its inhabitants (Kullar, 2016). Kullar (2016) goes on to describe geography as:

“Geography is a discipline of synthesis. It attempts spatial synthesis, and history attempts temporal synthesis. Its approach is holistic in nature. It recognises the fact that the world is a system of interdependencies.”

(Kullar, 2016, 4)

Therefore, geography is an interdisciplinary field that incorporate sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, politics and other disciplines to produce the highly generalist but also specialised field we know it to be today (Kullar, 2016; and Knox and Pinch, 2010). As civilisations have evolved to settle in, develop and occupy urban spaces; so too, has geography evolved to include the study of these spaces in various forms, from engaging specifically with the built environment to investigating the interactions between people in these spaces. Arguably, one of the most forward thinkers when it comes to the socio-spatial dialectic is David Harvey who actively contributed to

the field from the 1960's. Amongst his contributions were his focus and an emphasis on the importance of the human experience in urban spaces (Knox and Pinch, 2010).

Moreover, a greater number of researchers have begun drawing on the linkages between geography and urban planning, acknowledging the many overlaps between the two disciplines (Knox and Pinch, 2010 and Mishkini and Rahimi, 2011). The question then isn't so much where does urban studies fit into geography, but rather how does geography link to urban studies. The problem is that even within urban studies as a field there is a palpable tension between several orthodoxies. The first planning orthodox originates in the early 1900's with the Chicago School of Urban Sociology leading the thinking in urban studies as the city being "a congeries of socially differentiated neighbourhoods caught up in a dynamic of ecological advance and succession together with associated mentalities and behaviours" (Scot and Storper, 2014, 2). But this thinking underwent severe critical review from the 1960's when minds such as Castells (1977) hit back, arguing that the previous school of thought reduced space to a container of events and not an active participant in facilitating and producing life (Scot and Storper, 2014). Tensions raged on, with both planning studies and geography competing for ownership of the urban. It during the 1970's urban studies underwent a massive reform and 'space' was reconceptualised and begrudgingly shared between the two disciplines (Scot and Storper, 2014). This paradigm shift ultimately impacted the way space was conceived and written about in geography, as the subfield 'urban geography' emerged, grew and evolved.

South African urban geography and planning has closely followed the trends of our international counterparts, taking up the new literature, digesting it and then adapting its knowledge to our home-grown circumstance. Understandably, the majority of South African spatial studies have been influenced by apartheid policy that enforced racial segregation for almost 50 years, producing a very unique urban footprint. However, the land uses and methods of segregation having begun long before formal political

intervention. Needless to say, our own urbanists and geographers have been largely preoccupied with the impact of those spatial patterns, attempts to undo them and the social, economic and cultural impacts that it has had. Although not without consequence. While it stands to reason that the majority of interest would be paid to the larger cities with the largest population, which was also expected to rise with the freedom of movement, this has had a disastrous impact on our knowledge base of small towns and areas beyond the city boundary. Donaldson and Marais (2012) explains:

“Urban Geographic inquiry has for decades been biased towards a focus on larger cities and metropolitan areas, both in the developed and developing world contexts. Small towns are generally depicted as rural, and many people do not even consider the term urban to be applicable to small towns.” (Donaldson and Marais eds. 2012, ix).

Drawing on Henrik and Titus (2002), Etienne Nel echo's this sentiment describing small towns in geography as: "...overlooked and frequently misunderstood" (Nel, 253). Small towns research has mostly been approached as an anti-thesis to urban development research and therefore postulated as an 'anti-urbanism' (Baker ., 1990) negatively "impacting the development of national space" (Baker ., 1990, 8). However there is evidence of change in the form of a paradigm shift in the fields of urban geography and development planning. Admittedly the shift is subtle and almost unrecorded, the most perceptible records of the movement can be seen in the long term strategic national development plan, with Huyssteen and Botha (et al., 2008) noting:

“A more nuanced and temporal reading of spatial data and information suggest and confirms key social-economic and environmental trends and characteristics in the South African landscape. These trends and characteristics will, and most probably already have, a significant impact on governance and service delivery challenges... it became evident that the character and role of not only cities and city regions are changing but

also that of the range of other settlements in the country” (Huyssteen and Botha et al., 2008, 1-2).

There is an apparent acknowledgement from theorists for a resurgence of small town research. However, the perception that this paradigm shift is still an emerging and informal movement (Huyssteen and Botha et al., 2008 and Donaldson, 2018), can be quite damaging to the fragile momentum the field has managed to gain; and a reiteration of this sentiment as a ‘selling point’ or justification in up-and-coming literature may instinctively undermine its progress, as it may seem that there is no actual progress if the fundamentals of the field are indeterminate. That said, At the moment one of the most recent and largest contributions to small town geographies is from a collaborative publication in 2012 by editors Ronnie Donaldson and Lochner Marais, titled ‘Small Town Geographies in Africa: Experiences from South Africa and Elsewhere’. This publication, can be considered in this period to be one of the most progressive and contemporary works on South African small towns. However, this book fails in one critical aspect. The editors chose to actively avoid committing to a single, standard definition of small towns; saying: “It is not the intention of this book to provide a platform for the age old debate about when a place is considered a small town.” (Donaldson and Marais eds., 2012, X). They do note that towns represented in case studies in the book had populations of greater than 30 000 residents. Beyond this acknowledgement, the authors, like so many other publications make no attempt to justify their field selection, or provide a further interpretation as to the linkages between population size or town size and the data collected. Hoogendorn (2010), who writes from a more globalised perspective; can be considered to partially criticise Donaldson and Marais for their lack of commitment to first addressing/ defining the parameters of the field, as he touches on the possible involvement globalisation could have had on the position of rural areas in national development framework work and subsequently academic disciplines explaining:

“...the structural coherence of rural areas has been disrupted and rural spaces have been increasingly caught up within a global political economy where nationally regulated rural distinctions have in many cases been overtaken by other functions and meanings.” (Hoogendorn, 2011 p vii).

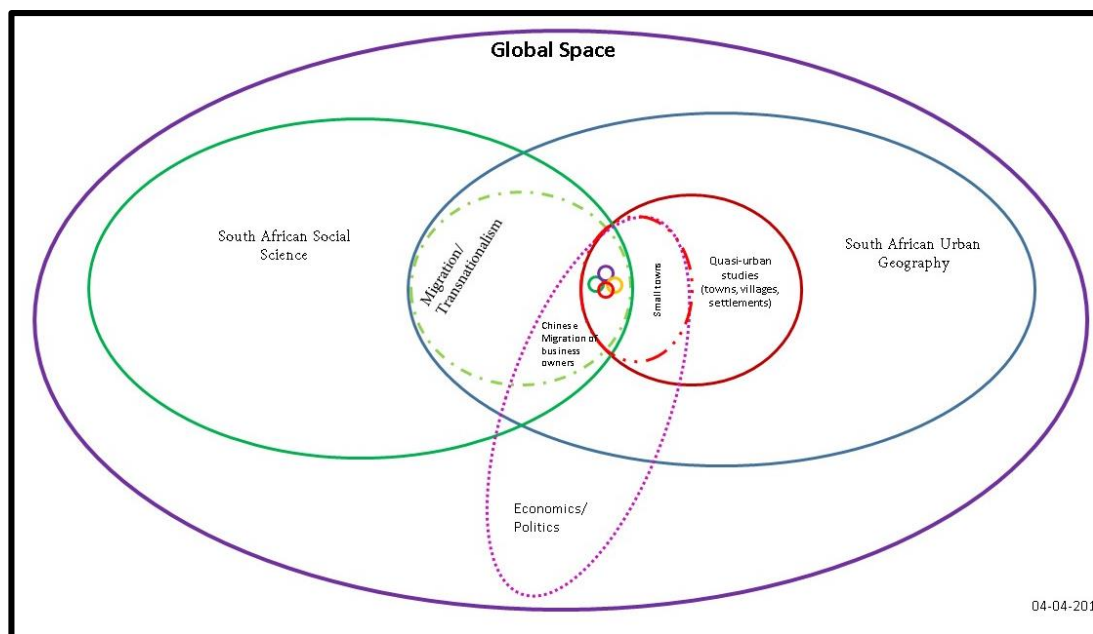
With this in mind, let's take stock: South Africa has seven major metropolitan regions, these are listed as: (1) City of Johannesburg, (2) City of Cape Town, (3) City of Tshwane, (4) Ekurhuleni Metropolitan, (5) Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan, (6) Etikweni Metropolitan and (7) Mangaung Metropolitan; which houses about 35 million people (Nel, 2005 and Census 2011). This means a substantial portion of the South African population reside in areas outside of major cities and metropolitan regions (Gopaul, 2007), estimated at 40%; which equates to about 20 million people (Nel, 2005). Continuing with this line of thought, the problematic of small towns in geography becomes increasingly evident when you begin to investigate its positionality, with a simple question of: “if 40% of a population resides in small towns, then how many small towns are there?” Only to find there is no readily available number of exactly how many small towns there actually are. A quick Google search of each province is the first indication to the problem. With no official documents volunteering this information, Wikipedia being the closest website willing to provide me with this basic information, I consolidated the information, and came to a total 805 small towns under the definition: “list of towns and cities in South African provinces”. Whilst the use of Wikipedia as a reputable reference is deeply frowned upon, as an extremely minor point in this argument, bear with me. Of that 805 consolidated towns (see annexure), 71 belonged to the Free State province. This number in contrast to the list of 101 towns provided by the Free State Provincial Department of Tourism upon request (see annexure). The national census (first seen in census report 2001, then census report 2011 and census report 2016) takes the time to categorise different areas into category A (metropolitan areas), category C (district municipalities) and category B (local municipalities) with a further

sub-division of category B into B1 (local municipality with secondary cities, B2 local municipalities with large towns, local municipality with small towns, with a small population and no large town, and B4 local municipalities that are mainly rural with community tenure and one or two small towns). Beyond this, nowhere in the document is there an attempt to define what a large town is in comparison to a small town or to a rural area with community tenure nor does the document even provide a proposed number. Nel (2004) suggests there are “about 500” small towns (Nel 2005 254) but he gives no indication as to how he came to this number.

This section is meant to only highlight the glaring disparities in the discipline and will be further discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. Returning to the intent of this section, to locate small town geography within a broader academic discourse, please bring your attention to the diagram below:

Small town geography is located as a niche field and exists as a result of several disciplines interacting and at work within a single space. Within small towns there are social, spatial, political, economic interactions and even trends associated with globalisation. The diagram illustrates the location of small towns within broader and other academic discussions, and assists in conceptualising small towns as a field with inherent, with so many possible lenses through which it can be studied. Admittedly, these many lenses do at times pose a significant challenge as they each speak from a particular positionality on the subject and it is this positionality that guides the way small towns are unpacked. However, this again simply speaks to the complexity of the field of

small towns and highlights the importance of understanding that complexity as opposed to reducing it and over simplifying it.



To reiterate, this section has provided only an introductory and high-level overview of the many interconnected disciplines which contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding small towns. It has been used to assist in identifying the conceptual location of small towns within urban geography. Moreover, the themes that have been discussed will be looked at in greater detail in the following chapter.

1.3. Urbanism and Migration

As we continue to exist in an era of economic globalisation which has been marked by an unprecedented scale of migration. With over 232 million people migrating across international borders annually (Hall, 2015) we cannot deny the effect this has had on urban transformation through urbanisation and subsequent urbanisms in increasingly cultural and ethnically diverse cities (Hall, 2015; Landau, et.al, 2011).

Economic globalisation has been a topic of interest for several decades now, however Hall (2015) argues:” We know comparatively little of the role of micro-global networks sustained by migrants in ongoing urban transformations, such as the day-to-day arrangements of micro-economies that emerge from local and global connections.” (Hall, 2015, 7). To further explain, we can track and monitor to a great extent, the effects and impacts of macro-economic movements through increased foreign direct investment

monitoring and international trade activities occurring between different economic powers and sub-powers in the world; but a lot less attention is assigned to the every-day economic or micro-economic and day-to-day activities of migrants who in effect are symbols and sustain the transformations of global macroeconomic trends.

Urbanism as a whole is a complex mosaic of macro and micro social, spatial and economic intricacies (Hall, 2015; Landau, et.al, 2011). Macro-urbanism focuses on broader urban transformations linked to urbanisation such as densification and diversification of cultures. In contrast:

“Micro-urbanism came out of a shifting paradigm of city and philosophy, which suggests there are internal realities to be investigated in order to describe how things interact and coordinate in the micro-scale realm, and which manifest the true spirit of a city and its people. Each city has a particular constitution of microcosms in relation to both natural environment and existing urban conditions, which are more vital and up-to-date than the conventional urban structure in terms of indicating the directions of contemporary urban development.” (Casagrande, 2009, 3).

Hall (2015) argues: “[t]he rendition of the global city as an hierarchical and prestigious territory potentially masks our understanding of migration as a process of city-making in a number of important ways...” (Hall, 2015, 6). She then goes on to explain that the consequences of unequal access to mobility, ignorance to internal inequalities in the city and recognising that the “city is actively being made both within and outside the fields of elites and experts” (Hall, 2015, 7) is important considerations when discussing urbanism. All of which are transcendent of the city-scape. When we begin to divorce the idea of urbanism as being solely linked to the urban condition, we can appreciate the currency of philosophy in micro-urbanism. Micro-urbanism engages specifically with the idea of interpersonal relationships (see Hall, 2015; Kullar, 2016 Landau, et al. 2011). This in stark contrast to the iconic George Simmel ‘The Stranger’ narrative that has set the stage for majority of urbanism discussion. Be that as it may migration has always been implied within the concept of urbanism (Landau, et.al, 2011); but has rarely appeared as a prominent and critical feature within urban-ism chronicles.

Small town urbanism as a concept is often featured as a bit of an academic stretch; given the non-urban status often assigned to small towns. However there is an undeniable way of life in small towns, and very particularly there is a micro-urbanism which exists in these spaces.

Migration patterns in regards to small towns in South Africa has maintained its prominence in academic discussion. There are expansive migratory flows surrounding small towns, which often reach a global scale. Recently, foreign national migration into small towns has caught the attention of several theorists (Al-Rohdan, 2005; Bouare, 2001, Dauderstädt et. al. 2005, Lall, 2002; Park et. al 2013 and Schiere et. al. eds. 2011); but it goes little further than acknowledging the global trend. There are a wide variety of foreign nations migrating and settling in small towns across South Africa having come from other parts of Africa, South America and parts of greater Asia.

Chinese migrants from the northern parts of China have become renowned for their global movements and entrepreneurial skill in foreign countries (Al-Rohdan, 2005; Bouare, 2001, Dauderstädt et. al. 2005, Park et. al 2013 and Schiere et. al. eds. 2011). Chinese migration in small towns in South Africa has attracted a significant portion of interest as it has occurred quite rapidly and has lasted almost two recorded decades. It was actually upon this premise that this research study was first initiated. However, upon beginning this research more critical discussion were identified to take precedence, but the participation of Chinese migrants in small town micro-urbanisms has remained a cornerstone of interest if the research.

1.4. Chinese Migration in Small Towns

Since the 1980's, the world has experienced a massive diffusion of spatial boundaries as a single global community arose. The phenomenon that became known as 'globalisation' occurred on two major fronts; the first was a decrease in cost of technologies that were linked to or provided communication, information sharing and transport; secondly an opening of global markets saw an increase in foreign direct investment, capital flows, gross trade and technology sharing that facilitated the movement of integration and connectedness on a global scale (Lee 2006). Globalization of the global south has been met with both optimism and pessimism regarding the impact of foreign direct investment (Lee 2006). Globalisation is a multifaceted phenomenon that has had a transformative effect at regional, continental and transcontinental scales across the world (Al-Rodhan, 2006; Bouare, 2001 and Lall, 2002). It is most frequently recognised to present with greater economic integration, the strengthening political alliances and increased migration, as well as the lowering of transport costs coupled with more efficient technologies (Al-Rohdan, 2005; Bouare, 2001, Dauderstädt et. al. 2005, Park et. al 2013 and Schiere et. al. eds. 2011). Furthermore, globalisation has a strong economic characteristics which as been described as "...the intensification of profit seeking abroad by states or businesses through widening of world markets." (Bouare 2001 21). Bouare (2001) argues that the globalisation of international trade and financial markets come with a certain social cost to developing countries that are rarely considered in respect of the financial benefit. South Africa's participation in international trade presents with the opportunity to grow and improve our manufacturing industries through product improvement in order to produce consumable that can compete in the global market.

This in combination with a reform in Chinese foreign policy in the 1970's (Park 2009) has facilitated Chinese participation in Global markets and an expansion of Chinese markets into Afirca. This economic reform in the east is considered to have begun what

is arguably a turning point of Chinese-African trade relations (Park et.al. 2013 and Stephen 2014, Schiere et. al. eds. 2011 and Toerien et. al. 2012). Trade between China and Africa seems almost synonymous with the 2000's. Creamer Media Reporter (2010) reported China-South Africa market performance of 2009 was recorded at amounting to \$16 billion which equated to some 20% of the China's foreign trade for that year. China's increased participation in Africa is underpinned by a win-win policy scheme that is economically driven with few, if any political commitments (Willemse 2013); this strategy is seen as an appealing alternative to western foreign investment, especially from the United States that is often accompanied with political pressures and commitments (Willemse 2013).

An influx of Chinese migrants to Africa and particularly South Africa is symptomatic of a positive Chinese-South African relationship. According to Park (2009) there are two most common types of migrants, the first are labourers linked to infrastructure and development projects funded by Chinese enterprises, the second type is 'small-time entrepreneurs' (Park 2009 6). Labourers affiliated with large infrastructure and development projects often return to China once their contracts have expired (Park 2009); but it is the 'small-time entrepreneurs' that is of most interest to this project. "These migrants weren't necessarily entrepreneurs in China, but upon migrating to Africa...established their own businesses...rather than entering the wage labour market" (Park 2009 7).

The rise in number and rate of establishing Chinese owned shops and malls that range from small-scale traders to large wholesalers is fast becoming a recognisable mark of the urban landscape (Idun-Arkurst et, al. 2007 and Willemse 2013). Existing literature suggests that the majority of Chinese traders in South Africa have perforated and settled in the retail sector by importing Chinese consumables to its host African country. These

consumables are often cheaper than the same locally produced or sold products (Idun-Arkurst et., al. 2007 and Willemse 2013). Beyond major cities, researchers have identified a growing number of Chinese owned businesses in smaller urban centres and small towns throughout South Africa (Bouare 2001, Nell et., al. 2011, Park 2009, Park et., al. 2013, Rogerson 2001, Willemse 2013, Xuza 2005).

One of the most recent additions, but growing quickly in relevance to small town geographies is the number of small scale Chinese traders that have settled in these landscapes (Nel et. al. 2011 and Park et, al. 2009). Presently, there is a substantial amount of literature on the macro impacts and operational procedures such as foreign direct investment, supply chains or networks, financial structures, backing and or capital inputs of Chinese enterprises in South Africa and Africa, as well as the migration patterns and individual or collective motivation for migration. But the vast majority of this literature deals specifically with major cities or large urban areas dynamics (Donaldson 2012, Duyar-Kienast 2010, Gopaul 2006 and Rogerson et. al. 2007) producing little on the social and economic impacts of Chinese enterprises on small towns with a comprehensive specificity towards the micro-economic environment. In reflection of the resources available, it becomes clear that small-scale Chinese trade is swept aside in respect of larger, organised Chinese trade and industry.

It is the ‘small-time entrepreneurs’ that mostly concern this project. “These migrants weren’t necessarily entrepreneurs in China, but upon migrating to Africa...established their own businesses...rather than entering their wage labour market” (Park 2009 7). Chinese migration and the proliferation of Chinese-made goods to South Africa has been recognisable in the context of small towns (Park 2009). Case study reports that have investigated the growing presence of Chinese migrant business owners in small towns

has thus far yielded interesting results and insights into the motivations underpinning this trend (see Park et. al. 2009 , Park 2009, Ethics Institute of South Africa 2014 9).

While the micro and macro impacts of Chinese trade in South African small towns is interesting, it is not the key focus nor the primary rational for their inclusion in this project. Rather, Chinese as outsiders, with little to no reference to South African urbanism and cultural norms provide a unique opportunity as studying the lived experience of small towns. It is for this reason that Chinese migrant business owners in small towns have been included as one of the focus groups of this study.

1.5. Urbanism in Small Towns

To understand urbanism, we need to first understand urbanity, which is the urban quality or urban characteristics of a space. Urbanity is the “an urban composite, aesthetic and consumption amenity that makes a particular neighbourhood” (Ahlfeldt, 2013, 3) and which coalesce into a *spatial capital* (Marcus, 2007); or urban spatial quality. In other words, it is the forms, functions, signifiers and symbols within a neighbourhood or area which indicate to the observer that this is a more or less urban space.

Urbanism then refers to the relation between urbanity and human activity, that is to say, urbanism is the way in which people interact with urban spaces depending on the urban spatial quality of a space (see Casarade, 2009; Hall, 2015; Landau et.al., 2011; McFarlane, 2011). Urbanism as a concept tied to and deeply entrenched in the lived experiences of cities may appear a placid and ill-fitting lens with which to approach small towns. However, if we were to divorce from the concept of urbanism, the tradition of cities – seeing urbanism and the –ism of urban life, as the way of living in an urban-familiar space we begin to recognise urbanism in small towns (Mcfarlane, 2011; Bourdieu, 1989; Chow, 2002; Dijkstra and Poelman, 2014; Karakayali, 2006; Lefebvre, 1974; Wolff, 1950)

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Donaldson and Marais (2012) explains:

“Urban Geographic inquiry has for decades been biased towards a focus on larger cities and metropolitan areas, both in the developed and developing world contexts. Small towns are generally depicted as rural, and many people do not even consider the term urban to be applicable to small towns.”
(Donaldson and Marais, 2012, ix).

Small towns research has mostly been approached as an anti-thesis to urban development research and therefore postulated as a ‘anti-urbanism’ (Baker eds. 1990) negatively “impacting the development of national space” (Baker eds. 1990 8). However this is drastically changing in the form of a paradigm shift in the fields of urban geography and development planning. Admittedly the shift is subtle and almost unrecorded, the most perceptible records of the movement can be seen in the long term strategic national development plan.

It is important then to recognise that there is both opportunity and scope to adopt concepts and ideas which were previously unconsidered in small towns research. It is from this departure point, that Urbanism is being adopted as a lens with which to engage with South African small towns as a way of expanding the current knowledge base of the field.

1.6. Problem Statement

With at least 40% of the South African population residing outside of major cities and metropolitan areas, we can expect and often find a great deal of interest in small towns from various bodies, both within the state and external. Whilst it is true, that there is a significant commitment, especially by the South African government to the sustainable, and progressive development of these spaces, it is equally true that the highly politically driven attention to these spaces has allowed for a skewed and partially neglected genre

of research to develop around small towns' which ultimately produces non-inclusive and rather exclusionary readings of small towns.

For a number of reasons, small towns are a deeply frustrated topic within geography. Firstly, they are caught in an outright classification war, where both rural and urban theorists are equally lobbying for and against small towns as being rural or urban constructs. Secondly, in addition to this, as we have partially seen in Chapter 1; many theorists have opted to take a highly 'pragmatic' position when engaging with small towns. The consequence of such a prevalent position, is ultimately an out-of-touch experience of small towns that is repetitively rendered in academic literature. To explain further, despite small towns being the home to such a large portion of the South African population, small towns are often conceptualised as an anti-thesis to larger urban areas. Their values and function are measured primarily by their economic contribution to the national gross domestic profit; and the majority of research undertaken in these areas focus solely on local economic development; as it appears to be the only 'worthwhile' method of engagement with small towns. Whilst it is decidedly important and practically imperative to have a good, solid grasp of the socio-economic status-quo of small towns as well as a strategic plan for the overall improvement of living standards and the quality of life of small town inhabitants, the net effect of this over-attentive sense of pragmatism is a very one sided representation of small towns in academic literature. Moreover, in an effort to achieve the level of pragmatism and practicality, seemingly required – the complexities of small towns, of which there are many, are reduced to a series of statistical data and correlations, projections and historical trends, with little to no notice given to themes of cultural practice, lived experience and lifestyle in small towns.

Finally, small towns are often seen as little more than a backdrop and necessary anti-urban-thesis to support bustling city life. The long histories, and highly diverse cultural innards of small towns are ignored; or exploited for capital gain in the name of local economic development, with little thought as to the place-value of the cultural heritage.

What this highlights are two dialectics at work within small town literature. The first is, how we understand small towns, and second how we engage with small towns. These are two very separate conversations which are difficult to marry in a seamless way. Therefore, this thesis and its components, are providing the conversation, whilst containing in it multiple conversations. In short, this thesis is an argument in and for itself. It is for this reason that a second 'micro-literature review' has been included in Chapter six.

A complete and seamless integration of the two principle conversations is beyond the scope of this study. However it is the intention of the study to demonstrate the potential of a more organic way of thinking about small towns, by examining the relation between the way South African small towns are defined and the way South African small towns are approached in research.

1.7. Aim of the Research

I propose, that by approaching small towns in a more nuanced manner we can uncover and develop a greater and richer understanding of small town spaces in terms of how their urbanism is perceived. While this study does not begin to purport that it can or has addressed or redressed all if many of the resonating challenges in the conceptualisation of small towns in South African geography, it is with hope that this project can at the very least provide the foundation for stimulating more dialogues about small towns in South Africa.

The aim of this research project was to understand the perceptions of urbanism in South African small towns, by exploring the lived experiences of three different population groups in five small towns in South Africa. Furthermore, the aim of this research project was to generate a bearing on the 'culture' which exists in small towns, which is the ethos of living within small towns in South Africa with the intention of demonstrating the potential for new changing views on small towns as well as initiate a deeper more exploratory, inclusive conversation around small towns. In order to achieve this, this

thesis will provide a cross-sectional view of current approaches to small towns and their constructs and will then suggest ways in which the discipline can be enhanced to incorporate a more dynamic and holistic understanding of small towns.

1.8. Research Question and Sub-Questions

The question was intended to provide a sturdy departure point for examining small towns from a more nuanced perspective, thereby unlocking and making accessible potentially new information on small towns as well as generating new ideas of understanding of South African small towns. The central question of this research is:

“How do we understand urbanism in South African small towns?”

To assist in this endeavour four sub-questions were derived from the primary question; and these were designed to assist in unpacking the main research question into smaller more manageable themes that would direct a more methodical approach as well as allow for a more coalesced argument to be formulated. These four sub-questions were:

1.9. Sub Questions:

i. What is a South African Small Town?

This question seems to be a classic departure point for all small town research and is fundamental to answering the primary research question; as the discussion of this question will encapsulate the majority of the discussion around urbanity. This question will be approached by drawing on existing definitions for small towns, a spatial analysis and experience of small towns as depicted during the qualitative interviews regarding small towns that was collected.

ii. What is the lived experience of South African small towns

Spaces are but empty vessels without people. This question is vital in constructing the human experience of small towns, and debunking certain assumptions that may exist or

are perpetuated within small town literature. This questions will look specifically into the some of the prevailing assumptions and misunderstandings that small towns as spaces of nothingness. Furthermore this questions will guide an investigation into whether or not small towns are truly heterogeneous spaces.

iii. What is the opportunity of narrativity in South African urban research?

It is not always obvious, or openly discussed, but in practice, many of the researchers personal motivations shape the decisions of made during the research process. From choosing the topic, to designing the research and the way the data is analyses, all these elements are affected by the researchers own narrative. This question seeks to generate a greater sense of researcher accountability in this research for the purpose of better understanding the intricacies of the way the researchers narrative impacts the research.

This questions is relatively straight forward in that it is guiding question to initiate and interrogation of the research method and whether or not it can be used as an alternative to positivist-functional research methods, or if it should be retained as a supplementary data collection tool.

1.10. 'The Small Town' or 'A Small Town'

A critical element in the conceptualisation of the topic of small towns in South Africa, is the consideration of the scale of the conversation to be had and the generalisability of the findings. During the early stages of the conceptual framework development, an important question was asked; that being: "is the research about *the small town* or is this research about *a small town*. Although it seems insignificant, the distinction between the two semantics is pivotal in the framing of the research topic, the presentation of the data and the overall reading of the data and conclusions presented in this thesis. To understand the difference and potential impact this idea could have on the thesis at large, this section will discuss the difference between the two terms.

The word 'the' is considered a definite article in English grammar. This refers to a specific item or object. This means that there is a specificity to the object of the language. Therefore, 'the small town' refers to a singular town and the research would have made use of a case study method with a particular interest in a single research site. Furthermore, any of the conclusions born from this research would relate entirely to one specific town.

The word 'a', is considered an indefinite article in English grammar. It is used to refer to a non-specific item or object in language. This allows for a degree of ambiguity to be imposed on the subject; therefore; referring to 'a small town' would denote a greater sense of generalisability in the results produced during this research. In reflection the current trend of existing literature, which focuses on specific cases, and look at 'the small town'; which Hoogendorn and Visser (2016) in Rogerson (2016) is an indication of the limitation and narrow geographical focus of small town research.

Therefore, this research has taken the risk of referring to 'a small town'; which is, this thesis has opted to take a highly generalist approach with the expectation that the findings may be applicable to the majority of small towns. Part of the motivation for this decision, actually lies in current trends in small town literature; as most research occurs at a case-study level, findings are often generalised to be applicable across multiple sites.

1.11. Structure of this Submission

This PhD submission is divided into three components. The first component is the 'written thesis'; which is the primary document, housing the Introduction, aims, literature review, methodologies, discussion and conclusion. The second component is a short literary compilation known as the *Ethnographic Monograph* containing the edited interviews of participants as they discuss the lived experience of living in a small town. and the third component are two documentary films. Lastly, photographic images have been included between each of the chapters of this thesis.

At first glance, this thesis may appear fragmented, as it does not follow the traditional format and flow of an academic submission. This was done purposefully, and the intention was to demonstrate a more organic flow of research, where the reader is participating in a journey of sorts as opposed to remaining static. The idea is that the different components of the submission fit together and support each other – creating a more engaging sense of knowledge interaction, thereby transferring power from the writer of the thesis to the reader – thereby equipping the reader with the ability to engage more directly with the arguments, data and information.

The thesis itself is an argument as is structure in more of a conversive manner than a traditional thesis. This will become more clear, especially as the reader moves through chapter 5 to 6 and 7.

A further breakdown of the thesis and components are detailed below.

Written Thesis

The written thesis is comprised of seven chapters.

The first chapter, 'An Introduction to South African Small Towns', is the introduction to the thesis and provides the theoretical basis for the main arguments of the research. This chapter summarises the founding rational of the research report, the aim of the study and illustrates with a brief summary, the major themes to be discussed. Also, in this chapter is the main research question and supplementary questions that have ultimately guided the research in providing a well-structured framework for adequately investigating the research topic. The sub-questions delineated in this chapter will be used to guide the presentation of data in chapter six and seven and the analysis of data in chapter eight.

Chapter Two: 'Underpinning Small Town Urbanity: Origins, Constructs, Facts & Fiction' will provide an examination and critical reflection on literary and theoretical underpinnings of the arguments outlined in the previous chapter and will further expand on these arguments. The literature under review in chapter two had been used as a

baseline to guide the data collection process; by identifying more explicitly the major theoretical weaknesses and shortcomings of small town and urban theory in South Africa.

Chapter Three: 'Research Methods and the Methodology of Research' will provide the outline of the research methods used, as well as a rationale as to why these particular methods were used in designing the research to answer both the primary and secondary research questions. Furthermore this chapter will critically reflect on the methods used and the potential of incorporating more experimental research methods such as documentary film making into scientific based research.

Chapter Four: 'Research Sites and Context' provides an outline to the four case study towns used as research sites in this project. This chapter will further explore the historical and present context of the sites, by briefly looking at their economic, social and spatial status quo and development.

Chapter Five: 'Data Analysis, Unpacking Small Town Urbanism'; contains the presentation of data collected during the research. Furthermore this chapter is a platform for more detailed analysis of the data and discussion of the findings in line with the research question and sub-questions.

Chapter Six: 'An Alternative Research Approach to Small Towns', as the previous chapter concludes with the necessity to explore other research methods in order to appropriately enhance our current understanding of small towns, it is in this chapter that we explore the use of film, photography and ethnography as potential methods which can be adopted in future small town research.

Chapter Seven: 'Conclusion, The Anthropomorphic Town', is the concluding chapter that reiterates and categorically summarised the previous six chapters, outlines key findings of the research, and provides the final reflection on the process and usefulness of more 'experimental' research methods.

Ethnographic Monograph

This is a composition of interviews of participants which have been edited to reflect a narrative style telling of their lived experience in small towns. The format of this document as a separate entity to the written thesis was selected for two reasons, first it mimicked the traditional anthropological ethnographic monograph. Second the inclusion of the narratives in the written thesis document would too dramatically disrupt the conversation being presented in the written thesis; as the narratives themselves are lengthy.

These narratives were used as points of cross reference during the discussion chapter of this thesis (chapter 5).

This narrative both interacts with this thesis as well as operates as a stand-alone document, which allows the reader to be submerged in the lived experience of small town residents as well as the experience of researcher as they conducted the research. It is therefore recommended that the reader read the ethnographic narrative in conjunction with the written thesis.

Documentary Film

The aim of the documentary film was to demonstrate the different formats in which data can be presented and the analysis opportunity of said data. Two documentary films were produced for this research project.

The first film follows the experience of the researcher as they conduct their research in the various towns and the second film is a poetic film making use of more technical film elements to demonstrate the available scope of film as a method of research

Photographic Inserts

The flow this thesis has been purposefully disrupted with the inclusion of several pages of images between each chapter. The function of to challenge the tradition of thesis construct, whilst offering the reader an opportunity to look at some of the images of the

towns that were visited. The intention is that this will create an experience for the reader, wherein reading the thesis is more of a journey than a static task. This echoes the conceptual structure of the thesis as being organic and representing a journey.

1.12. Conclusion

Small towns are a highly complex and intricate field within urban geography. With about 40% of the South African population forming part of the small town genre, it is not surprising that the topic has received a significant amount of attention, especially with regards to survivorship, local economic development and its' highly linked tourism economy. However, it is within the hyper-attentive foci towards local economic development that the need for a more nuanced and niche reading of small towns has emerged.

The aim of this research was to understand the perceptions of urbanism and urbanity in South African small towns by first providing a cross sectional view of existing approaches and trends in small town studies and suggesting ways our current understandings can be enhanced.

This chapter has introduced this research project by briefly highlighting some of the key elements in the discourse surrounding small towns, including but not limited to the locality of small town research in urban geography and some of the factors driving and influencing current research.

Following this chapter, will be Chapter Two the literature review titled: Underpinning Small Town Urbanity: Origins, Constructs, Facts & Fiction, wherein some of the existing and prevailing literature, arguments and discussions will be explored in greater detail.



Image 1: A road in Limpopo



Image 2: Small filling station in rural Limpopo



Image 3: Abandoned newly build home, Vredefort

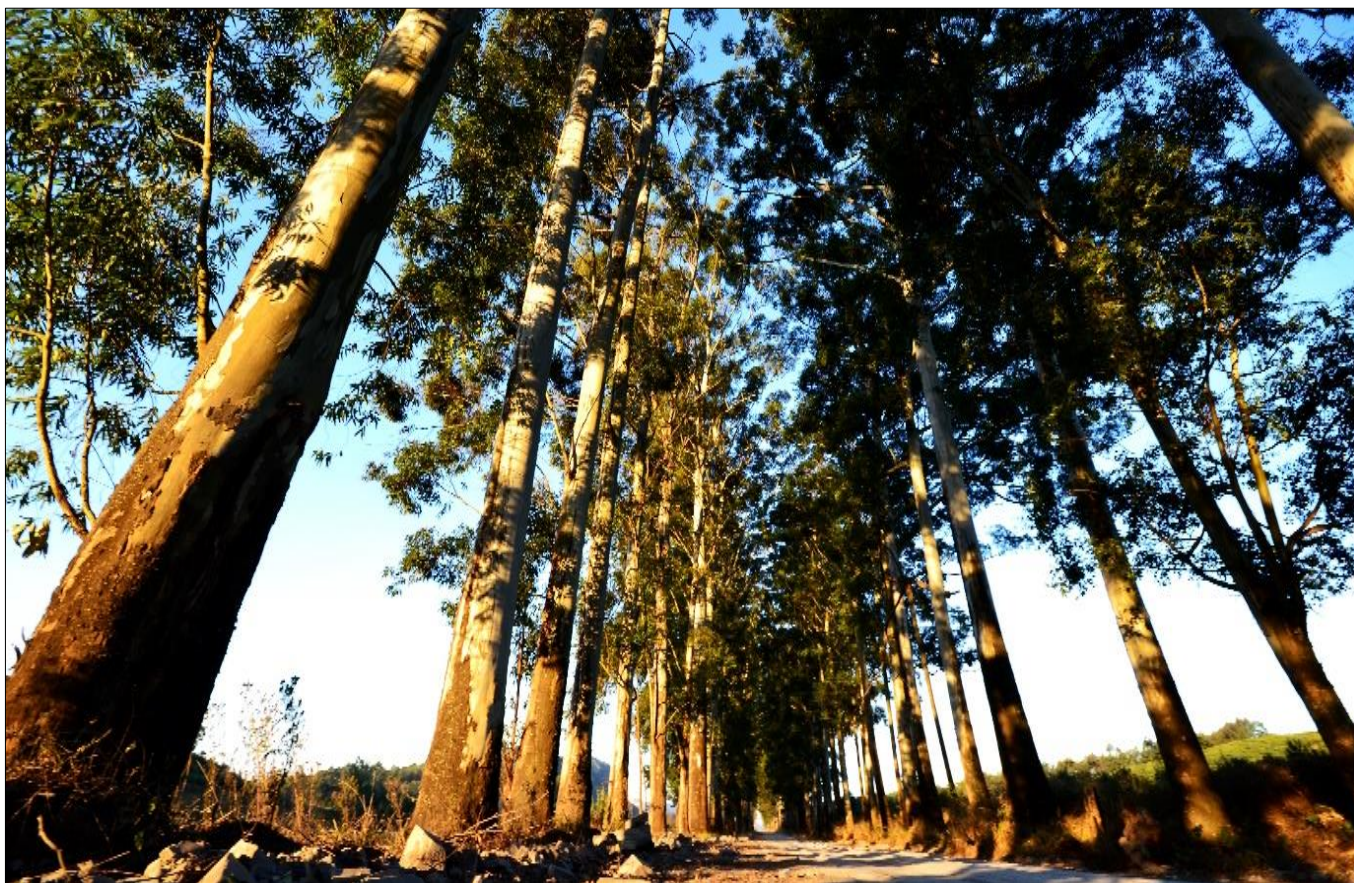


Image 5: Road near Bloubergstrand, Limpopo



Image 4: Dirt road near Niekerkshoop, Northern Cape



Image 7: Inside a Chinese owned 'China Shop', Vrede



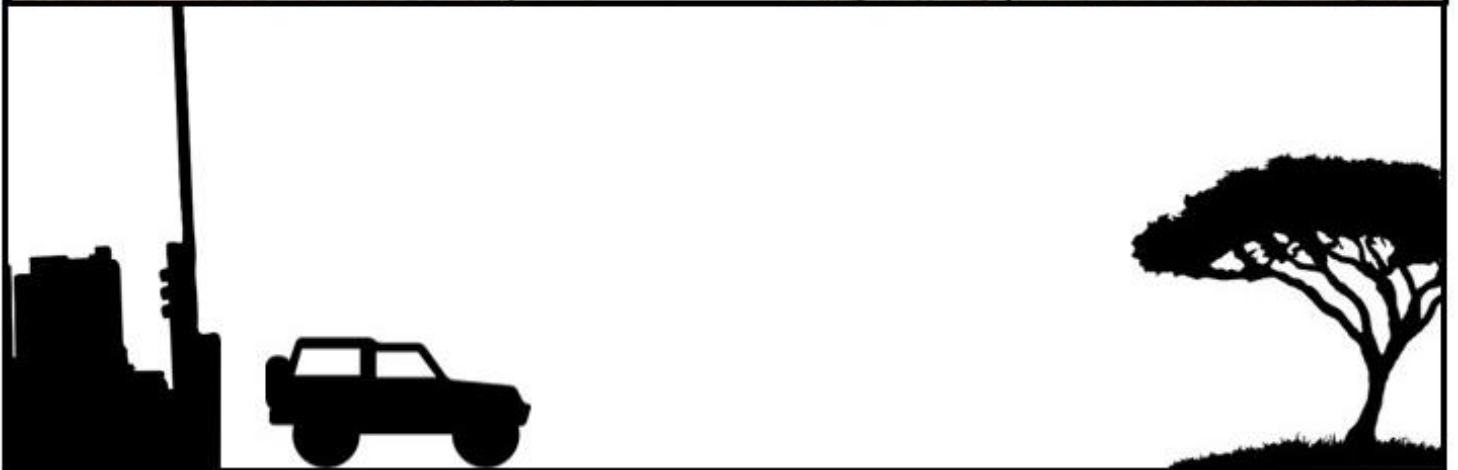
Image 6: Outside a Chinese owned 'China Shop', Vrede



Image 8: Peter and an employee, Vrede

2

Literature Review: Underpinning Small Town Theory



2. LITERATURE REVIEW: UNDERPINNING SMALL TOWN THEORY

2.1. Introduction to the literature review

This chapter will outline, explore and critically reflect on some of the literature that exists surrounding small towns. It will further assist providing a detailed basis of the argument of this thesis. The discussion below will assist in further unpacking the strategic urban geographical concepts which were introduced in the previous chapter. This will be achieved by delving into the depths of some of the major theoretical underpinnings of small towns in South Africa and on a global scale; with specific interest to the definition and of rural and urban in their construct of small towns in South Africa. Thereafter, this section will look at how these definitions and hierarchies are absorbed into broader discussions of small town dynamics such as rural-urban linkages and the roles of small towns.

As discussed in the rationale, there are 2 conversations being had in this thesis, the first is regarding small towns – what are they and how people experience them. The second conversation surrounds the way we engage with small towns; i.e. the method and technique. These are two very separate conversations which are difficult to marry in a seamless way. Therefore, this thesis and its components, are providing the conversation, whilst containing in it multiple conversations. In short, this thesis is an argument in and for itself. It is for this reason that a second ‘micro-literature review’ has been included in Chapter 6. The literature discussion in this section directly engages with concepts and theory strategically linked to two out of the three sub-questions presented in Chapter 1.

Thereafter this chapter will investigate some of the prevailing assumptions of small towns, where these assumptions originated, how they have manifested in literature and how they have informed our perceptions and understanding of urbanism and urbanity in

small towns. This section will delve into the depths of themes that contribute to a broadly accepted idea that small towns are spaces of nothingness, which are uninteresting and destined to fizzle and decay, disappearing and being reabsorbed into the countryside. This section will deal with diversity complexities within small towns in terms of migration, tourism, urbanism, the production and consumption of space and finally the lived experience within small towns

2.2. The Urban Vs Rural Dialectic

The urban, in literature has often been associated with civilisation at large, as if it were as natural an occurrence as the weather. Urban settlements, as a subject has a long ancestry of deliberation and discussion, ironically all beginning with the notion that very little is actually known about the urban realm (see Kaplan, Wheeler, and Holloway, 2004; Smailes, 1966; Best and Rogers, 1973; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005; Scott and Stroper, 2015). Discussions are then often driven by structuralist thought with the urban considered in dialectic opposition to the 'rural', country-side or hinterlands. The definition of urban is surprisingly difficult to locate in literature, however, despite this, the conversation effortlessly flows into the discussion about the city, insinuating an invariable link between what is urban and the city, or as if they are one and the same thing (Kropf, 2005). Recognising this rhetoric is the first step towards recognising of the problematic with urban studies, both in geography and elsewhere (Scott and Stroper, 2014).

Taking into account dynamics such as population size, density, area coverage, form, functions and services, building typologies, ecology and organisational structure; the urban is broadly defined by Gideon Sjoberg's (1973,19-20) in (Kaplan, Wheeler, and Holloway, 2004, 23) as: "a community of substantial population size and population density that shelters a variety of non-agricultural specialists, including a literate elite" (Gideon Sjoberg's (1973,19-20) in Kaplan, Wheeler, and Holloway, 2004, 23). Similarly, Killian, Ball and Crankshaw (2005), broadly describe settlements as including "varying sizes [and] geographical locations" (Killian, Ball and Crankshaw, 2005, 5). In South Africa, urban areas are completely synonymous with cities, and lack a definitive definition, existing in complete contrast to the definition of rural. Urban areas are characterised by population and refer to 'large metropolitan (2< million people)', large cities (500 000 – 2 million people), medium 'sized cities/ large towns' (100 000 – 500 000 people) and medium sized towns (50 000 – 100 000 people) (Killian, Ball and Howells, 2005). This was then further divided into 'urban formal', 'urban informal', 'urban hostels' and 'urban institutions'.

With the stark difficulty in identifying and then utilising the multitude of data-sets to define what is an urban area, many have taken to an even more general approach, as for example; the United Kingdom Office for National Statistics (2013) who defines urban as: “land which is irreversibly urban in character, meaning that they are characteristic of a village, town or city”. (United Kingdom Office for National Statistics, 2013, 2). Tacoli (2006) disagrees with this sentiment, arguing that for an area to be considered urban, the population “is where people whose main income is not from agriculture” (Tacoli, 2006: 33); but acknowledges that this may be too limiting and exclusionary in that small towns often function as both market towns, providing a formal structure and access of larger urban nodes to the agricultural lands and their yields.

In Contrast, ‘rural’ is understood generally as an “area where the settlements are sparse, where agriculture is the main employer and where the majority of jobs are connected with agriculture” (Harris, 1998, 1); Dijkstra and Poelman (2014) describe rural areas, using the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) method for defining terminology, as thinly populated, and being either predominantly urban, intermediate or predominantly rural with a density lower than 150 inhabitants per km² as rural (Hijckstra and Poelman, 2014).

In South Africa, according to StatsSA Census Metadata (2011), rural is “[a]ny area that is not classified urban.” (StatsSA Census Metadata, 2011,18), the metadata then goes on to describe the four main settlement types of rural area as: “a) formal urban areas; b) informal urban areas; c) commercial farms; d) tribal areas and rural informal settlements” (StatsSA Census Metadata, 2011:19). In Rural Planning in South Africa: A Case Study (2001) by UK International Institute for Environment and Development, explains:

“Until 1995, ‘rural’ was defined as all households not living in formally declared towns. In apartheid South Africa, many areas defines as rural were, in reality, urban areas without services. In the era after apartheid ‘rural’ is defined as the sparsely populated areas in which people a farm

or depend on natural resources, including villages and small towns dispersed through these areas. He Free State has adopted this concept. However, a problem with this definitions is that many households fall into both urban and rural categories as they derive their income from a range of sources, including migrant labour to towns” (UK International Institute for Environment and Development, 2001, 18).

South Africa is caught in a unique position of urban-rural postulation, as many of the earlier and later definitions and understandings of urban and rural were and remain politically driven by apartheid segregation and post-apartheid reformation respectively. At present, government is maintaining a hyper-attentive focus on transformation especially within the local governance structures. The re-administrative delegation of urban and rural locations coupled with the move to re-demarcate authoritative boundaries led to the removal of the distinction between urban and rural areas, concentrating on the strong linkages between built-up areas and the hinterlands (South African Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review, 2011). The rural development framework (1997) defined rural areas as being: “[1] sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources including villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas; [2] and areas that include large settlements in the former homelands, which depend on migratory labour and remittance as well as government social grants for their survival, and typically have traditional land tenure systems” (South African Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review, 2011, 192).

“The Constitution and the Municipal Structures Act are silent on the concept of urban and rural when describing Category B municipalities. However, the White Paper of Local Government correctly points out that, in some cases, the separation of rural areas from cities and towns has imposed artificial political and administrative boundaries between areas

that are otherwise functionally integrated. It also creates inequity for rural residents who contribute to the towns' economy but don't benefit from its resources. The inclusion of rural areas in with urban areas in the demarcation of category B Municipalities is not only allowed for in law but also regarded as appropriate." (Statistics South Africa, Census Report 03-02-20, 2001, 3).

Scott et al. (2007) summarises the urban-rural theory, and succinctly outlines decade's long debate:

"The general idea of urban areas relates to a town or city that is: free-standing, densely occupied and developed with a variety of shops and services. Three approaches are commonly used in determining urban perimeters: (i) tracing the extent of the built up area; (ii) classifying levels of population density; and (iii) plotting the functional area of the town which includes not only the built up area but settlements in the countryside. Furthermore, a culture of impersonal and anonymous relationships has been used to describe urban populations. The concept of 'rural' is more complex and multidimensional. One problem lies in capturing the diversity of types of rural areas that exist. These can, for example, range from small settlements on the fringe of large towns and cities to remote villages and hamlets, and from 'green belt' agriculture to areas of extensive arable farming or grazing. Another complication lies in the economic and social changes that have taken place in rural areas which create interrelationships with urban areas and cultures. For example, there has been an increase in commuting, especially of the urban work force choosing to reside in rural areas. Nevertheless, rural areas are characterized by a more personal and intimate web of social relationships. From a review of definitions of 'rural' five dimensions can

be identified: (i) negative, i.e. not urban; (ii) low population density; (iii) extensive land use; (iv) primary economic activity and employment; and (v) community cohesion and governance.” (Scott et al., 2007, 4).

On the surface, it seems simple and clear enough to the reader what is urban and what is rural. The relationship between the two seems almost symbiotic in that, to define urban is to juxtapose the idea against what it-is-not and that is rural; and similarly, to define what is rural is to juxtapose it to what it-is-not, and that is urban. Simple enough, yet the debate rages on, but why is there such a dialectic and tension between urban and rural space? By drawing on Gordon Childe (1950) Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005) attempts to provide some insight to this question...he explains:”...in antiquity, urban growth and ‘civilisation’ were inseparable. According to him the city transcends or even opposes the accepted ideas, customs, and laws of the surrounding rural environment...” (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005, 9). Kinsel (1957) argues that the conflict comes from the division of planning and theoretical attention. He says: “...planning is something peculiarly associated with urban expansion. The obvious differences between rural and urban problems, the separation between rural and urban government jurisdictions, and the urgency of extending urban facilities have succeeded in splitting our vision...” (Kinsel, 1957 in Putman, Taylor and Kettle, 1970, 363).

Therefore civilisation [culminating in the city] is seen as the progressive, the technologically, economically and politically advanced, a place of cultural mixing, trade, growth, creativity and knowledge production as opposed to the country-side which remains almost stagnant, but for the rare and insufficient interaction with visitors from the city (see extensive). Whilst insightful in that we recognise that the urban is in direct opposition to the rural, it only further solidifies the problematic, that urban is associated with city, and therefore the city signifiers; which means that if a built-form does not look, sound or feel like a city, then it cannot be a city and therefore it cannot be urban and vice versa. Logically, this is particularly jarring in that as urbanists we know that urban-rural

theory and their discursive dichotomies are for more intricate than is laid out here, however, simultaneously we cannot ignore the primal instinct to associate urban with cities and human advancement; and associate rural with country-side and backwardness or stagnation. This raises flags surrounding the language of spatial discourse, which will come under examined later on.

Returning to the topic, the conceptual polarisation of urban and rural creates a sense of opposition between the spaces and automatically places the urban and rural in competition with each other, which is hugely inaccurate as their relationship is more appropriately described as symbiotic as it is competitive (All the linkages theorists). Significant portions of academic resources have been dedicated to debating the rural urban dichotomy, with great strides made in understanding and constructing the two spheres. But how do we overcome this dichotomy? Kropf (2005) offers a potential method over circumventing and overcoming the debate, by thinking of the urban and rural not as two separate entities, but as separate features within a single system, he explains:

“There are obvious parallels between countryside character assessment and the understanding of urban morphology in towns and cities. What ties the two processes together is the broader concept of landscape. ‘Landscape’ really exists as a continuum across both rural and urban areas....’Landscape ‘is a term that is powerful because it invokes, in a single word, a wide range of meaning. Whilst landscape is often associated in a countryside context, in a purest sense, landscape has no start or end” (Kropf, 2005:28).

An increasing number of theorists have taken to seeing spaces as fluid and a fabric, continuous and inter-connected (Bourdieu, 1989; Chow, 2002; Dijkstra and Poelman, 2014; Lefebvre, 1974). The commitment is founded on the argument that conventional distinctions between urban and rural have undermined the significance of spatial

dimensions present in and between classically 'urban' and 'rural' settlement typologies. The consequence of this bias is seen in an unequal production of knowledge towards and in favour of 'urban settlements' or the 'city' (Anderson and Rathbane, 2006; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005; Kaplan, Wheeler and Holloway, 2004; Malaquais, 2011 ; Niekerk and Marais, 2008).

New approach to urban thinking has produced a new genre and nuanced reading of spaces, seeing the urban as a feature of the countryside, and not in opposition to it (Best and Rogers, 1973). With this in mind, we can begin to accept that administrated human settlements first existed about 6000 years ago, and cities as we perceive then today have only been a feature of the landscape for the past 300 years (Kaplan, Wheeler, and Hooloway, 2004). Furthermore, it is important to appreciate that the compositions and signifiers of urban areas differ dramatically depending on their varying contexts or their social, political and economic regions, also known as their country of origin. It is for this reason that any inquiry into cities and the urban sphere should begin with the following question, and that is to ask: 'is this a culturally specific built form, or is it a built form in a culturally specific location'. Ergo: 'is this a South African urban settlement, or is this an urban settlement in South Africa?'

The difference in the phrasing of these two questions is the outcome and meaning. Phrasing the question as a 'South-African-urban-settlement' denotes a sense of uniqueness in the referred-to spaces. It provides an insight to a kind of autonomy from the general urban field of study and prompts the thinking that it holds a unique set of characteristics that require a unique approach to research which specifically acknowledges the unique historical and present day context of the spaces and the various forms in which they have manifested in reality. Conversely, phrasing the questions as an 'urban-settlement-in-South-Africa' retracts the notion of uniqueness and in its stead inspires a sense of generalisability autonomous of context. This means that there exists general and shared characteristics among all urban spaces; prompting

research which is geared towards finding linkages, similarities and; objectively; difference. The complexity of these questions goes a lot deeper than the inferred impact on transnational urban research, and can and does have a very real impact on the way urban areas are understood in a multi-dialectic country. Take for example South Africa, which hosts 9 different provinces, is dominated by 11 official languages and numerous unofficial languages and has a profound spatial development and political history, consequently, much of present-day policies are designed to redress the consequences of such. Therefore the questions still remain pertinent, and the truth of their uniqueness or generalisability debatable. It is perhaps fair then to argue that the questions themselves can be transposed onto the other, for a more malleable and fluid interpretation of the spaces. However, retaining the idea that a universal truth may exist with acceptable variation within it; that reflects a specific context; whilst universal truth remains intact; and accepting that uniqueness is limited and for any progress to be made there must be an appreciation for some shared characteristics that allows research to be generalizable. The fact remains that within an environment where there is a heightened sense of appreciation for the complexities at work in various spaces, which present in various forms. Urban and rural will remain ambiguous in relation to each other, whilst hosting a degree of ambiguity in themselves. This inherent ambiguity is both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because it provide enough wiggle room to challenge the status quo, and make advancements in a field whilst remaining in the comfortable discipline of discourse, but it is a curse as it seems that it is simply impossible to untangle the knotted strings of complexity within the urban field.

There are a number of urban settlement typologies that are used in reference to the different urban and rural settlements in South Africa (Kaplan, Wheeler, and Hooloway, 2004; Killian, Ball and Crankshaw, 2005). Although there are many renditions of accepted settlement typologies, they are further organised into formal and informal settlement typologies (Killian, Ball and Crankshaw, 2005). These definitions are then organised and arranged into a hierarchy, creating a sense of importance and power of

one space over the other. This is problematic in that it encourages a linear organisation and thinking of space, that ultimately affect the way different spaces are conceptualised. Furthermore, this conceptual organisation of spaces generates a sense of teleology, which encourages us to think of spaces, below the 'city-ideal' as constantly aspiring to become or represent the 'city-ideal'. Arguably, the urban-rural debate within the field of geography can be to blame, as efforts to categorise space, with the good intention of understanding it better has resulted in the dichotomy and tension between the two that currently exists. Admittedly, this is not a problem that exists in geography alone, but it can be seen in fields such as, but not limited to spatial planning, economic development, sustainable planning and the like. As we have seen in the previous chapter, and early in this section, it is difficult to define what is urban and what is rural, and therefore difficult to differentiate between the two (see Anderson and Rathbane, 2006; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005; Kaplan, Wheeler and Holloway, 2004; Malaquais, 2011 ; Niekerk and Marais, 2008 Killian, Ball and Crankshaw, 2005). Whilst the absolute polar ends of the urban-rural spectrum is simple enough to identify, albeit highly contextual, it is the spaces in-between such as small towns, villages, hamlets and settlements that maintain an inherent ambiguity and interchangeability of the spaces which are not-rural but also not-urban. Small towns, which fall somewhere within this continuum of urbanity thus occupies a more liminal spatial definition. From the above discussion, it becomes clear that small towns share an equanimity between both rural and urban definitions, resulting in its inherited ambiguity. This ambiguity makes it difficult to structure into representations in language, which are simply too restricting to demonstrate the fluidity of the space, and this is why is so difficult to locate in literature.

But what does this mean for small towns? The discussion thus far, has yet to yield a description of small towns which can be used to isolate the physical area for the research and provide a significant context. Thus far, based on the discussion above small towns may be accepted as being both rural and urban, in that it has structural characteristics

of urban spaces in terms of density and substantial population size, services and so on, but as it is largely dependent on agricultural activities surrounding it, it is also rural.

2.3. Rural-Urban Networks: The Role of Small Towns

It is by no measure of intent that this thesis begins to assume that it could resolve the 'what is urban and what is rural debate'. Although unresolved, we must press on. Regardless of how we conceptualise the rural and urban divide, there is a clear network or relationship between the two spheres, which tend to complement each other, this relationship is known in varying fields as 'rural-urban linkages'. The importance of thoughtful consideration of rural-urban linkages lies in its potential of the ensuing discussion to offer insight and understanding into the complexity of people, their livelihoods and the associated living-strategies, which often include "mobility and diversification of income sources and occupations" (Tacoli, 2006, 3) in the context of both small towns and larger urban areas. A basic explanation of rural-urban linkages is that they comprise of the exchange and flows of produce, goods, services, information, technologies, economies and people between rural and urban areas, and visa versa (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1998; Southall, 1998; Simon, 1992; Pedersen, 2003; Tacoli, 2003 and Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2003). Whilst concise, this description is rather superficial, providing us with a broad description what the linkages may look like, but fails to adequately explain the importance or any detail for that matter, of the relationship and some of the potential impacts it may have on different ends of the spectrum.

It has been suggested that towns come to exist in particular spaces in order to provide 'necessary functions'; therefore in order to understand the linkages, we must first understand the historical context of the town's establishment (Smailes, 1966). With this notion being particularly popular especially amongst positivist-functional research, we then see expression of this in an over emphasis on the macro-economic relationship between urban and rural areas which ultimately drives policy and legislation for rural towns and urban centre. This can have positive impacts as Owusu (2005), agrees explaining further

the benefits of a strong macro-economic relationship, stating that in developing countries, governments are driven to implement policies and legislative changes which strengthen small urban centres and their market opportunities, thereby, incentivising farmers to improve agricultural production which is ultimately aimed at achieving national development goals that address poverty and promote programmes in small towns which diversify opportunities, particularly economic opportunities. However, many developing countries fail to properly implement strategies that are effective and sustainable. The South African Rural Development Framework (2000) reviews previously implemented strategies, citing that whilst there does exist an appreciation for the importance of rural-urban linkages in South Africa, the policies remain fragmented, unable to adequately address the multidimensional nature of challenges in rural areas. Furthermore, it acknowledges that having national government be the sole proprietor of rural transformation is not the best approach, as:

“Firstly...the policy framework has not gone far enough with respect to concrete strategies towards implementation. Secondly, centralised national responsibility for rural development has not been effectively assigned with a clear delineation of responsibilities (national/ provincial), goals and objectives. Thirdly and perhaps most fundamentally, the rural development agenda continues to be set at a national level with sub-optimal participation of provinces and more specifically the rural poor.”

(Rural Development Framework, 2000, 23)

There are five primary roles of small towns in regional and rural development, these are: first, **‘to act as centres of demand/ market for agricultural produce from the rural region’** (Tacoli, 2017). That is to say, small towns provide local consumers with access and networks to export markets which is a prerequisite to increasing agricultural incomes. Furthermore, small towns act as an intermediary between larger service-centred urban areas and rural production centres. Secondly, **‘to act as centres for the**

production and distribution of goods and services to their rural region' (Tacoli and Aggergaard 2017). Due to the economies of scale, clustering of firms and business, as well as locating them closer to each other provides firms with greater access to shared resources such as infrastructure, thereby reducing the costs of production. Agglomeration of manufacturing also locates businesses closer to each other, improving the market competitiveness, which in itself may drive economic, spatial and social growth (World Development Report, 2009). The third role of small towns in regional and rural development is **'to become centres for growth and consolidation of rural non-farm activities and employment'** (Tacoli and Aggergaard 2017). A key role of small towns is to host enterprises and service sectors critical to the connectivity, function and administration of the town, ensuring that it remains adequately connected to larger urban centres and their markets. For example, services such as banking, healthcare, and education, postal and other governmental services such as home affairs or similar are critical for the rural hinterlands to remain connected and active participants in the national and by inference global markets. When these networks fail, it directly impacts the economies and social infrastructure of the town. The fourth and penultimate role of small towns in regional and rural development is **'to attract migrants from the surrounding region'** (Tacoli and Aggergaard, 2017). This role serves two functions, namely, to reduce the rate of poverty in rural areas by providing non-farming opportunities, which is critical, especially in areas where work is seasonal. Secondly, by creating a demand for non-farm labour, it demonstrate diversity in opportunities and reduces pressure on larger urban centres which are often perceived as the hub of opportunities. The fifth and final role is **'the management of natural resources'** (Tacoli and Aggergaard 2017). This function relates to sustainability, both of the natural resources and of the networks between urban nodes and rural areas. Small towns are needed to act as administrative seats for the management of the agricultural area and natural resources in lieu of local and global changes, in both the economy, politics and the environments.

Notwithstanding, many still maintain that the survival and sustainability of small towns lie in decentralising power to local administrative units and strengthening small towns; enabling them to facilitate development of the surrounding hinterlands and their inhabitant communities (Xuza, 2005 Extend). Although sparse, studies of the micro-economic relationship between rural and urban areas have revealed that many people choose to straddle the urban-rural line in order to maintain and diversify their incomes, thus coercing a kind of economic security (Tacoli, 2006; Little, 1976). Continuing along the line of macro-economic relationships between rural and urban, a continued belief that urban and rural spheres are disproportionately linked through needs and necessity, that is to say their functions; will generate a continued perception and investment in rural areas which too narrowly target the region, and does not adequately integrate into broader economic development goals. It is for this reason that Baker (1990) argues this popular dualistic approach -which may stem from a conceptual cleavage between urban and rural- needs to be rejected as “it fails to understand the inherent and complex interplay of the rural and urban economies” (Baker, 1990 in Xuza, 2005, 91).

Instead, the relationship between rural and urban should be seen more as a symbiotic relationship, with intricate co-dependencies rather than a dominant-submissive. It is important to understand that that the country side, and its trading centres provide access to the hinterlands, and its natural resources, whilst the large urban centres provide the node for higher order services related to administration, governance and finance (Baker, 1990; Nel et al. 2005; Owusu, 2005; Tacoli, 2006; Xuza, 2005) furthermore, beyond the supply of goods and services, linkages extend to contribute to the engines which drive social, economic and cultural transformation (Tacoli, 2006). To reiterate this point, small towns, abstractly referred to and seen as ‘service centres’ and ‘network bridges’ between the rural and urban play a pivot role in the development of rural areas, which urbanites seem to find so offensive, Owusu (2008) cites a global report entitled *Meeting Development Goals in Urban Centres – Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities 2006*, wherein “ the United Nations agency for habitat states emphatically that small towns,

which tend to be overlooked, are the first-tier market and service providers for rural enterprise and development” (Owusu, 2008, 454).

As seen above, the literature and its method appears to be deterministic in some parts. What this means is that their output is not only defined by the parameters of the investigation, but is a result thereof. The danger of this is creating a false sense of what a small town is; when in reality what is being studied and presented is only a small part of what truly exists. This then results in incomplete representation of a subject matter, or mis-representation.

In South Africa, the majority of small towns were established as agricultural, mining or trading towns, location in relation to resources or opportunities, with the rare exceptional cases (see Baker, 1990; Nel et al. 2005; Owusu, 2005; Tacoli, 2006; Xuza, 2005). Whilst this is true in most instances, it does not provide a basis for the continued survival of towns who have ‘lost’ their function in that mines have closed, or farming stopped. Yes there is a large out-migration, however, the town may stagnate, but there is yet to be a case where a town has been completely abandoned. Furthermore, it does not account for towns who have gone through a rebranding of their identity, and become ‘tourism’ town, which has no direct economic or functional contribution to larger urban centres.

2.4. The Problematic of Urban Hierarchies

An ‘Urban hierarchy’ is the collective term that refers to the organization of human settlements into groups or clusters by location, size, and function; and in South Africa - institutional management. These, now classified and clustered human settlements are further organised into a vertical schema that demonstrates a hierarchy of urban spaces and acts as a conceptual framework organised academic and governance approaches (see Baker 1990, Berry et al. 1972, du Plessis and Landman 2002, Haddon 1971, Lupton et al. 2011, Marston et al. 2005, Smailes 1968, Shepard 2009 and StatsSA 2001).

The urban hierarchy model is said to have been born from the work of Walter Christaller in 1933, when proposed the Central Place Theory as an explanation for the emergence of settlements in different sizes, places and of varying functions (Marston et al. 2005 and Tourien and Sieman, 2012). According to central place theory, small towns are the result of economic necessity as a meeting place of buyers and sellers, as well as service nodes for the surrounding agricultural areas.

“Urban settlements are therefore seen as distribution centres, where enterprise development services are determined the scope and extent of activities in their hinterlands. Central Place Theory is the point of departure for urban hierarchy studies... It should be noted that Central Place Theory assumes a flat and static rural landscape based on a primary sector (Howland 1993 in Donaldson and Marais 2012). Central Place Theory comes under threat once the dominance of the primary sector is diminished by manufacturing, tourism or retirement villages – something which has commonly occurred in the United States of America in the 1970’s” (Bender et. al., 1985 in Donaldson and Marais, 2012, 4).

Whilst the narrative between Christaller’s Central Place Theory and the establishment of the Urban Hierarchy is opaque; and seated in multiple years of human and spatial geography ontological and pragmatic shifts; one of the most significant paradigm shifts has been the reimagining of the mainstream understanding of scale -from a regional geography and spatial science to a meta-theory that could now include political and economic sciences (Marston et al. 2005). Marston et. al., explains that “in more recent work by Amin (2002), Brenner (1998), Leitner (2004) and Taylor (2004), different researchers have nuanced scale in different ways” (Marston et al. 2005 417) resulting in a foggy yet versatile hierarchy theory. This is further evident in the multi-disciplinary use of urban hierarchy theory (see Baker 1990; Berry et al. 1972; du Plessis and Landman

2002; Haddon 1971; Lupton et al. 2011; Marston et al. 2005; Smailes 1968; Tourien and Sieman, 2012; Shepard 2009).

In Castells rendition of an urban hierarchy, the basic structure of the urban hierarchy is arranged from 1st order settlements to 4th order settlements. A *1st order settlement* has a small population and provides only essential services. *3rd and 4th order settlements* are larger and provide more advanced services to residents, these order settlements are far fewer in number than 1st or 2nd order settlements and residents of 1st and 2nd order settlements are likely to travel, often long distances; to these larger settlements for their services (Robinson 2006). The rudimentary nature of this hierarchy may be a point of criticism and frustration, as it does not provide much more than a loose expectation of what you might find in the different towns. However the basic structure of an urban hierarchy could also be an advantageous trait as we will see later on.

There have been several endeavours to develop a functional urban hierarchy in various South African governmental and non-governmental organisations. One of the earliest hierarchies, which will also begin our discussion on South African urban hierarchy production is the 1968 publication of Davies and Cook (Davies and Cook, 1968); presented its own hierarchy as (in descending order): Primary Metropolitan areas, Large Metropolitan Areas, Metropolitan Areas, Large Towns, Towns, Small Towns, Local service Centers and Lowest Order Service Centres.

Davies & Cook 1968	
1.	Primary Metropolitan Areas
2.	Large Metropolitan Areas
3.	Metropolitan Areas
4.	Large Towns
5.	Towns
6.	Small Towns

7. Local Service centres
8. Lowest Order Service Centres

Table 1: Davies and Cook proposed urban hierarchy, 1968

The Davies and Cook (1968) hierarchy structure was not based on population size or density, but rather it was constructed based mostly on Central Place Theory; focusing on centrality function and market thresholds. While this is useful, it can be argued that it represents only a small portion of the urban dynamic and omits the importance of other elements such as the impact population size and density has on these different urban spaces. However, the Davies and Cook hierarchy does differ substantially from other hierarchies in a fundamental way.

Moving forward a few years, to 1998. An alternative hierarchy has been presented in The White Paper on Local Governance (1998) where the hierarchy is structured as (in descending order); Large Metropolitan Area, Large City, Medium Sized Cities, Small Cities and Towns, 'Betterment Settlements', Informal Settlements, Rural Villages and Agricultural-villages.

THE WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE 1998	POPULATION
Large Metropolitan Area	10 dwelling units per hector
Large City	Unknown
Medium Sized City	Unknown
Small Cities and Towns	Unknown
'Betterment' Settlements	<5000
Informal Settlements	<5000
Rural Villages	500<5000
Agricultural-Villages	<500

Table 2: The white paper on local governance proposed hierarchy, 1998

The White Paper on Local Governance 1998 does not provide population parameters for areas it has defined as *Large City*, *Medium Sized City* and *Small Cities and Towns*, nor does it provide an explanation for this action. However it place of population parameters for Small Towns it has included a definition:

“Small towns, most of which have intermediate density levels and the characteristic apartheid urban form - a former white area with intermediate to high service levels, and former black areas with more limited access to services. Small towns vary greatly, but most are economically and socially linked to surrounding rural hinterlands.” (The White Paper on Local Governance, 1998, 20).

The definition in the White Paper is arguably unclear and does little in the way of endeavour to supply a tangible reflection of small towns.

As the decades pressed on, and a greater need to establish an organisation of spatial forms became more necessary, several alternative and independent research initiative were undertaken in South Africa. These efforts have managed to produce its own formula and definition of small towns. In 2002 the CSIR released in its Sustainability Analysis (based on the Urban Development Strategy of 1995) a hierarchy that was structured as (in descending order); Large Metropolitan Area, Large cities, Medium Sized cities and Small cities and Town; but in 2008 the CSIR restructured the hierarchy to read as follows (in descending order); City Regions, Cities, Major Regional Service Centres, Local and Niche Town, Clustered and dispersed settlements (CSIR, 2008). This amendment meant that the CSIR hierarchy was more expansive and made room for more detail to be included in exploration of each sub-field. The tables below demonstrate how the CSIR hierarchy was organized and how it changed between 2002 and 2008.

SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS CSIR	POPULATION
2002	
Large Metropolitan Area	<2 Million
Large Cities	500 000 – 2 million
Medium Cities	100 000 – 500 000
Small Cities and Towns	<100 000

SETTLEMENT HERARCHY CSIR	POPULATION
2008	
City Regions	<1 Million
Cities	400 000<
Major Regional Service Centres	Indeterminable population size
Service Centres	130 000<
Local and Niche Towns	Indeterminable population size
Clustered and Dispersed Settlements	Indeterminable population size

Killian, Ball and Howells in the state of human settlement report, (2005) arranged its hierarchy as: Metropolitan Areas, Cities or Large Towns, Small Towns, Displaces Urban/ Dense Rural, Rural Villages and Scattered or Dispersed Settlement.

Table 3: The state of human settlement report proposed hierarchy

THE STATE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT REPORT	POPULATION
Metropolitan Areas	<500 000
Cities and Large Towns	50 000 – 500 000
Small Towns	<50 000
Displaced Urban/ Dense Rural	<50 000

Rural Villages	500 - 5000
Scattered or Dispersed Settlement	<500

Closer to present day; figure one represents the hierarchical structure of our urban settlements according to StatsSa Census Geography Meta Data of 2011. In this hierarchy 'Main Place' is the field title determined by StatsSA and correspond with: towns, small cities, regions of large cities, or tribal areas (StatsSa Census Geography Metadata 2011). There are an estimated 14039 regions that populate this field (StatsSa Census Geography Metadata 2011), however the most controversial element is the lack of definition surrounding how this information was obtained and it is rendered mostly useless as it cannot provide a definitive number of small towns (see annexures). You would think that with such a large portion of the population in these small towns or beyond-the-city area there would be more interest and commitment to formalising the field. Perhaps the problem lies at grassroots level. Official documents such as census data 2001 and 2011 do not identify a total number of small towns, instead, the 2011 census data has established an urban hierarchy that is completely void of any semblance to other more basic urban hierarchies, employing a technique of ranking based on the demarcation of administrative boundaries as opposed to settlement size, location or function. The Figure below demonstrates the geographic frame of human settlement in South Africa:

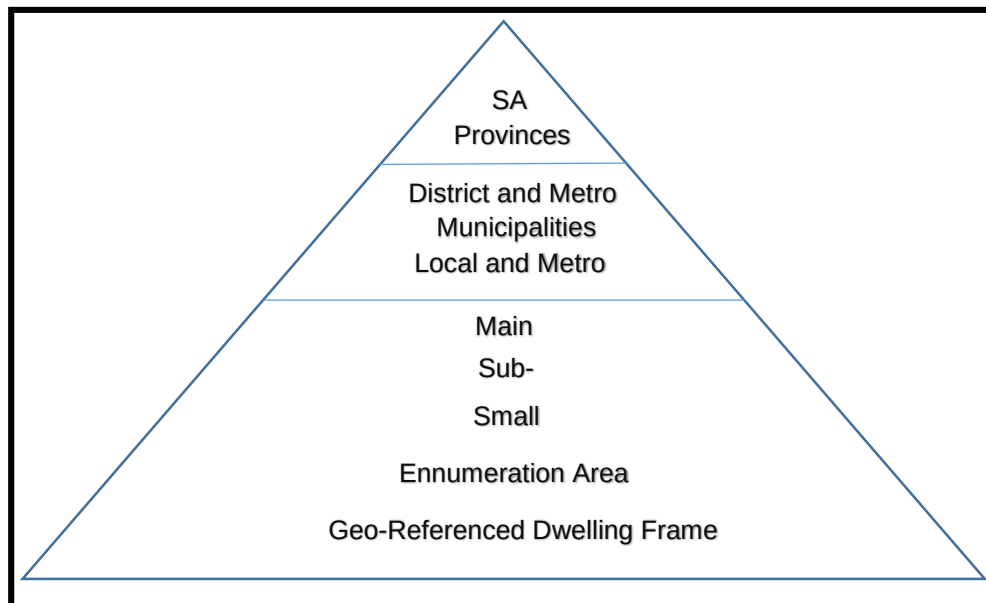


Figure 1: Census metadata urban hierarchy (Stats SA Census Metadata, 2011)

The last South African urban hierarchy to be discussed in this section has been provided by Johannes Wessels (2012), who provides a construct of what he perceived was the representation of the state of small towns in literature in a South African context. Wessels moves away from a purely quantitative method and adopts a more balanced approach incorporating qualitative rationalisation by beginning with the question: 'What is a small town', and proceeds to unpack this primary questions into the following sub- questions to aid in coming to a solution. Wessels then follows up with eight other questions, these being:

1. How large can the largest small town be?
2. How small can the smallest small town be?
3. Should only the inhabitants in the town be considered, or also the inhabitants of the immediate rural environment?
4. What about the inhabitants who have second homes in the locality?
5. Is a small mining town with a high economic output a small town, but an administrative town with a large population dependent on mainly social grants a

large town, or should economic base be considered as an element when deciding whether a town is a small town or a large town?

6. Quite often the term 'rural town' is used both in academic and popular article. If there are 'rural towns', are there towns that can be considered as 'urban towns' and if so, what are the fundamental differences between these?
7. What would a successful small town be? One that is growing and expanding (and therefore with the potential to become a medium or even a large town, or could a small town be successful also by staying effective, functional and small?
8. Since there is some potential, is that sufficient to propel them out of poverty.

These questions posed by Wessels are the first written articulation of the many parameters which need to be considered when unpacking small towns. The discussion of Wessels makes a very strong point, in the line of 'what makes a small town'. Yet, despite using these questions to set up the tone of his paper, they are not directly addressed and no resolution present. Nevertheless, Wessels does very successfully promote a more direct thinking about the parameters of small towns and my extension urban hierarchies.

From the discussion thus far, we can begin to see two very distinctive trains of thought emerge. The first, is based strongly on the Central Place Theory and these hierarchies are very descriptive in nature. Choosing to focus the types and quality of businesses. However, this approach often feels as if it is lacking some sort of substance...some connection with statistical backing. The second approach to South African hierarchies is almost the complete opposite to those based on Central Place Theory. These approaches focus entirely on the statistical elements active within a town, and seem somewhat disconnected from the many complexities within small towns, beyond population size. A third, albeit underdeveloped approach is Wessels and with a thinking that appears to be a rather lateral step out of the small town conundrum and successfully allows for one to engage in what is perhaps the nexus between the two approaches

towards urban hierarchy development; that being the perplexities that make a small town. What becomes evident from Wessels discussion is there is both confusion and contest regarding with is the small town, or how it is constructed.

If we were to begin with the idea: *we know what something is because of what it is not*; perhaps the solution to understanding the small town construct is to understand what it isn't. Assuming of course that we can agree that small towns are not cities; let us try to define a city as a baseline against which we can compare small towns. In the 2006 edited book *Small Cities: Urban Experience beyond the Metropolis*; David Bell and Mark Jayne (eds.), take us on an exquisite journey through the concept of *small cities*, in terms of how they are defined, understood and represented in discourse. They begin by explaining that there are two major problems in the conceptualisation of small cities:

“At one level [the first problem] ... is the commonplace [of] ‘me-to-ism’ produced by conditions of inter-urban competitiveness [the first problem referring to the inherent competition between different urban spaces]. It reflects the obsession with ‘trading up’ that is part of the same competitiveness: the desire for upward mobility [moving to bigger and better]...The second problem is also a question of translation and relation: how are small cities to find a place for themselves, find their ‘unique selling points’ (USP), tap into tradable capital, given the emphasis on the *bigness* of cities being their defining feature, followed by so called second tier cities – places with national importance but moving towards global reach (Bell and Jayne, 2006, 1-2).

From the excerpt above, we begin to see the same complexity in positioning undeniably urban spaces within a hierarchy. Here to, we see the first mentions of multiple tiers for ‘the city’. The book begins to deconstruct the idea of the city by first asking ‘how small is small?’ with the intention of ring-fencing a workable problem. Further along in the discussion, the book provides an urban hierarchy of cities as follows:

1. Global cities – typically with 5 million people within their administrative boundaries and up to 20 million within their hinterlands, but effectively serving very large global territories.
2. Sub-global cities – typically with 1 – 5 million people and up to perhaps 10 million in the hinterlands, performing global service functions for certain specialised services (banking, fashion, culture, media)
3. Regional cities – with populations of 250 000 to 1 million.
4. Provincial cities – with populations of 100 000 to 250 000

The book then goes on to argue that smallness is more than just a question of population or variety in city services, but includes the amount of influence, growth and the importance of the different levels and types of global engagement (Bell and Jayne 2006), thus rejecting in principle, the simplistic construct of the hierarchy as solely depending on and featuring spaces according to their population size and city services.

Closer to home, Lynelle John (2012); in a background report for the South African Cities Network, titled: *Secondary cities in South Africa, the start of a conversation*; John (2012), goes through the sequence of looking at the historical development of the hierarchy, allotting the conception of the hierarchy to Christaller and the Central Place Theory (a beginning of most hierarchy discussions). John (2012) explains:

“The ‘cities’ that form the apex of the urban hierarchy are differentiated in terms of their size, economic role, the influence they exert and so forth. There are two lenses through which we can view this urban hierarchy: [1] A focus on a global hierarchy of cities which explores the ‘position’ a city has on the international stage; [2] A national lens, which looks inwardly at the role of different cities and towns in a country.” (John, 2012, 8)

This premise is definitely a conversation starter, as we begin to recognise the importance of scale. Not the scale of the cities in question but the scale of the conversation. For the first time we begin to see the importance of differentiating the scale of the conversation when talking about cities as those competing in a hierarchy on a global platform and those competing on a national platform. Although the paper is primarily concerned with cities, the arguments made are particularly valuable in the discussion of South African small towns, as it highlights the importance of keeping the conversation local. If we take into consideration the above review of various literary sources which engage with the question and positioning of small towns in a hierarchy, it becomes clear that the development of the hierarchy is indeed project specific; therefore by inference it will be culturally specific.

Moving on; John then tackles the question ‘what are the distinguishing characteristics of secondary cities?’. He begins by outright disclaiming that “there are no precise criteria that tell us what characteristics a secondary city should process” (John, 2012, 12); but acknowledges that the general practice is to make use of the Kingsley Davis definition of Class II cities and reiterates this point by drawing on Rondinelli (1983) – who both use population as a basis for organising an urban hierarchy. However, John (2012) does recognise more recent debates which are somewhat more diverse and considerate of the variety of factors that influence a city’s performance and subsequent placement. John, 2012 lists the critical features as follows:

ITEM	Description
1. Population Density	How many people live within 1 square kilometre of the city?
2. Size and nature of city economy	How significant a contribution does the city make to the national economy?

	Which industries or sectors dominate the city's economy? Is there a burgeoning services economy in the city?
3. Economic growth rate	How fast is the city's economy growing?
4. Economic advantages	Do they offer more competitive advantages and opportunities than primate cities do (e.g. Greater potential for growth in property markets as well as lower labour costs)?
5. Per capita incomes	How much does the average person in the city earn
6. Regional importance of the city	Is it an administrative centre – or regional marker – or the surrounding towns? Does it host a university to which surrounding townsfolk travel to daily, for example?
7. Administrative status of the city	Is the city the seat of local government headquarters
8. Education infrastructure	Does it have good universities and/ or a sound schooling system
9. Technology intensity	Is there a presence or concentration of Research and Development firms, IT industries and other technology-based industries?
10. Availability of skilled labour	Is there a ready pool of skilled people, especially 'knowledge workers' (IT professionals, engineers, scientists, etc.), living in the city

11. Capacity for innovation and creativity	Does the city have the right infrastructure, leadership and mind-set to foster the innovation and creativity that's required for economic success?
12. Multiple business-language skills:	Is the local population in languages that multi-national companies conduct their business in?
13. High quality of life	Does the city offer scope for cultural and recreational pastimes? Is it a pleasant place to live in, with good schools for children?
14. Urban governance	How well do state institutions that govern the cities (especially municipalities) perform their functions?

In reflection of the above discussion, it becomes obvious that the majority of urban hierarchies use multiple methods to define different urban spaces and furthermore, individual methods and rationality which are project and outcome specific, in order to determine how to order and arrange urban hierarchies. The debate of what is urban and what is rural is at its highest when trying to define and produce a hierarchical system that is both representative of highly diverse spaces and equally generalizable and specific enough to be algorithmically logically. This further entrenches the idea that there is simply no consensus amongst geographers as how best to approach small towns.

Jennifer Robinson (2006) explains:

“Rather than categorizing and labelling cities...I propose we think about the world of ordinary cities, which are all dynamic and diverse, if conflicted, arenas of social and economic life. Whereas categorizing cities tends to ascribe prominence to only certain cities and to certain features

of cities, an ordinary-city approach takes the world of cities as its starting point and attends to the diversity and complexity of all cities. And instead of seeing only some cities as the originators of urbanism, in a world of ordinary cities, ways of being urban and ways of making new kinds of urban futures are diverse and are the product of the inventiveness of people in cities everywhere. We will see that there are some serious effects consequent upon labelling cities, placing them in hierarchies or dividing them up according to levels of development.” (Robinson, 2006,1).

Robinson’s argument imprints a need to consider all spaces equal but it does not detract from the fact that concerted effort needs to be made to bring clarity to the field. The main argument in support of definitive terms are based in deductive reasoning. Without a system of classification and placement of spaces into urban hierarchy we could conclude that there are any number of small towns ranging between 500 (as proposed by Nel, 2005) and 14039 regions (as stipulated by StatsSa census data, 2011). Arguably, conceptualising the urban as a fabric, with edges radically reduces the theoretical burden of identification, classification and categorisation. Accepting that there are scales of urban living practices as opposed to a definable and quantifiable modes of life allows greater opportunity to explore more diverse social, spatial, economic and politically themes.

The discussion of the small cities, is an excellent way to begin to question the understanding of scale and meaning of spaces, and how this is subjective in its representation in literature and or the mind of the urbanist. This discussion further highlights the malleability and fluidity of the hierarchy, and its subjectivity.

The idea of the hierarchy, and the defence of it as being a pertinent preposition to the discussion of small towns - in spite of the lack of concrete consensus within the discipline

– has found small towns in the position of a rhetoric that wishes to continue with the subject on a shaky foundation. The consequence of this rhetoric is the production and consumption of an understanding of small towns that can be equated to a misinterpretation of the genre resulting in an understanding of small towns that are no longer relevant and dwindle somewhat in their accuracy to represent the reality of small towns.

From Wessel's construction of characteristics, it became clear that many theorists on the matter followed a similar departure point. Nel et. al., (2011) is particularly useful in gauging and presenting this trend. The authors explain that whilst it was previously thought that South African small towns were too unique to share characteristics as outlined in literature from beyond our borders, the tides are changing, and there is a greater acknowledgement of the social, economic and cultural processes occurring in small towns as opposed to focusing only on the structural, functional or spatial characteristics of small towns. They further highlight that the historical view of small towns which emerged in the 1970's have left many with a rather pessimistic view of small towns, a view which continues to resonate today. This view is based on the idea that small towns are in a constant state of economic and population decline and it lacks substantial economic opportunities (Nel et.al., 2011).

Moving on from this paper, there is also a proposal in several other sources that suggests that: a small towns' development potential depends on its distance from a major city centre; the further the town is from the city the less likely it is to develop or experience any kind of growth whether architecturally or by infrastructure development – rendering it 'a land that time forgot' (see Nel et. a., 2011; Kotze, 2003; Ferreira, 2007 and Owusu, 2004). Off the heel of this idea Donaldson and Marrais (2012) note that small towns have generally poor service-delivery and inadequate infrastructure that is often failing. Similarly echoed throughout literature is epidemic unemployment and poverty is

paramount and consistent feature of small towns. It is rationalised that these two features are also strongly linked to the rural landscapes and its inherent lack of opportunities.

From the discussion above, there are several commonalities occurring in the discussion of what a small town is or how it can be identified. Taking only these common scripts in the literature into consideration, below is a consolidation of the reoccurring arguments on small towns. For now, these will be referred to as 'assumptions'; until proven or disproven throughout the thesis.

- Small towns are likely to have an aging declining Population
- Small towns are likely to have a stagnant or declining Economy
- Small towns lack economic opportunities
- A towns development potential depends on its distance from the city
- Small towns have generally poor service delivery and infrastructure
- Unemployment and poverty is a pertinent and permanent feature of small towns

Small towns often resemble 'a land that time forgot' Other authors have also taken the stance to partly reject the idea of the urban hierarchy, moving towards a more universal definition based on both quantitative and qualitative data. For example, Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005) leads with the question 'what is urbanisation, and how is it represented in African cities?'. Arguably this is a major step forward because it is the first time in the discussion of urban hierarchies, that we see the consideration of location and culture as an important factor in defining 'what is urban' and how this can be inferred to a hierarchy. She goes on to use the universally accepted definition of urbanisation as a starting point to understanding what is urban, and defines urbanisation as a spatial process of human migration to a specific location which is fairly defined in terms of built form, which is humanised, a place of buildings, powers, politics, economics and a concentration of other social processes (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005). Drawing on Wirth (1938) the argument transcends the built form as encompassed by city limits, and renders urban to mean "a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals"

(Wirth 1938 in Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005). The adoption acceptance of terms that are more generalizable and allows for lateral movement in ambiguity when referring to urban spaces is evident, for example the Office of National Statistics (2013), in a population themed study of England and Wales, defines 'built-up areas [as] characteristic of settlements including villages, towns or cities' (Office of National Statistics, 2013, 1). McLaughlin, Huberman and Hawkins (1997) in a report for the United States National Centre for Education Statistics leads from the perspective of ruralness, making use of "accepted, common sense definitions of 'small enrolment' and rural setting' and later defining rural areas as "a residual category of *places* outside urbanised areas in open country or in communities with less than 2 500 inhabitants or where the population density is less than 1000 inhabitants per square mile" (McLaughlin, Huberman and Hawkins, 1997, 3). Although this definition does not actively include any reference to the 'built-form'; the report itself, is investigating the 'Characteristics of Small and Rural School Districts' which discusses the educational needs of populations in different environments and ultimately refers to a setting whereon the effects of a built-form is irreversible (see McLaughlin *et al.*, 1997).

Little (1974), returns to the argument, that just as every hierarchy can be research specific, so to can the definition, understanding and appropriation of urbanisation and by contrast ruralness, which; both, at its very essence is ambiguous and refers to the modus operandi of living in towns as opposed to living in rural areas. And so, the debate between what is rural and what is urban rages on. Each side lacking consensus and guilty of further fragmenting their identities. We are thus driven to the conclusion that it would be more apt in our research endeavours of the built environment to see the urban as a network or fabric, interlinked and co-dependent, and which is dependent on locality, culturally specificity and contextually unique (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005 and Little, 1974). That goes without saying, the debate is important, as it holds pragmatic meaning.

The summation of this argument is thus: whilst it is highly relevant and important to have a concrete departure point for a strong discussion about small towns which begins by answering the question of 'what is a small town'. To answer this question can also be seen as a point of weakness, and an intellectual trap of sorts; as any conversation that is to be had, is equally equipped with arguments and counter-argument, thesis and antithesis. Therefore, the highly intricate and historically seated understanding of what is rural and what is urban can be extremely distracting. What does become clear however, is that much of the arguments presented for either side of the debate, is rooted in quantitative data, seeking to extrapolate a deeper meaning from and within the statistics and numbers that are often used to define and contextualise place. Burgeoning from this, is the idea, that perhaps to proceed in the field, in a progressive manner is to focus more on the qualitative value-add of a more humanised discussion, that seeks to include the human experience of space, the local specific urbanism and the ever evolving socio-political context of the spaces. Seeing the built form as both representations of space, representational spaces and culminating in spatial practice.

An inability to deduce a consensus regarding terminology and definition within the variant urban and rural literature (as seen above) has made it especially difficult to extrapolate a definitive definition of a small town, let alone define what a South African small town is. This has made it almost impossible correlate what is and has been happening in South African towns to other parts of the world such Europe, North Africa, North and South America, India and China (Nel, 2006).

Moving on to international literature. Some international urbanists have taken to other methods of classifying small towns in their respective countries. For example in India, Sumana Chatterjee (2014) uses the term 'rurban' to refer to urban towns which are governed by rural authorities. 'Rurban' is a hybrid word which refers to urban areas which are governed by rural authorities in India (Kolhe and Dhote, 2015). Although by this definition term wouldn't hold much significance or applicability in South African small

towns. But if we were to adopt the concept and attach to it a different meaning, it may be useful. Hypothetically, we were to take the hybrid word at face value, where rurban means neither rural and neither urban. Therefore, just as the word is a hybrid of two concepts, it may represent spaces which are a hybrid of other spaces. Case and point, small towns which appear at this moment neither urban nor rural. Perhaps they occupy a separate linguistic real, a hybrid realm...a rurban realm.

2.5. Small Town Urbanity and Urbanism

Taking only these common scripts in the literature; a consolidation of the reoccurring arguments as to what composes the characteristics of a small towns. In chapter two, these were referred to as 'assumptions' and were listed as follows:

- Small towns are likely to have a declining population
- Small towns have generally poor service delivery and infrastructure
- Small towns often resemble 'a land that time forgot'
- Small towns are likely to have a stagnant or declining economy
- Small towns lack economic opportunities
- A towns development potential depends on its distance from the city
- Unemployment and poverty is a pertinent and permanent feature of small town

The list above represents a familiar but also bleak image of small towns, and it is an idea that resonates in various urban theologies. Moreover, the list and literature at large does not engage with matters around spatial structure, infrastructure and amenities, social stability and cultural activities. Small towns are often regarded as blank spaces with few having any sort of appeal or intrigue, and whose sole purpose is to support and sustain the continued survival and growth of cities and their inhabitants. These assumptions will feature again later as part of the discussion during the spatial and data analysis.

Urbanism is the term that is defined by the interaction between physical urban space and the act of human life as it plays out within the urban context. It is a word that refers to the interaction between urban scapes and the individual act of the everyday or the lived experience of the urban and is best summarised by Louis Wirth as "...life characteristic of great cities" (Wirth, 1938:2). Urbanism is strongly linked to the Lefebvre's spatial triad and the production and consumption of space, which is an interconnected experience of political, economic, social and spatial ideas and practices within perceivably urban spaces. Although the word 'urbanism' denotes a sense that this particular 'ism' is linked to specifically urban areas. Wirth argues that this is incorrect and undermines the true diversity and expression of urbanism. He argues that if urbanism is to be seen as an expression of society that it cannot be confined to the 'great city' and then we are unlikely to "arrive at any adequate conception of urbanism as a mode of life" (Wirth, 1938, 4). He further goes onto postulate that:

"Since the city is the product of growth rather than of instantaneous creation, it is to be expected that the influences which it exerts upon the modes of life should not be able to wipe out completely the previously dominant modes of human association. To a greater or lesser degree, therefore, our social life bears the imprint of an earlier folk society, the characteristic modes of settlement of which were the farm, the manor and the village." (Wirth, 1938:3).

With this in mind, we can comfortably extrapolate the idea of urbanism for city-readings and apply the theory to small towns.

The post-modernist approach to urban land-scapes suggest there is an urban way of living that is non-specific to any conventionally ranked urban region within an urban hierarchy or urban ranking system that represents a teleology. The way 'living' occurs within the urban fabric is called 'urbanism' or 'urbanity'. The broader understanding of

urbanism is enveloped in the definition of: the general ever-day experience by individuals of the city. That is to say, urbanisms denotes a unique lifestyles that accompanies the practice of living the everyday through urban 'modes of life' (Wirth, 1938). Essentially, urbanism refers to the bourgeois attitude and identity that accompanies and characterises the urbanite (Watkins, 2005). This to the disagreement of Wirth who explains:

“Urbanisation no longer denotes merely the process by which persons are attracted to a place called the city and incorporated into its system of life. It refers also to that cumulative accentuation of the characteristics distinctive of the mode of life which is associated with the growth of cities, and finally to the changes in the direction of modes of life recognised as urban which are apparent among people, where ever they may be, who have come under the spell of the influences which the city exerts by virtue of the power of its institutions and personalities operating through the means of communication and transportation..” (Wirth, 1938:5).

Urbanism is best represented and understood against the background of the 'everyday', or the lived practice of people as they go about their lives. The 'everyday' is the overly transparent concept of the mundane and routines of our everyday lives as it is plays out. As simple as it may sound, this is the long and short of what the everyday is. Quite literally it is a subtopic of cultural geography, that deals explicitly and in its entirety with the boring blaze, seemingly uninteresting practice of living routine as it manifests in space and time. It is the procedure of family and work life. The processes around mobility through spaces, social engagement, economic transactions, planning, deadlines, traffic, appointments, grocery shopping, personal grooming appointments and so on. It is the saddle between public and private life of the individual and then the collective as their every-day's meet and mash together such as in the work place, or school or university.

It is life, the practice of life. That is to say, the making of geographies through the practice of everyday life.

Much of what has been written about the everyday has tended to encapsulate the concept within the structures and confines of the city (Lappiner, 2004); but as we have seen in the discussion above, it can be argued that the everyday is in essence a natural human condition, a practice of living innate to life and so occurs regardless of context or setting. However this is not to say that the context of urban life doesn't affect the everyday, or vice versa as is seen in the Lefebvrian spatial triad where ordinary people, through repeated and non-creative practice within space holds transformative potential (Lappiner, 2004) to create and recreate space; as it is their mundanity that give it first life, form and function. But to retract the everyday from the city, and allow it the same degree of agency as the agency of human behaviour, what this means is that the concept of the everyday is not caught in the multifarious webbing of such debates as the rural and urban; as to reiterate, the everyday is an innate part of the human experience or the experience of being human.

Overall, the turn toward cultural geography has been embraced with positivity and has "made things a lot more interesting" (Lappiner, 2004). It goes without surprise that these sentiments are accompanied with apposing criticism. One of the resounding criticisms of the field is the idea that the study of the everyday only exists as an academic observation of a conceptual other, as a result of distinguishing the researcher as an observer of the subject. It is best explained as being "...constituted by academic observers which, in turn, constitute the scientific perspective itself. Against this background, the theoretical problem inherent in the academic concern with geographies of everyday life becomes obvious." (Lappiner, 2004, 4). Admittedly, the understanding that the field of the everyday is only a result of the presence and activity of the researcher may be alarming, however, in retrospect, the same can be said about any field of scientific or non-scientific investigation. It would not exist if it were not for the research interests of the researcher.

This brings into viewpoint the inherent and highly reflexive nature of research in and of itself, but more on that later. As much as the 'hard sciences' focus on discovery of the new and unknown, it can be argued that the 'soft sciences' engage not so much with the new, but the less obvious and unknown. After all anthropologists have for decades explored the culture of life, some ancient, but unknown to the wide world or academia at large.

Nevertheless, the documentation of life in small towns appears limited and focuses on the challenges and difficulties of the everyday in relation to a failing economy, poverty and other common small town ills. Without a doubt, we cannot ignore the effects these difficulties have on everyday life, however, to present small towns as an exclusive image of poverty is deeply biased and doesn't adequately represent the space. Therefore, if we assume that urbanism is a way of life in an urban settlement (provided we assume urban is an experience and not a physical state); then small towns will possess a sense of urbanism, be it in the rhythm of traffic, the recreational and business activities available in the town, food options, dressing standards and expectation and mere human interaction i.e. greeting ones neighbour (Chatterjee, 2014).

2.6. Urbanisation in Small Towns

Urbanisation is defined as the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas in search of economic, educational or healthcare opportunities, and often results in the physical expansion of urban areas, either horizontally or vertically (United Nations World Urbanisation Prospectus, 2014). The link between urban and rural migration is quite pivotal in the role rural areas play in urban development. In the 1960's and 1970's America, migration of people into urban centres also known as urbanisation was seen as positive thing in that there was a shift from a dependence on primary services such as farming, to more diversified economic activities, associated with industrialisation. However, by the end of the 1970's, the impacts of rapid urbanisation was being felt in the form of growing urban poverty, strain on services, housing and healthcare and the education system. Simply put the city could not keep up with the growing demand for opportunities, goods and services of the in-migrating population.

According to the United Nations definition, urbanisation is an event surrounding the 'urban'; and is a direct result of a surplus in the agricultural industry. The historical undertone of urbanisation comes from the *how* and *why* cities exist. Cities form when food production and natural-resources based production within the countryside can support and maintain a non-agricultural system, that is, it provides the opportunity to diversify occupations to include non-agricultural activities such as military enrolment, political administration and governance and economic markets to grow as well as other services to evolve (Kotze, 2003; Scott and Storper, 2014; Tacoli, 2003). There are considered to be five stages of city development. The first is called '**export specialisation**'. In this stage the local economy specialises in the primary production and or manufacturing of a single product based on agriculture, and begins to export outside the community. The second stage, known as the '**export complex**' occurs when a growth of industry and expansion of the local economy, wherein additional firms begin manufacturing and supplying inputs to the original firm or support the original firm by purchasing its outputs to support its own manufacturing. The third stage, called

‘economic maturation’, sees a growth of the service sector in the area, and a diversification of economy away from manufacturing. The fourth stage sees the establishment of the **‘regional metropolis’**, and is not the site that begins to supply services to the regional surrounding hinterlands and smaller, less developed economic nodes. The fifth and final stage, known as the **‘technical-professional virtuosity’**, is the recognisable presence of the city on an international scale (Thomson, 1965 in Kotze, 2003). Whilst the topic of small towns is extremely varied, with many definitions and conversations occurring simultaneously.

Owing to the idea that all cities began as rural centres, and subsequently depend on rural production for continued support in driving growth and development, it does prompt one to think about what it was that drove rural research out of the main stream. Douglas (1998) argues that it was during the mass intellectual shift during the 1960’s and 1970’s when the majority of disciplines underwent a mass transformation into a post-modernist discourse that observers initiated the slant towards urban bias, which actually began in the 1950’s with the adoption of the Lewis model of development. The result was a perpetual idea of the rural as being in competition with the urban and requiring ‘hand outs’ from its more developed big-brother counterpart as opposed to being self-sufficient. The consequence was diplomatic disinterest in rural and small towns, placing them on the back burner of investment incentives and prompting the dualist intellectual debate that to this day reigns (Douglas, 1998). Baker and Pendersen (1992) further explain, that urbanisation was seen as the primary cause of countryside neglect with the focus of planners set on the growth and development of cities. The resultant disinterest and decay of agricultural centres lead to severe underdevelopment in the countryside which initiated the cycle of disinterest-non-development, wherein small centres continued to decay, now becoming liabilities to urban areas. It is safe to say that the general perception of rural areas and small towns has been pessimistic (Donaldson, 2018) until it was revisited in the 1990’s. However this was not a point in literature when there was an overall shift to what is the present positive attitude towards small towns, their linkages between rural-

urban areas and their potential roles in being the catalyst for development in the hinterlands. The 1990's were a period of interlude, especially in South Africa, when small towns oscillated between criticisms for being "...economically undiversified, single-resource small towns that have rather bleak future development prospects." (Pelser, Van der Merwe and Kotze in Donaldson and Marais, 2012, 45). Simultaneously, single industry small towns have been recognised as the 'backbone' for resource based economies (Pelser et al., in Donaldson and Marais, 2012). Having said this, by the end of 1990's, most theorists had reached a consensus as to the important, role and functions small towns play on a national scale (Ferreira, 2007). Furthermore, it became clear that regional development could not be completed separated from national development goals, and were in fact integral to achieving overall development vision. (Ferreira, 2007).

Without a doubt there are both positive and negative aspects of being a small town, and there are both advantages and disadvantages within the urban-rural relationship. Developing countries have taken the experiences and lessons learned from more developed countries very seriously on a variety of matters. In our case, the lessons learned related to approaches and reproaches of governments to small towns and urban areas. The 1990's saw a veritable era of renewed policy interest by governments in developing countries to addressing small towns and rural areas in a more positive way, in order to capitalise on their inherent opportunities and the roles and linkages they dominate. Turok in Parnell and Pieterse (2014) explains that African governments have attempted to learn from these woes of past experience, and thus about "...three-quarter of African governments have policies in place to reduce rural-urban migration" (Turok in Parnell and Pieterse, 2014, 60). He goes on to explain these policies are a result of governmental concerns that if the city's labour market and economy at large cannot absorb the in-migrating population, populations will only experience greater poverty, public health problems, social frustration, political uprising and general human misery (Turok in Parnell and Pieterse, 2014).

In South Africa, it difficult to ascertain whether our development and implementation of policies, specific to rural area development; such as :the Urban Development Framework of 1997 or the various acts and strategies that were generated by the South African Departments of Land Affairs, Housing and Human Settlements; were a result of the overall shift in the intellectual paradigm; or, if it was a sole result of the transition of South Africa to democracy and equitable land reform was needed (see Banister, 2003).

Although it seems much like a chicken-and-egg scenario, Hoogendorn and Nel in Donaldson and Marais (eds.) (2012) recognise that the increase in policy initiatives related to small town development is in fact a positive acknowledgement of the importance and the roles of small towns. In South Africa, policies have been instrumental in the transformation and development of rural areas and small towns. Many have argued that this was necessary to undo the long standing separate spatial development strategies of apartheid and their associated poverty and underutilised human potential entrapped in the areas (Nel and McQuaid, 2002). As is becoming a trend in spatial theory, Local Economic Development (LED) has no universally accepted definition, however, a general consensus amongst theorists recognise that local economic development is the implementation of regional specific economic development strategies that are particularly geared to alleviate poverty (Nel and McQuaid, 2002). Furthermore, it is seen as essential to achieving the political, social and economic integration of South Africa's cities and towns (Urban Development Framework, 1997).

Whilst this has had an resounding positive impact on small towns and rural populations in terms of improved development, service delivery and diversification and intensification of economic opportunities in the areas, it has also to prompted a flurry of literature that focus solely on the economies of small towns and suggested ways of capitalising on potential in order to achieve local economic development goals. What this suggests is that small towns and rural areas, may not necessarily survive if their primary function fails or is depleted. Furthermore, it has only perpetuated a production of knowledge that

focuses on the statistics of a small town from population density to gross domestic product; ignoring the human element of these area – even though it was recognised as element of untapped potential.

2.7. The production and Consumption of Space

Thus far, we have had a very intricate debate around what is urban space and what is rural space and on which end of the spectrum do small towns fits. Whilst both have presented key arguments in simultaneously taking responsibility for and rejecting small towns as a part of their field; the conclusion was that small towns occupy a more liminal space, being both rural and urban and neither at the same time. However, the lack of definitive identity of a small town being either rural or urban does not detract from its truth as being first and foremost a space.

Space as a subject matter has been divided into two categories of theory. The first is *absolute space* and the second is *relational space*. Absolute space was developed by Isaac Newton and sees space as a ‘thing’ set in time. It refers to the physical container of all life, which can be mapped out and divided and; where all of nature plays out in a definitive position. Relational space was a theory written as a response and critique to the one dimensional Newtonian rendition of space; and theorised that space held within it things which included non-spatial elements such as social constructs and these things coexisted in a contemporaneous way (Madanipour, 1996). It was Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher who wrote extensively on epistemology, ethics, political theory and metaphysical theory who really propelled the study of space forward into a multidimensional field that took into account the human influence on the perception of reality. It was Kant who was amongst the first to see the constructs of spaces as being highly subjective construct of the mind and not solely as an “empirical concept derived from outward experiences” (Madanipour, 1996: 5). The relationist view falls short in that it ignores the role of absolute space in its construct of space, and similarly, absolute space fails to include the human experience of space. It is therefore easy to pose these

two theories in competition with each other, however, drawing on Einstein, Madanipour (1996) explains that both concepts exist in tandem, and a more pluralist approach to the world would provide allow the world to make greater sense. With absolute space providing the place of material things, and the place where things can happen and relational space as seen as the more abstract realm where absolute space is conceptualised, interpreted, digested and understood (Leggett & Perry, 1995; Madanipour, 1996).

Within the pages of Robert Sack's 1980 'Conception of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective', we are introduced to the important and extensive nature of space, as seen in the quote below:

"Space is an essential framework of all modes of thought. From physical to aesthetics, from assumption and magic to common everyday life, space, in conjunction with time provides a fundamental ordering system interlacing every facet of thought." (Sack, 1980: 4).

It was during the 1970's that relativist spatial theory hit its stride with one of the most notable and widely cited works coming from Henry Lefebvre in his 1974 Spatial Triad Theory. The theory explains the dynamic and amazingly complex relationship between the physical and abstracted perceptions of space. Pier Bourdieu (1989) described these realms as physicalism and psycholism and how both compete trying to demonstrate their dominance in the foundations of the other, but still remaining in an undeniable state of constant exchange, seeking in the other meaning and function. With this in mind, we can then move onto the idea that space, oscillates between both the physical and the psychologically constructed realms. For example, small towns which naturally oscillate between both urban and rural realms, ay arguably be able to do that, because the interpretation of the physical manifestation of the spaces in subject to the interpretation of the mind.

Sack explains: "Space often changes its meaning because we perceive and describe the spatial relations among things differently in different situations." (Sack, 1980:5). He further goes on to explain that the differences in the way spatial relations are described are subject to the observer's own experiences and lenses, which are greatly influenced by history, culture, technology and personal agenda.

Returning to Lefebvre, the spatial triad, which provides an excellent departure point for any discussion about the production, interpretation and consumption of space; consists of three elements arranged in a triangle. The first element, entitled *The Representation of Space* refers to the physical or built environment. The literal and concrete expression of ideas and conceptions in the form of roads, buildings, houses, factories, sidewalks. The parts of space which physically construct and direct social behaviour through form and associated function. In other words it is a system of signs and signifiers which form the foundation of a sequence of information relating to that space and its purposes (Watkins, 2005). But, representations of space go far beyond just the concrete buildings, it includes the spaces as represented in maps and literature, culture and language. For example, a map may be produced that shows crime hotspots and 'no-go' areas, or anthropologists or journalists may visit a rural area in another country or a city and write about it, constructing a particular image of that particular area in the written work.

The second element is entitled: *Spatial Practice*, and refers to the metaphysical realm of space. The spatial practice of space is based on the lived experiences of people in relation to space, their interactions with that space and how people communicate with their environment. The communication may be cooperative or non-cooperative each producing different interpretations and resultant spatial practices. Spatial practice largely relies on the representations of space (Watkins, 2005). If we are to continue with the example used previously, a representation of space in the form of a map illustrating 'no-go areas' may affect the behaviour of a person by discouraging them from visiting the areas shown on the map. This may result in that person using alternative routes, or for

example practicing a different behaviour in the actual space of that representation. To transpose that example into real life personal experience. There was an incident once where I had to drive from Bedfordview to Parktown. The route my GPS took me on, took me through Hillbrow, which I didn't know until I saw the signboard for the Hillbrow Police Station. My drive up to that point was quite relaxed, I am generally a cautious driver, waiting that extra second at the robot after it turns green in case there is anyone who decides to skip the robot having been made aware from a variety of sources about the notoriety of Hillbrow, my throat tightened at the realisation that I was a single female driving in my 1980 classic VW City Golf (a very highly sought after vehicle) in the midst of one of the most dangerous areas in Johannesburg. Upon realising where I was, my entire demeanour changed, particularly my practice within the space. I no longer obeyed *all* the traffic laws. Speedily pulling off from being stopped at the robot, treating stop signs as yields and speeding through the streets of Hillbrow in an effort to get out of there as fast as possible and into more familiar territory. Whilst this may be an admonition of guilt, it does also demonstrate; albeit in a rather crude way; how the representation of spaces can affect the practice of spaces.

Lastly, the third and final element of the Lefebvrian spatial triad is *representational space*. This refers to the abstracted space. Or space within the mind. It is when experiences of spaces are internalised and overlaid upon the representations of space, and their meanings, signs, signifiers and practices questioned, created, reformatted and finally synthesized into new representations and practices. It is not so much a where but a when. When the primal communication between person and space occurs, when our relationship to a particular representation of space is cooperative or non-cooperative, and that relationship is reassessed. It is here, when spaces are reimaged, and the where exemplifies a different meaning (Watkins, 2005). Take for example an abandoned swimming pool. For some, it will always only be a swimming pool, once it was drained it became an eyesore and nothing more. For other, it was became a skate-board park. The original representation of the space was a swimming pool, its function was singular and

its practice limited. Within the realm of representational space, the swimming pool became something else, something more. It held a different function and meaning. The reformation and reimagining of space is not a mystical activity limited to a few. It is a part of the everyday, and society. In the same way that the swimming pool was appropriated, so too can a desk be appropriated into a chair for sitting, or a chair may become a ladder for reaching something high up, a ruler as a pointer, a glass as a chime to gain someone attention and so on and so forth. It is in this realm that human creativity and the inherent potential of space meet, guided by the less obvious representations of space, but exhibited in the practice of space.

It is in appreciating the ambivalent nature of space that we can appreciate the ambivalent nature of places. With rural and urban areas being places in constant exchange and constantly fluctuating in the reimagining of their meaning and function.

One thing that is infrequently outwardly discussed when considering the spatial triad and the production of space is the role of the person. The person is central to the existence of the spatial triad. As without the person none of the elements would exist. The person houses the vision, creativity, intellect and ability to participate in space, whether as a container or as a more fluid, active and receptive entity. Small towns like all spaces are places of people, and as such as subject to the alteration accompanied with people.

2.7.1. Globalisation

Globalisation is primarily an economic process, indicative of the systemic increase in connectivity on social, economic and political platforms through improvements in transport, telecommunication technology, economic and trade interactions and the increased movement and migration of people; which span local, regional and global scales (Sheffield, Korayev and Grinin, 2013; Segerstrom, 2010). The term was widely used throughout the eighties and nineties as a way of describing the rapid global transformation and diversification of social, spatial, economic and political patterns. However, globalisation as we often perceive is not a recent or new phenomenon, but has

existed for centuries. When we consider that globalisation is an economic feature and is linked to progression in technology and greater connectivity, then we recognise the patterns of globalisation in eras when locomotive technology was under improvement, or similarly, the improvement of telecommunication technology from written letters, to the telegraph and then the telephone. With this in mind, globalisation has been a prevalent and reoccurring process.

Although the concept has retained its popularity, especially within in political and economic forums as a way of invoking a common place understanding between globalisation and positive economic performance and the associated political benefits. In truth, globalisation is as much about economics and politics as it is about culture and the sharing of ideas, ideologies and the metaphysical attributes of interconnected lives that create a global village or community. The most amazing component of globalisation is that is in not geographically bound, and is instead highly associated and linked with the internet and cyberspace. The internet being a fantastic medium through which information and by inference cultural and social practices can be exchanged.

Nonetheless, modern globalisation has occurred on two major fronts; the first was a decrease in cost of technologies that were linked to or provided communication, information sharing and transport; secondly an opening of global markets also known as a globally shared move towards neoliberal policies saw an increase in foreign direct investment, capital flows, gross trade and technology sharing that facilitated the integration and connectedness of people, companies and governments on a global scale (Lee 2006). The effects of and or affects driving globalisations are seen in four major composites, these being (see Ahmet, 2011; Al-Rodhan, 2006; Bouare; 2001; Cuterela, 2012; Jordaan, 2001; Kearney, 2001; Mostert, 2003):

- Trade and,
- Investment;
- Sharing of information and knowledge,

- Migration

Arguably, three factors have been the primary driving force in facilitating the globalisation. For most, it is first and principally the innovations in transport and telecommunication technology, and with these innovations came the decrease in the costs associated with the services, thus improving the ability of a greater number of goods and services in more diversity to become globally accessible – which may have otherwise been limited by the demand for said goods and services or the costs of importing and exporting to expensive.

Second is the reform in policies which encouraged more open trade agreements as well as eliminated or mitigated the many tariffs associated with direct investment or transnational transactions. The opportunity for more countries to join the market opened a series of opportunities for greater market interactions with greater margins for profitability. This in turn prompted the reform of many associated policies, such as those which governed labour, manufacturing and other market participation.

Lastly, strongly linked to the innovation in transport, telecommunications and the reformation of trade policies is the tendency of firms and business to organise themselves across borders, thereby benefiting from cheaper manufacturing, labour and associated costs. This removal of geographical limitations was a key part of creating the global village, which grew out of globalisation and continues to do so (Bouare, 2001; Al-Rodhan, 2006).

2.7.2. Trade and Investments

Economic globalisation or the globalisation of trade is one component of the highly complex and intricate trend that is globalisation. A decrease in the cost of technology, an increase in the accessibility and speed of technology as well the access to data and information streams have acted as catalysts for globalisation to explode in the rapid and expansive way that it has. Trade is one of the most spoken about elements in

globalisation next to investment. Trade is not limited only to the exchange of resources and other commodities, but also includes the transnational exchange of services from legal and accountancy to banking and insurance, as Van de Walle explains: "...economic globalisation are the proportion of national economies that are accounted for by international economic transactions including primarily international flows of trade, capital and labour." (van de Walle, 1998, 12). Bouare goes on to explain that:

"In the past, trade sometimes formed an enclave isolated from the rest of the national economy. Today, all countries are engaged in international trade and nearly all countries trade in significant proportions of their national income. Around 20% of the world output is traded and a much larger proportion is subject to international competition." (Bouare, 2001, 21).

Africa and South Africa is no exception to the rule. Recognising that globalisation can be highly beneficial to a country in terms of their economy, spatial and human development (through skills transfer), there is also significant risk for a country's overall wellbeing, especially in the developing south where countries often have difficulty capitalising on the positives of globalisation in a sustainable way (Bouare, 2001; International Monetary Fund, 20070; Jordaan, 2001; Van de Walle, 1998).

When referring to investments in the context of globalisation, it is a common understanding that this refers particularly to foreign direct investment (FDI). FDI like trade dominate the globalisation conversation, mainly because globalisation is strongly an economic process than most other processes.

2.7.3. Chinese Migration in Africa

So on a global level, we are experiencing large scale economic transformation; both economically and politically; all of which have affected migratory patterns, which has become more frequent than less. However, we are without a doubt facing the effects of globalisation on a local scale. One of the latest additions, but growing quickly in

relevance to small town geographies is the number of small scale Chinese traders that have settled in these landscapes (Park et al., 2009; Nel et al., 2011). Presently, there is literature on macro impacts and operational procedures of Chinese enterprises in South Africa. Literature speaks extensively about foreign direct investment, supply chains or networks, financial structures, backing and or capital inputs of Chinese enterprises in South Africa and Africa, as well as the migration patterns, and individual or collective motivation for migration. Conversely, little has been documented about small scale, independent traders that migrate from China. These traders have a small start-up capital and are not backed by the Chinese government or any corporations (Park, 2009; Willemse, 2013).

Chinese traders can be separated into two categories. The first is 'the middle man' who sells or trades in goods that have been imported for the general population and the second is the 'enclave entrepreneur' who services his/ her own ethnic community (Willemse, 2013). Products available in these stores range from textiles, cloths, shoes, electronics, foods and Chinese medicines (Willemse, 2013). What is clear is that Chinese traders have come to occupy a unique gap supplying cheaper products thus providing access to certain textiles that people of lower income groups may not have had access to previously. Chinese migration and the proliferation of Chinese-made goods to South Africa is an exciting occurrence that is recognisable in the context of small towns. Case studies that have investigated the growing presence of Chinese migrant business owners in small towns have yielded interesting insights into the motivations underpinning this trend (Park et al., 2009; Park, 2009; Ethics Institute of South Africa, 2014, 9)

The informal trade or private sector of Chinese migrant traders is less widely researched, so little is known about the topic. Park et. al. (2009) and Willemse (2013) argues that these traders are made up of peasant from the Fujian province. They have access to limited resources in terms of start-up capitals and business networks as well education and English language skills forcing them into the "lower rung of the retail sector,

operating in small shops in the remote towns all over South Africa” (Park 2009 25). This in contrast to Chinese owned businesses in the formal sector or state-owned businesses that stem from the affluent Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces and come with large capitals and extensive business networks known as Guanxi networks (Park 2009 and Willemse 2013) to rely on. Surveys conducted by The Pew Global Attitudes Study and the China Quarterly Study on African Perceptions on Africa-China links; in several African countries periodically between 2009 and 2013 (Ethics institute of South Africa 2014) revealed the majority of people felt positively about the increased interaction between Chinese seated markets and African markets, however this was a bitter-sweet revelation as responses from Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa tended to be more apprehensive about the linkages in comparison to other nations who felt the social and economic costs to African industry survival or development is not made a priority.

The bitter-sweet reality is that rural-urban theories are deeply fragmented. In our present context of intellectual knowledge, topic of what is rural and what is urban and then the more intricate question of locating sub-topics such migration, economics and the like within a globally generalisation ‘small town’ context is simply not possible.

It would be an absolute injustice to proclaim an intellectual, theoretical or political disinterest in the subject of small towns, when the opposite is excessively true. There is an alarming amount of literature available on the subject matter of rural hinterlands, small towns, rural centres, non-urban, semi-urban or any other conceivable variation of the word that refers to the opaque, wishy-washy ‘small town’ in the midst of agricultural activities providing higher order services to the surrounding communities. It is simply impossible, even upon the platform of a PhD dissertation to even begin to scratch the surface of the depth and detail of the field whilst still maintaining a theoretical thread throughout the discussion.

2.7.4. Migration in South African Small Towns

At a surface level, migration as a concept is composed of two primary themes. The first is *immigration and emigration*, and the second stream is *local and international* migration. Emigration, also known as out-migration refers to the movement of people out of an area, which is: they are exiting or leaving an area and relocating to another area. Immigration, also known as in-migration refers to the movement of people arriving in an area. Both immigration and emigration can happen on a local and international scale, and both come with their own set of advantages, disadvantages, challenges and opportunities. Drawing on Shryock et al., (1976) a report, based on the 2011 census, published by Stats SA entitled 'Migration Dynamics in South Africa' defines migration as: "...a form of geographic or spatial movement involving a change of residence between clearly defined units which involves a change in social functions of the migrants concerned. Both the place of destination and place of origin are affected in the migration process" (Stats SA, 2011: 2).

Migration is a common event in most countries, especially local migration patterns between rural and urban areas and vice-versa. Migration is also a key feature in urban and rural linkages, and the overall urbanisation rate of an area (see Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1998; Southall, 1998; Simon, 1992; Pedersen, 2003; Tacoli, 2003 and Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2003). South Africa has experienced both in-migration and out-migration at both international and local levels, as Stats South Africa explains:

"On the continent of Africa, South Africa has shown to be a receiver of migration from Africa (Stats SA, 2014). Reasons for the immigration of Africans across Africa to South Africa range from economic to social and political. Beyond the African continent, South Africa is also known as a sending country, experience emigration of its citizens to more developed countries such as UK, USA, and Australia etc." (Stats SA, 2011: 2)

Despite the wide array of available literature on the subject of migration, internally and locally produced, the Forced Migration Studies Programme notes that migration statistics in South Africa are generally “poorly collected, weakly analysed and misleading” (Forced Migration Studies Programme, 2010) and this has led to little reliable data on the migration patterns of between provinces or municipalities. A sweeping generalisation available from the data shows that there is a definite trend amongst all provinces where populations have moving to more urban areas in search of opportunities. What is also true is that major centers such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban have experienced the majority of rural-urban migration, which has a lot to do with push and pull factors of the areas.

The push and pull factors of an urban area refers to the perceived advantages (opportunities) and disadvantages (challenges) of moving to a particular area. Urban centres are perceived to have greater economic opportunities, better infrastructure in order to supply basic services, better health care and schooling systems, cultural diversity, centres of creativity and broader freedoms and provide greater access to other amenities such as housing and transport by comparison to the countryside. The push factors or down side is things like overcrowding, competition, the high cost of living, a reduced quality of life due to stress, noise and air pollution, an unhealthy lifestyle, high crime rate and the exposure to a variety of diseases that are often associated with centres of cultural and globalisation. For some this may be a deterrent but for many the opportunities and potential advantages of relocating to the city outweighs the challenges. Furthermore, the perceived opportunities outweighs the potential and push and pull factors of the countryside. The flip side of the coin is the out migration of previously permanent urban populations to the countryside with many second and third generations of urban residents becoming ‘tired’ of the hustle and bustle of the city and wishing for a greater quality of life over the opportunities within the city. Migration as a whole is largely economically driven, many of the decisions surrounding migration are informed by the economic cost vs benefit index.

While the push and pull factors of urbanisation and migration into the large cities are relatively well documented. Little is known about the growing settlements and migration in small towns. The assumption is that small towns are the starting point of the rural urban migration, and whilst this may be true, it is not the whole truth and small towns experience a significant amount of inter-town migration.

Cyclical migration is an important feature of small town's migration patterns. Research suggests that the movement of people from rural areas to cities is significant and important for continued city growth, however in a large portion of the cases, the movement is impermanent, and eventually, people retain their connection with the country side through relatives, properties, businesses or similar return to their former homes in the country side. The rate of cyclical migration in Africa is especially high, or this could be because the division between urban and rural is just that much clearer.

2.9. Conclusion

Subsequent and progressive approaches have attempted to move beyond the stage of defining a small town (in essence abandoning it), and began unpacking the social, spatial, political and economic structure of these spaces. However, there is a definite and prevalent bias towards concentrating on the economic engagement of small towns in national and even global economic markets, using this as a medium to gauge the towns' value and influence within the urban hierarchy. What has come from this is a tendency to be hyper-attentive towards a town's economic performance, relating many of the other social or spatial prevalence's to that economic performance. Whilst it can be argued that small towns will naturally underperform in larger economic markets, seeing small towns as economically stagnant or declining with the cause or primary influence as being other attributes like an aging and or decreasing population is highly reductionist and over simplifies the many interconnected facets within small towns (Baker, 1990; Al-Rohdan, 2005; Nel, 2005; Alden et al., 2006; Tull, 2006; Gopaul, 2007; Hoogendoorn and Nel, 2009; Hoogendorn, 2010; Wang et al., 1999; Wilkinson, 2008; Park et., al. 2009; Schiere et al., eds. 2011; Donaldson et al., 2012; McNamee, 2012; Toerien et al., 2012; and Park et., al 2013).

Over the last 10 years; there has been a steady intensification in interests towards small towns with an increasingly diversified view beyond economics. Notably, a large portion of the new literature has been driven by national development policy, wherein small towns are acknowledged for their value and contributions to the overall urban landscape – being seen as important service, social and spatial nodes; simply put as the primary areas of access to food supplies, primary and secondary education, healthcare and other government services for rural communities. However, although policies such as the 'Small Towns Development Initiative' launched in six small towns in 2012/2013 and 'Local Economic Development' strategies being implemented at the municipal and local government levels do generally inspire a sense of importance for small town research, it again reiterates a bias towards focusing primarily on the economies of small towns –

whilst valuable it is only half of the story. Unfortunately there remains a quantifiable deficit of research on small towns with regards to population decline and growth patterns, migration patterns, economic stabilising factors, population demography (van Rooy 2007) and a clear urban ranking of towns in an urban hierarchy. The unequally distributed literature has allowed us to conceptually reduce these spaces to spaces that are economically stagnant or declining, with aging and dwindling populations, that are socially, culturally and ethnically homogenous and where there is nothing to do and nothing really happens (see Abrahams 2003; Donaldson and Marais eds. 2012; Huyssteen and Botha et al. 2008; Marais 2004; Marais et al., 2005; Nel 2005; Van Staden and Marais 2005 and Van der Merwe et al., 2005).

Importantly, the above is a much-abridged summary of the intricate conversations surrounding small towns. However, this reflection which has come from a detailed review of the nature of the progression alerts one to understand why it is then unsurprising that geographers and urbanists interested in small towns, find themselves in a position where the available literature seems outdated, incomplete and or does not adequately represent the current small town status quo. As stated previously, the literature is largely one-sided; tending to be hyper-focused on economic flows and seldom branches out into other topics such as human development, socio-spatial politics and so on. Furthermore, the abandonment of trying to define a small town has left our present understanding and conceptualisation of small towns as being simply that “a small towns is not a city or metropolitan area” based on their competitiveness within the national economy (due to the many complexities that impact the economy); this being an obvious questions which both limits interests in the field, but at the same time creates a sense of unapproachable expansiveness in terms of ‘we just don’t know where to begin’. (Baker, 1990; Al-Rohdan, 2005; Nel, 2005; Alden et al., 2006; Tull, 2006; Gopaul, 2007; Wang et al., 1999; Wilkinson, 2008; Park et., al. 2009; Schiere et al., eds. 2011; Donaldson et al., 2012; Hoogendoorn, 2010; McNamee, 2012; Toerien et al., 2012; Park et., al 2013; Owusu, 2005).

In spite of this bleak overview of the current position of small towns in South African geography, the situation is not without remedy. Geographers and urbanists have taken to challenging the way we conceptualise urban spaces; choosing to move away from traditional urban-non-urban approaches into a more topological inquest that emphasises the metanarrative of theory; spurring a renewed inquisition into the field; With a growing number of authors having begun engaging with the topic in a more post structuralist way, reasserting the complexity of small town spaces and highlighting a greater emphasis to the way life is lived in the small towns to also includes elements like migration, both national and international, post-productivism in small towns and, the various social, economic and cultural essentials that shape the everyday lives of small town inhabitants; taking precedence in the production of small town knowledge.

Though progress is slow and limited, results from the more human centered approach to small town studies has yielded much transformation in the field. As part of exploring and building on the idea of small towns as complex social, spatial, economic and cultural spaces, this research intends to further the current progress on revitalised small town research by exploring the lived experience of small towns through the use of ethnographic research tools that engage with lenses of local residents, Chinese migrant business owners and small town expats with the intention to contribute to a more holistic and balanced body of human geography.

The fundamental rationale of this research project is that small towns as a sub-genre of urban geography can greatly benefit from a cross-cutting of theory – bringing together multiple urban-centric fields for a fuller and more dynamic understanding of small towns. There are four core reasons to support this; firstly, the conceptualisation of small towns in South Africa is a rather fragmented one, with little concrete basis in it belonging to geographical or planning inquest. The lack of placement and ownership is a symptom of a far more deeply rooted problematic. As the discussion has thus far revealed, there is an uneven distribution of knowledge generation within the field of urban geography;

biased towards 'certifiable urban centres' rather than towards the apparently opaque and ambiguous areas outside of the city, such as small towns. Furthermore, we have also seen that much of the existing body of knowledge which guides a particular thinking around small towns appears incomplete in reflection of its bias to a particular sector of small towns, routinely undermines many of the interspersed realities, and tends towards more empirical and quantitative research methods and their associated results. This does not mean that there is an out-right lack of interest in spaces beyond the city, quite the contrary, there is a sufficient amount of interest from a variety of sources, both governmental and non-governmental, but the lack of consensus in matters such as how rural and urban is defined, how these spaces should be approached and how they link together, greatly undermine efforts to encourage, firstly a greater and more detailed production of knowledge for alternative-urban spaces that fall beyond the city, and secondly that facilitates a more comprehensive and acute dialogue between urban and rural – one which is bred from a greater understanding of the happening in these spaces beyond what the statistical data represents.

Secondly, at present there is a handful of theorists (mainly geographers) who dominate the field such as Rogerson, Hoogendoorn, Nel, and Donaldson. Their perspectives and work in regards to small towns of South Africa can be considered the very foundation of modern thinking on the subject. Whilst progressive and expansive with a steady production of publications, their work centres on and presents a very much post-productionist attitude towards small towns, concentrating on tourism and economic diversification that will basically support the continued survival of small towns (see Donaldson, 2007; Donaldson and Marais, 2012; Donaldson, 2018; Hoogendoorn, 2011; Long and Hoogendoorn, 2013, 2014; Rogerson and Visser, 2007; Visser and Hoogendoorn, 2011; Rogerson and Visser, 2014; Hoogendoorn and Rogerson, 2015; Nel, 2005; Nel and McQuaid, 2002; Nel, Taylor, Hill and Atkinson, 2011;). Though this is highly valuable, it can be considered particularly bias and exclusionary to small towns who do not have a tourism industry nor the potential for one. Furthermore, the focus on

local economic development fosters a sense within the observer that small towns are experiencing general economic strife and are in constant need of economic based intervention. Moreover, this approach to small towns tends, at times, to over-emphasise the push factors of small towns, focusing on out-migration and urbanisation of small towns. This is a highly structuralist view, and largely discounts the towns individual autonomy to continue to exist through other means...hypothetically as the hometowns of a large portion of the population, who may wish to return to the town and to continue to support its economy by the mere fact that they live there.

Thirdly, small towns, however they are defined and from whichever angle they are perceived remain an integral feature of the South African urban landscape, and as such holds cultural, social, political and economic value. In light of the fragmentation within the discourse, this project seeks to expand the discussion, by attempting to exit the current discourse foci on tourism and local economic development. It has also been observed that much of the reading on small towns stems from an emphasis and reliance on statistical data through which interpretation are extracted and an understanding of small towns are constructed. Again, although this method is important, it highly structuralist.

Finally, understanding small towns only in terms of their growth and development is not a sufficient enough way to develop an inclusive representation of small towns. There is very little literature in the way of understanding and examining the social constructs presence in small towns. This refers to such trends as international migration to small towns, cyclic migratory and economic trends and the pull factors that sustain the small town with or without tourism industries.



Image 9: Man delivering bread, Cornelia



Image 10; Abandoned newly constructed home, Vredefort



Image 11: Corner Ruiters Rd and Retief Street Mokopane



Image 12: School in Cornelia



3

Research Methods & The Methodology of Research



3. RESEARCH METHODS AND THE METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the research design and methods that were used for this particular research project will be outlined, discussed and critically reflected upon. The chapter will explore, and where appropriate provide information regarding the background and rationale to each of the 4 phases of the research project, from Topic Establishment, to Research Design, Data collection, Processing and lastly Data Presentation. Furthermore, it will look at some of the unique challenges and considerations that were included in the early and later stages of research design and methods; such as what it is like organising a multidimensional research team and being a female in the field.

The research methods used during this study are considered well established and have proven to be highly effective in gathering appropriate data.

3.2. Outline of the research

The research for this thesis made use of mainly qualitative research methods which produced the majority of the data used in this study. The study also made use of some quantitative data extract and analysis. The research was divided into three main phases. These were: 'Phase 1: Research Design', 'Phase 2: Field Work' and 'Phase 3: Data processing and Analysis'. The data sets were structured into two levels, these were *primary* and *secondary* data sets, and a total of four data sets were analysed to answer the core research question and sub questions. These data sets were (1) compiled narratives of the lived experience of small town South African residence, Chinese migrant business owners and South African Small town expats. (2) A documentary film and (3) participant observations from the researcher and (4) Spatial analysis which depended on statistical information from census data.

In total, the research concluded at about 13 non-consecutive weeks of active field work between January 2015 and May 2017.

Phase 1: Research Design; initially occurred during the proposal writing period of the PhD degree. However, after a pilot study was conducted to test the methods outlined, the research design had to undergo revision, with the rethinking of core research parameters and the inclusion of several key lessons learned during the pilot study.

Phase 2: Field Work; was divided into four successive periods of data collection. The first period included the pilot study where four towns in the North West Province were surveyed; the data collected during this phase was used as secondary data and three of the four towns investigated in the pilot study were not re-examined in the main fieldwork. The second stage took the form of participant observation where the researcher visited about 40 small towns over a six non-consecutive weeks, the data collected at this stage was also used as secondary data. The third period was the primary data collection stage. Interviews were conducted with the target audience over about six weeks in the five case study towns. Lastly, the fourth and final period was a series of interviews conducted with small town expats.

Phase 3: Data processing and Analysis; occurred over a period of about 18 months post field work conclusion. Each data set required its own processing and analysis technique.

3.3. Selecting Small Towns for Research

Although not considered part of the phases of the research, identifying the small towns in which the field work would be conducted was a critical part of the research. In order to identify small towns appropriate to this research a set of criteria and characteristics were developed to identify small towns that would identify the small towns to be included in this study.

The first step was to establish exactly how many small towns there were in South Africa and then the sample requirement in order to complete the research that would provide

generalizable data. It was recognised, during the proposal writing stages, that there was a disagreement in the academic community as to how many small towns there were and how to define and identify a small town.

Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) involvement in the census made it an ideal source of data. Spatial data was requested from StatsSA which provided a complete list of populated areas characterized by StatsSA as *Main Places* according to the 2011 census data. The data was first sorted by population size. This identified a potential of 469 areas. Unfortunately, larger suburbs or 'sub-places' or 'Non-Urban' areas that met the Main Place population parameters of StatsSA were also included. The researcher then manually sifted through the list, and removed these places reducing the number of potential research sites to 399. Thereafter the data was sorted according to population density. According to the Census Metadata Geography (2011) Hierarchy and Attributes Report (2001), towns are characterized as having population densities less than 1000 persons per Km². While Stats SA does not provide a clear definition of 'Town' a decision was taken to retain the use of their parameters and with the intention to later provide a clearer definition specific to this study. By applying the population density parameter, the total number of potential towns were reduced to 144.

The final step in identifying research sites were the application of a final additional filter specific to this research-h. Towns were identified according to their spatial structure, this means that towns eligible for this research needed to have an identifiable business node or central business corridor. The rational for this was that the initial interest in small town research stemmed from the observed expansion of Chinese owned businesses in small towns and a desire to understand what attracted Chinese business owners to them in the first place.

The application of the two additional filters reduced the final number of research sites to 64. The diagram below demonstrate the process of identifying the towns:

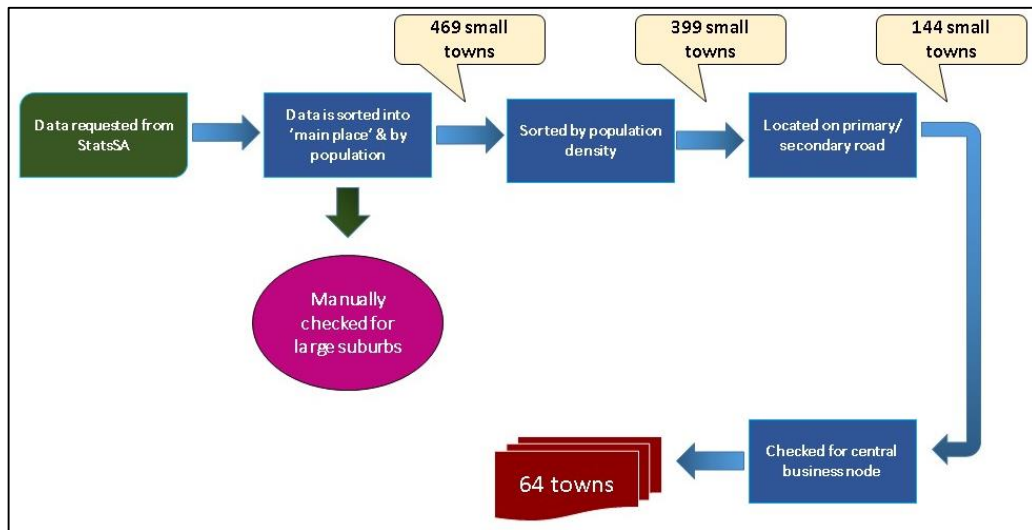


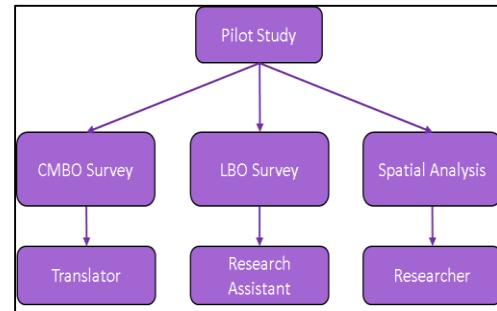
Figure 2: Process of selecting the small towns for investigation

In summary, the criteria for selecting the small towns is demonstrated below:

- Minimum population 10 000 people;
- Maximum Population 25 000 people;
- Located primary (N) or secondary (R) route
- Should have an evident central business district or business node.

A pilot study was then arranged in 4 towns in the Northern West Province to test the accuracy of the assumptions, appropriateness of tools and the potential the method to answer the research question. A research team was assembled, which included a Mandarin Translator, a research assistant and myself. Initial results were promising, but evidence of a deeper challenge began to emerge.

This pilot study occurred over two days, with one over-night rest stop. The towns surveyed were (1) Stillfontein, (2) Orkney, (3) Vryburg and (4) Delareyville. The pilot study involved the administering of between 2 and five surveys



to Chinese Migrant Business Owners (CMBO), Local Business Owners (LBO) and at least one spatial analysis in each town. Each of the surveys were assigned to one of the team members, i.e. the CMBO survey was administered by the mandarin translator; the research assistant was assigned the task of surveying LBO's and lastly the lead researcher performed the spatial analysis, assessing items such as infrastructure, architectural typologies, number, diversity and order of businesses.

The team stopped in Wolmaransstad overnight. The map below illustrates the route that was taken. The map below illustrates the route that was taken during the pilot study. A new set of criteria was developed, as shown below:

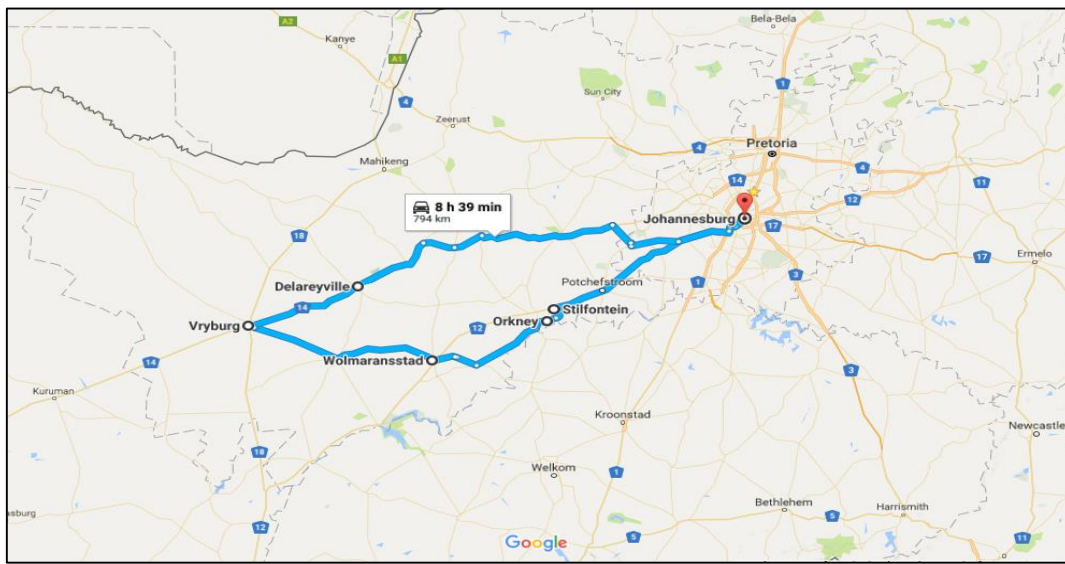


Figure 3 Image take from Google maps of proposed pilot study route and towns

The 4 towns surveyed in the pilot study had populations of between 10 000 and 25 000 people, and a spatial and business analysis of each of the town's revealed advanced architecture, infrastructure and a stable or thriving economy with higher order business

services which had significant inter-business competition. All characteristics that were regarded as uncommon in small towns and were non-representative of the conditions and characteristics outlined in the existing literature. This was the first indication that the literature was incomplete or biased towards a particular conceptualisation of small towns that were inaccurately generalised.

Method Revisited

Based on the initial findings of the pilot study, it was decided that a smaller population and density margin was needed in order to align with the description of small towns in the Central Place Theory. Furthermore, it would not be viable to conduct an impact study, as the number of towns and distances between them made that method financially unviable. A new criteria was applied to the StatsSa data; these were:

- **Towns should have a population of between 1500 and 5000 people**
 - This is based on the threshold required to support lower order services.
- **Located on a primary (N) or secondary (R) route**
 - This was based on the market and transportation principle of the central place theory.
- **Must have an evident central business district or business corridor**
 - Based on the identification of urban settlements according to urban morphology
- **Towns selected should be within a one to three hour driving distance of Johannesburg.**
 - Based on the marketing and transportation principles of the Central Place Theory; and

- For convenience in the initially stages of the fieldwork when prospective research sites were visited to test viability and build relationships with participants.
- **Towns selected should be established in about the same period**
 - This was not an integral element; it was assumed that if the towns were established in about the same periods, it would be better to understand the different factors influencing their formation over the years.
 - Additionally, this had never been a consideration in any pervious hierarchy and the researcher was curious to see whether or not it had any bearing on the small towns in present day.

In summary, the new criteria for the towns were as follows:

- Population between 1500 and 5000
- Located on a primary (N) or secondary (R) route
- Must have an evident central business district or business corridor
- Towns selected should be within a one to three hour driving distance of Johannesburg.
- Towns selected should be established in about the same period

From the revised method and parameters, a total of 5 towns were selected for research.

These were:

	Selected Small Towns				
	Group 1			Group 2	
Name	Wolmarransstad	Senekal	Parys	Vredefort	Vrede
Province	Northern Cape	Free State	Free State	Free State	Free State
Established Date	1891	1880-1890	1882	1876	1879
Population Size	3633	3466	8071	1326	1962

Distance from Johannesburg	2h54	2h43	1h	1h24	1h32

Table 4: Summary of selected towns

Although there were several more towns that fell within the criteria, due to financial restrictions a case study approach was used as opposed to an impact study of all the qualifying towns. In addition to redefining the method of selecting the small towns, the shift to a case-study method required a revision of the surveys used into an interview structure with more open ended questions and a greater sense of fluidity.

With the identification of the towns complete, the research methodology could now move onto the research design.

3.4. Phase 1: Research Design

Population Sampling

Three population groups were identified; these were:

- **Current South African small town permanent residents (STR)**; these are people who currently reside in a small town.
- **South African Small town expats (STE)**; these are people who once lived in a small town but now no longer do.
- **Chinese migrant business owners currently residing in a small town (CMBO)**; these are Chinese business owners who have migrated from either China or a foreign country to run or work in a Chinese owned business in a small town and who are currently residing in a small town.

It was assumed that by focusing on South African participants (with the exception of Chinese business owners) a South African lived experience of small towns could be constructed. Current small town residents were selected as they were identified as the most likely population to provide information on the present day lived experiences of small towns. Small town expats were identified for their potential in providing information about the lived experience that once compiled in contrast to the current residents of small

towns, would produce a dynamic and more holistic view of the lived experience of small towns.

Although there are many people from different nationalities present in small towns; in particular from Africa, Chinese migrant business owners were identified as key sources of information regarding the lived experience of foreign nationals in small towns as they were a population group retained from pilot studies conducted in early research on small towns. This is discussed in great detail in chapter one.

A combination of snowballing sampling and random sampling techniques were used to identify participants. The random sampling method was used to identify South African small town residents, Chinese migrant business owners. The snowball sampling method was used entirely for identifying small town expats to participate in the research.

A snowball sampling method was used to identify participants for this research. Snowball sampling is a technique of population sampling that is used when it is difficult for the researcher to access or find individuals willing to participate in a research study. Schutt (2011) describes the method as being “...useful for hard-to-reach or hard-to-identify population, but the members of which are somewhat interconnected” (Schutt, 2011, 148). This method was used extensively as it most adequately addressed the challenges associated with this type of research where the researcher is not from or located near the research sites under investigation. Moreover, time constraints as well as financial costs in relation to out-come goals during field work exercises dramatically limited the ability of the researcher to spend extensive periods of time in the researcher sites in order to build a sample population through a random sampling method or a quota sampling method.

Structured Interviews: Design

The primary source of data collection was a structured qualitative interview of about an hour in length so as not to disrupt the participant's routine. The interview structure was used to construct the lived experience of the three different targeted population groups.

Three separate structured interviews were developed for each of the target groups in order to elicit the best lived experience narration. The interviews consisted of a brief introductory section that was quantitative based and asked profile development questions such as the participant's age and gender and nationality. This section of the interviews were used to understand the context and lenses of the participants, the remaining sections were a series of open ended questions that were used to unpack the lived experiences of the participants.

Documentary Film Making Method

According to Friend and Caruthers (2016); documentary film making as a research technique is the next step in qualitative research. Filming a documentary is a highly technical technique and like any research method one which has several components and a unique processes in order to make is successful. There were four stages in the documentary film making method

The first stage was the acquisition of equipment. A good quality documentary depends rather heavily on the audio and visual equipment that is being used. As the audio and visual footage was going to be presented to an audience; and the documentary and important out-put of the research careful consideration was paid to the type of equipment in comparison to the budget available. Equipment was purchased specifically for the completion of this research project. It was decided that Mid-range equipment that would produce a fine enough documentary, but would not have the same cinema quality that may be expected from a professional production.

The second stage was to develop a shooting-schedule. A shooting schedule, as the name suggests is a schedule of images and visuals that were required to tell the intended story through visuals (Friend and Caruthers, 2016). Interviews were included as part of the shooting schedule. For the most part I handed over the creative design of the documentary to my research assistant, instead focusing on the interviews and still

photographs that could capture the essence of what was identified as imageries and verbal constructs of small towns

The third stage was the actual shooting of the documentary film. This involved sensitizing the participants to the camera, and the intention of the film it also required 'setting up', ensuring that the light and sound quality was good, despite the slightly informal nature of the film.

Lastly, the fourth stage was the post production stage, or editing of the raw footage into a documentary. First a script was written with a basic story line and identified themes that needed to be covered in the documentary film. Unfortunately it was not possible to include each of the participant's entire interview in the documentary, as each of their interviews lasted about one hour. As stated above, their transcribed interviews were included in Chapter five of the thesis. The software used for the editing process was Adobe Premier Pro Editing Software because the research assistant was most familiar with it and would be doing the majority of the editing in this software.

Non-Participant Unstructured Observations Method

The non-participant unstructured observations method, falls within a broader qualitative research methodology. Observational data was collected over a period of about 18 months, during which time I visited close on 80 towns throughout South Africa. Data from these visits were collected in a series of field journals and general research notes. Of particular interest to the researcher was the different urban and rural formats each of these towns assumed. It quickly became clear that our academic renditions of small-town-scapes were highly sterile and ignored much of the details in small towns.

The observations made during this time and the data collected as part of these observations were critical in the thought development of this research project.

Spatial Analysis

A spatial analysis is a technique often used in urban planning to assess the urbanity of an area. It can include the evaluation of information relating to population size, area

coverage, availability of resources, building topology characterisation and even an aesthetic evaluation of the condition of urban features in an area such as the condition of roads or the presence of street lights.

The spatial analysis was prepared based on common used characteristics to defined small towns as outlined in the literature review. Data was collected from the South African Census and StatSA. It was then compiled into a series of 'potential small town characteristics' and assessed for accuracy in that representation and applicability across multiple regions.

Findings in the spatial analysis was also cross-compared against narrations of the lived experience by participants.

3.5. Phase 2: Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this research project occurred in four small towns in the Free State and one small town North West Provinces. It was divided into two main research trips, the first trip occurred over 10 days with about two days spent in each town. The first trip targeted Chinese migrant business owners specifically, and required the presence of a Mandarin/ Cantonese translator. The second trip occurred over a period of five days, and focused local business owners in the four case study towns. Interviews with small town expats occurred over about two months, in between the longer research visits.

We spent on average of two days and two nights in each town. We began from Johannesburg towards Vrede. Thereafter we drove to Senekal, Parys/ Vredefort and lastly visited Wolmaransstad before heading back to Johannesburg.

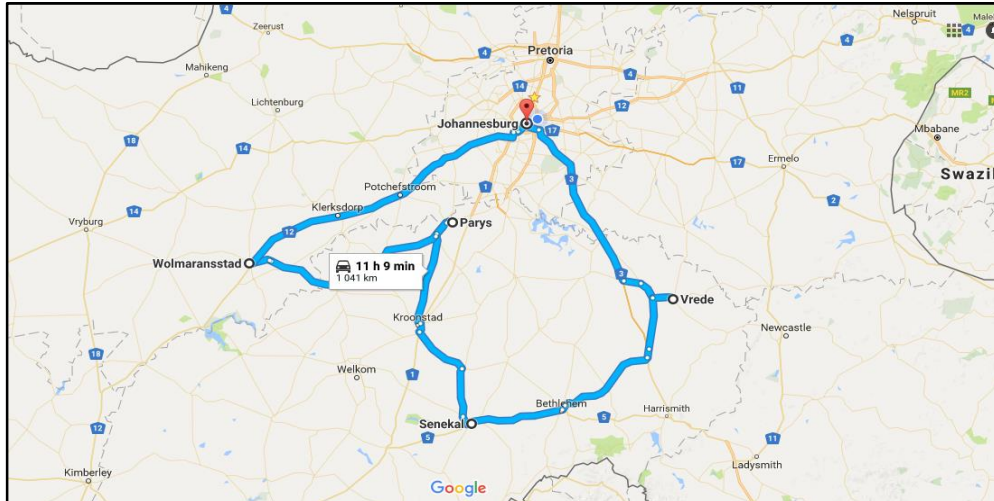


Figure 4: Map illustrating the route of the first round of field work, which occurred over 10 days. <https://www.google.co.za/maps/dir/Johannesburg/Parys/Wolmaransstad/Senekal/Vrede,+9835/Johannesburg/>

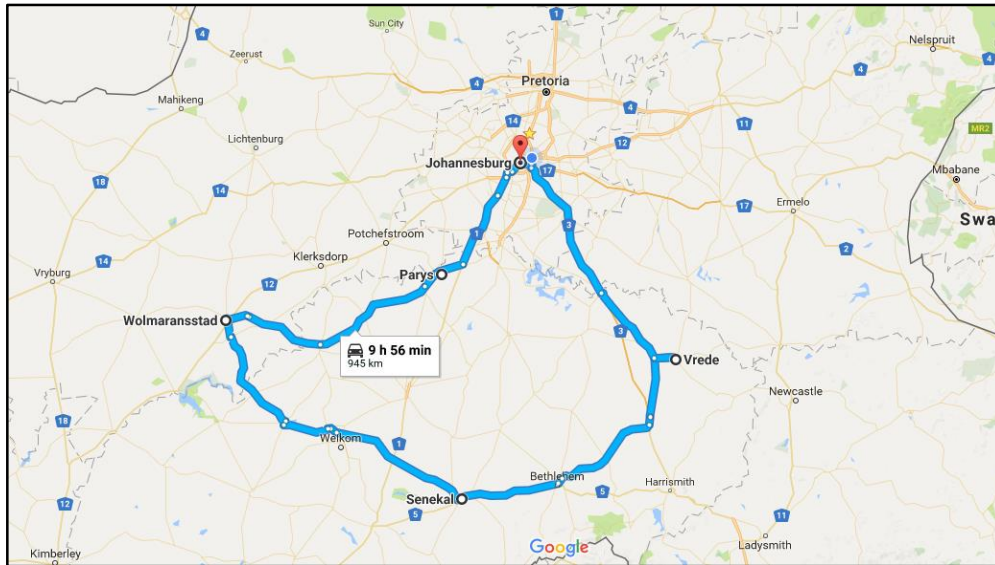


Figure 5: Map illustrating the route for the second round of field work, which occurred over 5 days.
<https://www.google.co.za/maps/dir/Johannesburg/Parys/Wolmaransstad/Senekal/Vrede,+9835/Johannesburg/>

The second round of field work accounted about three weeks after the first round, the image below illustrates the route taken, beginning at Parys and then moving onto Wolmaransstad, Senekal and Vrede, thereafter returning to Johannesburg. For this we only concentrated on local business owners. Interviews were arranged prior to arriving in the towns and because of this, we spent one day in each town, during which time we interviewed participant, and filmed more of the towns for the documentary and explored more areas of the town. Structured Interviews: Administration

As mentioned previously, a snowball sampling method was used to identify South African small town residents. There was a total of four South African small town residents who participated in the research. No participants were identified in Vredefort. Interviews were conducted in the homes of participants. Interviews were conducted over two visits with the participants. The first visit relied solely on the structured interview with the participants, the interview was then reviewed and interesting points of discussion as well as missed interview leads were identified. These were unpacked and addressed during the second visit with participants.

A combination of random sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify Chinese business owners. A translator was used to assist in interview in translating the interview questions to the participants and their responses back to the researcher to be recorded. Chinese migrant business owners were identified first through visual assessment of the central business node or corridor of the towns. It was noted that Chinese business owners had a very particular approach to setting up their store front which prompted the first engagement. The researcher along with the translator would enter the store and engage with the store owner. If the store owner was willing to participate, we would set up a time for the interview. If the store owner was unavailable or unwilling to participate the researcher would request a referral to another Chinese business owner. Interviews with the CMBO was administered in their stores, with the store owners. The interviews lasted for about an hour, depending on the how talkative the participant was. The interviews were conducted over two engagements with the participants. The first engagement relied heavily on the prepared structured interview. The interview was then reviewed and interesting points of discussion as well missed interview leads were identified and addressed during the second engagement with the participant. A total of 11 interviews were conducted with Chinese migrant business owners, but only 8 were used due to the consent that was given to record the data. The remaining interviews were considered in the participant observation that assisted in the interpretation of the data.

Lastly, interviews with small town expats was arranged primarily through the snowball sampling method. The majority of participants in the population group were from the researcher's personal network of friends. Interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants and lasted about an hour. Interviews were conducted and completed through two engagements. The first engagement relied heavily on the prepared structured interview; thereafter the interview would be reviewed and interesting points of discussion as well as missed interview-leads were identified. These were then addressed in the second visit.

Reflecting on Sampling Methods and Interview Administration

The random sampling and snowball methods proved effective in identifying participants for the research. These methods proved most adept given the time and budgetary constraints of the fieldwork.

A major challenge in the small towns was the lack of familiarity with the people of the town. The towns' inhabitants, Chinese and local were generally nervous and wary of participating in the research by outsiders. Their largest concern was that we were government officials and there was a fear from the Chinese migrant business owners that in talking to us, it may lead to some legal action. However, after a few minutes of talking to the both the Chinese migrant business owners and the local business owners, answering all their questions and reassuring them that we were not from the government, they consented to the interviews.

The method was particularly unsuccessful in identifying a more representative sample population. A consequence of the snowball sampling method in both the South African small town resident's population sample and the South African small town expats population sample was a racial bias and therefore a lack of diverse representation in the small towns.

Administration of interviews with Chinese Migrant Business Owners proved to be the most challenging element due to the language barrier. The use of a translator alleviated some of the difficulty, however it was found that several nuances or phrases in the mandarin language could not be directly translated into English resulting in a loss of some detail during the interview. Additionally, after the several interviews with Chinese business owners it became clear that the translator was providing his own interpretation of the individual's response to some of the questions as opposed to the direct translation of their response. This meant that some of the answers may have been inaccurate and the analysis of these interviews inaccurate.

An important consideration in the reflection of the effectiveness of the method is the limitation and impact time and financial constraints had on the successful administration of the method. More time and a larger fieldwork budget may have dramatically improved the representation in the sampling methods.

Filming a Documentary

The documentary film making process was broken into four stages. The first was the logistics. I was referred to a Wits School of Film and Television senior lecturer who graciously offered to mentor me through the part the documentary film making process. She first recommended I get a fourth year film student to assist me. Which I did. I visited the Wits school of Film and television, and randomly approached individuals, pitching to them the opportunity of participating as the film team for the PhD documentary. I then requested sample of their work.

Reflecting on Documentary Film Making

The documentary film was by far the most technically and logistically challenging element of this research project. The main reasons for this was that I did not possess the technical knowledge that I felt was required to produce a film that met the outcome requirement, nor enough knowledge of digital storytelling to fully convey to narratives of the three streams that was envisioned to be present in the film. Secondly, I required a research assistant to whom I could delegate the responsibility of filming, and who would be able to film both independently and be able to take instruction from me. Lastly, in terms of logistics, the equipment that was needed to film a good documentary required a lot of research in itself and knowledge of what equipment was needed and how it was going to be used.

Participant Observations

Over a period of 18 months, the researcher visited an estimated 80 towns in multiple provinces in South Africa. Image and experience data was recorded and used in the thesis to assist in the development of the overall argument.

3.6. Phase 3: Data Presentation, Evaluation and Analysis

Three mediums of data presentation that were used are not presented as single document. Borrowing from McFarlane (2011), this research has used the idea of 'assemblage' in the design and presentation of the research. Assemblage, very basically refers to the idea put forward by philosopher Aristotle saying that the *whole is always greater than the sum of its parts* – regardless of how the parts are arranged. What this means is that the many parts that make up an object as individual parts are often worth more (more interesting) than the object itself. In urban terms, this refers to the many elements that assist in comprising the urban realm, and how each part as an individual piece is as equally complex and interesting as the next – however this does not detract from the fact that regardless of how interesting each part is; it will never amount to more than the whole itself.

The first presentation of data is in the form of statistical analysis in chapter 5. This analysis has been supported by extracts from the interviews conducted during the fieldwork. The second medium of presentation is the composition of an ethnographic monograph; which is based on the narratives constructed from the interviews. This is a completely separate book and has been presented in A5 to mimic the traditional ethnographic monograph. The third medium is the documentary film, which makes use of both visual and auditory components, including music. Lastly, throughout the thesis there are free standing pages with pictures from all the towns that I have visited in the past three years that have been included as part of the participant observation source of data collection. These mediums were selected as they presented the most potential for constructed as authentic a representation of the research sites as possible and still allowed the reader to retain a sense of autonomy in self-analysis the data when engaging

with the data. *For the purpose of storage and admittance of this thesis in the Wits University Library; the ethnographic narrative has been included as Appendix H.*

The motivation for this is in keeping with the traditional anthropological ethnographic method of narrative writing, where as much of the original text is preserved in the form of a single story, with the interruption of an analysis by the researcher. This is in order to provide the reader with the chance of engaging with the narrative in a highly authentic form, taking from the narrative what interests them, and allowing the narrative to be read and viewed through multiple lenses. In chapter six, the narratives are deconstructed and juxtaposed against the literature to answer the research questions and sub questions.

A summary and discussion of the making of the documentary film is discussed in chapter five. This was given its own chapter as it is very much a stand-alone piece as it is a representation of data that is highly linked to this thesis. Again, the documentary film can and should be watched in isolation without an analysis so as to experience as fully as possible, the most authentic version of the data. Although, this in itself is somewhat of an oxymoron. But this will be discussed further on in chapter five.

Throughout the thesis, there are pages of pictures, simply captioned, only with a data and a location – sometimes a small anecdote that relates to the experience of research. This is the final medium of data presentation. It is meant to give the reader the opportunity to engage with the data in an independent way, allowing the reader to experience the data on their own and formulate an understanding of. Later the data is discussed in detail and in reflection of the literature.

The use of different mediums was meant to both test and explore how different ways of collecting and presenting data can affect the way the data is understood and received. In keeping with a poststructural theme and moving away from the positivist-functional method of research, this methodology seemed most appropriate in redistributing the power associated with research to the observer, allowing the observer to actively participate in the research to some degree – to learn and take from the research

something that may have been excluded or missed during the analysis process. In this way data become more universal, in that it could possibly be extracted from this thesis and used elsewhere, instead of confining data to a research specific topic ultimately resulting in the need for other researchers to have to go out and re-conduct the research for their own topics.

3.7. Conclusion

A total of 5 towns were included as case studies in this research. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. Under quantitative methods, a spatial analysis was conducted which evaluated selected statistics chosen for their applicability in characterising small towns. These statistics were compared with extracts from the interviews which were helpful.

In terms of qualitative methods, ethnographic research tools were principally used in the form of interview. From these interviews an ethnographic monograph was compiled as a separate document which supplements the research and can act as a standalone data source.

The second tool in the qualitative methods category was the use of a documentary film to collect and present data. Footage of the towns, the process of research and participants was collected and edited into a film.

The third tool in the qualitative methods category was the use of photography. Based on participant observation, images were collected from a variety of towns which included the five case study towns but also included images from towns which were visited outside of the primary fieldwork. These images have been arranged throughout the thesis as a kind of essay; however their primary role is to merely alert the reader to the many different forms 'urban' can take.

In the following chapter we will begin with the spatial analysis, followed by a brief discussion which will begin to answer the research questions.



Image 14: Church in Hanover, Northern Cape



Image 15: Street Scapes (1 & 2) Hanover, Northern Cape; (3) Road in Niekerkshoop; (4) Strydom Tunnel, Limpopo; (5 -7) Street Scape in Groblersdaal, Northern Cape.

4

Research Sites and Context



4. RESEARCH SITES AND CONTEXT

4.1. Introduction

With a large number of small towns establishment dating as far back as the early 1800s, we cannot ignore the impact of the historical conditions of established and current influence these retained histories have on the present day lived-experience of small towns in South Africa. Having formed within a history of ethnic based violence, conquest, segregation and enslavement – small towns are heavily weighed spaces. By appreciating the events and conditions under which small towns were established and continued to grow, we may be able to understand more about the present day experience of small towns.

This chapter will provide an outline of the historical development of the 5 towns focused on in this study. As a standalone chapter it is geared towards demonstrating the historical pressures under which these towns were established and the social, political and economic conditions which continued and continue to influence the development of the towns into what we know them to be today.

4.2. A brief history of South Africa and early settlement

The earliest known occupancy of South Africa is attributed to the KhoiKhoi and san peoples. Evidence of their presence has been found from the shores of the South African coast and throughout the escarpment; dating back 100 000 years before European Settlement (Thomson, 2001).

Popular history of the discovery of South Africa is attributed to the Portuguese, when at the beginning of the modern period and known as the 'age of discovery', Bartholomew Diaz in 1488 first sailed around the southern-most point of Africa from the west, along the shore-line as far as Algoa Bay, in the present day Eastern Cape (South African History Online, 2011 <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/bartolomeu-dias>). However, it is far more likely that merchants from the late antiquity period, were the first to round the

tip of Africa as is consistent with findings of Arabian, Indian and Chinese merchandise from the same period at the ruins of ancient Southern African civilisations. Furthermore, research of the prehistory civilisations such as Mapungubwe in present day Zimbabwe and Tulamela City in present day Northern Limpopo Province of South Africa, confirm this. The South African History Online (2011) describe the civilisation and its people as follows:

“The people of Mapungubwe were wealthy and farmed with cattle, sheep and goats, and also kept dogs... Archaeologists found traces of millet, sorghum and cotton in the remains of storage huts... From about 1220 to 1300 Mapungubwe was an advanced trading centre and its inhabitants traded with Arabia, China and India through the East African harbours..... They exchanged salt, cattle, fish, gold and iron, ivory, wood, freshwater snail and mussel shells and chert....” (South African History Online, 2011 <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/kingdoms-southern-africa-mapungubwe>)

The website goes onto describe the city of Thulamela in the same way as is seen in the following excerpt:

“The city of Thulamela has been carbon dated to have existed between about 1240 AD to 1700 AD... Scientists believe that the ancestors of the Shona people established Thulamela... Archaeologists discovered gold beads, gold wire, gongs and a potsherd with traces of molten gold at Thulamela. There were also forged tools and weapons which show that they had begun to extract and use metals around 800 years ago, and had converted it to steel without any European influence...Archaeologists [also] found gold jewellery, iron tools, ceramic potsherds, glass beads, spinning whorls, sewing needles and a piece of Chinese porcelain. This shows that metal was smelted, which means they had advanced

technology and trade contacts with the Far East.” (South African History Online, 2011 <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/kingdoms-southern-africa-thulamela>)

Nevertheless, it was the chartered expedition of Barthelemew Diaz that first mapped the southern tip of Africa. Nine years later in 1497, Vasco De Gama again rounded the tip of Africa, going as far as present day Durban. But the Portuguese had little interest in Sothern Africa beyond it being an access route to the east. As the Portuguese monopoly of the eastern trade began to die down, the Dutch and English saw this as an opportunity to expand their own trade mission. In 1600, the English East India Company was founded and in 1602, through the consolidation of independent trade companies, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) came into existance (Thomson, 2001). For the next 40 years or so, there would be several attempts by both companies, independently and jointly, to set up a refreshment station in the cape, but with no success. Then in 1647, a Dutch vessel was ship-wrecked at Table Bay, and the surviving crew moved into table valley, where they remained for 6 months before being rescued. They sustained themselves by growing vegetables and bartering with the local people for livestock. The marooned crew found that the area was fertile and had a favourable climate. When they were eventually rescued and returned home they presented their findings to the company, convincing them of the areas suitability for European settlement (Thomson, 2001).

In 1652, the Dutch East Indian Company dispatched maritime veteran Jan van Riebeeck and about 125 men to Table Bay to establish a fort and develop a vegetable garden for the benefit of ships on the Eastern Trade Route (McKenna, 2011). Renamed Cape of Good Hope, within 10 years the settlement became home to a colony of 250 white people; thus beginning the history of South African Colonisation.

With tensions already high between the settling Europeans and the pre-existing KhoiKhoi and San, it did not help that the refreshment post was becoming more established and increasingly frequented by passing ships from several nations, intensifying the demand

for supplies and produce. This prompted the VOC to release several men from their company contracts, awarding them farms on which produce was to be grown for further supply to the VOC outpost. The further dispersal of the Dutch farmers (now known as Burghers) to occupy more land only exasperated tensions between the KhoiKhoi and Europeans, often resulted in conflict. The Khoisan often resisted the Dutch colonialization, and the further expansion of the colony by 'Trekboers' - the name given to Dutch that drove the northern and eastern frontiers. Skirmishes eventually erupted into guerrilla warfare with three major conflicts occurring in the early settlement of the Dutch as they moved northward, further into the interior (McKenna, 2011). McKenna (2011), describes the deteriorating situation:

“Cattle raids punctuated almost every decade of the 18th century. The raids and counterraids became increasingly violent as the Dutch expanded into the north east where sheep could be grazed; by the last quarter of the 18th century the colony’s northern frontier was under arms, and numerous settlers had been driven from their lands. Between 1799 and 1803 dispossessed Khoisan farmworkers in Graaff-Reinet, many with horses and guns, rose in revolt, challenging the entire colonial order. The Dutch feared that the Khoisan would attack the arable farms of the southwest, especially as they were joined by Xhosa allies. The intervention of government troops, divisions among Khoisan and Xhosa forces, and sheer bloodletting led to the defeat of the uprising, although it haunted the colonial imagination well into the 19th century. This was the last time the Khoisan fought under their traditional leaders to regain their lost lands.” (McKenna, 2011, 24-25)

At the same time, along the Eastern Frontier, the situation was no better. Settlers encountered Xhosa farmers and the arrival and settlement of the Dutch led once again

to severe conflict between the groups, costing numerous lives but eventually leading to the division of land along the boundary of the Great Fish River. While the Trekboers had superior fighting technologies in the form firearms, the Xhosa had superior numbers, thus resulting in the first two frontier wars ending in a stalemate.

At the turn of the 19th century, the British became more and more interested in the cape as it secured the British-Indian trade routes. Often providing imperial assistance to the settled Boers, the colony eventually came under British rule instigating several administrative and policy reforms. Amongst these were the revision of market regulations, encouraging the abolition of preferential tariffs and reform in the land tenure system, furthermore, new policies ensured standards of treatment of slaves and servants, and finally, in 1834 the emancipation of slavery. Despite the promise of this policy reform and supposed potential it had for slaves, little actually changed, and by 1841, settlers had re-imposed their old authority. In reality the British-reformed land and labour policies threatened the lifestyle and livelihoods of many of the Boer. Finally, dissatisfied with the British rule, parties of Voortrekkers (Pioneers) began leaving the cape colony in droves with their families and slaves; as part of a mass exodus that would become known in history as 'The Great Trek' (McKenna, 2011). In total about 15 000 Boarer left the colony, dispersing, northward through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal; and eastward towards Natal, with the intent to establish their own, separate republics (Mills, 2007). Independent of the British who remained along the coast, the Voortrekkers and their settlements seemed to thrive in the Highveld, eventually unifying in the 1860's as the South African Republic, which was later annexed by the British between 1877 and 1881, and retaken by the Boer during the 1899-1902 South African War. The years following The Great Trek were arduous and saw much conflict between the indigenous people and the settlers. McKenna (2011) described the period as follows:

“Compared with the British colonies, the racially exclusive republics between the Vaal, Hartz, and Limpopo rivers were weak members of the

135 world economy, dependent on cattle ranching and hunting...control
136 continued well into the 20th century. The incapacity of the settlers to wrest
137 the indigenous inhabitants from their land resulted in the development of
138 several types of labour coercion and control: slavery, clientship,
139 indenture, debt bondage, and various forms of rent and labour tenancy.
140 The struggle to transform formal claims into actual landownership and
141 money was short, and government officials were paid in land, usually
142 along with its African occupants. The settlers' accumulation of wealth was
143 often the result of random looting and forcible, though sporadic, extraction
144 of tribute, tempered by the limited physical capacity of the commando
145 system. Surrounded by a horseshoe of powerful African chiefdoms, it was
146 only in the last third of the 19th century, during a period of renewed
147 imperial interest in the interior, which the balance of power shifted
148 decisively in favour of white farmers." (McKenna, 2011, 38).

149 Whilst the majority of the settlers were Dutch, there were several Eastern European
150 settlers, namely German and Scandinavian. They were eventually joined by asylum
151 seeking French Protestants, escaping religious persecution by the French Catholic
152 Monarch of the time, King Louis XIV. Due to labour shortages, slaves were brought from
153 other, already colonised countries in the eastern and western parts of Africa. The VOC
154 prohibited enslavement of the indigenous South African people so as not to jeopardise
155 the cattle trade between the two. However, exposure of the local people to infectious
156 diseases carried by the Europeans; and against which the local South African's immune
157 systems were unprepared; along with the loss of agricultural land on which they were
158 dependant; ultimately decimated the Khoi and San populations.

159 The progressive colonisation of South Africa, and eventual discovery of gold and
160 diamond reserves in the Highveld interior prompted the establishment and growth of
161 formal settlement that would eventually become the cities we know today. The urban

landscape of South Africa and its' indigenous people were subjected to a plethora of policies and laws that promoted prejudices; especially when it concerned land ownership; such as the Black Land Act No 27 of 19 June 1913 which restricted the right of black persons to own or rent land outside of designated reserves; The Native Affairs Act of 1920 which initiated the system that ultimately regulated black participation in political affairs; and The Natives (Urban Areas) Act No 21 of 1923 which broadly regulated black presence in urban areas – to name but a few. Much of the early discriminatory legislation can be seen as a precursor to the far more expansive instatement of the Apartheid State in the mid 1940's. 'Apartheid', an Afrikaans word meaning 'separateness'; was the term given to the previously active political policy of the South African National Party. The policy was based on the premise of racial segregation and was highly influential in social, economic and spatial development of South Africa, between 1948 to 1994. Throughout South Africa, the effects of the policy are still seen and felt today. The policy which incited prejudice, racism and separation of the races living in South Africa, and manifested into a series of social-ills, have plague South African people for generations. The 1913 Land Act in which the majority of the population were given 7% of the land to live on is evidence of this.

The National Party enforced many laws to ensure that the different races were kept separate. These laws included the Group Areas Act of 1950, one of the policy's most notorious and whose impacts are remnant even today. The act forced the separation of people according to their race to reside in racially allocated areas, and many of these suburbs still remain intact and comprise mostly of the racial groups that which were forced to live there when the law came into effect. A good example in the greater Johannesburg area is Eldorado Park, Lenasia and the South West Township (SOWETO). Three areas which were allocated for peoples classified as Coloured, Indian and Black by the then South African government.

188 It is important to recognise that small towns were equally affected by the policies of
189 apartheid. Many argue that Small towns do not receive the same attention and focus as
190 large cities in terms of undoing and redressing the impacts of apartheid in small towns,
191 because of the population density and the economic potential of the towns (see Andrew,
192 Ainslie and Shackleton, 2003; Cousins, 2005; Free State Provincial Spatial Development
193 Framework, 2014; Killian, Ball and Howells, 2005; Mangaung Integrated Development
194 Plan, 2016/17; National Spatial Development Perspective, 2006). Small towns are
195 usually unifunctional and however they generally have a limited range of areas they
196 influence. Small towns comprise of all different races all occupying the same space but
197 segregation still remains due to the nature of Apartheid that has been entrenched in the
198 people living there who tend to associate with their own kind. There is less integration
199 between the races in South African small towns. Steyn and Ballard (2013) describe this
200 as 'living together apart'. Boundaries are maintained between them. According to the
201 research there is racism in small towns with the minority population group feeling
202 unwelcomed. This caused the minority to remain together. Apartheid encouraged
203 'separate development' (Steyn and Ballard, 2013) and had a certain moral order (Steyn
204 and Ballard, 2013) that was associated with it.

205 The settlement geography of South Africa in the Post-Apartheid city has changed
206 somewhat but many areas are still predominantly the same as it was during Apartheid.
207 Residential areas in South Africa still show a reflection of the Group Areas Act. Freedom
208 in South Africa and the downfall of Apartheid did not necessarily mean an 'integrated
209 and egalitarian society' (Steyn and Ballard, 2013). Research has been done in various
210 regions of South Africa on the reasons why people would move to newer areas and the
211 reasons why people still remain in those same areas demarcated for them during
212 Apartheid. Some of these reasons include crime, poverty, culture, family, familiarity,
213 financial barriers. Due to this South Africa's urban profile can be seen with some distinct
214 'racially organised residential patterns' (Steyn and Ballard, 2013) even though things

215 have changed and the mind-set and attitudes of many South Africans have changed.
216 The legacy of Apartheid still remains in the form of segregation based on poverty.
217 South Africa is a racially and culturally diverse country with 11 official languages. During
218 Apartheid many of these indigenous languages were used in the Homeland or Bantustan
219 Act. Black South Africans were segregated according to the language they spoke and
220 were given marginal pieces of land to live on. These areas were said to be independent
221 states within South Africa and were to be governed separately. Much of the land was
222 infertile and eroded and people living on it could not farm the land which was a necessity
223 for food and little income at the time.

224

225 **4.3. Contextualising the Free State and 5 small towns as Case Studies**

226 The Orange Free State formed part of the four provinces of the Union of South Africa in
227 1910 (Free State Provincial Development Framework (FSPSDF), 2014). At present, this
228 province is the 3rd largest province of South Africa covering approximately 129 825 km².
229 It is located in the centre of the remaining 8 provinces, and it shares an international
230 border with Lesotho, as seen in the image below.



Figure 6: Map showing 9 provinces of South Africa, highlighting the position of the Free State Province (https://bsazone1-2m4ngwd4.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Map_of_South_Africa.jpg Visited 02 July 2017)

Legislatively, the Free State comprises of one metropolitan municipality, five district municipalities, namely: (1) Mangaung, (2) Xhariep; (3) Lejweleputswa; (4) Fezile Dabi and (5) Thabo Mofutsanyana. These are then divided into nineteen local municipalities. Bloemfontein is the capital of the Free State. According to the Free State Provincial Development Framework (2014), the Free State is composed of 90 low density urban settlements. It is estimated that at least 40% of the provincial population reside in the urban settlements or urban centres. Furthermore, the framework has identified 6 settlement types within the Free State, these are arranged in descending order of urbanity (FSPSDF, 2014 p38):

1. **Small Metro:** Bloemfontien
2. **Large Town:** Botshabelo, Sasolburg and Welkom
3. **Medium Town:** Allanridge, Bethlehem, Henneman, Kroonstad, Odendaalsrus, Thaba Nchu and Virginia

4. **Small Town:** Bothaville, Ficksburg, Frankfort, Harismith, Heilbron, Ladybrand, Parys, Puthasithaba, Reitz, Senekal and Viljoenskroon
5. **Villages:** Small villages through the province
6. **Remote Village:** Rural Settlements of Thaba Nchu and Maluti s Phofung.



Figure 7: Map showing the District Municipalities and some of Major Urban Settlement in the Free State Province (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d5/Map_of_the_Free_State_with_municipalities_named_and_districts_shaded_%282016%29.svg Visited 02 July 2017).

“It is estimated that urbanisation has increased from 70.5% in 1996 to 80% in 2006, and that approximately 40% of the Free State population reside in the large urban centres or settlements” (DEDTEA 2009 in FSPSDF, 2014 p38). About 72% of the province is classified as a Grassland Biome (DEDTEA, 2009 in FSPSDF, 2014) and about 60% of this is identified as priority conservation areas. There are currently 19 protected areas in the Free State that include both national parks and provincial nature reserves.

Located within the Free State are both the Orange River and Vaal River. The Orange River basin is an international river basin, crossing three other Southern African

countries. It is also the most developed transboundary river system in Southern Africa. Furthermore it incorporates a variety of transfer schemes that supply water to municipalities, industries and farms, both inside the basin and beyond.

The Vaal River which originates in the Drakensburg Mountains in Mpumalanga Province, flows westwards and joins the Orange River in the Northern Cape. The Vaal River is responsible for supplying water to the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Area and its surrounds as well as a large portion of the Free State. As seen in the map below, the advance network of river and tributary systems makes the province ideal for industrial activities such as farming; and the area is indeed littered with farms.

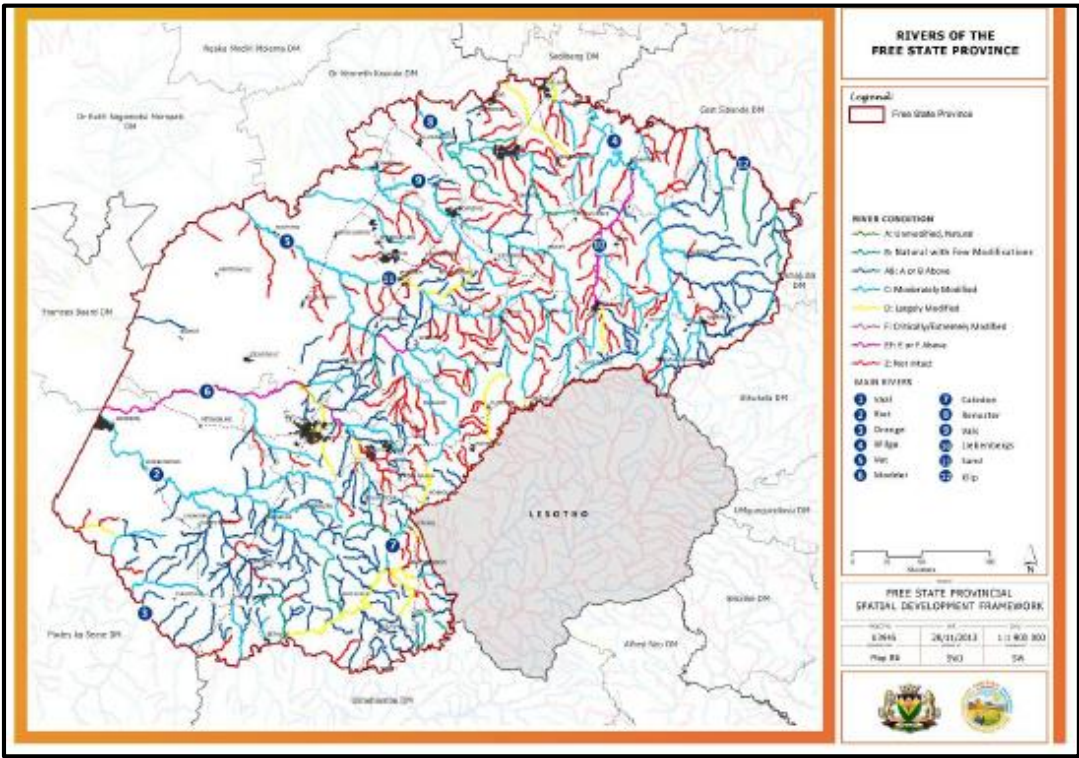


Figure 8: Rivers of the Free State (FSPSDF, 2014 p41)

Demographically, the Free State has the second lowest population density after the Northern Cape. With just over 2, 7 million people, the population is divided into 87.6% Black population, 3.1% Coloured, 0.4% Asian and 8.7% white and 0.2% other (Statistics South Africa Census 2011 Provincial Profile Free State, 2014). Overall the Free State has experience an average of 0.14% population growth rate per-annum, between 2001 and 2011. Migration patterns form a crucial part of the demography of the Free State.

275 About 85.6% of permanent residence of the Free State were born in the province, 14.4%
276 of residence were born outside of the province and 21.5% of the population were born
277 in the province but now reside elsewhere. It is rationalised that a large portion of the
278 migration out of the Free State is driven by deepening social and economic challenges,
279 pushing individuals to seek opportunities elsewhere, especially in the larger metropolitan
280 regions (FSPSDF, 2014). Overall the Free State has experience a total of about 14.5%
281 of in-migration from other provinces, which is marginally lower than the rate of population
282 leaving the province (FSPSDF, 2014). The table below demonstrates the estimated
283 percentage location of out-migrants from the Free State and where they settle in other
284 provinces.

Province	% of Out-Migrants	% of In-Migrants
Western Cape	8 %	14.5%
North West	19 %	
Mpumalanga	5 %	
Limpopo	8 %	
KwaZulu-Natal	5 %	
Gauteng	46 %	
Eastern Cape	5 %	
Northern Cape	4 %	

Table 5: Demonstrating the estimated percentage distribution of out-migration from the Free State to other province (FSPSDF, 2014 p66)

The map below further demonstrates the trends of in-migration and out-migration of the Free State Province.

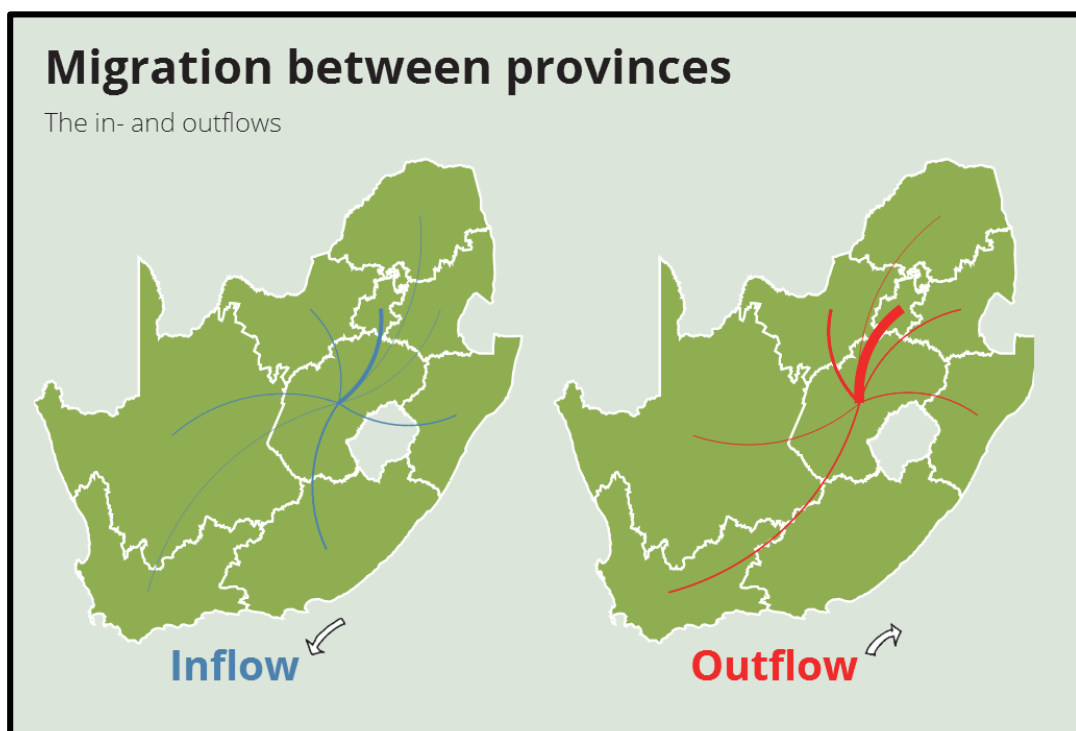


Figure 9: Map demonstrating the migration in-flows and out-flows between provinces (Statistics South Africa Census 2011 Provincial Profile Free State, 2014 p35)

We can begin to see a strong migratory relationship between Gauteng and the Free State, as having the strongest migratory relationship.

According to the FSPSDF (2014), there has been no noticeable change in the Human Development Index (HDI); results indicate no improvement or decay in the standard of living, and the trend is forecast to be unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. This is as a result of “a marginal economic base of poorer areas, the decline of the primary sector and the consolidation of the economic base in the relatively better-off areas, and the increase in HIV and AIDS.” (FSPSDF, 2014 p66). The current HDI of the Free State is estimated at 0.54 as of 2010, while the national HDI is estimated at 0.56 as of 2010 studies.

Poverty remains at crisis levels in the Free State, with an estimated 51% of the population living in poverty, which means they earn less than 1600 South African Rands a month; which is regarded as the poverty line (FSPSDF, 2014). This high rate of poverty, in conjunction with generally low incomes and continued unequal income distribution impacts a large portion of the population’s ability to access basic services. Furthermore, unemployment in the province is higher than the national average with the average unemployment rate at 32.8% in the three largest municipal districts.

Overall the Free State’s educational profile has improved from pre-1994 to 2010. Functional literacy has improved from 64% to 80% respectively; furthermore the Matric pass rate has improved from 56% to 71% in the same period (FSPSDF, 2014). “Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality has the highest attainment level of matriculation with the Thabo Mofutsanyana District with the lowest matriculation rate and in the same stance the highest no schooling level and highest unemployed” (FSPSDF, 2014 p68). However, despite these improvements, only an estimated 9.5% attend a higher education institute after graduating matric (FSPSDF, 2014).

Service Standards, refers to the population’s access and standard of basic services of housing, water, refuge and sanitation, electricity, telecommunications and healthcare.

These services provide a good indication of the general health and wellbeing of the population.

There are an estimated 823 316 households in the Free State. Among the district municipalities, Mangaung Metro has the largest consolidation of households, with an estimated 231 921, then Thabo Mofutsanyana with an estimated 217 884, third is Lejweleputswa with an estimated 183 163, then the second smallest district municipality is Fezile Dabi with an estimated 144 980 households and lastly the smallest district municipality Xhariep with an estimated 453 68 households (FSPSDF, 2014).

Type of Main Dwelling	Free State Provincial Percentage
Formal	81.1%
Informal	15.7%
Traditional	2.4%
Other	0.9%

Table 6: Percentage distribution of Free State dwellings per dwelling type (FSPSDF, 2014 p70)

Formal Dwellings are defined as being built with bricks or concrete which include entities on a separate stand, in a yard or on a farm. This also include a block of flats, a cluster of houses in a complex, free-standing or semi-detached dwelling. *Informal Dwelling* is defined as a shack in a back-yard or elsewhere. A *Traditional Dwelling* is defined as being made of traditional materials and include a hut or similar; lastly, *Other Dwelling* refers to a caravan or tent (FSPSDF, 2014).

The Free State fares quite well in comparison to other provinces in terms of formal and informal dwelling distribution as seen in the table below:

Province	Formal Dwellings	Informal Dwellings
Eastern Cape	63.2%	7.7%
Free State	81.1%	15.7%
Gauteng	79.8%	18.9%

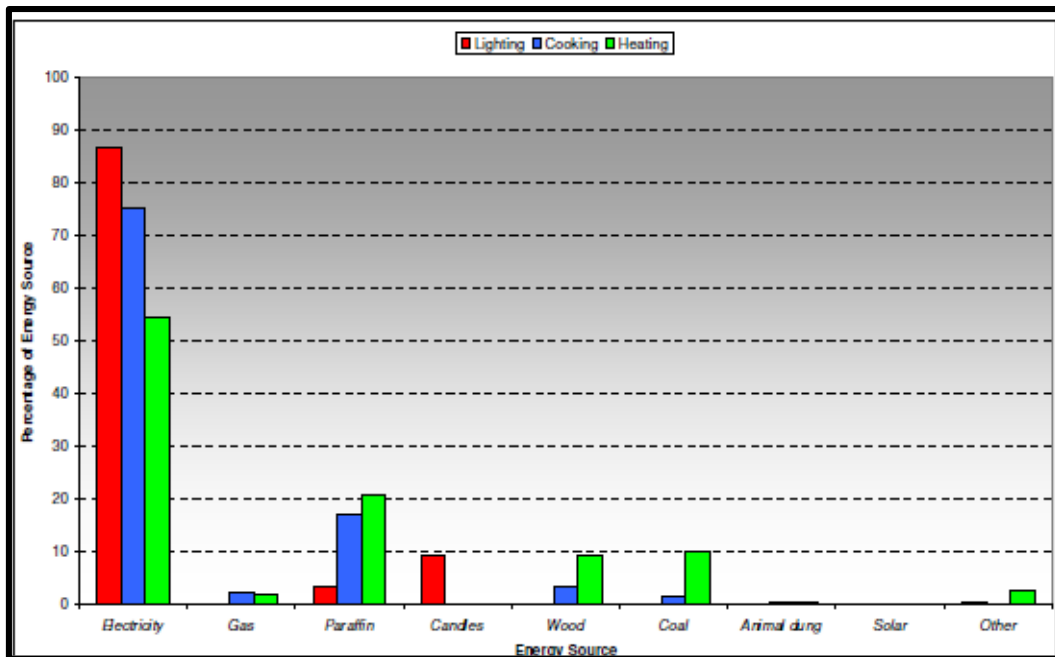
KwaZulu-Natal	71.6%	8.3%
Limpopo	89.8%	5.2%
Mpumalanga	83.8	10.9%
North West	76.2%	21.2%
Northern Cape	82.4%	13.1%
Western Cape	80.4%	18.2%
South African Average	77.6%	13.6%

Table 7: Comparison between South African Provinces and Dwelling Type (FSPSDF, 2014 p70)

The FSPSDF (2014) had this to say about access to sanitation in the province:

“Approximately 89% of all households have access to a flush or chemical toilet. Fezile Dabi District has the highest number of households with access to appropriate sanitation, whilst Thabo Mofutsanyana District has the lowest at 48.9%, and Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality the second lowest number (60.7%) of households with proper sanitation services.” (FSPSDF, 2014 p71).

Approximately, 89.9% of households in the Free State have access to electricity as an energy source, which is slightly higher than the national average of 84.7%. Several other sources are used as seen in the graph below, alarmingly there seems to be no investment in renewable energy sources such as solar power.



Graph 1: Distribution of different energy sources for lighting, cooking and heating in Free State households (FSPSDF, 2014)

Statistically, people in the Free State have access to 236 clinics, 13 community health care centres, 99 mobile clinic services, 25 district hospitals, 5 regional hospitals, 1 central hospital and 3 specialised hospitals (FSPSDF, 2014). There is a noted skills shortage in the Free State which impacts the quality of services rendered. Furthermore, poor maintenance on facilities also affects the different centres ability to treat patients or render sufficient care.

There were five towns selected as case studies for this research. The full method is outlined and discussed in *Chapter 3: Research Methods & the Methodology of Research*.

Parys and Vredeford (Free State Province)

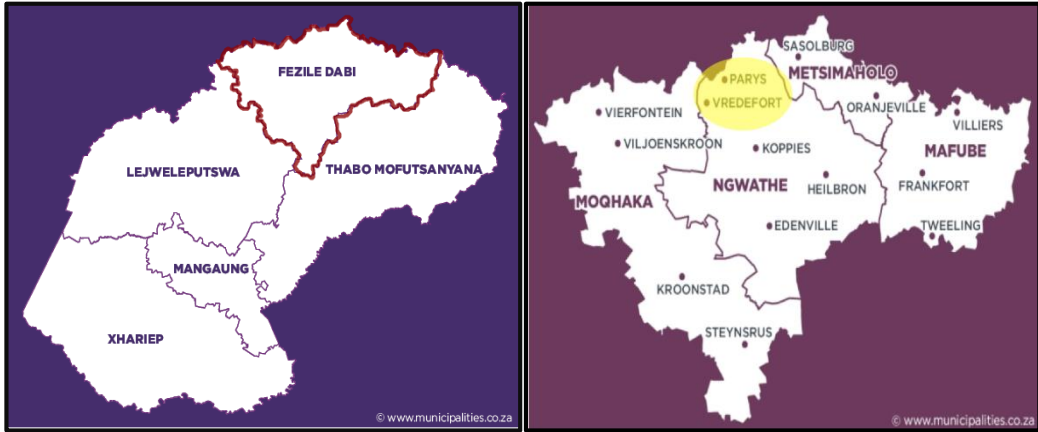


Figure 10: Map showing the Free State Municipal District Demarcation and location of Parys and Vredeford (<http://municipalities.co.za/provinces/view/2/free-state>, Visited 25-06-2017)

Situated in the Thobo Mofutsanyana District Municipality (Ngwatho Local Municipality), along the N1, Parys was founded in the early 1870's, in the Northern Free State. The town's establishment is accredited to the fact that in the past, the towns in the Free State were set quite far from each other, making the journey for Christian worshipers wanting to participate in service an arduous and difficult one. The Ring of Dutch Reformed Churches, then decided to suggest the idea of congregating in a central point, preferably on the Klipspruit Farm, to the north of the Renoster River. Initially there was some resistance from the farms custodians, but the church-men persevered, and eventually

Text Box:

The Naming of Parys

There have been several suggestions put forward about the origin of the name Parys, the most commonly accepted being that it was suggested by Mr. Schillbach, a German land survivor who had served in the Franco – Prussian war, and had taken part siege of Paris. Apparently the events were still fresh in his memory five years later and he likened the Vaal River to the Seine and prophesied that a day would come when a big town would lie on both sides of the river, just like Paris. To carry on the similitude he named the two adjoining farms Issy and Versailles, after two of the forts that were outside the French capital. Municipal life began in 1883, when a Village Management Board was appointed. When gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886, a period of development was in store for the little town, because the main road to the north through Bloemfontein en Kroonstad, went through Parys and many travellers passed forward or backward through the town.

Text Box 1: The naming of Parys (<http://www.parys.co.za/parys/history-about-parys.html> Visited 22-06-2017).

381 visited the adjoining Vischgat Farm (present day Vredefort); the owners of which were
382 more aligned to the intentions of the Ring of Churches and finally agreed; thus the
383 Vredefort Township was born. The owners of the Klipspruit farm soon realised that they
384 had passed up a golden opportunity, and hastened to amend the matter. Although it is
385 not recorded, it is narrated that the owners of Klipspruit farm approached the Dutch
386 Reform Church, and gained their sympathy. In 1876, when the township was laid out, a
387 large portion of the farm was donated to the church. The farm was divided into seven
388 erven, and sold at 25 pounds each. The Boer War in 1889 devastated the small township
389 economically, bringing it to a standstill. Many of the early buildings were destroyed and
390 when peace was declared in 1902, those who stayed behind had to start over. The first
391 electrical lights were turned on in the town in 1912, and it marked a new industrious era
392 for little Parys. In 1913, a tender was put out, requesting bids to build a concrete bridge
393 over the Vaal River, thus connecting the two sides. Work started in 1914, just three
394 months before the First World War, the war resulted in delays in construction works. The
395 bridge was eventually completed in December 1915
396 (<http://www.parys.co.za/parys/history-about-parys.html> Visited 22-06-2017).

397 Wolmarransstad (North West Province)

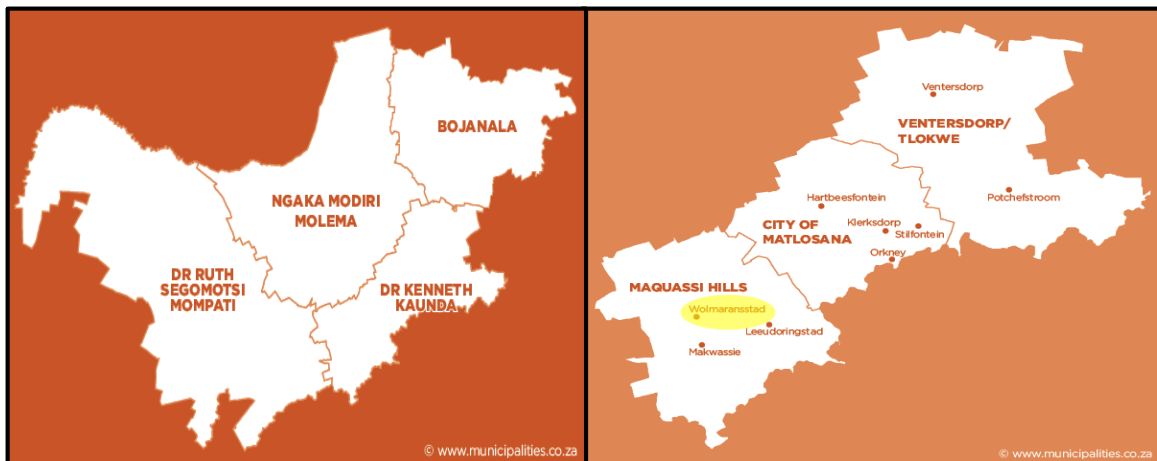


Figure 11: Map demonstrating the District Municipal Boundaries of the Northern Cape Province and the location of Wolmaransstad (<http://municipalities.co.za/provinces/view/8/north-west>, Visited 25-06-2017)

398 Located on the N12, Wolmaransstad was established in 1891; but white settlement of the
 399 area dates back to about 1823. The town is
 400 located on route to Kimberley, the Diamond
 401 capital of South Africa. It is roughly a three
 402 hour journey from Johannesburg, which
 403 passes Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp. The
 404 town was established as farming trade center
 405 and grew to support an important diamond
 406 trading center (South Africa North West
 407 Province, History Wolmaransstad,

Text Box 2:

Early Settlement of Wolmaransstad

White settlement in the district dates back to 1823 when missionaries Broadbent and Hodgson of the Wesleyan Missionary Society settled among the Barolong near the present Witpoort. However, their missionary work ended in 1825. The Voortrekkers were the next whites to enter and settle in the Wolmaransstad district. From 1845 onward they gradually moved westward from Potchefstroom to settle in the present Wolmaransstad district. This stage of settlement was completed around 1870 when all the farms available in the district had been occupied. Towards the end of the 19th century the farming community faced many challenges especially with regard to the difficult climate which eventually brought financial ruin to many farmers. The district was also hard hit by the effects of the ongoing Anglo-Boer War on the agricultural industry. This struggle continued

Text Box 2: Early Settlement of Wolmaransstad(<https://dspace.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/1776>)

408 www.tourismnorthwest.co.za/wolmaransstad, Visited 21/06/2017). At present
409 Wolmaransstad is home to about 3600 residents (StatsSA Census Data 2011).

410 The town prospered into a bustling hub of activity. Around the 1970's and 1980's; the
411 town fell into economic decline, when a large portion of the labour force abandoned the
412 farms, to work in the higher wage environment of the mines. This lead to the closure of
413 several farms in the area. The situation worsened as the area was often hit with traumatic
414 climactic and natural events such prolonged period of drought and plant and animal
415 disease (Coetzer, 1986).

416 Wolmaransstad is the only town, out of the four case study towns selected for this project
417 that is not located in the Free State Province. Situated in the Northwest Province of South
418 Africa. The province shares a border with Guateng, Limpopo, Botswana, Free Srare and
419 the Northern Cape. The capital of the province, Mahikeng (about 2.5 hours' drive from
420 Wolmaransstad) is located near its northern border.

421 The province consists of our district municipalities, namely: (1) Bojanala Platinum DM
422 (BPDM), (2) Ngaka Modiri-Molema DM (NMMDM), (3) Dr Ruth Segmotsi Mompati DM
423 (DRSMDM) and (4) Dr Kenneth Kaunda DM (DKKDM).

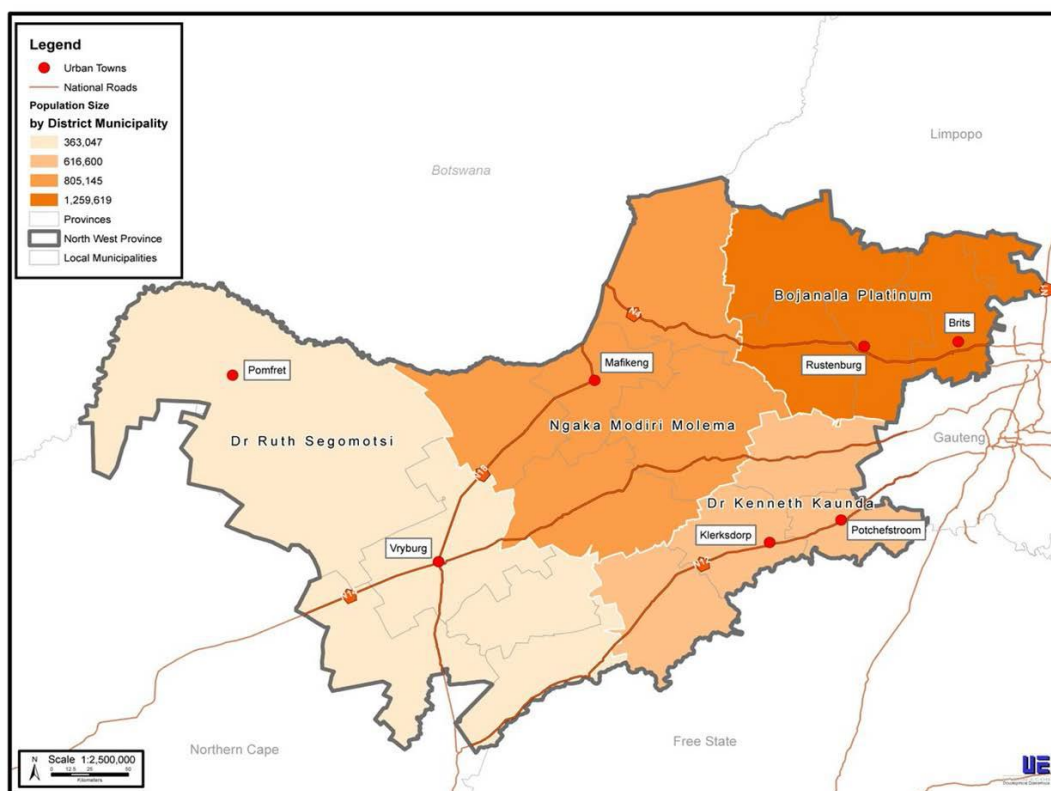


Figure 12: Map demonstrating four district municipality demarcation in the North West Province (North West Provincial Development Plan 2013/2014 10).

425 terms of population, the province has maintain an overall positive growth rate, as
 426 shown in the table below:

Level	Geographical Location	Population (2011)	Historical Growth Rate			
			1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	1995-2010
Provincial	North West	3,509,875	1.5%	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%
District	BPDM	1,507,492	1.9%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%
	NMMDM	842,677	1.6%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%
	DRSMDM	463,774	0.5%	-0.2%	-1.9%	-0.5%
	DKKDM	695,932	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%

427 **Table 8:** Population statistics of the North West Province, per district (North West Provincial Development
 428 Framework 2013 12)

Migration to and from the province place a pivotal role in its population dynamics. The North West Provincial Development Framework (2013) attributes the out migration to a number of factors, namely: wars in the region, lack of employment opportunities, political conflicts and natural disasters (such as drought) (North West Provincial Development Framework 2013). The illustration below shows the in- and out-migration patterns in the region.

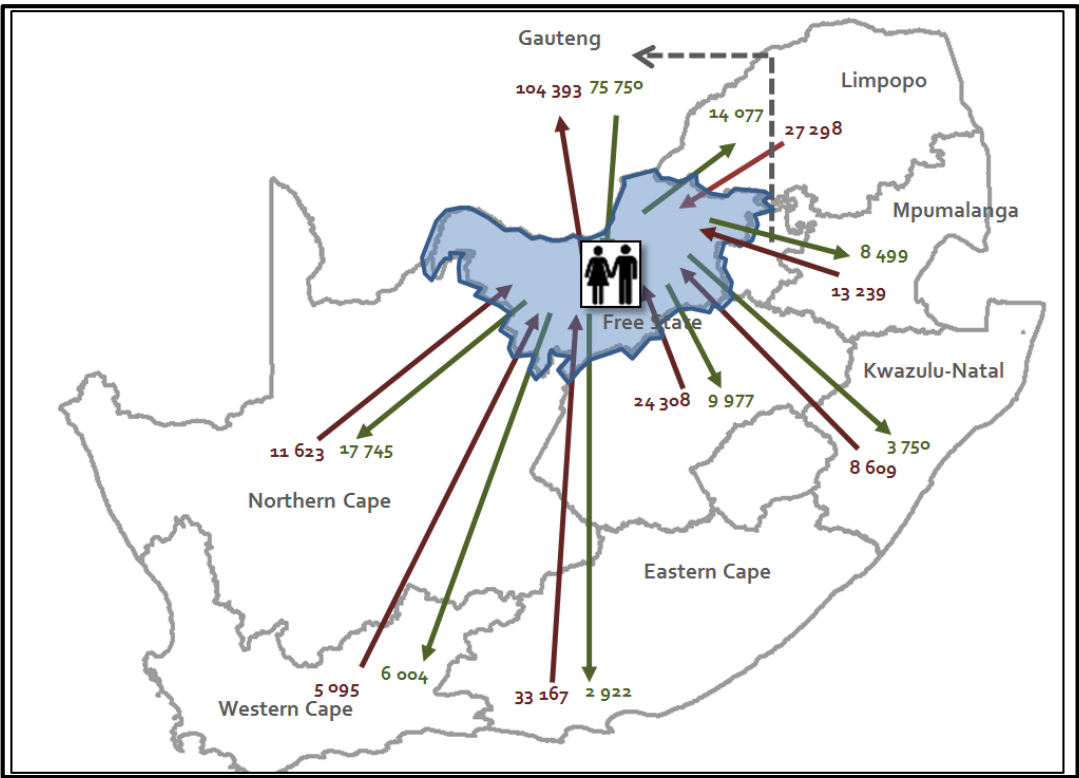


Figure 13: May demonstrating the in- and out-migration patterns of the North West Province to other Provinces in South Africa (North West Provincial Development Framework 2013 20).

What is clear, is that there is quite a large number of migrations between the North West and Gauteng provinces. Also interesting in the in-migration from the Eastern Cape into the North West.

Senekal

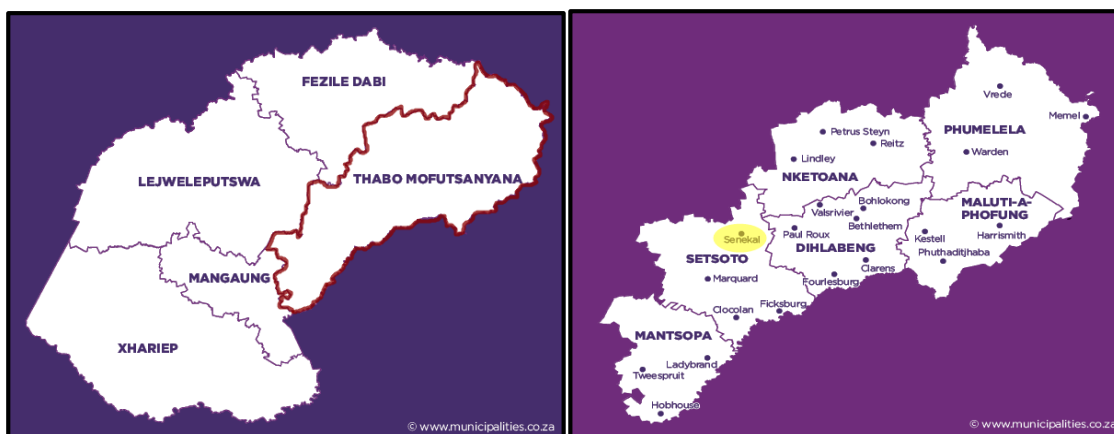


Figure 14: Map demonstrating the District Municipal Boundaries of the Northern Cape Province and the location of Wolmaransstad (<http://municipalities.co.za/provinces/view/2/free-state> Visited 25-06-2017)

Located on the N5, Senekal is a town situated in the Thabo Mofutsanyana municipal district (Setsoto LM) in the Free State Province. The town was established on the sand river banks of the Klipspruit River in about 1877. The town is about a three hours' drive from Johannesburg, between Winburg and Bethlehem, Senekal is surrounded by maize, sunflower, wheat, milk and livestock farms (Free State Info: Senekal, <http://www.free-state-info.co.za/provinces/town/465/senekal>, visited 20-06-2017). The current population is about 3466 (StatsSA Census 2011).

Senekal has a long, and well documented history. Senekal was the centre of much conflict in its early years, being a strong hold for the Boer during the Anglo-Boer war in 1900.

“It is named after Commandant Frederik Petrus Senekal who died in 1865 in the skirmishes with the Basotho people. Senekal was founded on the farm De Put of F Malan. The town is situated only 25km from the renowned Willem Pretorius Nature Reserve and is also situated comfortably on the major N5 road traversing the Eastern Free State. With its enviable Free State climate, atmospheric scenery and majestic star

467 studded nights it offers pleasant living conditions.”
468 (<http://riemlandroute.co.za/senekal.html> Visited 25-06-2017).

469 Senekal falls within the Thabo Mofutsanyana Municipal District of the Free State. It is
470 surrounded by the remaining three DM's. There
471 are six local municipalities, comprised of 23
472 urban centres, among which is the town
473 'Vrede'. According to the Integrated Development
474 Plan for TMDM: “Bethlehem, Ficksburg,
475 Harrismith, Vrede, Memel, Phuthaditjhaba,
476 Senekal, Reitz and Ladybrand constitute the
477 main economic centres within the district.”
478 (TMDM IDP 2012-2016 6). The district is linked
479 via the N3 to other provinces such as Gauteng
480 and Kwa-Zulu Natal, giving its residence
481 access to airports and harbours. The N1
482 borders the west of the district and the N5 runs
483 through the centre of the district. The R26,
484 R711 and R712 routes are important in linking
485 the towns within the district (TMDM IDP 2012-
486 2016).

487 “Railway connections within and to the outside
488 of the district are well established. In this
489 regard, Harrismith provides an important link
490 with the rail line between Gauteng and Kwazulu
491 Natal...and several airfield are present in a
492 number of towns throughout the district” (TMDM IDP 2012-2016 7).

Text Box 3:

Battle at Senekal

May 25th was to be a fateful day, Maj Dalbiac (of the Boer armed forces), on receiving the news of approaching British forces, gathered some men and, with a few from two cossack posts, ascended the spur to the east of Senekal. Less than thirty British men rode up, two of whom were wounded during the ascent. They rode towards the sound of firing and came to within 100 metres of the Boers which were stationed there. The force quickly dismounted and an order was issued to save the horses, most of which were shot. Dalbiac was shot through the neck and killed. He was found next to the fifth pole of a telegraph line passing over the spur. Sgt F W Shells, who ascended the spur with Dalbiac, was also killed, his body was found next to the ninth telegraph pole. The rest of the men lay on the ground. They had no cover except the short grass which was no protection. The Boers fired an intense hail of bullets and the British force, which, in addition, began to experience rifle fire from their right, and saw Boers creeping around towards their rear. Surrender was only

Text Box 3: Battle at Senekal is a short extract from Steve Watt's online publication: Senekal/ Buddilphsberg, (Watt Unknown <http://www.historybuffs.co.za/south-africa/action-at-yeomanry-koppies/>)

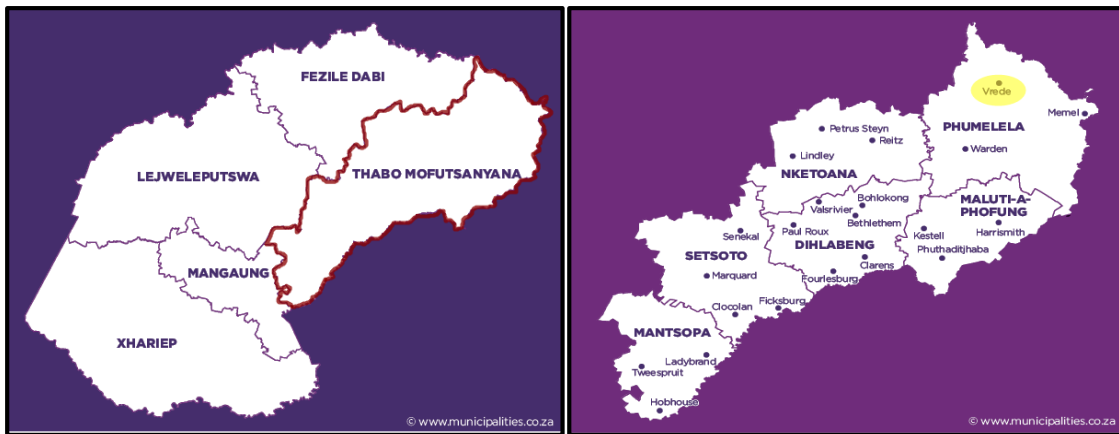


Figure 15: Map demonstrating the District Municipal Boundaries of the Northern Cape Province and the location of Wolmaransstad (<http://municipalities.co.za/provinces/view/2/free-state> Visited 25-06-2017)

494 Located just off the N3, Vrede meaning
 495 'the town of peace', is found within the
 496 Thabo Mafustanyana municipal district.
 497 About two hours drive from Johannesburg,
 498 this town is located between Frankfort to
 499 the west and Volksrust to the east.
 500 Although it had been settled prior to its
 501 official establishment in 1863, the initial
 502 applications for the establishment of the
 503 settlement were rejected by the Volksraad
 504 (meaning house of assembly; House of
 505 Representatives; parliament; equivalent to
 506 magistrate).

507 The population currently consists of mostly
 508 Afrikaans and Zulu speaking.

Text Box 4:

The naming of Vrede

It was named in 1863 after a dispute between its founders. Like most towns formed during and after the South African wars, Vrede has a very rich history seen through the historical buildings influenced by Dutch design. Vrede currently features several wonderful testaments to its' history. The frontage of the Dutch Reformed Church features a Burghers Memorial to fallen Boers and a garden to honour the British soldiers. The Great Trek Monument is a granite memorial erected in 1938, the centenary year of the Great Trek. There is also the First World War Cannon that may be seen in the town. This Cannon marks the role played by the Whites during the

Text Box 4: The naming of Vrede
 (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/vrede> Visited
 25-06-2017)

4.4. Conclusion

South Africa as a colonised state has a relatively short history, having only been settled in 1652. Yet despite this we have a long history which aptly documents periods of prosperity and some of the darkest moments in history.

The wars between the British and the Boers is particularly significant as it can be considered one of the principal catalyst for the Great Boer Trek that ultimately led to the establishment of independent settlement areas for White Boers across the 'uninhabited' South African landscape. These settlement areas flourished into small towns and acted as strong holds and or bases of operations during the Anglo-Boer and Basoto wars.

Today, some of these settlements form part of the Free State province and are included in the list of areas governed by several district and local municipalities. Each of which has a legislative responsibility to track and maintain a population census which covers service delivery and other important governance indicators.

In this chapter the context for the research sites was provided for five towns, in 4 local municipality and in 3 district municipalities.

Following this chapter will be the Methodology wherein a detailed account of how the research was conducted in terms of how the towns were identified, data collection, data processing and data packaging.



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Image 16: Residence in Groblersdaal, Northern Cape

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Image 17: Towns which redefined themselves, Dullstroom



Image 18: A shop in Cornelia, Free State

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4

Research Methods & The Methodology of Research



5

Data Analysis: An Attempt at Exhausting a Small Town Definition



TOWN DEFINITION

5.1. Introduction

Thus far in this thesis, we have critically looked at and unpacked some of the many literary sources which inform our academic conceptualisation of small town geography in South Africa. During that process, we began to recognise a bias of geography and other urban studies to tend to concentrate on cities and somewhat ignore lesser-urban areas like small towns. Furthermore, we noticed that small towns were generally approached as very homogenous spaces, and often described as spaces lacking cultural, ethnic and economic diversity. Moreover, research approaches which did look at small towns tended to focus more on the economic position of small towns as a departure for research in the area. This done over more nuanced readings which were attentive to cultural or social elements present in small towns, and therefore, providing caption and comment on only a small part of the many intricacies in small towns. Moreover, as we have seen, there is no immediate interest in the lived realities of small towns and therefore there is little to no research on the lived experience of small towns.

Through various techniques of interpretation and analysis of the data collected in the five case study towns, this chapter will simultaneously provide a spatial analysis as well as a discussion of the results. The core objective of this chapter is to answer the primary and secondary research questions. The chapter will begin with a brief recap of the method used to collect and analyse the data, thereafter it will move on to a spatial analysis of the five small towns; and will conclude with a consolidation of findings.

Following this chapter, will be the sixth chapter of this thesis which will look at the opportunity of alternative research methods in small towns research.

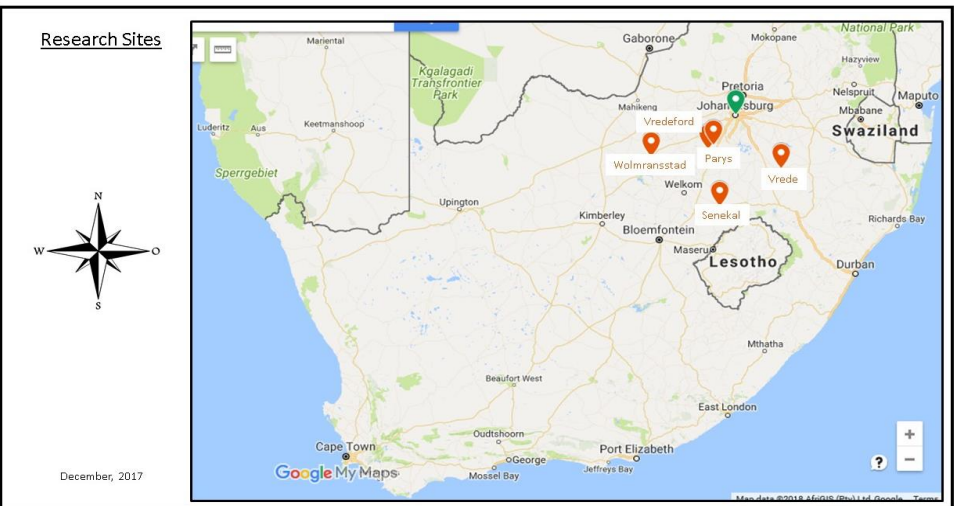
5.2. Methodical Recap

The primary question guiding this research has been: “How do we understand urbanism in South African small towns?”. The intent focus and aim of this research project was to unpack and understand the urbanism of South African small towns, by exploring the lived experiences of five small towns. The question was intended to provide a sturdy departure point for examining small towns in a more nuanced way, thereby unlocking and making accessible potentially new information on- and a new understanding of South African small towns. To assist in this endeavour three sub-questions were derived from the primary question; and these were designed to assist in unpacking the main research question into smaller more manageable themes that would direct a more methodical approach as well as allow for a more coalesced argument to be formulated. These sub-questions were:

- I. What is a South African Small Town?
- II. What is the lived experience of South African small towns?
- III. What is the opportunity for narrativity in urban research in South Africa?

Following the outline of the research aim and questions, a very lengthy discussion was held in chapter two, as several key thinkers and their arguments were drawn on regarding what comprises a small town. To begin the discussion, it was understood that small towns as a subject matter is a practical feature in the field of Geography at large. There can be no doubt that this discussion belongs to geographers and is a vital accent of urban, geographical or landscape studies. Whilst it was clear from the beginning that there was a lack of consensus amongst the authors as to what a small town was, how it could be identified and so on, it was possible to extrapolate from several of the sources a list of traits that were proposed to be common features in small towns (see Nel, Donaldson and Marais, Ferreira, Kotze etc). assumptionassumption

A case study approach to the research was adopted and the research was conducted in five small towns in the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa. The towns were



Map 1: Illustration of the five small towns that were used as case studies in the research. These were, Parys, Vredefort, Senekal, Vrede and Wolmaransstad.

identified based on the application of several criteria, amongst these were: year of establishment, population size, distance from Johannesburg and the presence of or near-by access to a Primary/ National Distributor (N-road) and or Regional/ Provincial Distributor (R-road). The map below illustrates the location of the five small towns that were used as case-studies in this research.

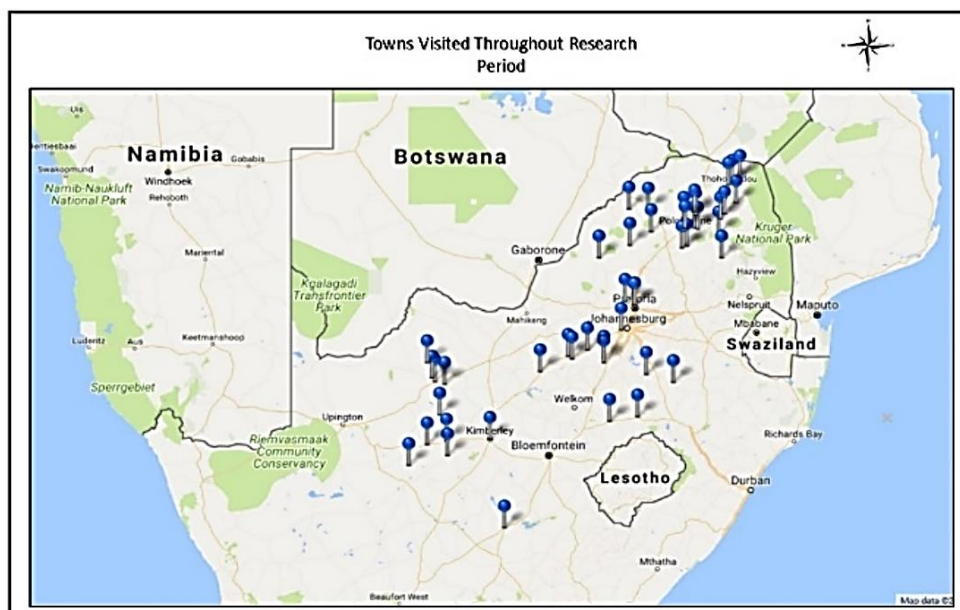
Although there is somewhat of a discrepancy in the number of small towns scattered across South Africa, however, there are about 102 small towns in the Free State province (Free State Department of Tourism, 2017) and a about 68 small towns in the North West province (North West department of tourism, 2017). Although neither of the provinces disclosed their method of defining a small town, the lists provided contained 102 and 68 town names respectively. Of the 102 towns in the Free State, four were used as case studies for this research and the remaining town is located in the North West. These towns were Parys, Vredefort, Vrede, Senekal and Wolmaransstad. The five small case study towns fell within three district municipalities and four local municipalities within their respective provinces; as demonstrated in the table below.

Province	District Municipality	Local Municipality	Town
Free State	Fezile Dabi DM	Ngwathe LM	Parys

			Vredefort
Free State	Thabo Mofutsanyana DM	Phumelela LM	Vrede
Free State	Thabo Mofutsanyana DM	Setsoto LM	Senekal
North West	Dr Kenneth Kaunda DM	Maquassi Hills LM	Wolmaransrad

Table 9: Breakdown of research sites according to province, district municipality and local municipality

In total about 80 towns were visited during a period of about a year, in five out of nine provinces in South Africa. Data from these 80 towns were collected primarily in the form of participant observations and compiled into a photographic essay, which is seen through-out this thesis. The map below illustrates the location of some of the towns which were visited. For a full list of the towns, please see annexures.



Map 2: Illustration of the location of about 80 towns which were visited during the research period. Data from these visits were compiled into a photographic essay present through-out this thesis.

Three population groups were identified as sources of data. The first were South African residents currently residing in one of the five case study towns, then migrant Chinese business owners and lastly expats who had one resided in a small town but now reside in Johannesburg. Surveys and interviews were used to collect data from participants. These surveys were used as part of the spatial analysis and the interviews were compiled into a single ethnographic monograph. Moreover, a documentary was produced and presented as an alternative method for capturing and representing data;

this was done to illustrate the potential and usefulness of different ways of engaging with research and data, both as a researcher and as a reader.

This has been a much summarised recap of how we have gotten to this point in the thesis. The following sections will provide a deeper analysis of the data as well as relate it to some of the content covered in the literature review. The analysis will be arranged per research question.

5.3. Answering the Research Questions

I. What is a small town?

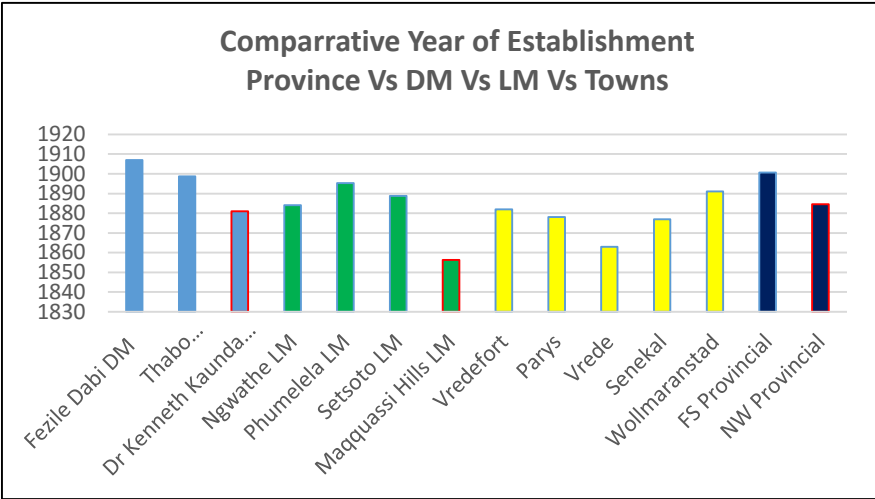
The first question, the one which can be said, is to have had started this research endeavour, is 'what is a small town?'. This very question has been at the centre of much debate, and falls within larger conversations regarding urban hierarchies. When one applies some thought to the question, we find that it isn't perhaps as easy to answer as we would have initially imagined. Suddenly we begin to ask ourselves questions such as: *how small is small?* Or, *how big is too big for a small town?*. From asking what is a small town, a more appropriate first question arises: 'what makes a small town?'. Now there are many components; which one can consider valuable to the overall *making* of a small town; and can include physical attributes such as morphology and street patterns, or intangible influencers such as population size, infrastructure, economic performance and so on; as well as a particular sense of experientiality. All of which can be considered, and are often critical composites of the small town. Whilst it would be a wonderful expansion on the knowledge of small towns to discuss all of these elements in great detail, it is simply beyond the capacity of this thesis, so therefore only a select few components have been prioritised for discussion. These are: (a) year of establishment; (b) population size; (c) migration; (d) physical area coverage; (e) street pattern, (f) road networks, (g) spatial pattern, (h) building typologies, (i) unemployment rates, and (j) the lived experience of small towns (in relation to the aforementioned

characteristics and independently thereof). An assessment of all of the above is known as a spatial analysis, and it is anticipated that upon completing the spatial analysis we will have a clearer sense of what is a small town or more aptly what makes a small town.

To begin the spatial analysis, data on the *year of establishment, town age, population and area*

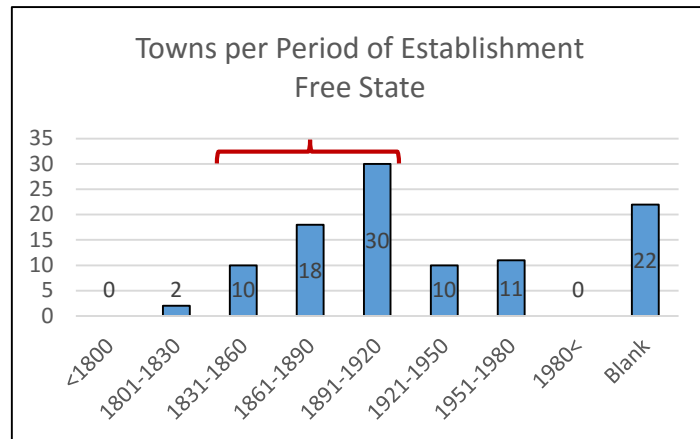
coverage were collected on all 170 towns in the Free State and the North West province.

Beginning with an



analysis of the *year of establishment* of small towns. This data set, will allow us to gauge the era during which the towns were established which will aid in understanding why or how it was established, what's its primary function was and how it has evolved. As demonstrated in the graph to the right; the majority of towns were established from the late 1870's to the early 1900's. There is an observable trend amongst data from the North West province to have generally lower years of establishment, meaning that the towns in the North West, are generally older than those in the Free State. Very notably, the Maqquassi Hills local municipality has the lowest year-of-establishment, which means it has some of the oldest towns located in the municipality. This will be examined in greater detail later on.

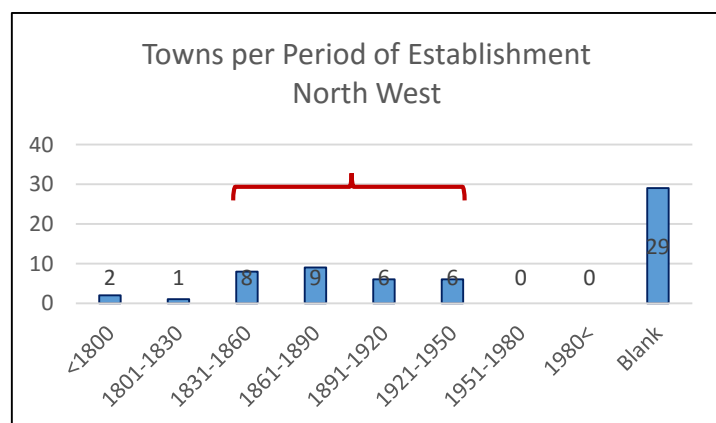
680 A closer look at the years of
 681 establishment of towns in the
 682 Free State begins to reveal an
 683 interesting trend amongst towns
 684 in the Free State. Below is a
 685 graph which has grouped the
 686 years of towns into periods.



687 Beginning with towns being established before 1800, the grouping towns into periods:
 688 1801-1830, 1831-1860, 1861-1890, 1891-1920, 1921-1950 and towns established after
 689 1980. Also included in this graph is a total number of towns whose dates of establishment
 690 couldn't be found; which quite shockingly was 22 out of 102 towns in the Free State.
 691 There were no towns, as classified by the Free State Department of Tourism; established
 692 after 1980; and there are no records of or no towns have been established prior to 1800.
 693 Interestingly, the Free State had the highest establishment of towns between 1891 to
 694 1920. However the province saw the highest and consistent rates of town establishment
 695 between 1831 and 1950.

696

697 The same trend of
 698 establishment can be seen in
 699 the data collected for the North
 700 West Province. Admittedly, the
 701 data is as available or as
 702 complete as the Free State,
 703 with the majority of dates being



704 inaccessible. Nevertheless, from the data that was available, it appears that there was
 705 also a similar trend to the Free State occurring in the North West with greater numbers
 706 of small towns being established between 1831 and 1951; and the highest rate of

establishment with 9 towns between 1861 and 1890. This in contrast to the highest rate of town's establishment in the Free State between 1891 and 1920.

A possible explanation for this trend may be found in history. The years between 1801 and 1830 saw a greater movement of settlers from the cape colony into the interior of South Africa. From about 1824, as Boer settlers became increasingly dissatisfied with the British rule, Dutch, French Huguenot and German descents known as Voortrekkers – left the cape colony and began moving upward; towards the Vaal and Orange rivers in search of their own territory; and independence from British authority. Although there had been previous expeditions north and west of the Vaal and Orange River, as far as current day Pretoria, this was primarily in the form of missionaries, but by 1834, the Great Trek had begun. Thousands of Boers moved northwards, eventually arriving in the area of present day Free State, which they found had been devastated in the genocide known as the Mfecane by the chief Mzilikazi and the Matabele, leaving large areas depopulated. After an encounter with Boers, Mazilikazi retreated to form a new settlement in present day Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. By 1836, the Boers had established their own rudimentary republican form of government with tensions between the Boer and the British remaining high. After a series of British-Boer political struggles, by 1854, under the Bloemfontein Convention, the British relinquished their sovereignty, and the local Boer settlers formed the independent Orange Free State. The area saw a period of relative calm, with the emergence of several Boer republics from the Vaal River, through the Transvaal to the Limpopo River.

The discovery of diamonds and the establishment of diamond minds in and around the Kimberley area in the North West in the 1860's saw multiple town's spring with an influx of foreign miners. This explains the high rate of town establishment in the area, especially around that period.

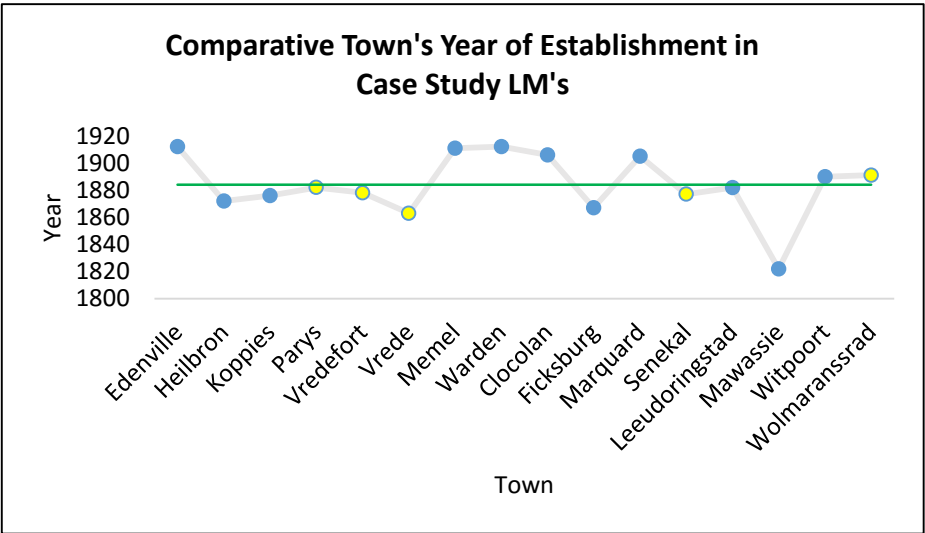
From 1870's to the 1890's the Free State underwent consistent development, growing in political strength as an independent country. Infrastructure development and the

acceptance of a rail link between the country and the cape colony were amongst some the greatest achievements of the time. The years of peace were brought to a sudden halt at the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand in 1888 in the independent country of the Transvaal. The Transvaal was at the time an independent country recognised by France, Germany and the Netherlands. Upon the discovery of gold, Britain tried to annex the area, which sparked the second Anglo-Boer war which lasted from 1888 to 1902; when Pretoria, the last of the large Boer towns in the Transvaal fell.

Self-government of the Orange Free State was restored from 1907; even though the Free State remained a province of the Union of South Africa under British administration. This semblance of independence of the Orange Free State in combination with the highly unappealing dominance of British rule in the Transvaal (which would have been relatively unbearable for the Boer, given the historical relationship between them and the British), may account for a large migration of the remaining Boer from the Transvaal to the Free State and explain the high rate of town establishment in the area between the period 1891 to 1920.

The ebb and flow of periods of war and peace and varying migration patterns have

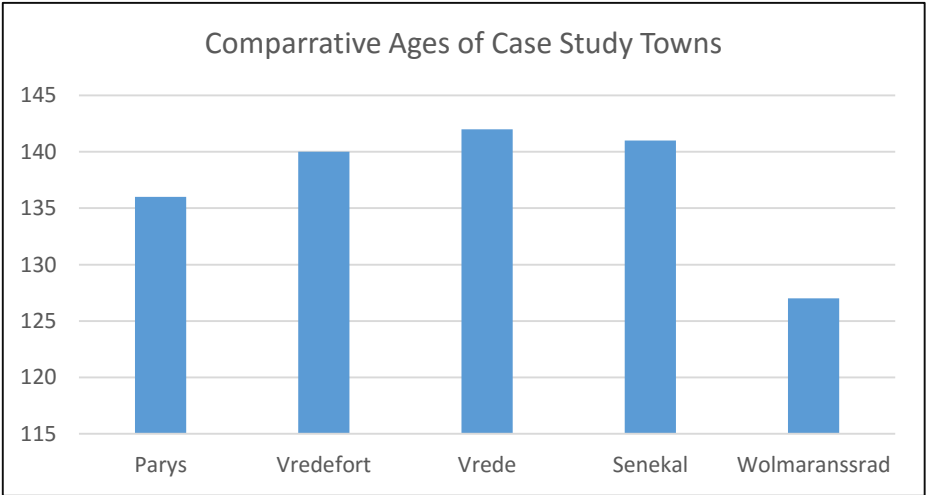
arguably had an impact on the years of town establishment in the two provinces. An extremely detailed inspection of the present day local municipalities which house the case study towns and others (as seen in the



graph to the right), further confirms the idea that events occurring from the late 1870's to

the first quarter of the 1900's; particularly the period of peace and then later the Second Anglo Boer war greatly encouraged the establishment of a number of towns.

When looking at the ages; at least 3 of the 5 towns are closely related in age. Vrede is the oldest town in the case study, at about 142 years old, it is closely followed by Senekal at 141 years old. Then, Vredefort at 140 and its neighbouring town, Parys at 136 years old. The



newest or youngest town is Wolmarranstad, having been established in 1891, it is only 127 years old.

What is important to take from this discussion is that all the towns were established within the same period. This means that they were all subject to or experienced the effects of similar historical events which would have shaped them, spatially, economically and culturally. However, year of establishment and the historic value or heritage of a town is not enough to determine what makes a town a town, or answer the question, what makes a small town. A more thorough investigation of small towns is needed, one which examines other facets which contribute to the 'making of' a small town. Whilst it would be interesting to examine each town individually, and would likely yield some intriguing findings, it is simply not practical to do so at this time. Therefore, this project will instead focus on the five core case study towns within their respective local municipalities. Moreover, the data for the towns in the local municipalities shared by the case study towns were found to be complete, thereby motivating as having a stronger foundation for analysis in comparison the an analysis at provincial or district level, where the data for the larger sample size is less complete.

There was a total of 12 other towns located in and share the respective district and local municipalities of the five case study towns. Below is a tabulation of the district municipalities, local municipalities and towns, and includes some important tabulated data such as the year of establishment, the town's age, population, number of households and area in kilometres squared which the corresponding town occupies. Highlighted in yellow, are the five towns which were used as case studies.

Province	DM	LM	Town	Year Est.	Town Age	Population	Households	Area (Km ²)
Free State	Fezile Dabi DM	Ngwathe LM	Edenville	1912	106	6294	2098	7.3
			Heilbron	1872	146	5486	1667	11.91
			Koppies	1876	142	1136	326	5.12
			Parys	1882	136	8071	3256	23.3
			Vredefort	1878	140	1326	561	16.77
Free State	Thabo Mofutsanyana	Phumelela LM	Vrede	1876	142	1962	689	46.52
			Memel	1911	107	619	229	8.91
			Warden	1912	106	2088	641	15.61
Free State	Thabo Mofutsanyana DM	Setsoto LM	Clocolan	1906	112	1349	429	15.76
			Ficksburg	1867	151	5400	1719	50.35
			Marquard	1905	113	1033	431	7.3
			Senekal	1877	141	3466	1252	32.88
North West	Dr Kenneth Kaunda DM	Maquassi Hills LM	Leeudoringstad	1882	136	5054	1542	5.63
			Mawassie	1822	196	13351	3155	6.19
			Witpoort	1890	128	856	204	0.62
			Wolmaranssrاد	1891	127	3633	938	41.68

Can population size alone determine what is a small town?

Beginning with a comparative analysis of the population size of small towns; the first statement in the list of assumptions is “small towns are likely to have a declining population”. This idea stems from a rhetoric in the literature that sees a high rate of urbanisation which is the movement of people from the hinterlands into the cities as the primary cause for the perceived decline in the population of small towns. In order to avoid being side tracked, let me delineate the dimensions of this assumption or idea. Firstly, we need to understand the role of population data in small town definition, and then (secondly) we need decide whether or not population data; specifically one which reflects a particular trend; is critical to a list of characteristics of small towns; and finally we need to understand what the relationship between population data and the lived experience is.

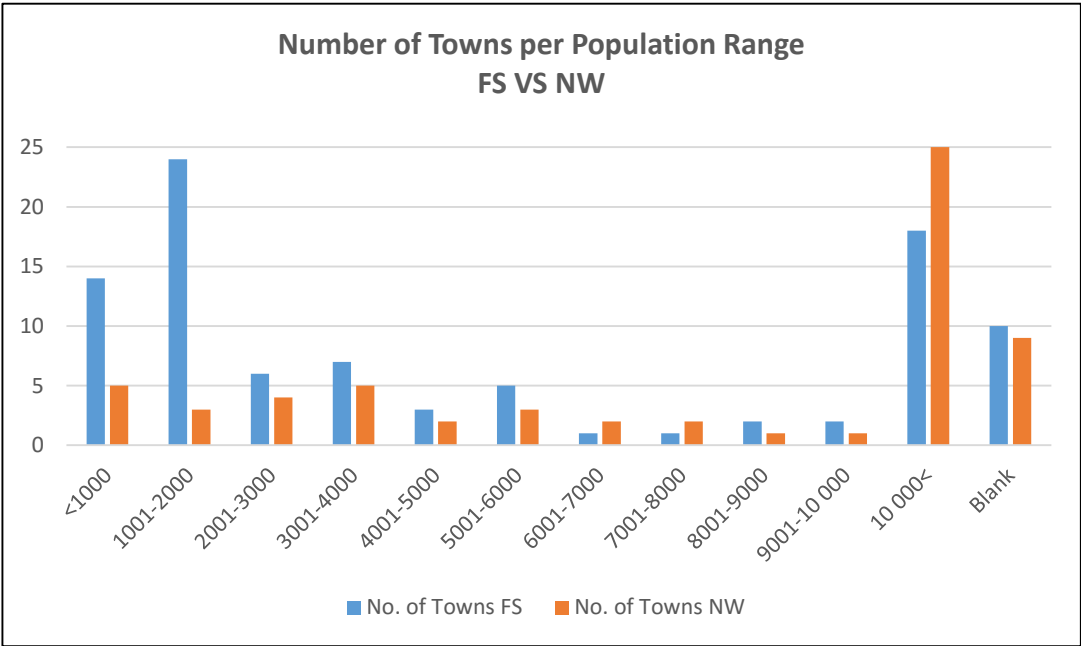
Firstly, in addressing the need to understand small town population data in defining a small town – we can ask, if (a) it is possible to define a small towns solely through population size; or (b), if it is necessary to include population data in a collaborative approach to defining small towns. The simple answer is, yes, it is possible to define a small town by population size alone. However, this has proven to be less successful and somewhat problematic, as we saw in the chapter two, the literature review. In the White Paper on Local Government, 1998; there is no definition of the population size for small towns. Incidentally, towns and small cities are grouped together in the presented hierarchy without a prescribed population size. Furthermore, a 2002 CSIR sustainability analysis reflected the spatial groupings in the 1998 white paper, and grouped small cities and towns into the same level in a hierarchy – however, in this publication the CSIR provided a recommended population size as being less than 100 000 people. Later in a 2008 CSIR study, three rather distinctive spatial typologies where listed (amongst others). These were, service centres, which were recommended to have 130 000 people or less and local and niche towns. Incidentally, local and niche towns (wherein the majority of small towns fit) there were no population size recommended for that particular

821 classification. What becomes apparent, is the obvious acknowledgement of spaces
822 which occupy the definition of 'small towns'; but beyond that there is no attempt at
823 finalising that definition.

824 The biggest problem with defining a small town solely through its population size is the
825 huge variation in number of people; specifically in the models proposed in the White
826 Paper on Local Governance, 1998 and the 2002 and 2008 CSIR Reports. Simply put;
827 the interval of population for a small town can be extrapolated to be any area
828 accommodating between 5000 and 130 000 people. This is a mammoth scale, and there
829 is no indication if any level of subdivision occurs within the scale; and has a very real
830 impact in the way we conceptualise small towns.

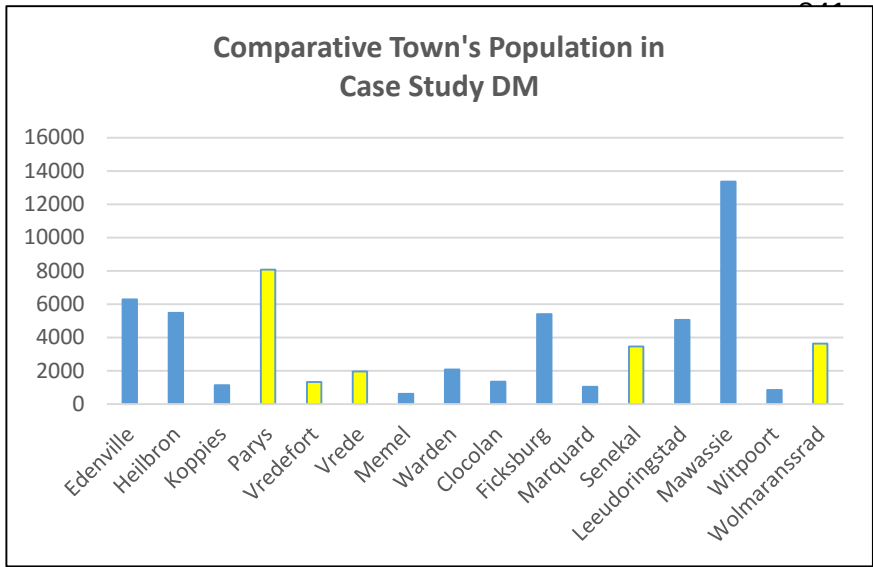
831 A closer interrogation of the distribution of the number of towns per population indigent
832 reveals an interesting picture. When the list of towns as provided by the Free State and
833 North West Department of Tourism are placed on a graph, we see a clear distribution
834 with the largest numbers of towns falling within the population categories of below 1000
835 people, between 1001 and 2000 people and greater than 10 000 people. This trend is
836 true primarily for the Free State. In comparison, the North West distribution appears to

837 have a higher concentration of towns between the 2001 and 4000 people mark. The
838 graph below illustrates this trend:



839

It is particularly unclear at this time as to why this trend exists. However, what we can



infer from it, is that a varying number of small towns occupy a variety of population specifications. An even closer interrogation of the small towns data,

as seen in the graph to the left, there is a varying range of population sizes amongst the small towns in the local municipalities. Population sizes amongst the towns range from a maximum of between 12 000 to 14 000 people; and from a minimum of below 2 000 people.

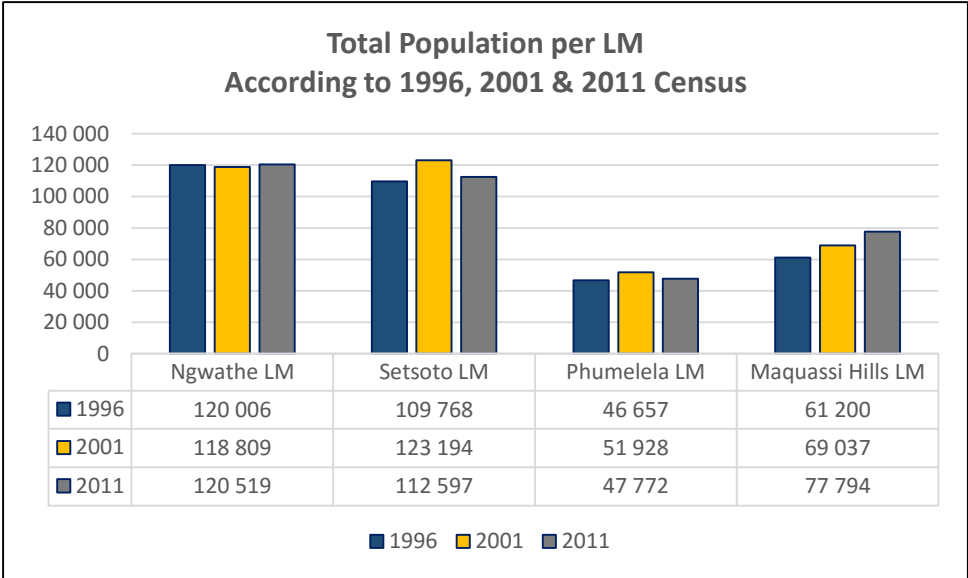
Memel has the smallest population recorded amongst the group, with about 619 people.

Mawassie has the largest population amongst the group with about 13 351 people.

Whilst there is significant variation amongst the population sizes of the towns shared in the local municipalities, these population sizes are a great deal lower than the proposed maximum of 100 000 or 130 000 people.

Moving on, let's now look at the use of trend data. The second part of the statement: "Small towns are likely to have a declining Population". So far we have looked at the role population size plays in the definition of small towns, now we can ask – are small towns likely to have a declining population?

Overall, findings in the local municipalities which house the five case study towns suggest no clear trend. Findings in 2 of the 3 local municipalities in the Free State (Setsoto and Phumemela) or 2 out of the four local municipalities which were studied; present with a slight decline in population between 2001 and 2011. The remaining 2 local municipalities demonstrated an increase in the overall population sizes.

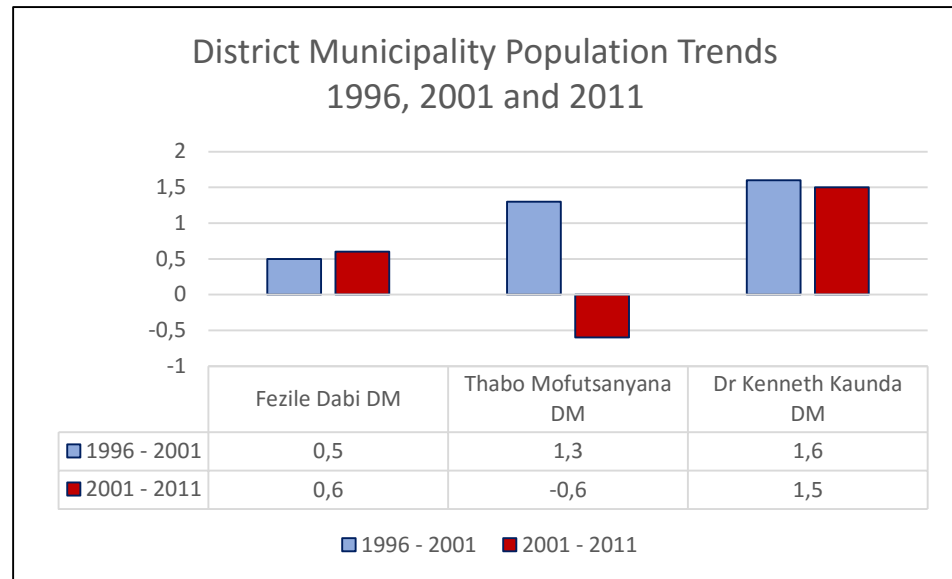


Graph 2: Total Population per Local Municipality According to 1996, 2001 and 2011 Census (Census data from Free State Municipal Report, 2011; North West Municipal Report, 2011)

With the exception of Ngwathe Local Municipality in the Free State, the remaining 3 saw and overall increase in population size between 1996 and 2001.

This particular analysis was completed at local municipal level because the data per town over the three periods were not available; however it would have been interesting to see variations amongst individual's towns during the different periods.

881 Interestingly,
 882 at the district
 883 municipal
 884 level, we see a
 885 similar lack of
 886 consistency in
 887 the population
 888 trend. Fexile
 889 Dabi, Thabo

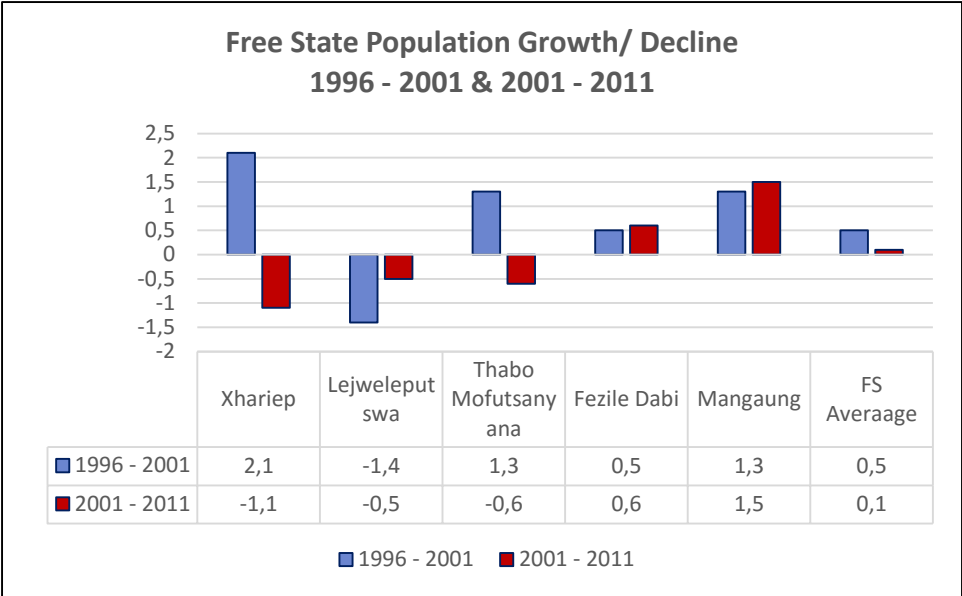


Graph 3: District Municipality Population Trends, 1996 Vs 2001 Vs 2011 (Free State Municipal Report, 2011 and North West Municipal Report, 2011)

890 Mofutsanyana
 891 and Dr Keneth Kuanda are the district municipalities hosting the local municipalities
 892 wherein the research sites. In reflection of the graph to the right, we see a mirror of the
 893 previous population trend of the local municipalities. In 2 of the 3 district municipalities
 894 (Fezile Dabi, Free state and Dr Keneth Kuada, North West), we see an overall positive
 895 increase in the population in both periods 1996 to 2001 and 2001 to 2011; and in only
 896 one of the district municipalities (Thabo Mofutsanyana, of Free State) do we see a
 897 decrease in the population; in the same periods.

898

At a provincial level however, the trend in the Free State is clearer. As demonstrated in the graph below which was extracted from the Free State Municipal Report, 2011, we see an overall positive increase in population in 4 out of 5 district municipalities in the period 1996 to 2001; however, between 2001 and 2011, the district municipalities appear to experience a population decrease in 3 of 5 districts, and experience a population increase in only 2 of the 5 districts. As the

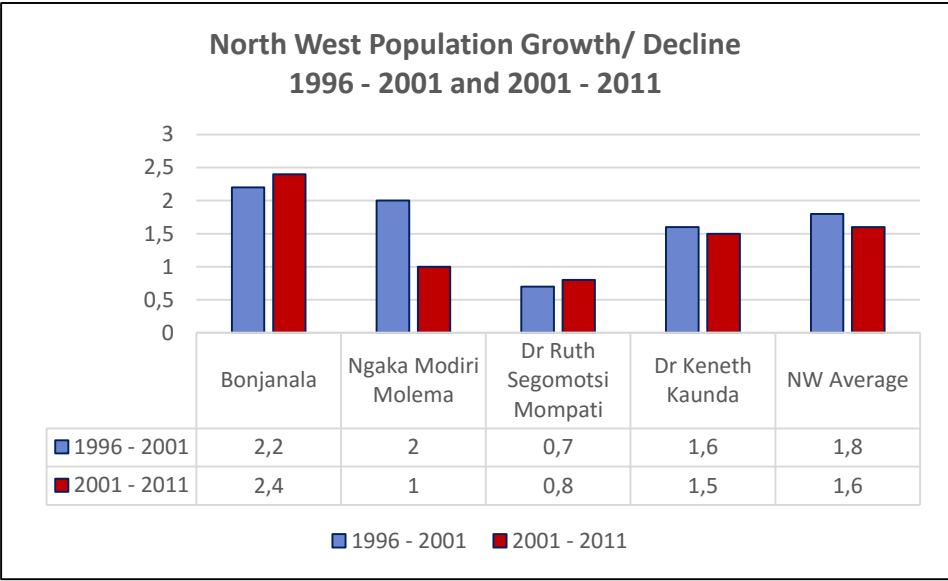


Graph 4: Free State Population Trend 1996 – 2001 & 2001 – 2011 (Free State Municipal Report, 2011, 8)

Free State is composed primarily of spaces commonly understood as ‘small towns; it is at this point during which it becomes clear as to why an idea such as ‘small towns are likely to have a declining population’ would have emerged.

Despite this conflicting trend, and apparent lack of congruence within the data, the provincial average has demonstrated an overall positive movement of population within all the district municipalities; albeit a relatively small increase. This indicates an overall increase in the population size of the Free State, which ultimately challenges with idea that small towns are likely to have a declining population.

Conversely,
the North
West
province
depicts a
drastically
different
image. The
province



has experienced an overall positive growth in population. With an average of about 1.56
base points across all 4 district municipalities in comparison to the average of about 0.35
in the Free State.

There are several serious and relatively crippling problems with using population data as a principle source of defining small towns. Firstly, the question of relation comes up. This is specifically, how small towns are related to other spaces. The data doesn't distinguish where its sources are, all we know is that the data exists on a district municipal level, which means it will include all spatial forms, urban or rural. The only thing we can really take from this data is that there is a fluctuation in the population size of the respective district and local municipalities, and moreover, we can ascertain if that population is declining or increasing, but again at a district level. This data in particular does not provide the detail required to adequately and responsibly draw the conclusion that small towns are likely to experience population decline. Furthermore, the data conflicts with the assumption in that; even though some districts have experienced a population decline, the province has experienced a generally positive increase in the population as measured between 1996 and 2011. Therefore, the statement is actually invalid.

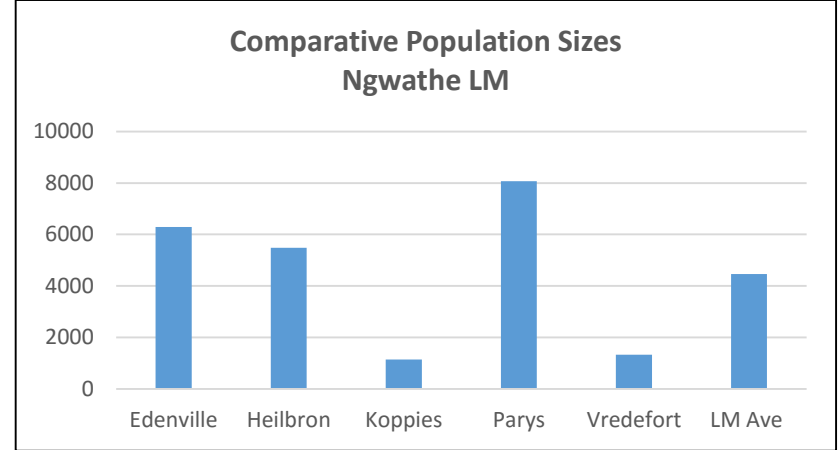
Secondly, the data is one-dimensional as it only takes into account total population size and does not consider migration patterns as a whole and or how these patterns affect the growth or decline of a population. For example, the total population size only assesses one level, population total, and doesn't assess how much of that population are permanent or seasonal, additionally, the data doesn't take into account more complex population flows such as cyclical migration; which can span several decades and depending on the phase it is in, can affect the census outcome.

Therefore, we can conclude that population size as the only criteria for identifying small towns is ineffective, and can produce very inaccurate assumptions of the space.

So why is such a detailed discussion on the population size of small towns valuable? For one, population sizes form the foundation of the majority of both practical and theoretical descriptions of the urban hierarchy (Kaplan, Wheeler, and Holloway, 2004; Smailes, 1966; Best and Rogers, 1973; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005; Scott and Stroper, 2015). Therefore this discussion was particularly valuable in providing a benchmark for the

thought process and understanding of the gaps in the use of population size as the principle factor in determining an urban form, or defining a small town. However, as I have explained earlier, the recreation of an urban hierarchy is a futile endeavour, which can be repeated and recreated time and time again with limited effectual progress in the field. For this research, an interrogation of the population size of different towns in their respective district and local municipality was specifically useful in determining and establishing a baseline for generalizability. Generalizability is the terms used to explain how applicable findings of a research investigation are in regard to the broader topic under discussion.

Beginning with Ngwathe Local Municipality in the Free State. This municipality houses 2



Graph 5: Comparative population sizes in Ngwathe Local Municipality

of the 5 research sites, namely Parys and Vredefort. Located about 14km from each other, these two towns posed the most

perplexing contrast

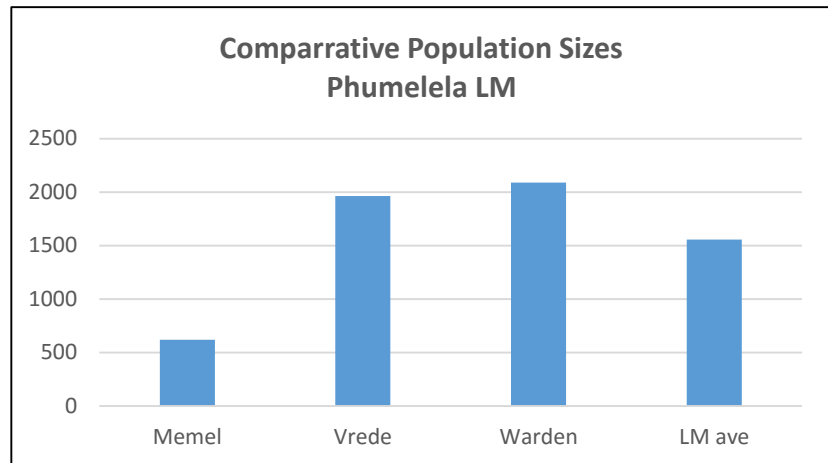
with regard to their overall look and feel of the towns, and that contrast is definitely demonstrated in their population statistics. Within Ngwathe LM, Parys is recorded to have the largest population in the municipality, capping off at about 8071 people as of the 2011 census. On the other end of the spectrum Vredefort is home to the second smallest population of the local municipality, with 1326, barely passing Koppies, which has an estimated total of about 1136 people. Additionally, Parys has a significantly higher population than the local municipality's average, and Vredefort has a significantly smaller population than the average. But why could this be? Perhaps Isabel, a resident in Parys could offer some clarity. When asked why she thinks Parys is doing better than Vredefort, she responded"

1000 *"If you ask why Parys seems to be doing better than Vredefort which is*
1001 *only about 14 kilometres from Parys, I think there is a bit of a story*
1002 *about that. There used to be a court in Vredefort and they moved it to*
1003 *Parys and since then Parys has grown bigger. But also Parys is next*
1004 *to the river. So I actually don't know how true it is that moving the court*
1005 *from Vredefort caused to become like it is. And besides, there are a lot*
1006 *of people from Parys who go there to visit the church, especially when*
1007 *they have events."* (Isabel, 2017)

1008 She also noted later in the interview, that Parys had become more of a tourist attraction
1009 than Vredefort. What was interesting was the way Isabel described Vredefort, and in the
1010 same breath compared it to the 'smallest town' in South Africa;

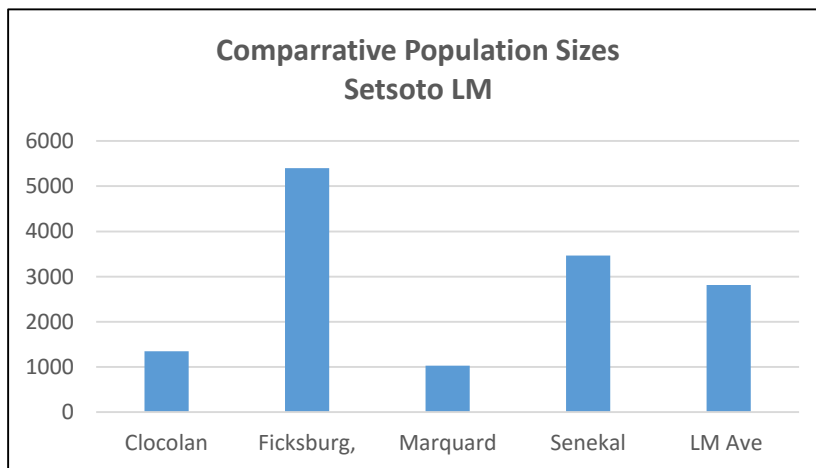
1011 *"...Vredefort is a very, very small town. It's like a little bit going back in*
1012 *the past when you drive through there... The smallest town I know of*
1013 *is Venterskroon and it's the smallest town in the country; or it used to*
1014 *be a town, but not anymore. There's this hotel where you can go eat*
1015 *on a Sunday. But there's very little there...Also there's a meteorite site*
1016 *there. But even though its considered the smallest town in South Africa,*
1017 *it seems like there is more to do there than in Vredefort."* (Isabel, 2017).

Moving along, second we have Phumelala Local Municipality, which is home to 1 of the 5 case study towns, namely Vrede. In the Phumelela LM, there are only two other towns – these being



Graph 7: Comparative population sizes in Phumelela Local Municipality

Memel and Warden. In terms of population size, Vrede is located in the middle of the two towns, with 1962 people. On the lowest end of the spectrum is Memel with 619 people and on the opposite end, is Warden with 2088. Both Vrede and Warden have higher population sizes than the municipalities average. The most significant point we can extract from this data is the substantial difference in population size between Memel and the other two towns in the municipality.



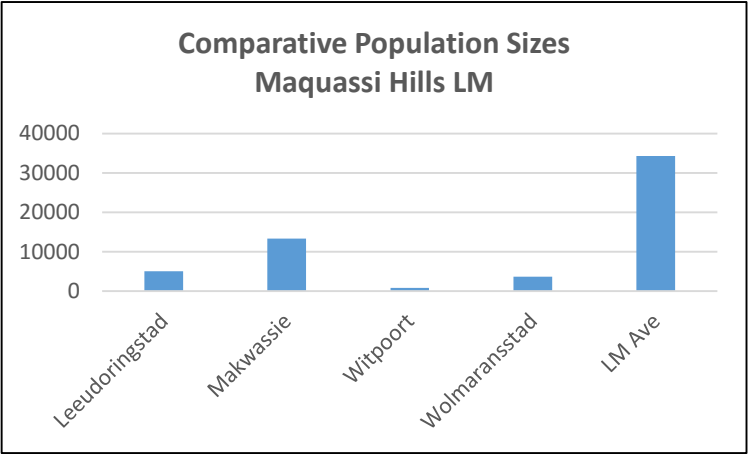
Graph 6: Comparative population size in Setsoto Local Municipality

Third, we have Setsoto Local Municipality. Also located in the Free State it is home to only Senekal. Amongst all the municipalities studied in the project, it appears to have the most diversely

ranging population sizes amongst the towns which share this municipality. Senekal is located once again the about the middle of the spectrum of population sizes, with about 3466 people. Ahead of Senekal is Ficksburg, with 5400 people it is considered to the service centre of the region; where there is more variety in terms of services, or consumer goods. The smallest town is Marquard with 1033 people. Importantly, Senekal has a

slightly higher population size than the municipal average which is sitting at about or near 2800 people.

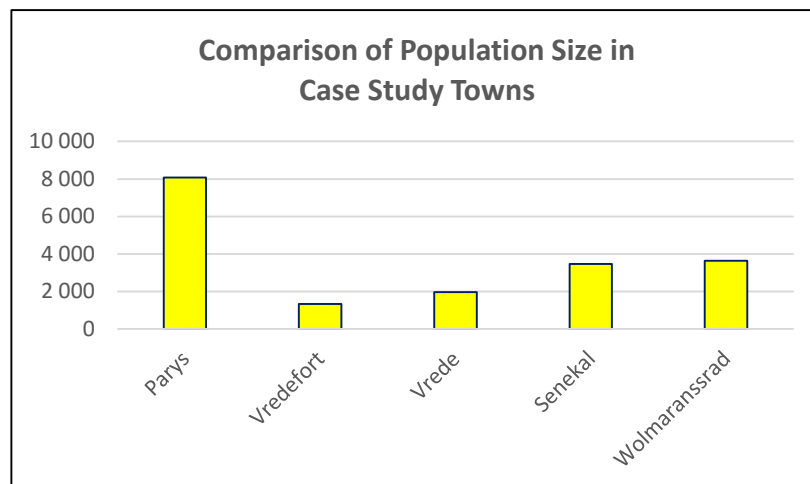
The last municipality hosts only 1 of the 5 case study towns. It is also the only 1 of the towns and municipalities in this study located outside of the Free State. The Maquassi Hills Local Municipality is located in the North West Province and encapsulates four towns, including Wolmarransstad. Three of the four towns



Graph 8: Comparative population size in Maquassi Hills Local Municipality

located in this local municipality less than or close to 5000 people, however Mawassie has a staggering estimated 13351 people. Wolmaransstad and Leeudoringstad share the mid-range of the graph with 3633 and 5054 people respectively. Serving as the tail, Witpoort is home to only 856 people. This marginal difference in the population sizes makes the data rather difficult to analyse, as such a significant change in population size should mean there is a change in the characterisation of the space, with specific reference to Mawassi Town; which is really not a small towns.

In terms of the five case study towns of this research project. The variation in the population sizes of the case study towns is quite interesting when we consider the relative similarity in age or year of establishment; as we discussed earlier. Parys has the largest population; whilst its neighbour, Vrederfort has the smallest population in the group. The remaining 3 towns fall between these two extremes.



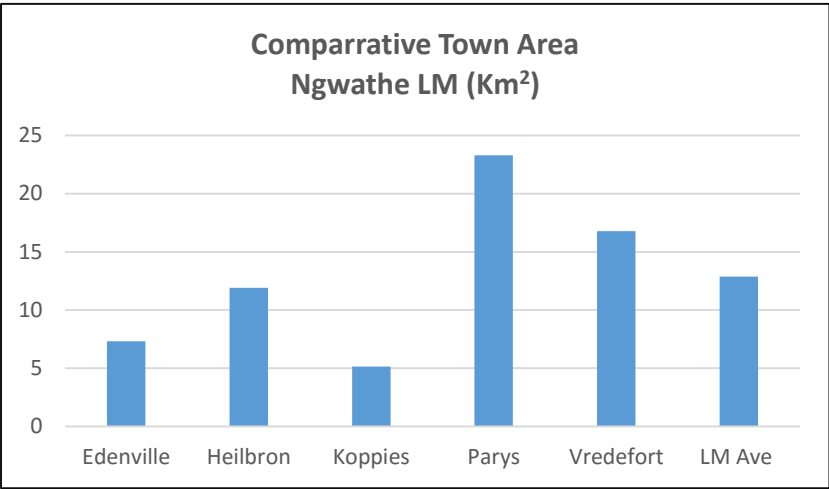
As we have seen in the discussion of the population sizes of the five case study towns in relation to other towns in the same local municipality, what emerges is evidence of different classes of small towns. What this means, is that small towns can be further sub-classified according to their range of population. Although this was a technique implemented during the pilot stage of this study, and was an idea composed in the literature, it has yet to be demonstrated.

ROLE OF POPULAITON IN CHARACTERISING SMALL TOWNS

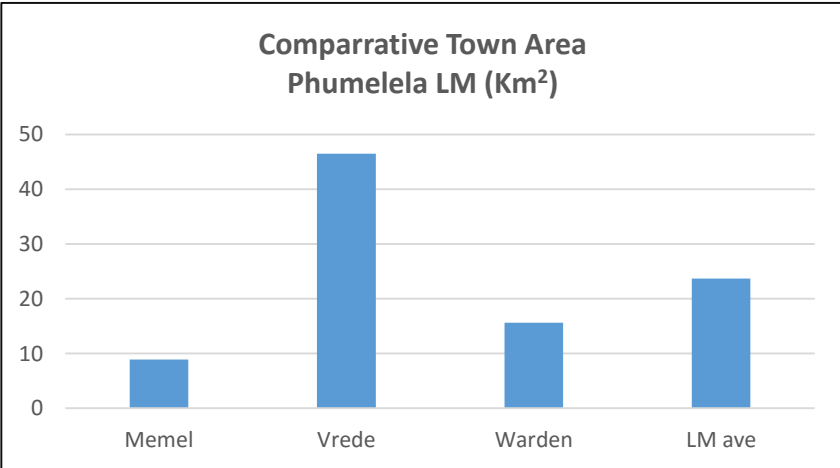
Moving onto the element of small town characteristics, we shall look at the physical area of the town. Beginning again with Ngwathe Local Municipality. In terms of area coverage, Parys and Vrederfort have the largest areas in their local municipality. Why this is especially interesting for Vrederfort is because, whilst it has the second largest area coverage in the group it has the smallest population. This is somewhat of a contradiction, or at least a direct challenge to the expectation that a large population will

have a large area. In contrast, Parys has the largest area coverage of the group and the largest population.

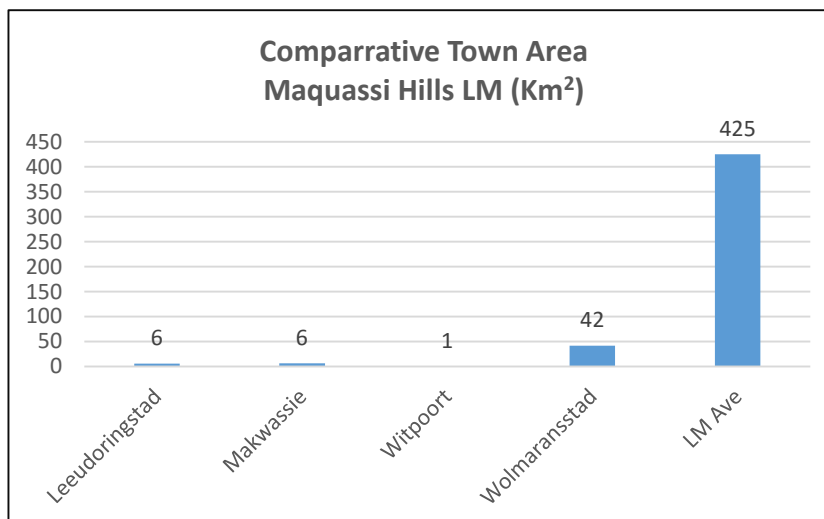
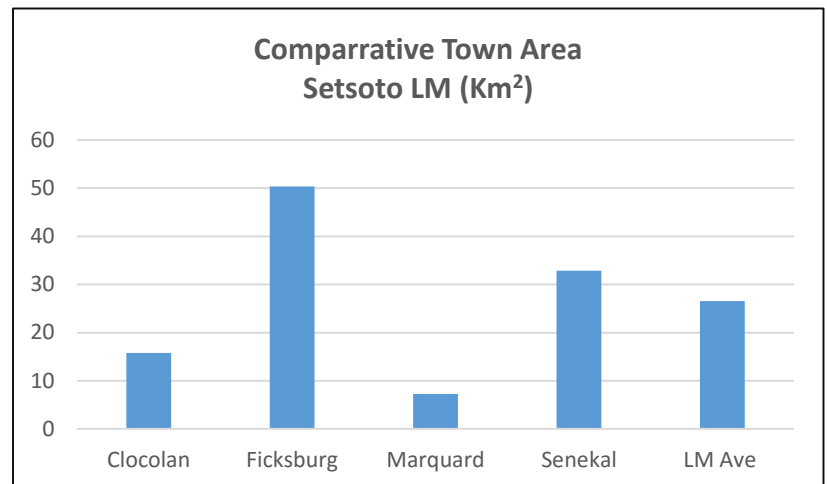
Second in the discussion of area coverage is the Phumelela Local Municipality. Here again, Vrede (which is one of the case study towns) is recorded as having the



largest area coverage. With the second largest population in the municipality, we can assume a correlation between the area coverage and the population size. Conversely, Warden, which has the largest population size in the municipality has the second smallest area coverage, which means the town may be rather densely populated. Alternatively, by that logic, given that Vrede and Warden have rather similar population sizes, then Vrede may be especially sparsely populated.



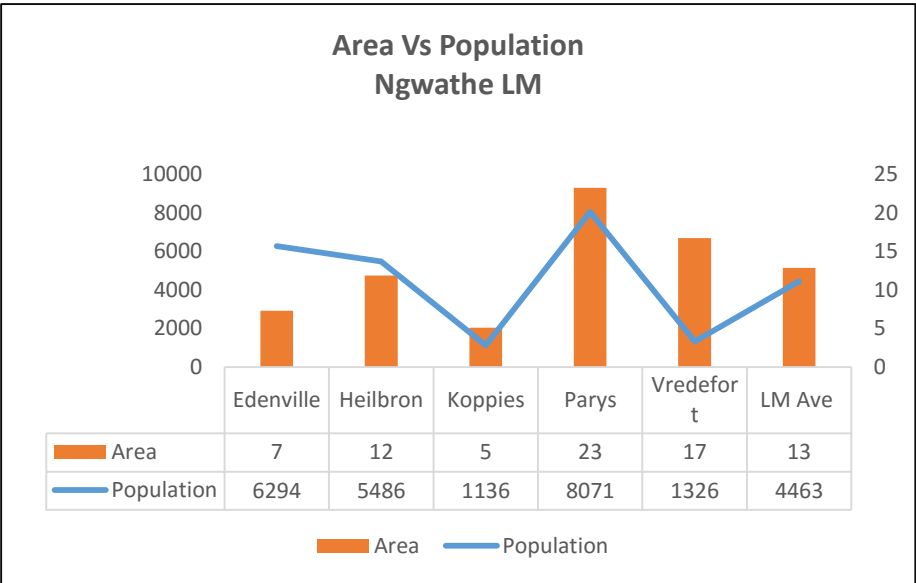
Third is the Setsoto Local Municipality. Here we see Senekal as having the second largest area coverage, which again appears to be correlated to the population size, for which it again has the second largest population size in the municipality. Conversely, Ficksburg has the largest area coverage in the group, occupying about 50 square kilometres of land. This again directly correlates with it having the largest population, as well as being recognised as a service centre in the region.



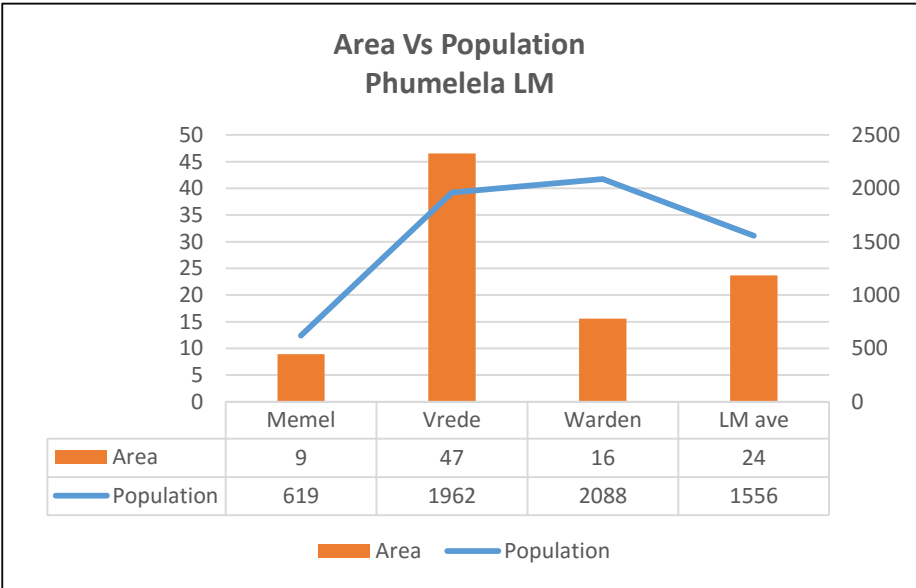
Last, in the analysis of the area coverage of the towns is Maquassi Hills Local Municipality in the North West

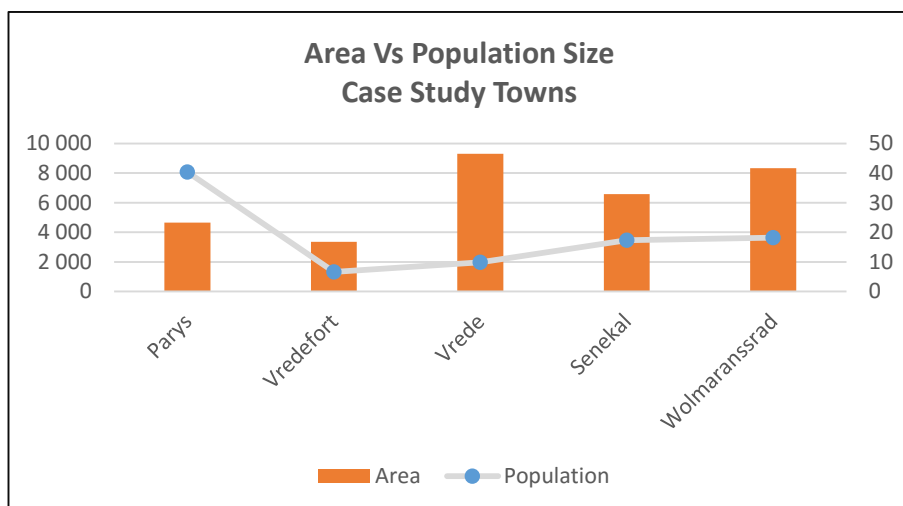
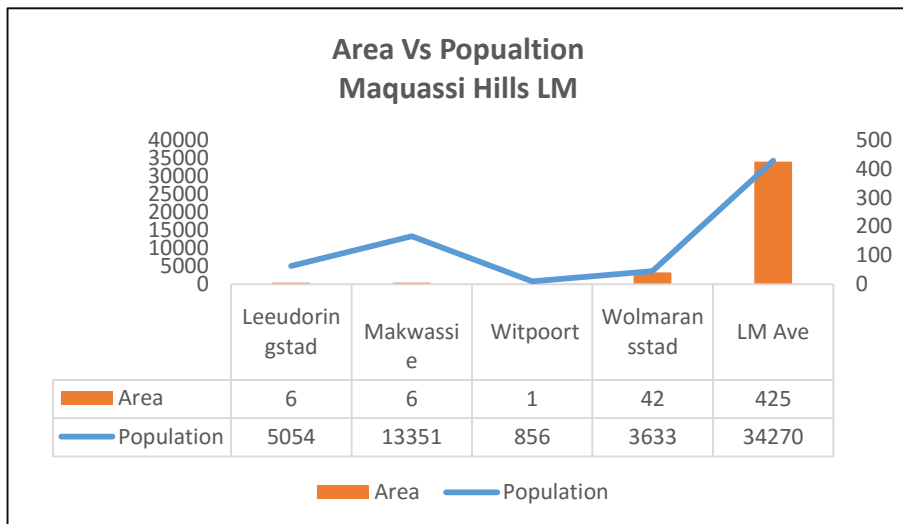
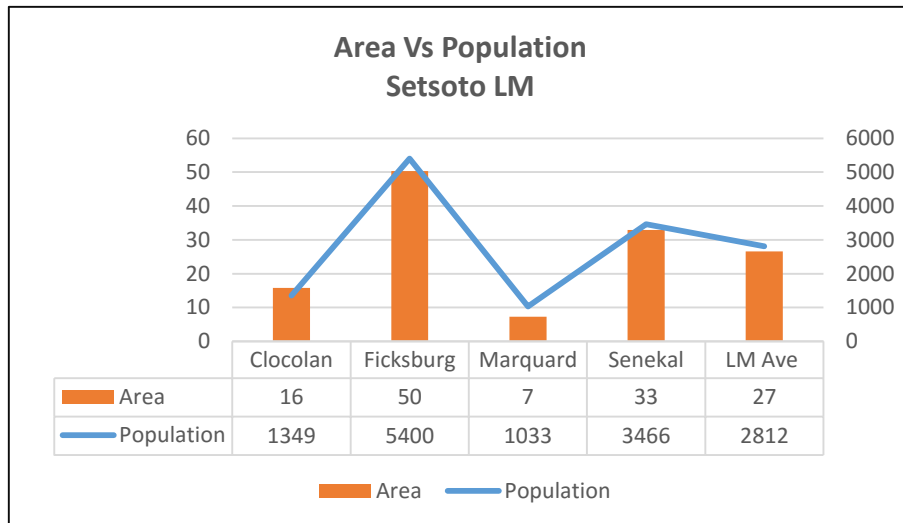
Province. This local municipality is especially interesting and directly challenges our expectations. Firstly, Makwassie, which has the largest population in the municipality (over 13000), has one of the smallest area coverage, with about 6 square kilometres, which has resulted in a density of about 2200 people per square kilometres. This closely rivals the population of Johannesburg, which stands at 2900 people per square kilometre (Johannesburg Census, 2011

In contrast, Wolmaransstad has the largest area coverage, and the third largest population after Leeudoringstad. In the case of



Leeudoringstad as with Makwassie, there also seems to be a lack of correlation between the large population size and area coverage. Between the two provinces there is little consistency between population size and area coverage. This makes it difficult to define small towns according to their area size alone. To further iterate this point, provided are a series of graphs which overlay the population sizes of the towns with their corresponding area coverage.





Thus far in the discussion, we have looked with great detail at the potential effectiveness of using year of establishment, population sizes and area coverage of towns (in isolation) as a methods of distinguishing small towns from other towns. Despite, the characteristic of population size as being the most popular principle characteristic of defining small towns, it was found in this discussion, that this method was rather ineffective and almost limiting to the point where one cannot actually defend the uses of single or principle characteristic. However, when the different series of data are used in combination, we begin to see a much clearer picture form.

What is the role of service delivery and infrastructure in defining a small town?

The next statement in the series of assumptions are 'small towns have generally poor service delivery and infrastructure. This statement, like the ones before it requires some unpacking before we proceed to determine how accurate it is. Still related to the sub-question – what makes a small town, we need to ask if infrastructure is a core component of what makes a small towns, and secondly if the delivery of services is a component. Thereafter, how do we measure these two attributes? Once we have an understanding of the role of these two components in the characterisation of small towns; we can ascertain their weighting in the overall description of small towns.

At first glance, infrastructure seems like a simple enough and measurable facet which may positively contribute to the overall understanding of what makes a small town. However, *infrastructure* is a far more complex term, and is most accurately understood as a word encompassing several elements, with its own rather ad hoc definition (Ferderke and Garlick, 2008). Conventionally there are two broad categories of infrastructure; these being Economic Infrastructure and Social Infrastructure; and two modes of measuring infrastructure; that being physically and financially. Economic infrastructure typically includes transport, communications, power generation, water supply and sanitation facilities (Ferderke and Garlick, 2008); and for some this includes the buildings that make up the infrastructure of urban and rural communities (Dawson,

2013). Social infrastructure on the other hand refers to educational and health care facilities (Ferderke and Garlick, 2008).

An entire thesis can be written on infrastructure and anyone of its aspects; and they have. However, Ferederke and Garlick, 2013 explains, " Constructing a single index of the physical characteristics of widely varying types of infrastructure is a difficult task, so it is common practice to use physical measures only when examining specif types of infrastructure" (Ferderke and Garlick, 2013, 3); therefore this section will only focus on transport infrastructure and specifically roads and how they contribute to the making of a small towns.

First, we will begin with the urban road pattern, the Urban Road Pattern, very literally refers to the structure of the roads as they were laid out during the proclamation of a town. Road patterns tend to take 1 of three forms, these are:

- (a) Radial;
- (b) Rectangular, block or grid and;
- (c) Organic or irregular.

The image below further illustrates the three dominant types of street morphology.

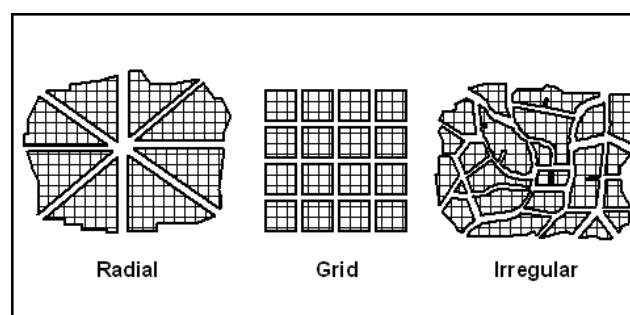


Figure 16: Three dominant road structures.
https://www.google.co.za/search?biw=1366&bih=620&tbn=isch&sa=1&ei=z1LFWsqPHIPCgAao_rOACQ&q=grid+street+pattern+example

With about 760 000km of roads running throughout South Africa, we use a five tiered and 6 class hierarchy and classification system for our roads. At the top of the hierarchy

are (1) Freeways and Expressways, (2) Primary Arterials, (3) District Distributors/ Integrators, (4) Local Distributors/ integrators and (5) Access Roads & Streets. Within each of these hierarchical tiers, are six classes, which correspond to a tier. Beginning at the top once again, (1) National High Ways, which are identified as their names start with an N; for example N3 from Durban to Johannesburg (Robertson and Taljaard, 2011). These roads are particularly interesting as they are often considered 'super-routes', which means they need to be able to accommodate extra-high, extra-long and extra-heavy vehicles (COTO, 2012). (2) Metropolitan Freeways, which can be identified by their name starting with the letter 'M'; these road usually allow for traffic to move between metropolitan area, like the M2 from Johannesburg to Kempton Park. (3) Provincial Main Roads also known as R-routes, as distinguished by their name beginning with an R. (4) Gravel Roads and secondary roads that are surfaces. (5) Urban streets and roads in major cities and towns of South Africa and; (6) generally unclassified roads, which are located 'off the beaten track in rural and countryside areas (COTO, 2012). To assist in visualising the hierarchy, a table has been provided below:

Hierarchy	Classification	Unique Characteristic
Freeways and Expressways	National High Ways (N)	Super-routes
Primary Arterials	Metropolitan Freeways (M)	
District Distributors/ Integrators	Provincial Main Roads (R)	Dual Carriage/ Single Carriage
Local Distributors/ integrators and	Urban streets and roads (Street/ Avenue/ Boulevard etc)	surfaced
Access Roads & Streets	Gravel Roads and secondary roads that are surfaces & generally unclassified roads	Non-surfaced

Table 10: Hierarchy and classification of roads in south Africa (adapted from COTO, 2012 and Robertson and Taljaard, 2011)

Whilst this detailed discussion on roads seems somewhat unnecessary at this time, it will be integral further on. For now, let us return urban street pattern.

The grid pattern was a very common design used, especially in the post-industrial period as it was a design which encouraged economic performance and favoured the car (Marshall, 2005). Within these dominant structures several combinations and sub-structures have been identified and have been linked to different era's which coincide with changing urban thought. The diagram below illustrates the five sub-categories which a street pattern often takes:

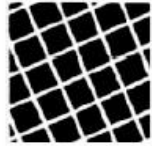
	Gridiron (c. 1900)	Fragmented parallel (c. 1950)	Warped parallel (c. 1960)	Loops and lollipops (c. 1970)	Lollipops on a stick (c. 1980)
Street patterns					

Figure 17: Five subcategories of Grid Street Pattern.
https://www.google.co.za/search?biw=1366&bih=620&tbn=isch&sa=1&ei=z1LfWsqPHIPCgAao_rOACQ&q=grid+street+pattern+example

The street pattern, we can assist in providing further clarity in the quest to define a series of characteristics of small towns. Presented below are five maps of the five case study towns. Within each of the maps, two very distinct road patterns appear. These are a gridiron pattern and what appears to be a warped parallel structure or a fragmented parallel road structure. What is also quite notable is that the warped parallel/ fragmented parallel have a compact and narrow structure, resulting in compact fragmented blocks. This in contrast to the large, square gridiron blocks. A series of maps have been provided for each of the case study towns. Present in all the maps are two very distinctive road patterns, the gridiron patterns belonging the five case study towns, and the warped parallel structure belonging to the neighbouring township, previously segregated as the residential and or living location of black labour in the pre-apartheid and apartheid era's.

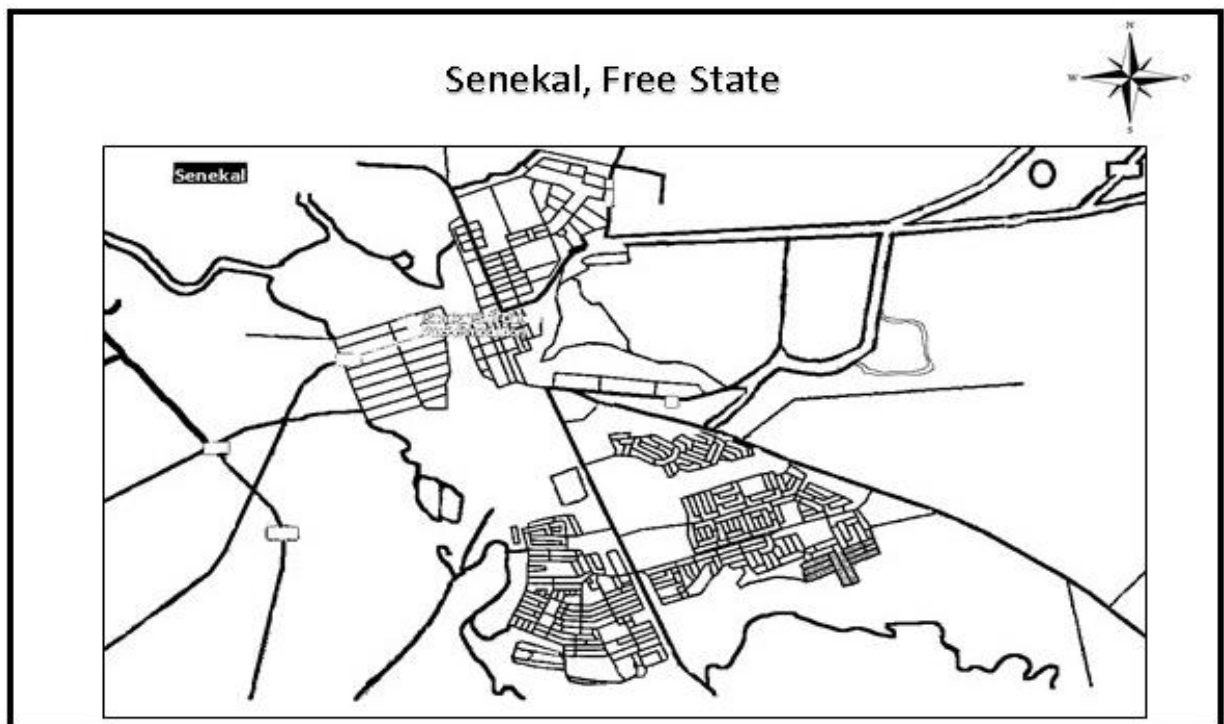


Figure 19: Topographical map of Senekal, Free State

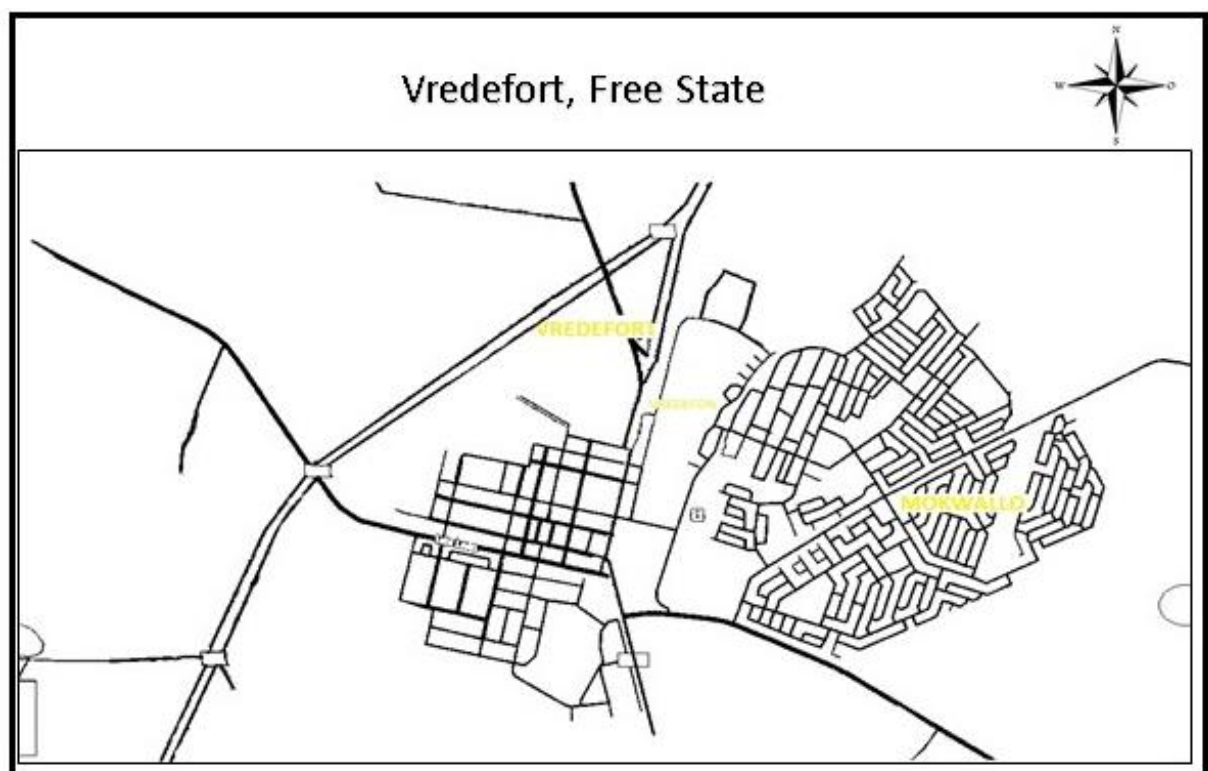


Figure 18: Topographica map of Vredefort, Free State

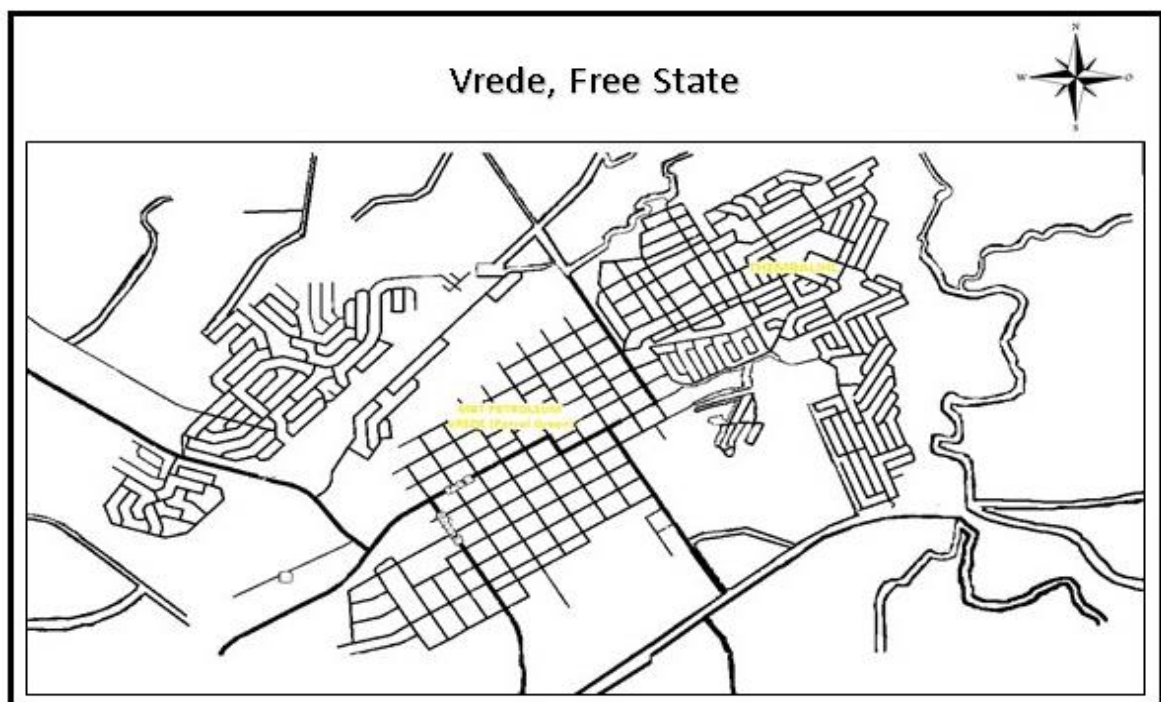


Figure 21: Topographical map of Vrede, Free State

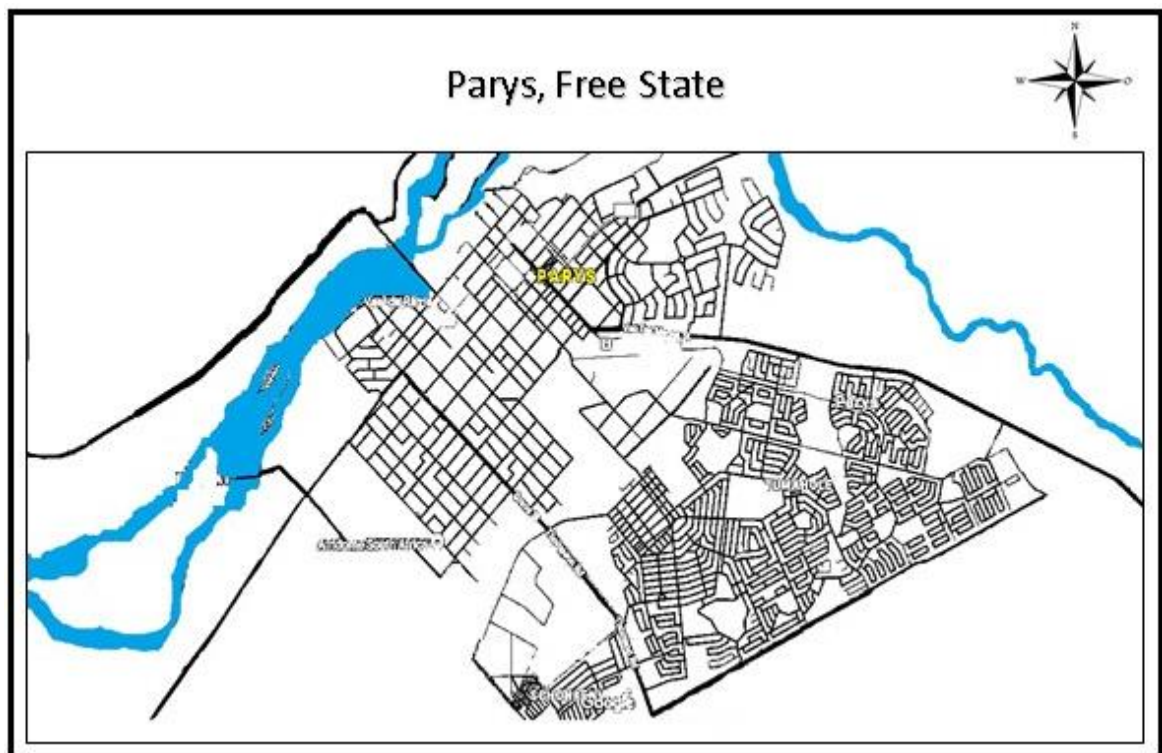


Figure 20: Topographical map of Parys, Free State

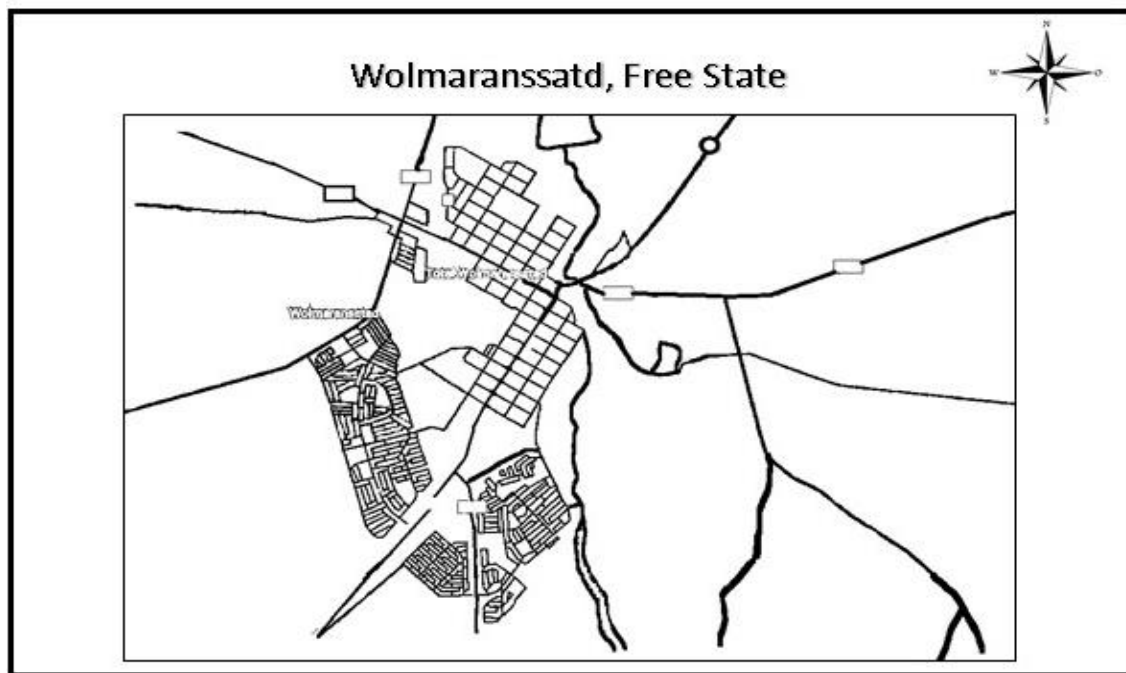


Figure 23: Topographical map of Wolmaransstad, Free State

As stated previously, the consistent presence of these road formations is indicative of the time period during which these towns were built. The warped parallel structure first appeared in the 1960's and 70's; whereas, the gridiron structure was most prevalent in the 1900's. Moreover, this prevalence of an apparently shared town street template may suggest that this be the first and possibly only shared characteristic amongst small towns. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Take for example the town of Harrismith, it was established in 1849, and demonstrates the same gridiron road pattern.



Figure 22: Harrismith Town, Free State (www.google.com/maps, 2018)

However, it has a population of

27 000 inhabitants. Here we return to the applicability of looking for any one shared characteristics, and being able to apply it in isolation of other factors which contribute the description, understanding and definition of different spaces.

The question now is why is the gridiron pattern favoured in respect of the warped parallel -or any other urban road structure as a defining characteristic of a small town? A corroboration between the year the town was established and the preferred road pattern of an era are not enough. Furthermore, even though all five of the case studies share the same street structure, to accept this would be to automatically accept a predetermined definition of small towns which was used in providing me with the list of small towns which I then extracted the case studies from. If we did that, it would be a waste of four very long years.

Nevertheless, the question at hand; why is the gridiron street structure favoured in respect of any other street structure. This is an extremely important and valuable question. For the first time since we began our discussion on what makes a small town, we have been presented with a map of the five towns under investigation. This has given both me, as the research and the reader a sense of 'space'. When we discussed the use of heritage, population size and area, we discussed them in very real terms, albeit abstracted terms. We were able to discuss various towns in great detail, however, when we are presented with a map, the idea of physical boundary – the start and the end of the town – becomes an important factor. When we define a town, we define its boundary. In defining that boundary, we exclude other places, which is only logical. However, in excluding those places we exclude the people who live in those excluded places. The close proximity of the town to the township often means that people from the township engage in most aspect of the towns life, from participating in the schooling system, to engaging in the economy by buying from the stores. They also work in the town's stores, or clinic or other institutions. So therefore, how can we exclude the township from the discussion of what makes a town?

Lets begin firstly with understanding why the boundary between the two spaces is necessary. The main function of the boundary is assist in classification of the space. That classification can be linked to a series of other components which eventually translates in the needs of a town. From a purely physical point of departure, firstly, a boundary can be drawn between the different urban road structures to denote separate urban forms; thereby identifying to separate settlements which can be represented spatially. Secondly, the classification of the roads provides another layer, which further entrenches the boundary. The towns which were investigated had surfaced roads, specifically tarred roads. Moreover, the towns had a greater variety of roads, i.e. an N-road as well as a combination of dual and single carriage ways and urban streets and roads (as is the case with Senekal or Wolmaransstad); or an R-Road in combination with single carriage ways and urban streets and roads (as is the case with Parys and Vrede); running through the towns; all of which were surfaced.

South Africa boasts about 735 000km of tarred and dirt roads (SANRAL, 2017); which connect all corners of the country together. The Free State, has an advanced network of

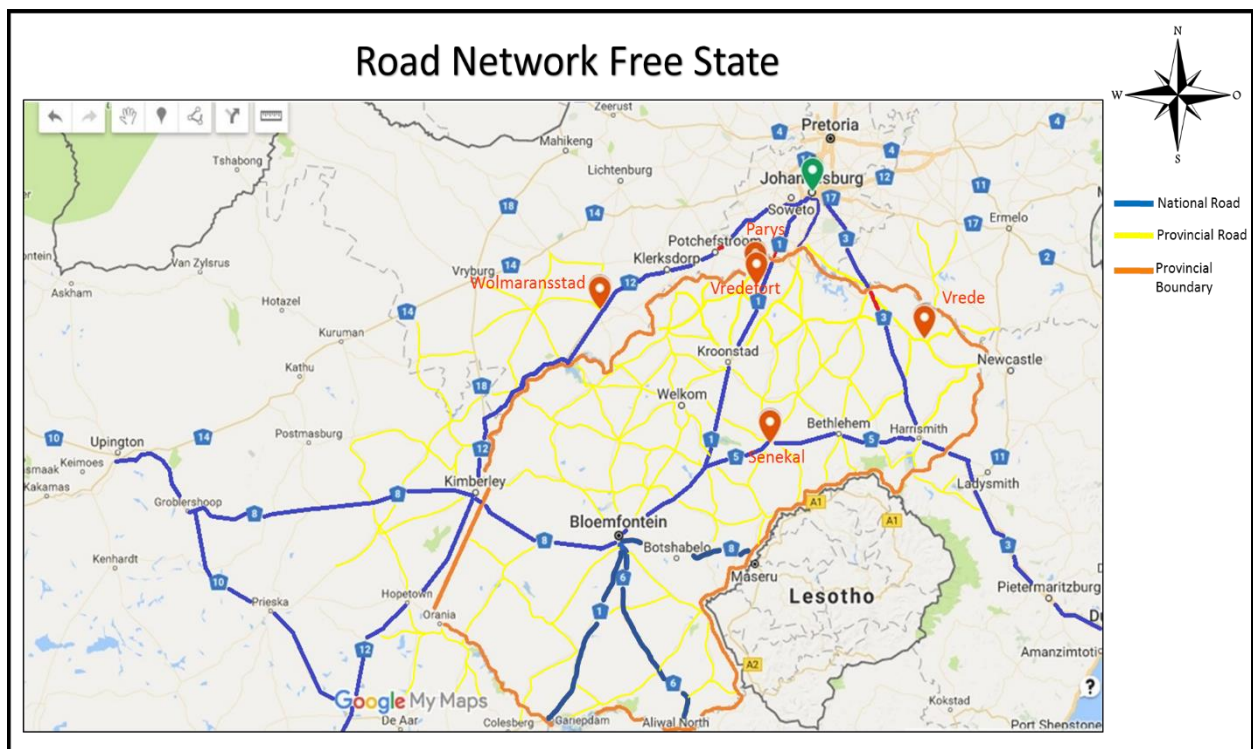


Figure 24: Road Network of the Free State

both National and provincial roads running through it, as demonstrated in the image below.

Using Johannesburg as the starting point, we see a web of national and provincial roads weave through the Free State. Wolmransstad is located along the N12, Parys is located just off the N1, and Vredefort are located along the N1 and Senekal is located along the N5. Only Vrede is located on a provincial road, as is relatively far from the N3.

Parys is located along the R59, from Johannesburg. In fact the road passes right through the town; as indicated by the red line.

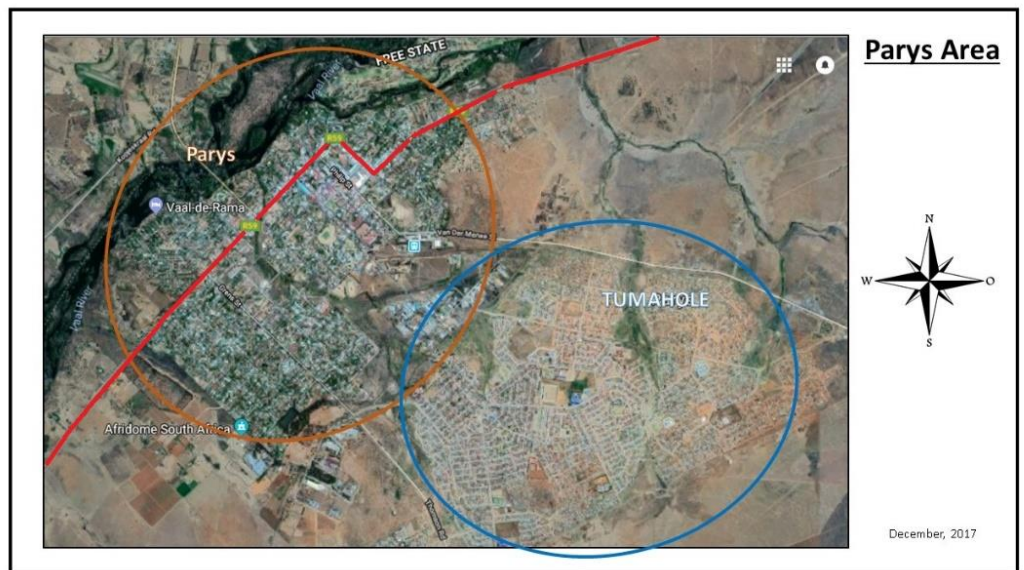
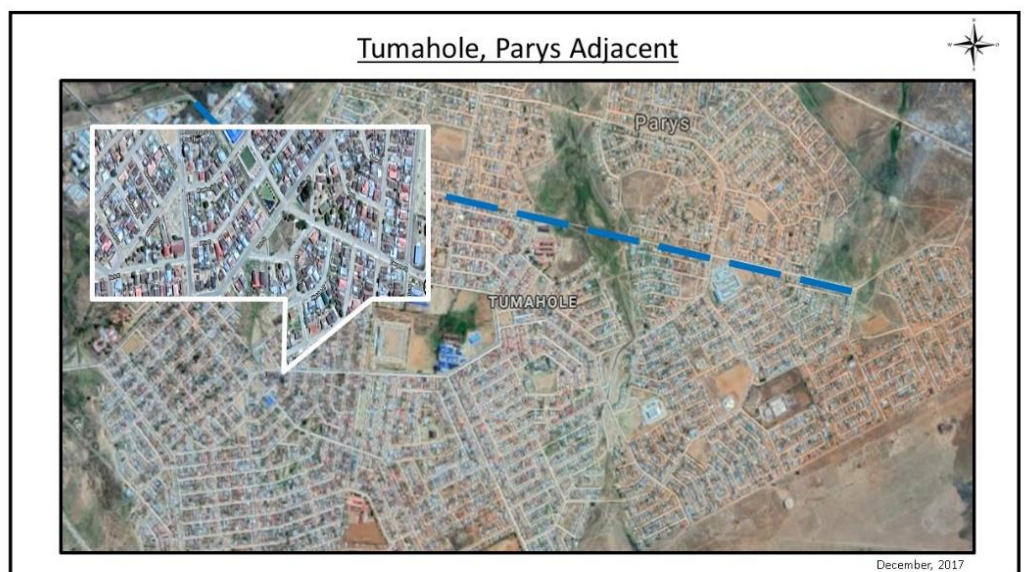


Figure 25: Parys Area

Although the adjacent township, Tumahole has about two strong arterials, these are not considered provincials roads, as they have street names, and are therefore classified as a lower ranking road. Also within Tumahole, is a mature arterial, as indicated by the blue line in the image to the right; however this can be considered a



main-street along the lines of avenue's or boulevards as it is surfaced. There was no history available on the establishment of Tumahole, however, records indicate that the area existed prior to 1956 (Tumahole History, 1999). The relevance in this is trying to understand the different street patterns which exist between the two spaces. Once possible explanation is the lack of development in the 'labour reserve' which was Tumahole until the late 1950's; when there was separate development strategy implemented under apartheid law (Tumahole History, 1999).

Referring back to Figure 25: Parys Area, we see an overlap of the two spaces, Parys and Tumahole, which begins to illustrate a more complete urban fabric. However, the sharp topological and state-of-development difference between the two spaces wipe-away and interlacing which seems to occur on the satellite imaging.



*Figure 27: Tumahole Street, Free State
(google.images/tumahole)*



Figure 27: Parys Residential Street, Free State

If we look at the architecture in the two spaces, the differences are evident, along with other aesthetic differences. Most notably, the building structures. Parys has houses with pitched roofs, and boundary walls and the pavements appear to have grass on them. In Tumahole, there is less prevalence of a pitched roof structure, and homes are basic in their design; however both residence are made of the same material, that being concrete and bricks. It appears that the homes have boundary markers, such as a low level wall, or fencing, however they do not impose as severe a distinction between the private and public space as in the

case with Parys. There is evidence that there is electricity supply to homes in both areas, however in Parys the electrical supply is sub-ground and in Tumahole; from this image we can barely make out a power line running to the roof of the home. Furthermore, the plot sizes between the erfs seem dramatically different in the two spaces. In terms of similarities however, the street quality of surfaces streets is poor in both areas.

Looking at Parys' neighbour, Vredefort has two provincial roads near it; with one actually running through the town. Adjacent to Vredefort is Mokwallo, which appears significantly larger than the town. Although connected by virtue of the land, the two areas do not exhibit the same linkages as Parys and Tumahole; and there is a clear 'buffer' zone between Vredefort and Mokwallo. Vredefort as a mature gridiron street patter, and Mokwallow has some indication of a gridiron street pattern as seen in the north-west of the area; however the dominating road pattern appears to be fragmented parallel, or parallel warped in some regions as we can expected with the continued expansion of the area.

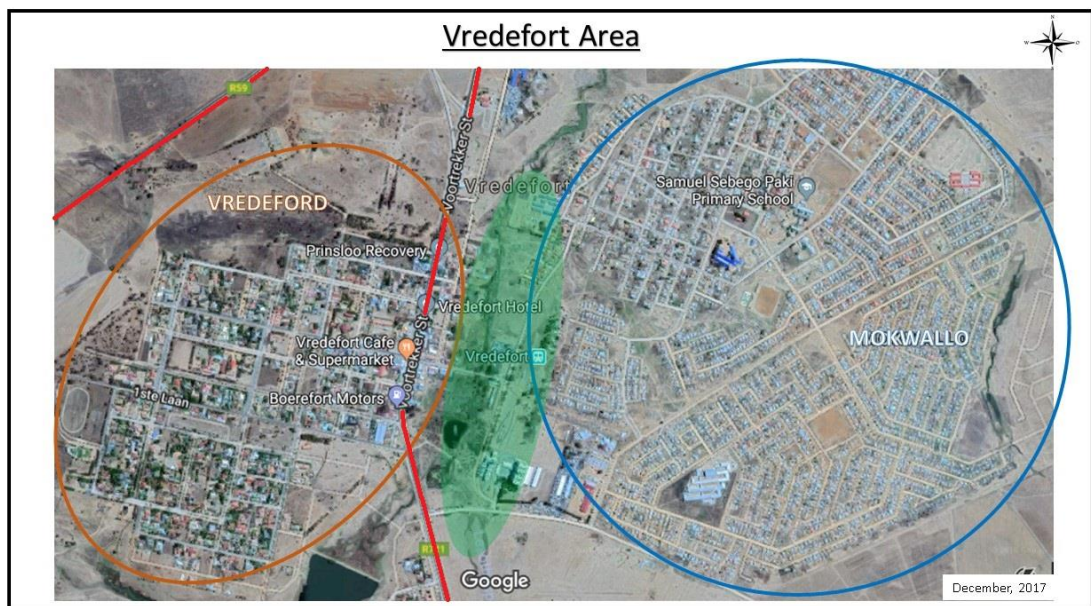


Figure 28: Vredefort Area, Free State

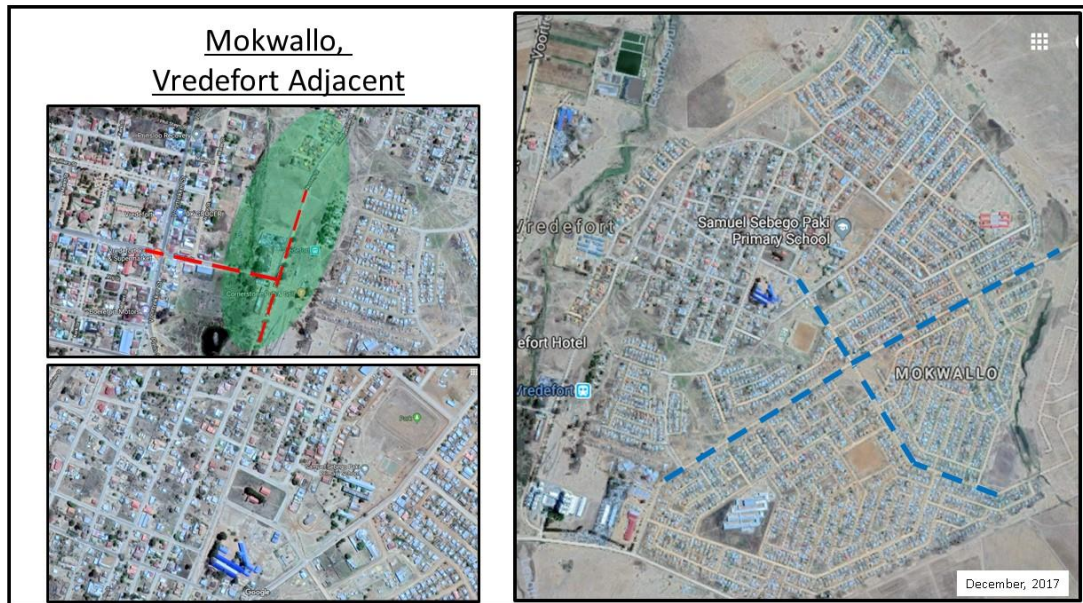


Figure 29: Mokwallo Area, Free State

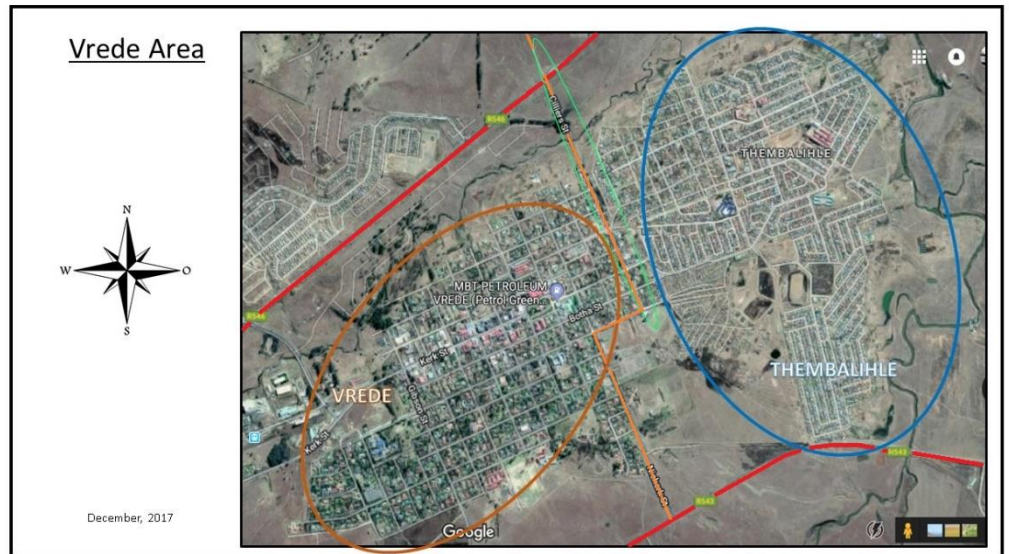
At closer inspection, Mokwallo has some mature arterials running through it as seen with the blue line, however yet again, they have not been ranked as an R-route or anything more senior than a street. We can see a dividing street between Mokwallo and Vredefort, located in the buffer zone, however this is also the primary access of people in Mokwallo to Vredefort, or from Vredefort to Mokwallo.



Figure 30: Mokwallo Street, Free State

Although there isn't much to be said about Vredefort the town, there is still an aesthetic difference between Vredefort and Mokwallo; with Mokwallo demonstrating significant underdevelopment in relation to Vredefort.

Vrede on the other hand is located between two R-routes, with a mature arterial linking the two; and which runs through the town of Vrede.



Both Vrede and the

neighbouring township: Thembalihle have dense spatial structures and the distinction between their starting and end points is almost unnoticeable; except for the distinct street patterns which occur in both spaces. Moreover, identified by a thin green line, the road which connects the two R-routes also divides the two areas from each, and may have been as a result of a previous buffer zone. Conversely, there is a more apparent sense of fabric between these two areas than there was between Vredefort and Mokwallo. In the north-west of the map we see a new settlement or an expansion of the existing settlements, however this is almost completely on the R-road.

Senekal, has one of the most advanced road systems in the case study. It is closely located to the R707 and has

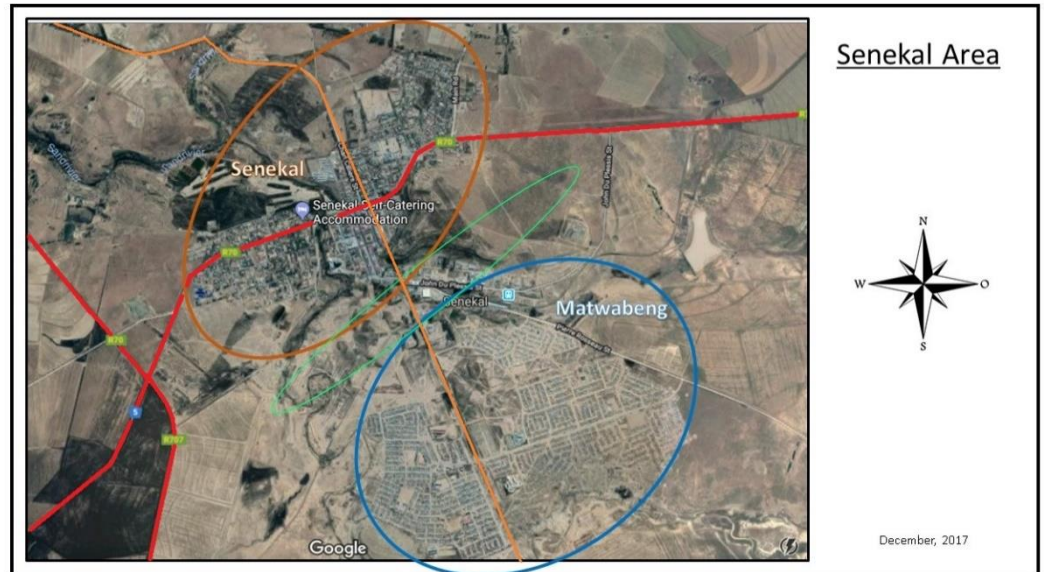
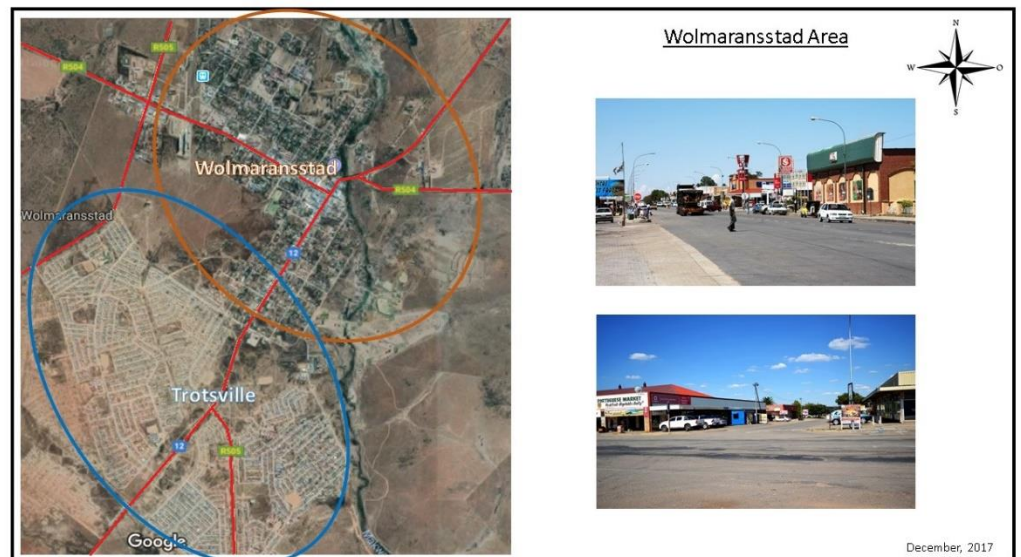


Figure 31: Senekal Area, Free State

the N5 running through the town. Also in the town is a mature arterial which continues through the neighbouring township, Matwabeng. In this region, we again see a similar spatial pattern with two distinct street designs differentiating the towns and the township. Once again, we see evidence of a buffer zone between Senekal and Matwabeng; with one prominent linkage between the two areas.

In concluding this part of the discussion, we will look at Wolmaransstad.

This town has the most advanced road structure of all the towns,



being at the confluence of at least five provincial routes. Neighbouring Trottsville, it is the only township what has a provincial route running through it.

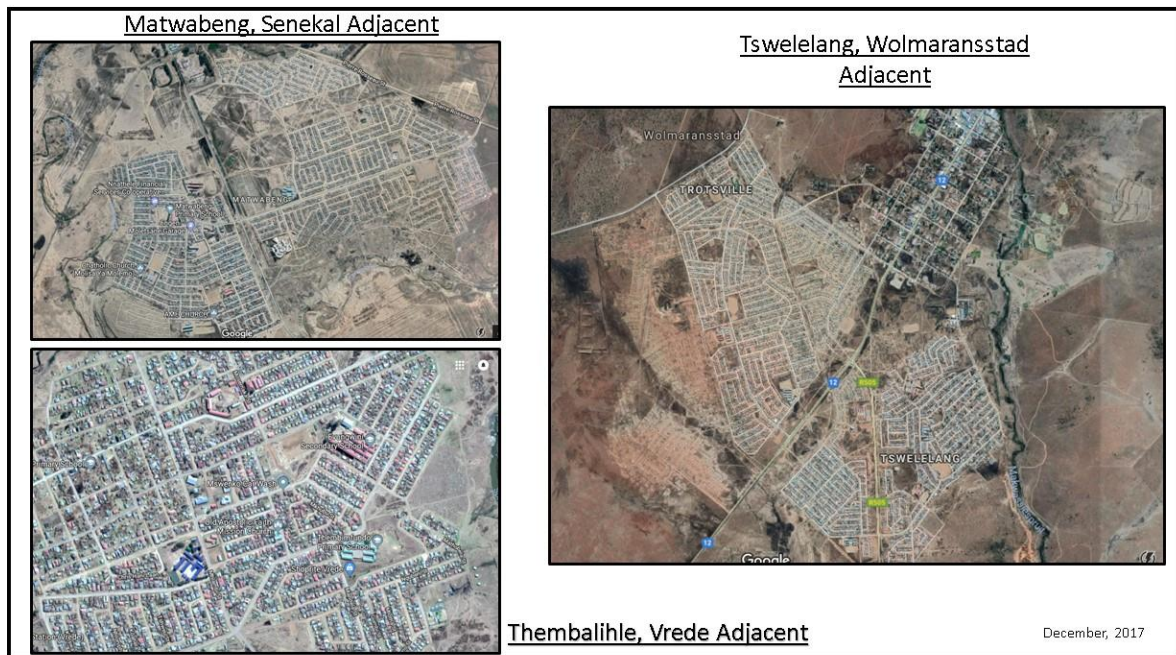


Figure 32: Overview of township street patterns of Matwabeng, Thembalihle and Tshelelang.

If we were to measure the function of the roads in relation to rurality and urbanity, by placing the road hierarchy and urban hierarchy on a teleology, assuming that the more urban a space was, then the more advanced road structure would be present. This is demonstrated in the figure below.

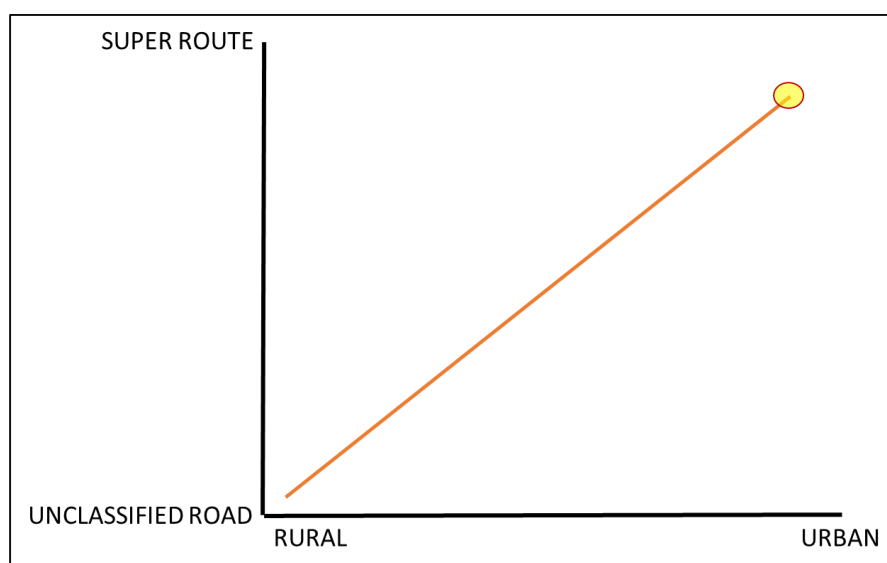
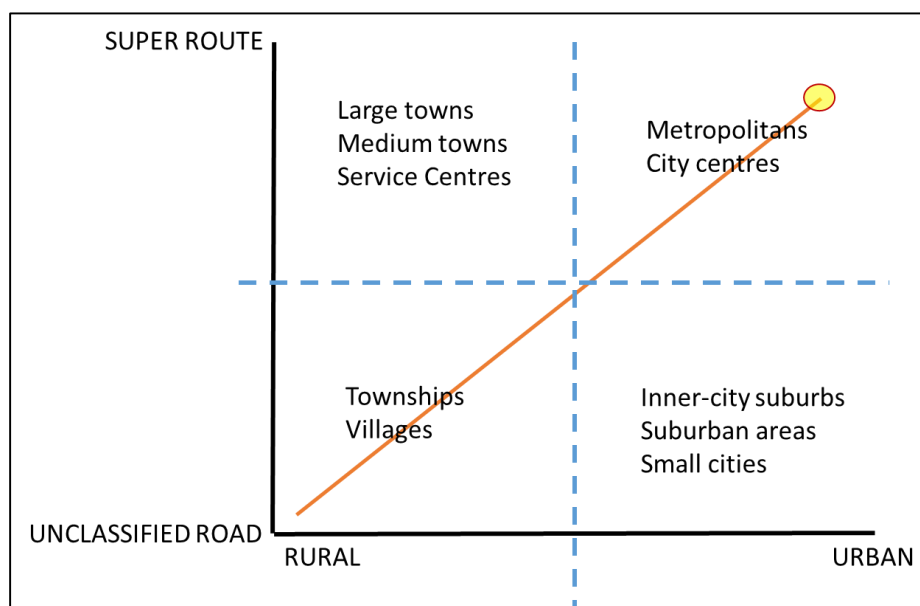


Figure 33: Teleology of Rural-Urban Space

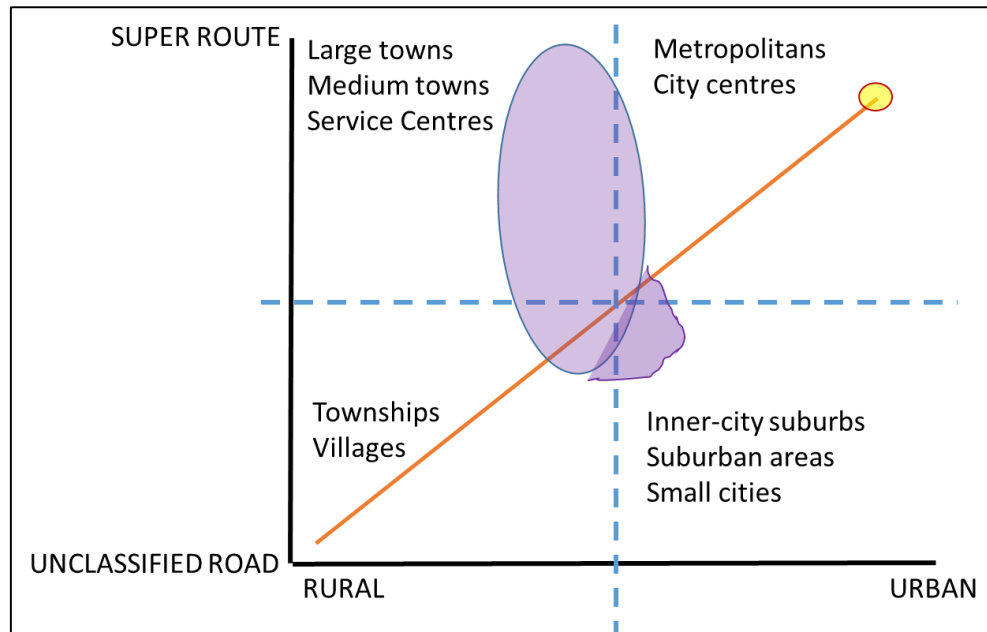
By this logic, small towns would be located somewhere in the middle of the teleology, however, towns which have super-routes running through them complicate the situation.

A potential solution and way of capturing the complexity in the infrastructure of small towns is through a hybrid of the teleology and a variation of the Pasteurs Quadrant Model. This model is a research model which bridges the fundamentals of a research project with the immediate use for society. If we were to combine the two models, we get a representation of data as shown below. On the teleology there are now four quadrants. Starting at the top left, the combination of rural and super-routes produces or are produced in large, medium and service centre towns. Below that, in the bottom left quadrant, where there are low ranking roads, and we are closer to the definition of rural, we find townships and villages. The bottom right quadrant is where we find a combination of low road ranking but high in urbaness, such as inner-city suburbs and small cities. In the final quadrant, on the top right; where there are the highest road rankings and highest level of urbaness, we find metropolitan areas and city centres.



It is difficult to ascertain if it is the combination of roads and urbaness that produce actual spaces, or if it the spaces that produce the varying combinations of roads and urbaness. It is really a question of whether form follows function, or if function follows form; more colloquially, which came first, the chicken or the egg. Nevertheless, by this logic if we were to plot the location of the five case study towns on the model, we may find that they occupy space in all four quadrants. But predominantly, may be located closer the centre. Theoretically small towns, like any other space, if located at the absolute centre would occupy a zero definition, because at the confluence point of all the segments, the definition is everything so therefore nothing.

That aside, as demonstrated in the diagram below, towns, particularly small towns as in this case study; present with both urban and rural traits; and the varying combination and strength of those traits will affect the towns location within the model. Hypothetically, if a complete spatial analysis was conducted on all the towns, it is highly possible that the majority of small towns will likely locate in the upper left quadrant of the model (as indicated in purple), with particular affinity to the median line. The reason for this, is based on a structural analysis, and an assessment of the roads present of the towns within this case study, and the emerging trends, we find that most towns, although located in the centre of a rural landscape, have a low to moderate rate of urbaness; whilst simultaneously having a variety of road rankings present in the towns. For example, all five of the case study towns have an N-road (super-route) or R-road running through it.



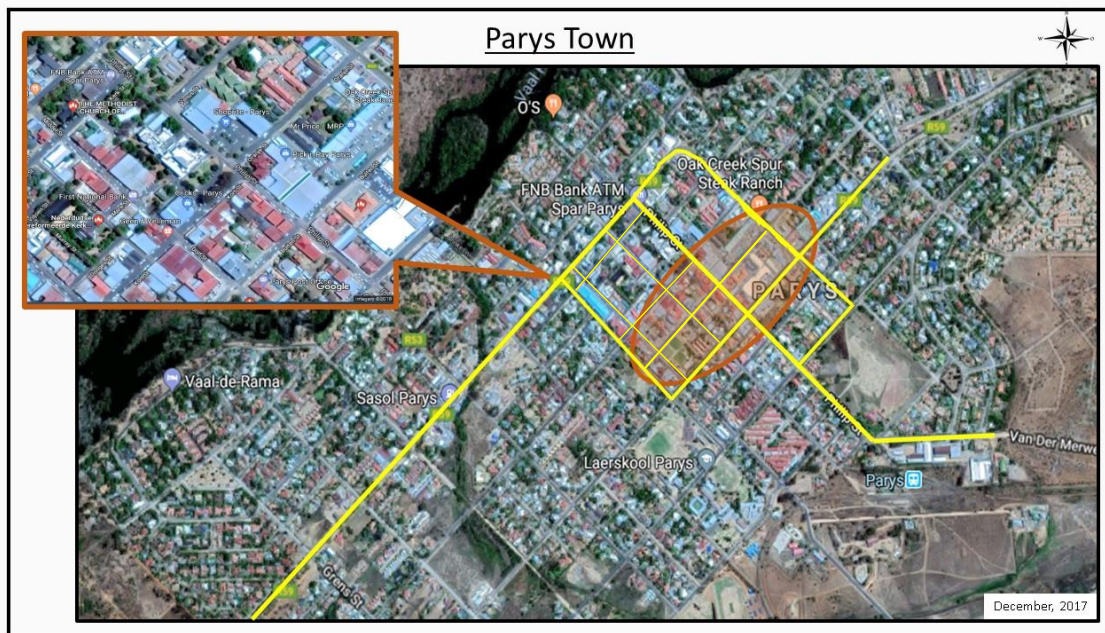
Small towns, would also occupy some locations in the bottom left quadrant, as they possibly maintain their level of urbaness, but the ranking of the roads present in the towns may be very low. Furthermore, I postulate that you may also find a significant number of towns occupying the bottom-right quadrant, as they increase in urbaness, but have low ranking roads present in the town.

From a practical standpoint, it would be interesting to see what developmental strategies could be derived to address the unique challenges of the towns located in the different quadrants.

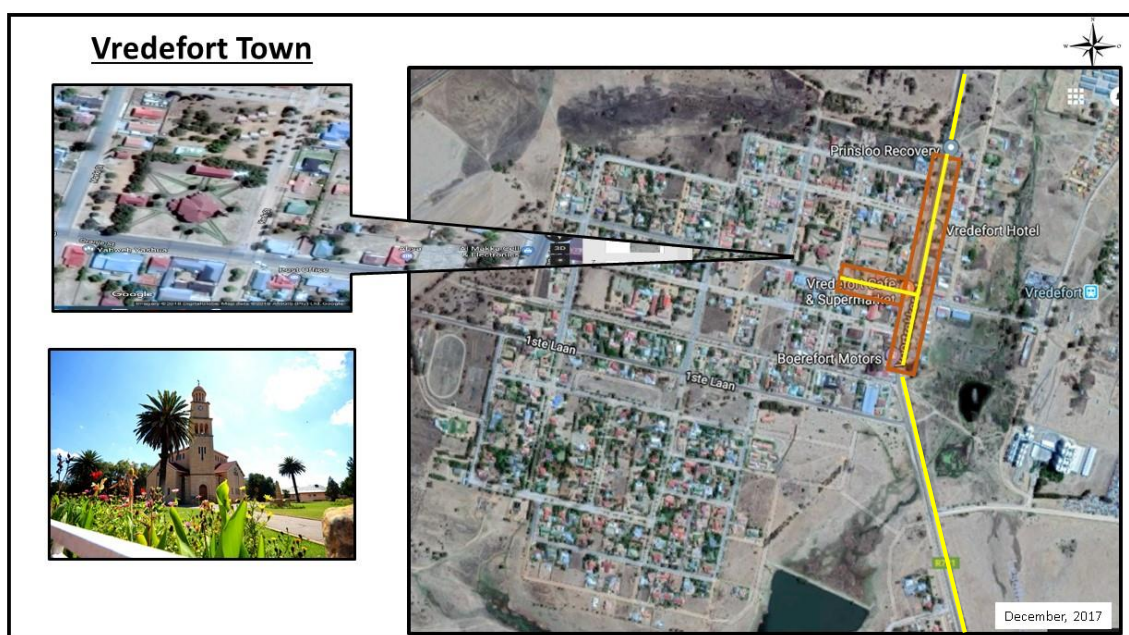
Another distinct feature of all the case study towns is the presence of a central business node or corridor. This indicates that there is a centralisation of spatial activities, and a division of spatial uses in the towns. Although a large portion of the literature focuses on the economic profile of town, particularly small towns, there is no discussion on the multi-nucleic or concentric spatial model which exists in small towns. Based on observations, most small towns adopt a multi-nucleic spatial form, where there very evidently being upper and lower class neighbourhoods in the town.

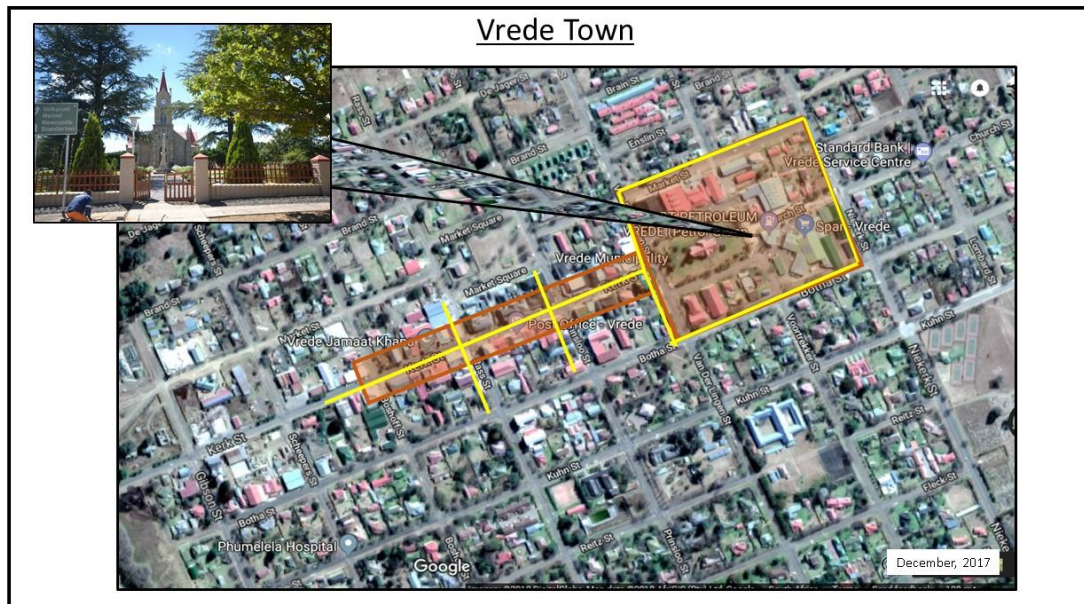
Nevertheless, the details and support for the potential presence of a multi-nucleic urban structure in small towns can be had at another time, or is an opportunity for further research in small towns. Below are a series of images which highlight the economic corridors of small towns. The roads or access routes to the corridor are highlighted in yellow with the business area highlighted in light red.

Economic nodes and corridors are two terms used in urban planning to refer to the form economic activities tend to take in an urban setting. An urban node is where people and transport congregate. The key feature of a node is to be as compact as possible and to concentrate the economic advantage associated with proximity. The corridor on the other hand refers to an important transport route which runs through an area, and in a city setting connects multiple nodes together.

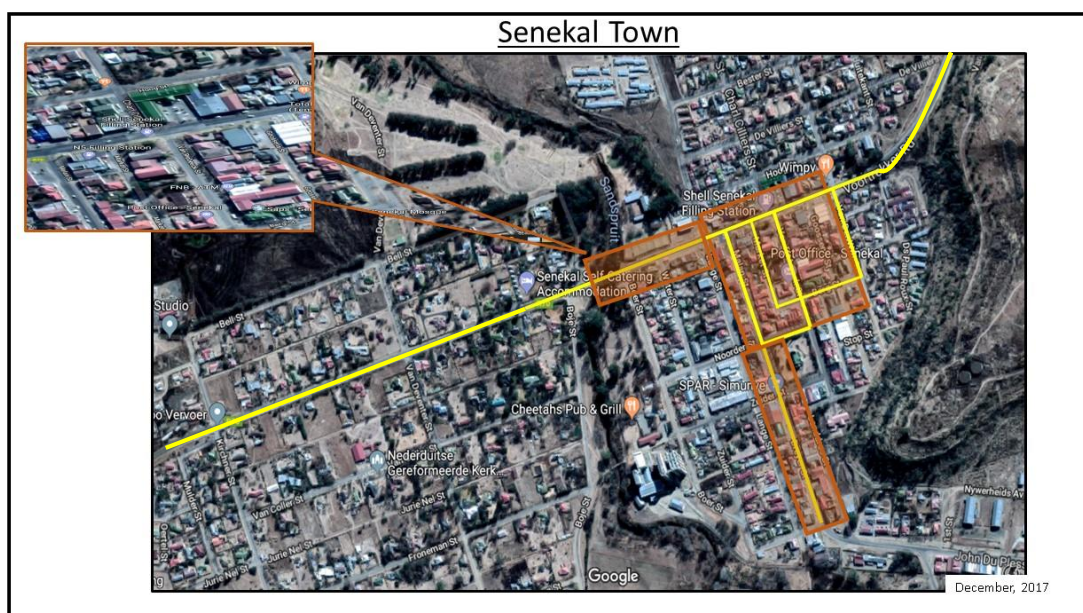


Interestingly, Parys (above) demonstrates a node economic structure; with economic activities as well as transport routes converging in an area of the town. Also important to note, is the Provincial Road which connects Parys to Johannesburg (R59) runs directly through the town and appears to form the foundation of the economic node in the town. Vredefort (below) exhibits more of a corridor economic structure, which incidently is also on the foundation of the R-route which runs adjacent to the town.



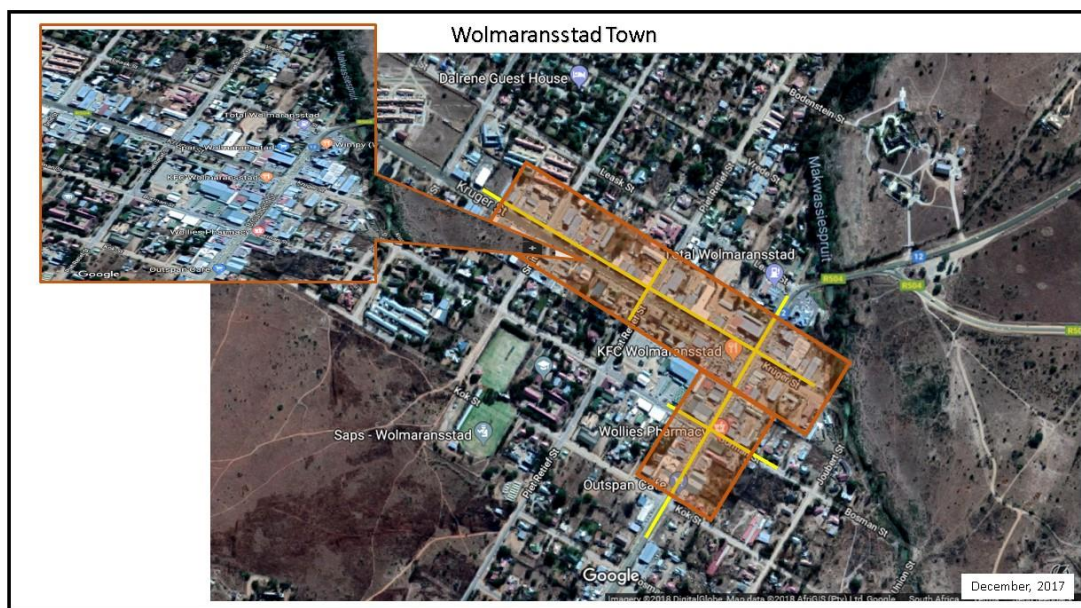


Vrede (above), has a well developed node and corridor. What is more interesting about Vrede is that the basis of its corridor and the centre of the node is the church, which is located at the very centre of the town. Kerk Straat, is also the main road you use as you enter the town and it is interesting to consider the design considerations that were taking when laying out this town. Moreover, it is interesting to think of the role the church may have played in the historical development of both the node and corridor. Continuing, below is a map of Senekal



Senekal has a more advanced node structure than Vrede or Parys, in combination with strong economic corridors which appear to run the length of the town. The main church is located in the centre of the economic node, however, it is not as prominent a feature in the aesthetics of the node as it is in Vrede.

Lastly is rather dense economic corridor structure, where it almost borders on looking like a node. The foundation for both corridors are R- and N-routes which connect the town to other towns such as Vryburg (R-route) or cities Johannesburg (N-route). At the epicentre of this corridors, the town hall is located and the area immediately around it has been developed into a 'strip-mall' with several stores including a Shoprite, Shoprite liquor as well as a KFC fast food restaurant sharing the space.



Now looking at the building typologies. All the towns examined presented a similar template in terms of the building typologies present in the town. This analysis was confined to the central business node, or corridor of the towns. The reason for this was to minimise the interference of data from other typologies, for example residential typologies which are complete separate building class.



Figure 34: Streetscape in Vrede, Free State

Based on observations, it was noted that towns generally had single story building typologies. Stores were of varying sizes, and accommodated a variety of activities. There didn't appear to be any moderation or designation of particular economic activities to a particular store based on their location in the economic node. With the exception of Parys, all four of the other towns demonstrated similar architectural traits with regard to the building typologies.



Figure 37: Street Scape in Wolmaransstad, North West



Figure 35: Street Scape in Vredefort, Free State



Figure 36: Street Scape in Wolmaransstad, North West

Parys however, had a slightly more advanced building typology, with a combination of multi-story and single story buildings located in the economic node or corridor of the towns.

Building typology is an important feature to be included in the characteristics of small towns. However it cannot be used in isolation, as this becomes reductionist in thought and create a homogenous idea of small towns, disregarding the instances of outliers.

Something that is important to recognise is the depth of detail present in the photos which accompany these pages.



Figure 38: Street scene in Parys, Free State



Figure 39: Street scene in Parys, Free State



Figure 42: small town street scene



Figure 41: small town street scene



Figure 43: small town street scene



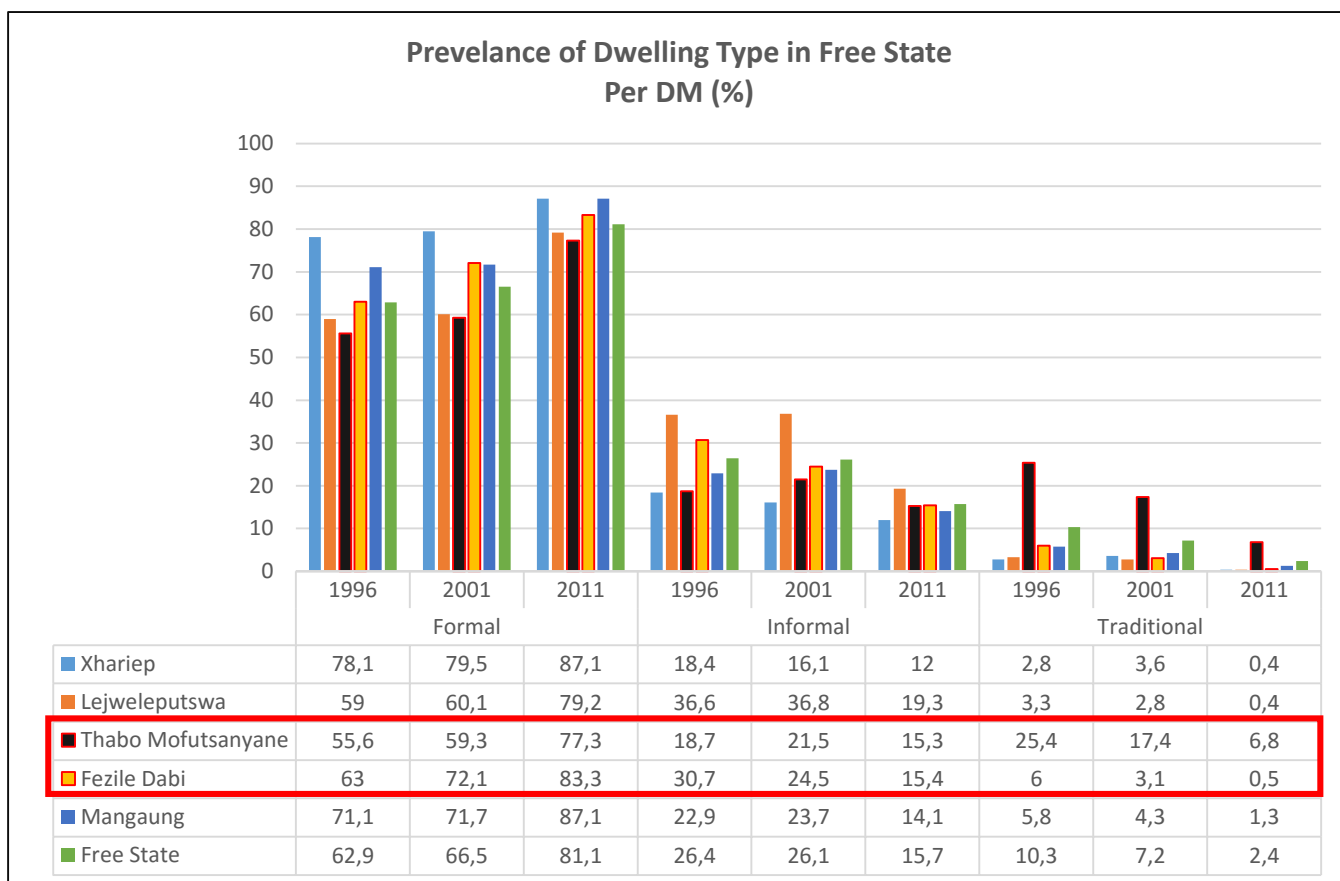
Figure 40: small town street scene

The interrogation of assumptions on this scale is no easy task, as we are only now going to address the service delivery part of the 'small towns have generally poor service delivery and infrastructure' assumptions. Service delivery, like infrastructure, encompasses several elements, and is a commonly used phrase to describe the distributions of basic services, housing, water, refuse and basic sanitation infrastructure (i.e. toilets) (Chen, Dean, Fran and Kumar, 2014). In 2014, a group of researchers visited South Africa with the intention of studying service delivery protests and then developing a mapping system which could track said protests. What the researchers found was that, 'service delivery' was widely used term to describe any protest action, directed towards the government's ineffective governance within a community or the country and economy at large. For example, the researchers came across a series of protests, which were protesting the lack of job opportunities in the community; when investigated further the community firmly believed that it was indeed a service delivery issue and it was indeed within the governments mandate to supply jobs. In summary, the researchers did not develop their tracking model, but aptly stumbled on a more serious question. What constitutes service delivery? (see Chen, Dean, Fran and Kumar, 2014). The long and short of it is, that service delivery is not universally understood, however there are commonalities amongst what is considered basic human needs. In Sierra Leone for example, basic services include primary education, safe potable water and a secure network of feeder roads, which fundamentally link people to other services and opportunities. In India, basics services include water, sewerage, solid waste management, electricity and services such as health, education and public distribution systems. In Afghanistan, basic services include all of the above, but goes one step further to include play grounds for children and sports and entertainment facilities. In the United Kingdom, we see an even greater expansion of what is considered basic services, with services such as job search services, public libraries and enrolment in higher education or university included in their list of basic human needs (see Beall and Schutte, 2006; CESPA, 2012, eGouvernement UK Fact Sheet, 2014). For South Africans, the

government is responsible for the provision of services such as adequate housing, basic education, primary health care, social welfare, transport, electricity, safe water and sanitation, refuse and waste removal (COGTA, 2009). Throughout the different variations of what is considered basic services in different countries, there is a noticeable commitment to satisfying the basic human rights of a person, as denoted by or modelled after the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

So the question at hand, do small towns generally have poor service delivery? For the purpose of answering this question, we will focus on 5 of the potentially 9 service sectors. The reason for this, is that service delivery is directly linked to infrastructure. As we only discussed the economic infrastructure (as above); in order to maintain consistency, we will discuss the linked services; these are: dwelling type, safe water, electricity, sanitation (toilets) and refuse removal.

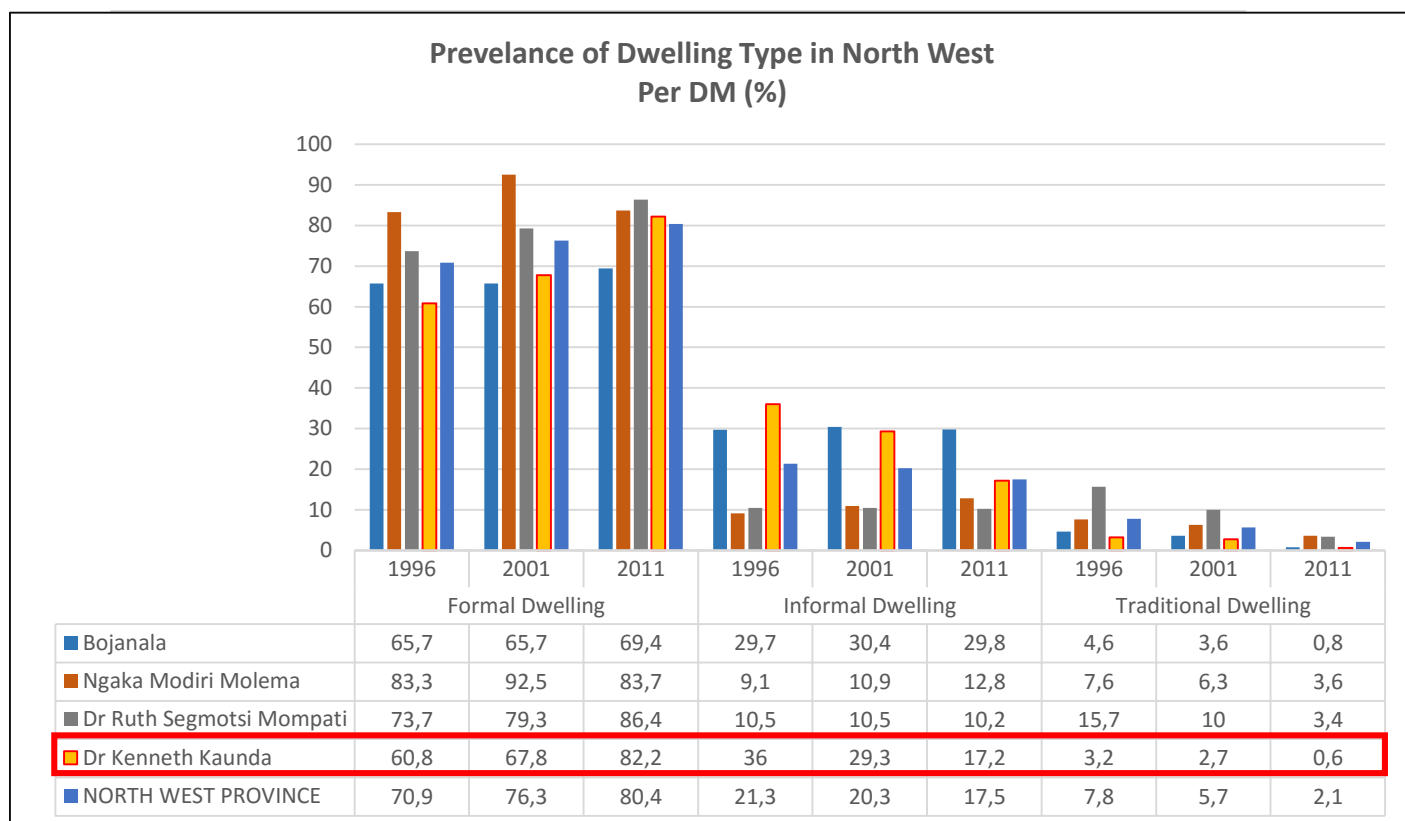
As of the 2011 census, there is an evident dominance of formal housing being the most common dwelling type in relation to the prevalence of informal and traditional dwelling types. Although trend, definitely sees a higher percentage of formal dwelling types, at closer inspection, the Thabo Mofutsanyane Local Municipality (administrator of Vrede and Senekal) has consistently under-performed in relation to other local municipality; with only 77,3% of all dwellings being formal dwellings in comparison to the provincial average of 81,1%. Comparatively, Fezile Dabi (administrator of Vredefort and Parys) has been a steady mid-range performer and demonstrated a progressive increase in the total percentage of formal dwellings in the municipality, with a 20,3% increase between 1996 and 2011. With the exception of 1996, Fezile Dabi has exceeded the provincial average with 72,1% against 66,5% in 2001; and 83,3% against 81,1% in 2011. This is clearly observable in the graph below:



Graph 9: Prevalence of Dwelling Type in the Free State (Census, 2011)

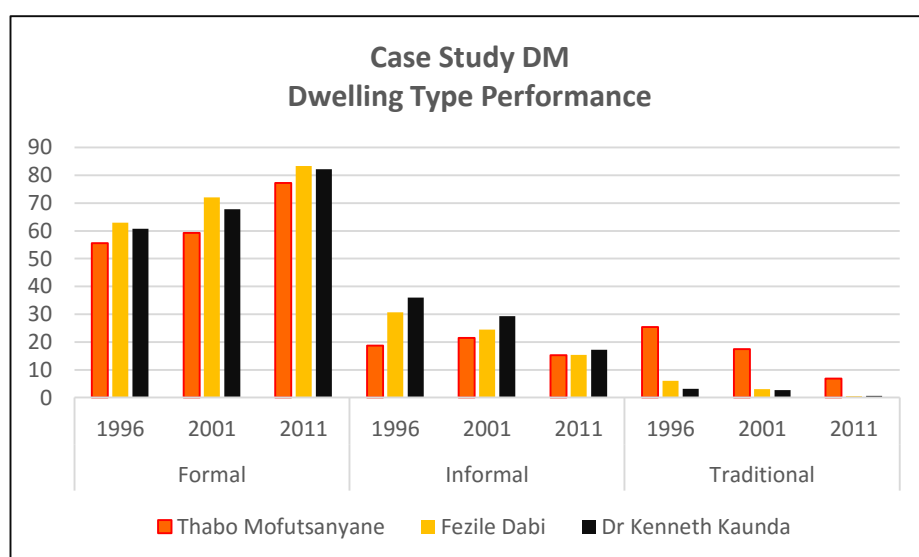
The prevalence of formal dwelling types in the Free State is further supported by the apparent decrease in percentages for informal and traditional dwelling types, with percentages reaching the mid-teens and, near zero-percentile respectively in 2011.

The North West province demonstrates a similar trend, with an unquestionable dominance of formal dwellings as the most prevalent dwelling type in the region. Dr Kenneth Kuanda municipality (administrator of Wolmaransstad) had steadily underperformed in relation to the provincial average, however, it exceeded it in 2011 with 82,2% versus the 80,4% provincial average. Interestingly, the municipality was the lowest performer in prevalence of formal dwellings amongst the other municipalities in 1996, but in 2001, it assumed the position has having the third highest formal dwelling percentage in the province, and had maintained that position in 2011. This once again is demonstrated in the graph below:



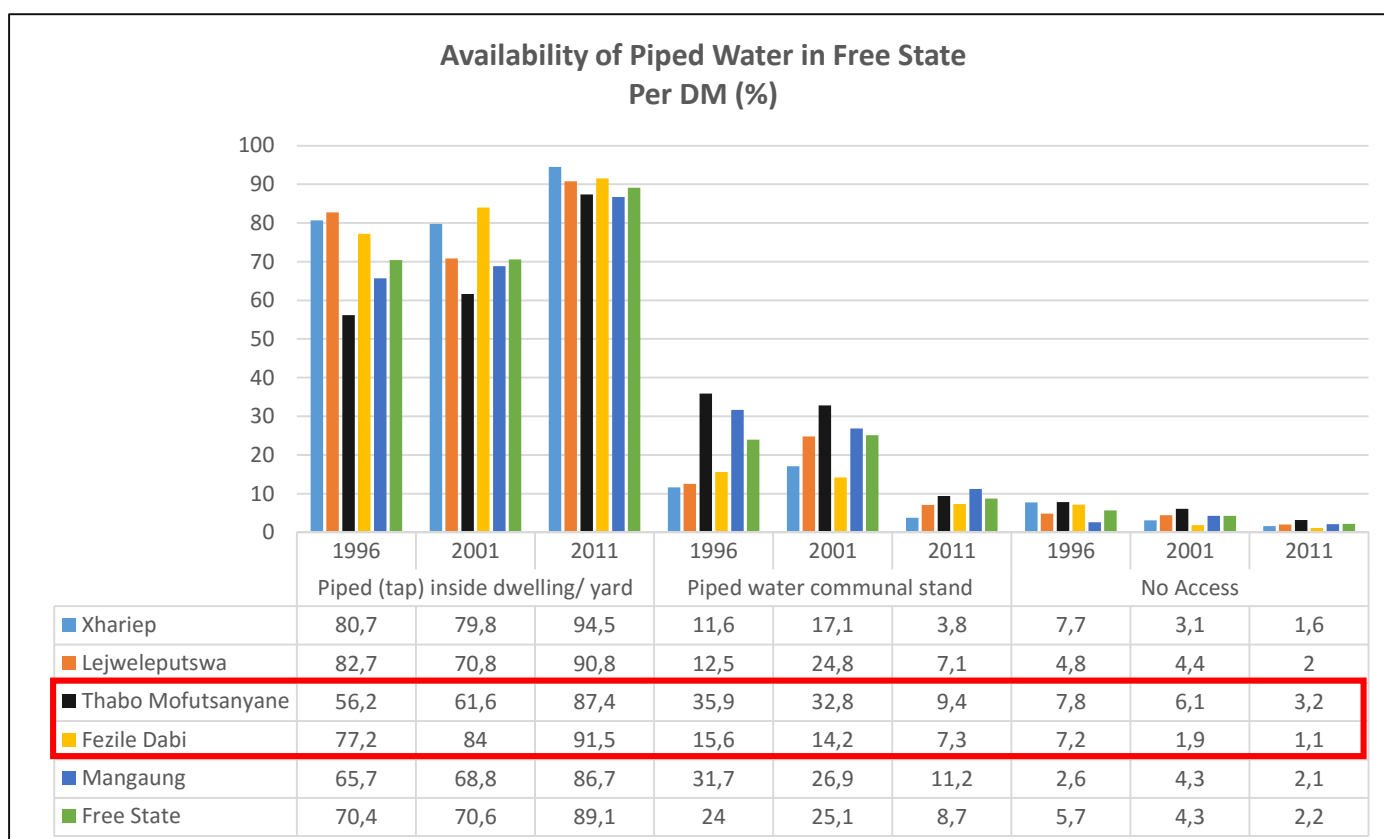
Graph 11: Prevalence of Dwelling Type in the North West (Census, 2011)

Comparatively, amongst only the 3 municipalities which administer the 5 case study towns. Thabo Mofutsenyane is once again the lowest performer in the formal housing category. Then is the Dr Kenneth Kaunda local municipality, and the highest achievement of formal housing amongst the district municipalities of the research sites is Fezile Dabi.



Graph 10: Dwelling Performance between Case Study District Municipalities (adapted from Free State Municipal Report, 2011 and North West Municipal Report 2011)

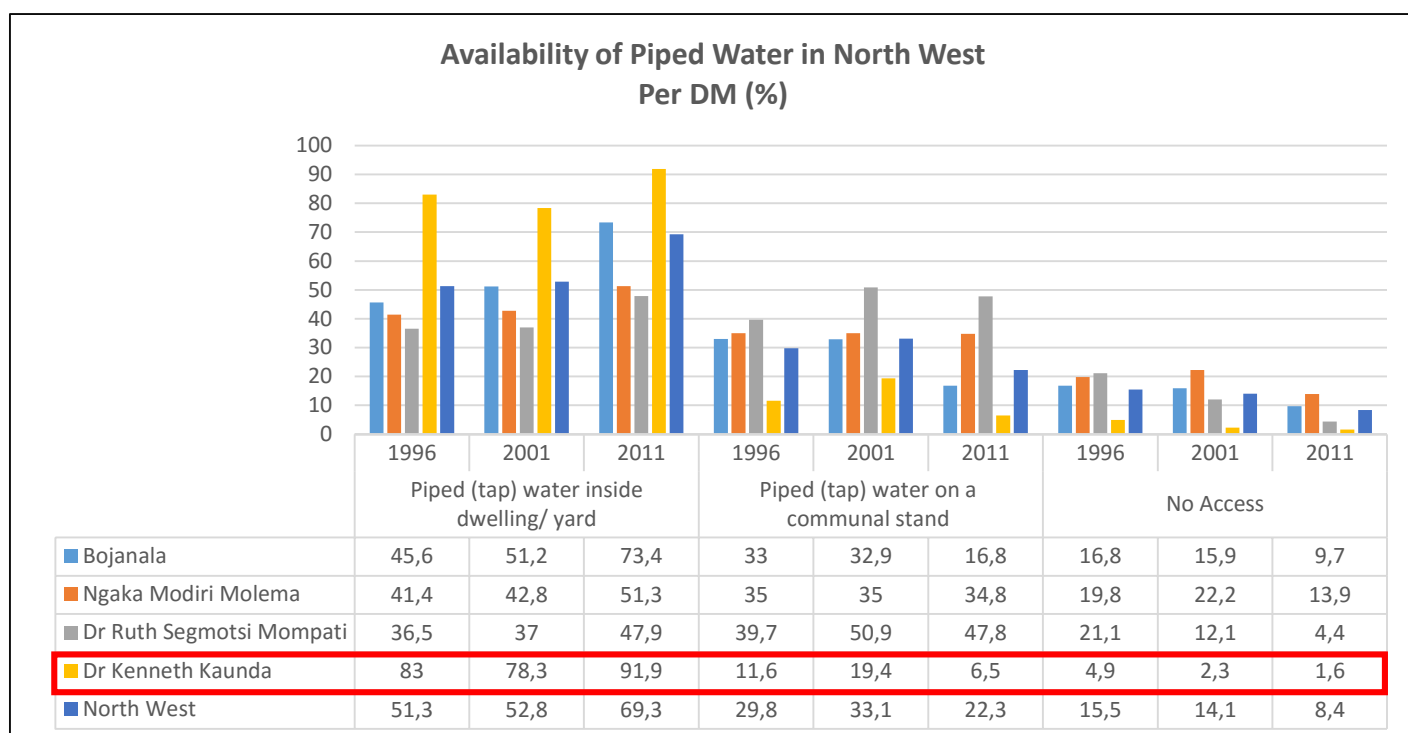
Second we will be looking at the availability of piped water in the Free State. According to the census data, here we also see a higher percentage of piped water to individual households available to residents in the local municipalities when compared to piped water to communal stands, or no access at all.



Graph 12: Availability of Piped Water in the Free State per District Municipality (Free State Provincial Report, 2011)

Thabo Mofutsanyane was once again the lowest performing municipality between 1996 and 2001, but steadily improved by 2011. This is a significant achievement, as in correlation, it had the highest incidence of communal stand water supply and no access to water in 1996 and 2001. Fezile Dabi once again performed well in all three periods, exceeding the provincial average. It was the top performer in the supply of piped water to individual households in the 2001, with an 84% supply rate.

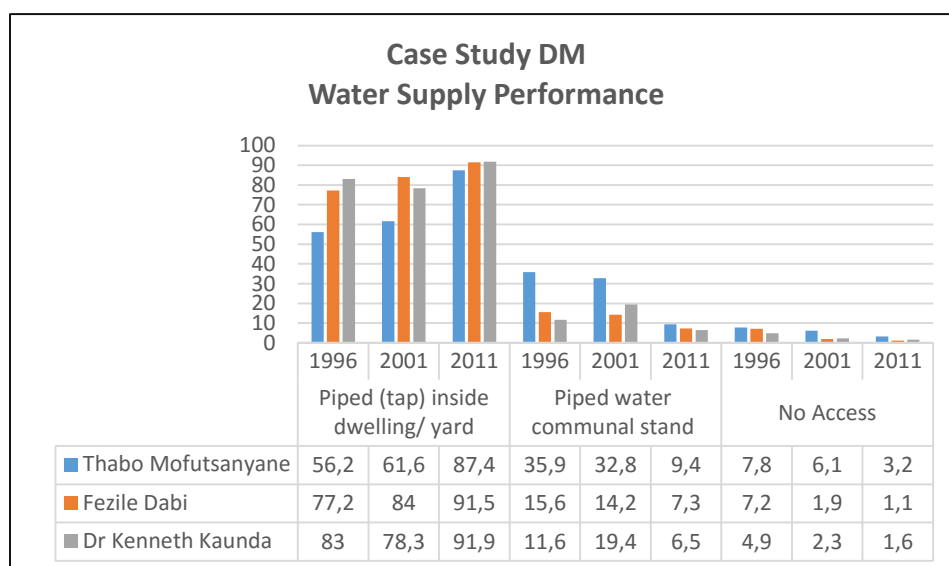
Surprisingly, in the North West, despite having a relatively poor performance in the category of formal housing, Dr Kenneth Kuanda Local Municipality was the highest supplier of piped water inside a dwelling or yard for all three periods; 1996, 2001 and 2011.



Graph 13: Availability of Piped Water in the North West per District Municipality (North West Municipal Report, 2011)

The juxtaposition between the low percentage of formal dwelling structures and the high percentage achievements of supply of tap water inside a dwelling or yard may lead one to question the validity of the data. It is possible, that the stands for the dwelling structures have been laid out and the water infrastructure supplied per stand, however no formal housing had been built on the stands at the time of the census. What this highlights is the independence of the municipality to implement its own methodology in defining the parameters of the provision of the infrastructure or service as well as the measurement of completeness, unless outlined in the constitution or other guiding legislative body such as the Municipal Systems Act.

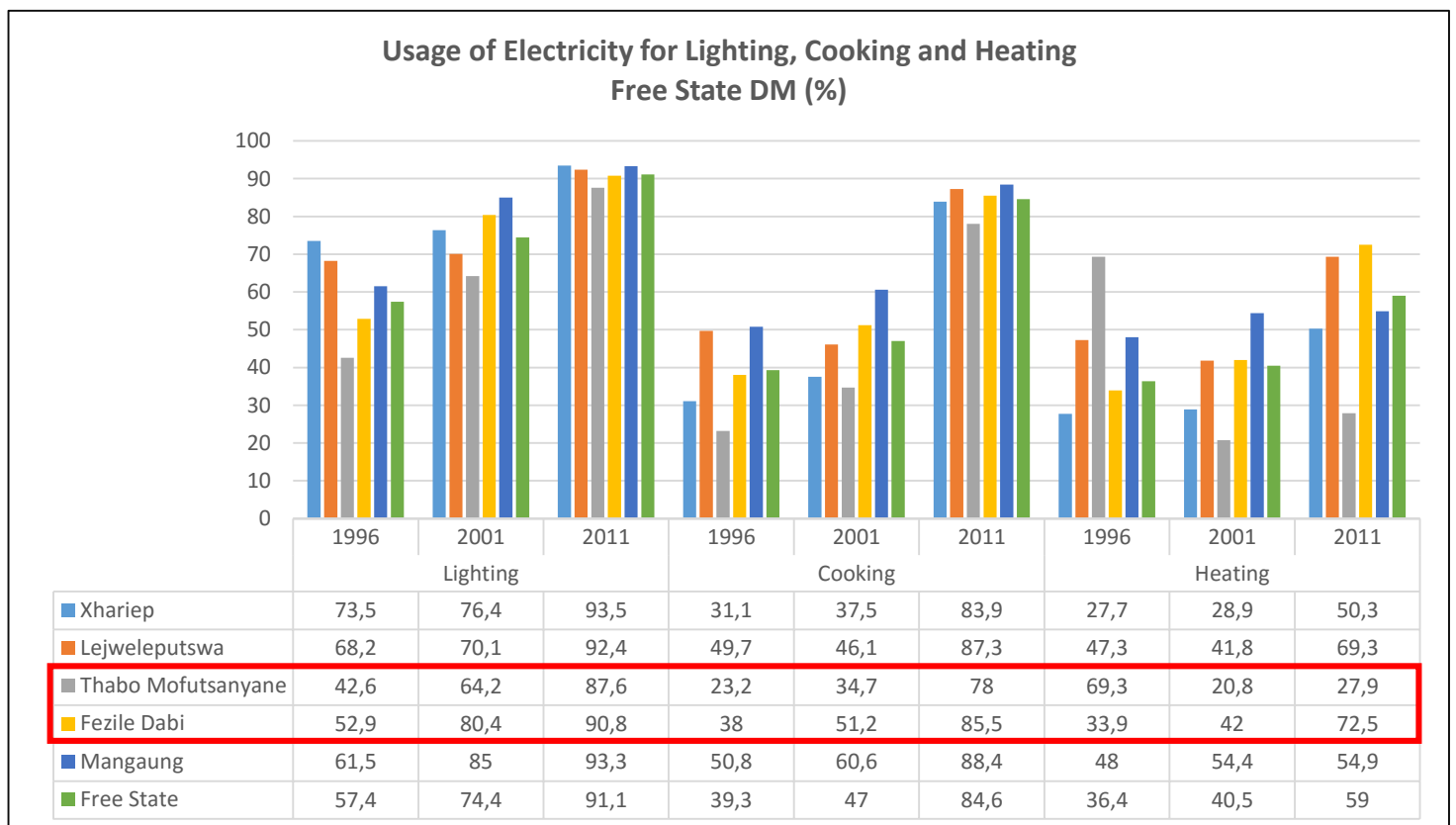
Comparatively, all the case study municipalities fared well in the assessment of piped water, supplying piped water to dwelling or yards to more than 85%. Alarming, a total of about 5,9% of the population in the 3 district municipalities are recorded as not having access to piped water, whether to dwellings or yards or communal taps. This equates to a staggering 40 000 people; at least – who are without access to piped water.



Third is the supply of electricity. This is an interesting statistic as it measures the distribution of usage across lighting, cooking and heating. Whereas the other two services we looked at measured the availability of that service to individuals or individual households. Why this is important is because the statistic assumes that there is a 100% supply of electricity to individuals, which is questionable without proof.

Nevertheless, the performance of Thabo Mofutsanyane and Fezile Dabi remains consistent with the findings of the other two services analysed. Thabo Mofutsanyane was a relatively poorly performing municipality in relation to the other municipalities and the provincial average; with Fezile Dabi once again performing very well. Although, it remained tied or slightly under the provincial average in most sub-percentages; which is a change from the previous trends. Thabo Mofutsanyane had an average of 82% for electricity used for cooking and lighting in 2011, but only 27% of the population used electricity for heating in the same period. Fezile Dabi on the other had had an average of 88,15% of the population confirm they used electricity for cooking and lighting in 2011, whilst 72% of electricity was used for heating in the same period.

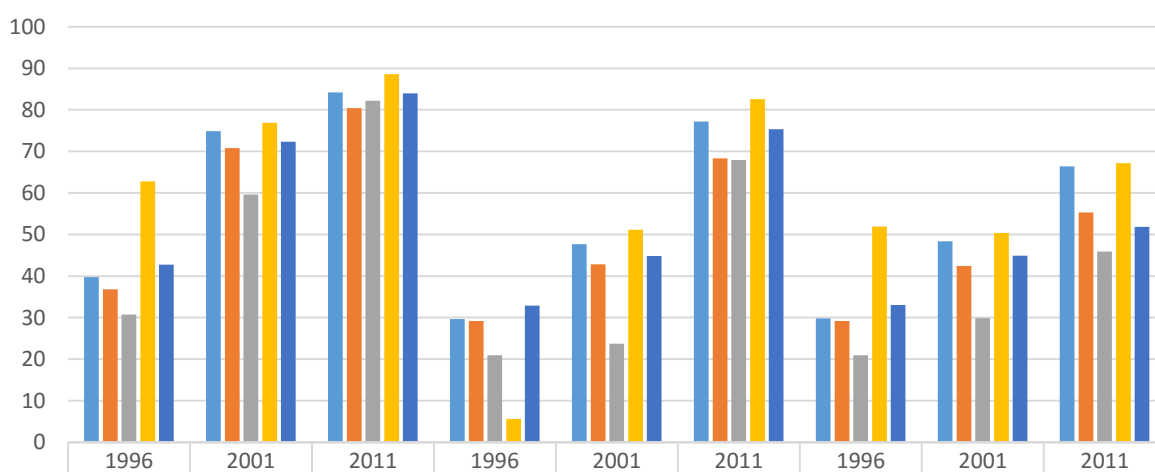
The low percentage of electricity used for heating in the Thabo Mofutsanyane district municipality could be attributed to a number of reasons, amongst them is a prioritisation of funds paid towards electricity for the use of lighting and cooking; alternatively, the population may favour alternative heating sources such as fossil fuels like coal, wood or gas. Also likely is an inconsistent or unreliable electrical supply and an emphasis on maintaining grid integrity; therefore, users would be encouraged users to make use of alternative heating sources and prioritise electricity usage. The statistic as it presented in the Free State Municipal report does not discuss the reasons behind this trend. However, the interpretation of the data reveals something quite interesting about the way



of life or urbanism of people living in Thabo Mofutsanyane, Fezile Dabi and other districts in the Free State.

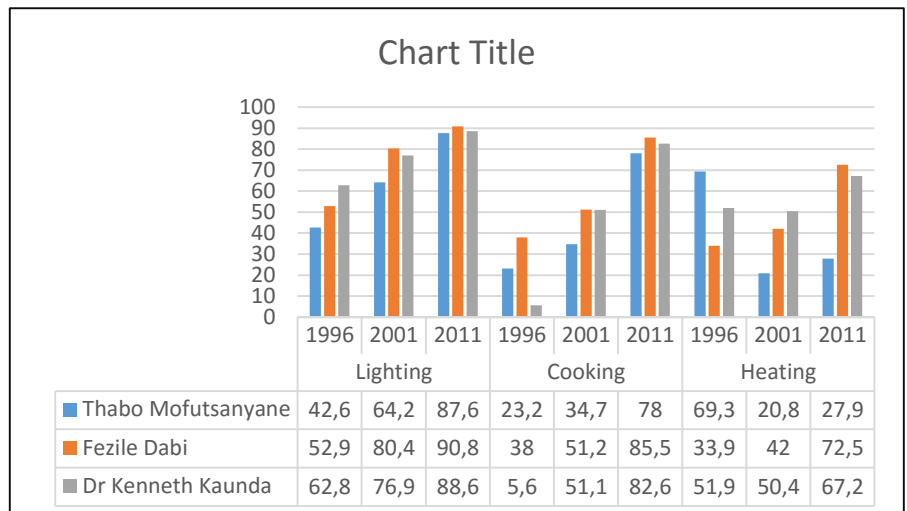
Dr Kennet Kuanda District Municipality once again performed very well, having the highest percentage for electricity use for cooking lighting and interestingly enough, heating. This high rate of electricity usage, is likely linked to a strong supply over the periods, which is highly probably given the large coal mining industry in the province. Although, the use of electricity for heating is marginally lower than the other uses, and a similar trend can be seen all other districts in the province in 2011. This is indicative of a prioritisation of the heating resources and or a preference for alternative heating sources, to reiterate: coal, wood or gas.

**Usage of Electricity for Lighting, Cooking and Heating
North West DM (%)**



	1996	2001	2011	1996	2001	2011	1996	2001	2011
	Lighting			Cooking			Heating		
Bojanala	39,7	74,9	84,2	29,6	47,7	77,2	29,8	48,4	66,4
Ngaka Modiri Molema	36,8	70,8	80,4	29,2	42,8	68,3	29,2	42,4	55,3
Dr Ruth Segmotsi Mompoti	30,7	59,6	82,2	20,9	23,7	67,9	20,9	29,9	45,9
Dr Kenneth Kaunda	62,8	76,9	88,6	5,6	51,1	82,6	51,9	50,4	67,2
North West	42,7	72,3	84	32,9	44,8	75,3	33	44,9	51,8

At a case study level, we see Fezile Dabi leading, with the highest percentages in all three uses, closely followed by Dr Kenneth Kuanda and lastly, the worst performing district municipality in the

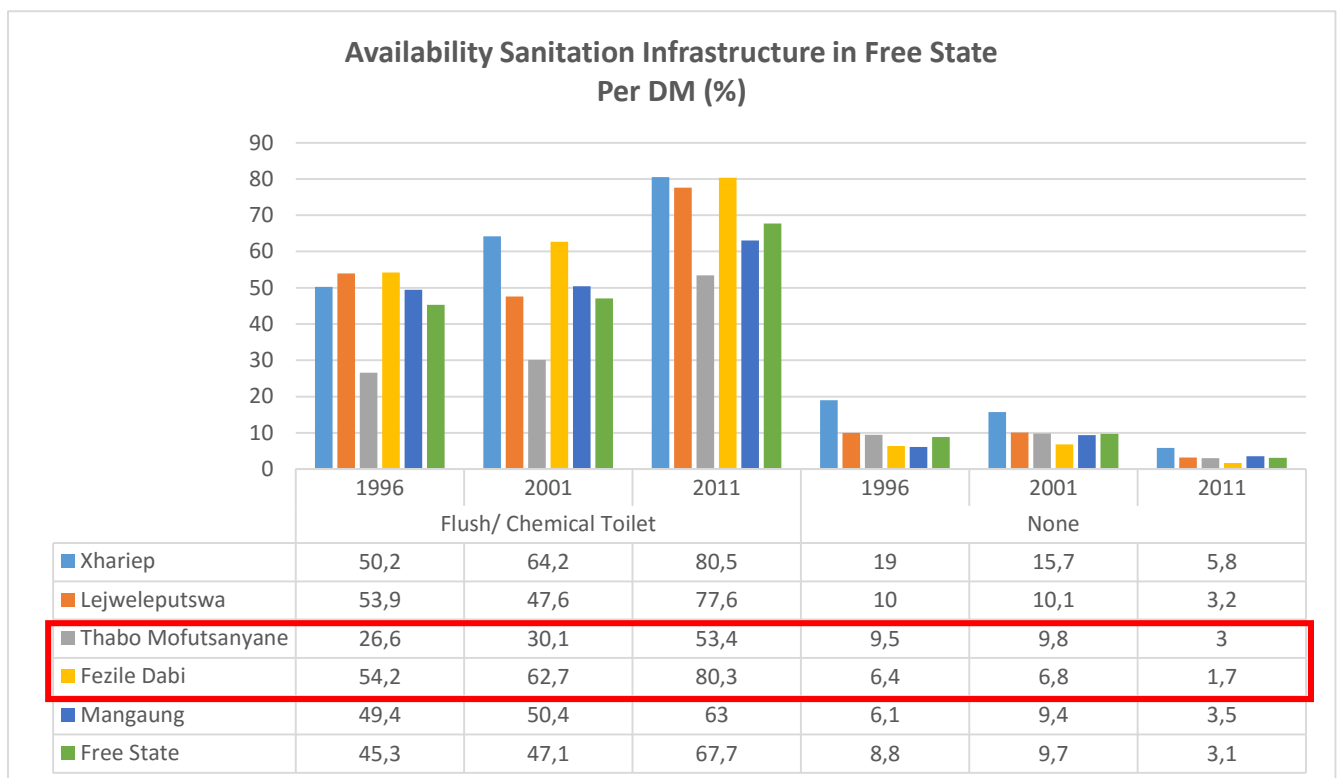


case study is Thabo Mofutsanyane. Two very interesting occurrences with the districts is first, the dramatic increase in the use electricity for cooking in the Dr Kenneth Kuanda district between 1996 and 2011. Also interesting is the sharp and dramatic decrease of electricity used for heating in the Thabo Mofutsanyane district municipality. These changes in trend direction are an interesting contrast to the consistent increase in usage with the probable increase in supply of electricity in the Fezile Dabi district municipality.

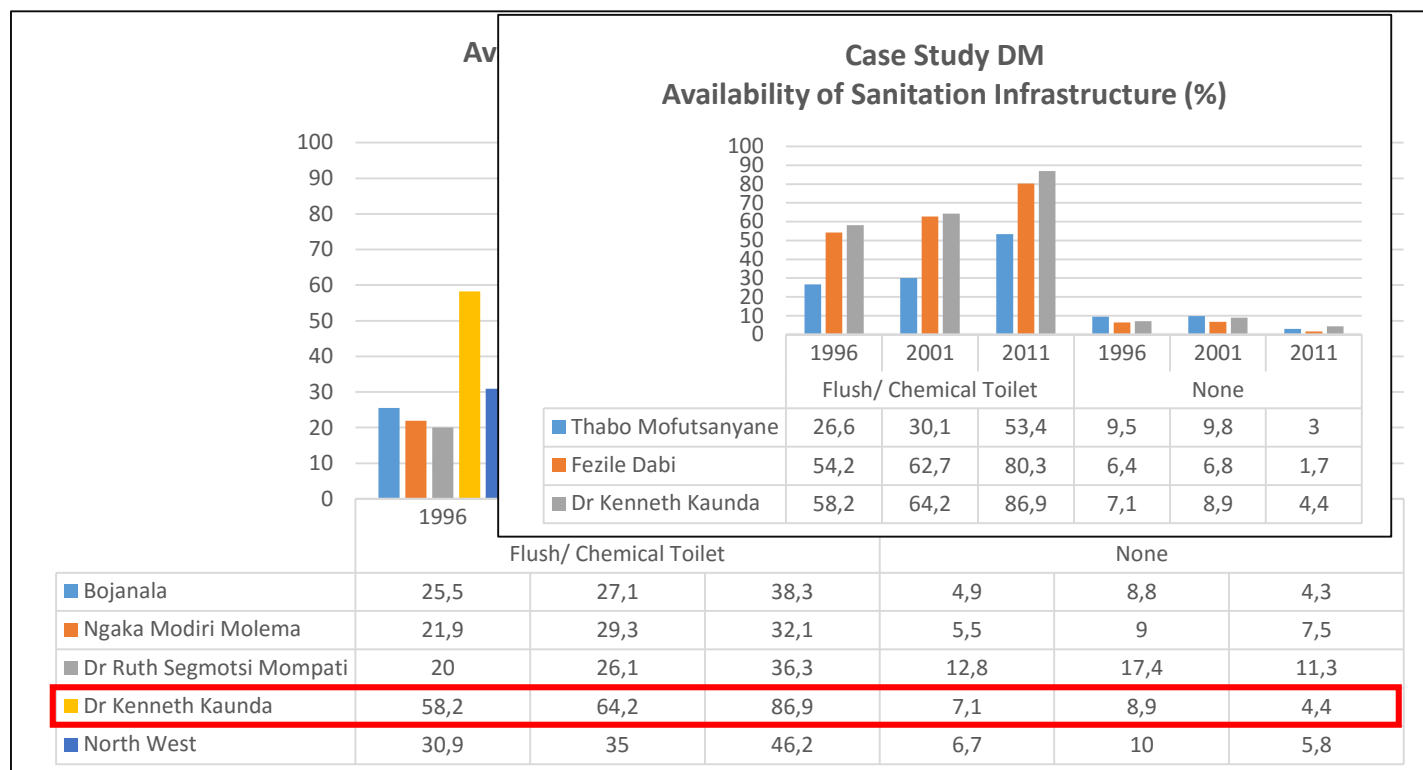
Now, the penultimate item in the discussion of service deliver, the availability of sanitation infrastructure, also known as toilets. The statistics available in the Free State Municipal Report are once again interesting, as, they only look at two forms of sanitation, that being, firstly chemical toilets or flush toilets and secondly 'none'. The assumption which arises, is that there is only one option for sanitation, and that is a flush toilet. This dichotomy, presents a bit of a challenge when trying to unpack the living standard or way of life for people in the Free State; as when we look at the graph, we may not pay attention to the percentages provided, but rather the categories – assuming only two options exist. However, at closer inspection, we will find that the percentages between flush-toilets and none, if added up do not equal 100% as it should, therefore, we can assume that some data, particularly around alternative sanitation options is missing or has been omitted.

Despite this we will continue with the analysis. Unsurprisingly, in the Free State, the Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality is once again the poorest performing

municipality; with only 53,4% of households or the population as being equipped with a flush toilet. The data records only 3% of the population as having access to no sanitation infrastructure. This means that there is a possible 44% of people, whose sanitation data is not represented. Fezile Dabi is once again amongst the best performers in the province; in all census periods exceeded the provincial average, as well as having the lowest rate of 'no access' to sanitation infrastructure with only 1,7%.

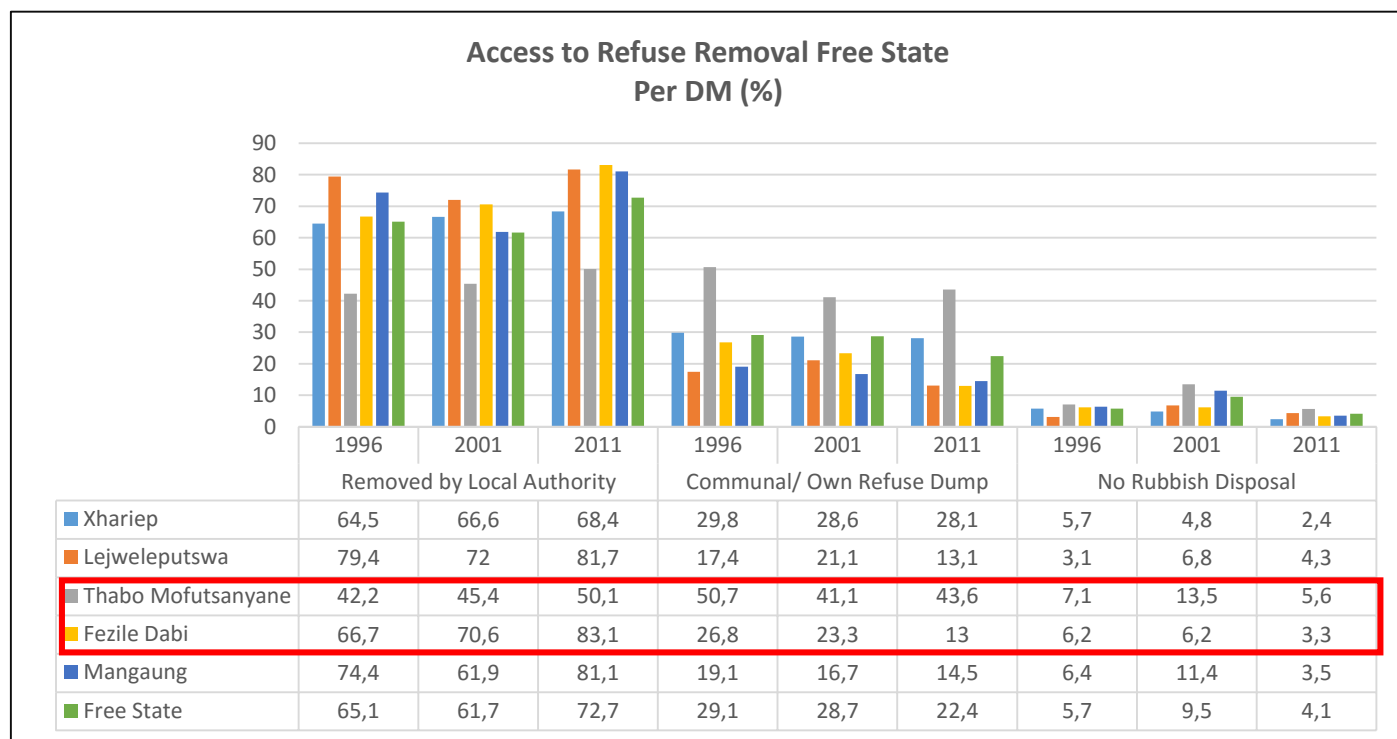


Upon looking at the same data for the North West, we find that Kennet Kuanda is the highest performer amongst the other districts in the province; with extremely significant higher percentages of persons with access to a flush toilet.



comparatively, within the case study districts we see a steady and positive incline towards increased access to flush toilets. However, to reiterate although the trend is positive, the information depicted is only partial, leaving out some very important detail. In 2011, only about 53% of people in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District had access to flush toilets, meaning that the remaining half of the population will be using alternatives the flush toilet. By 2011, 80% of Fezile Dabi had access to flush toilets, and in the same period 86% of Kenneth Kuanda had access to flush toilets.

Lastly, the concluding element of the service delivery discussion, refuse removal. By 2011, 72% of the Free State had access to refuse removal as provided by the local authority.

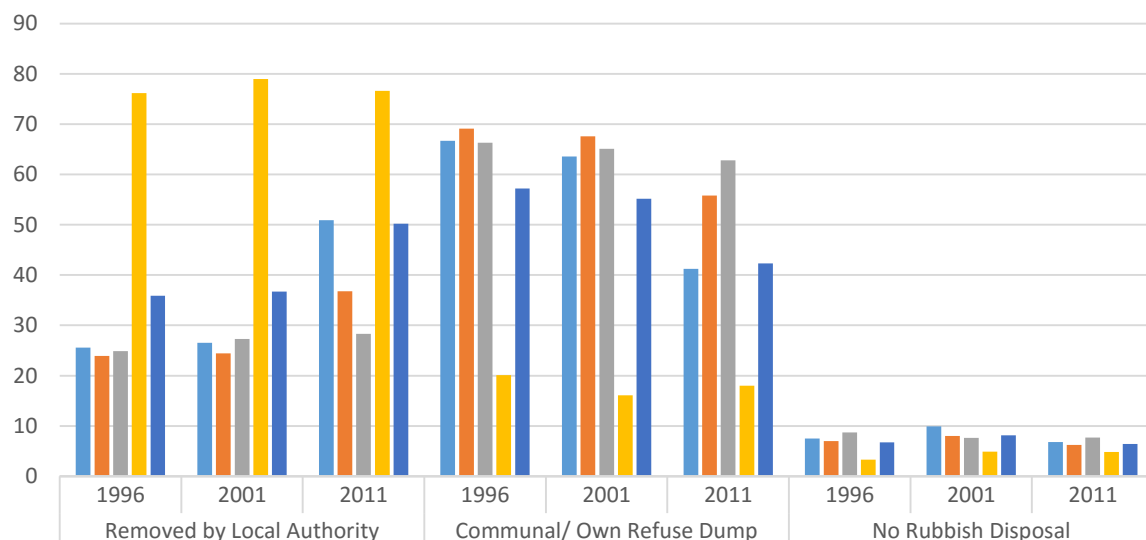


Yet again, Fezile Dabi was the best performing district municipality, and Thabo Mofutsanyane was the worst. Moreover, the increase in the service appears to have steadily improved between 1996, 2001 and 2011 in Fezile Dabi; in contrast to very small 2,4% and 4,6% move between 1996 and 2001; and 2001 and 2011 of the Thabo Mofutsanyane district. Importantly, Communal or Own Refuse Dump, took a massive 10,7 percentile drop in Fezile Dabi between 2001 and 2011. This being the largest decrease in the statistic, followed by Lejweleputswa, with a roughly 8% decrease in the same category between 2001 and 2011. Incidentally, Thabo Mofutsanyane saw a 2,3% increase in communal or won refuse dumping between 2001 and 2011.

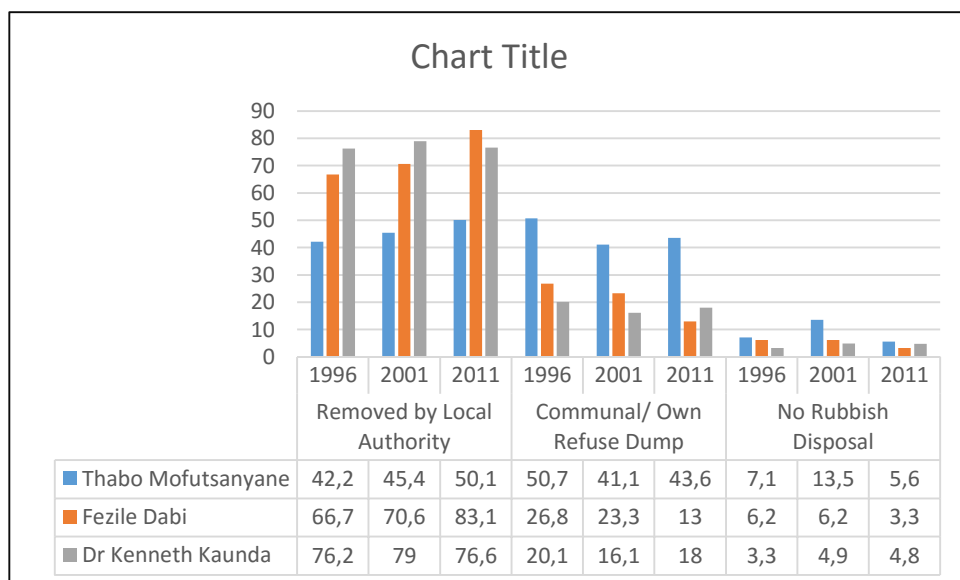
Dr Kenneth Kuanda was the highest performer in this category once again. However, what is particularly alarming is that the district leads the provincial average by more than 40 percentile points, with the average being 35.9% of the districts having a their refuse removed by the local authority; in comparison the 79% of the Kenneth Kuanda district

having their refuse removed by the local authority in 2001. It appears that in the same period the districts conduct the majority of their refuse dumping by themselves. We do however see an overall improvement in the province with an increase in refuse collection by the local authority in 2011; however, whilst everyone else experienced an improvement in the services, Kenneth Kuanda experience a 2,4% drop in the service and a 1,9% increase in own dumping.

**Access to Refuse Removal North West
Per DM (%)**



Overall, Thabo Mofutsanyane has seen little progress in the way of improving refuse collection services, as provided by the local authority. Fezile Dabi has showed steady improvement,

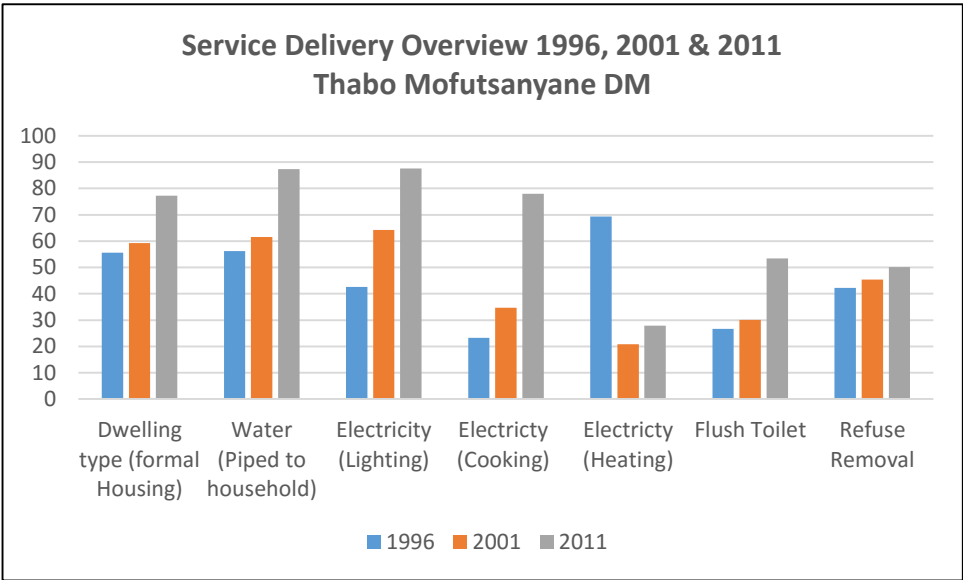


which is in line with the overall improvement we have seen in that district across all elemetns of the service delivery. Dr Kenneth Kuanda experienced a surprising and unexpected decline in services between 2001 and 2011; considering it has maintained

a steady growth and service delivery improvements across all other service delivery components.

In summary, let's have a quick look at how each of the individual case study districts progressed over the years with their overall service delivery.

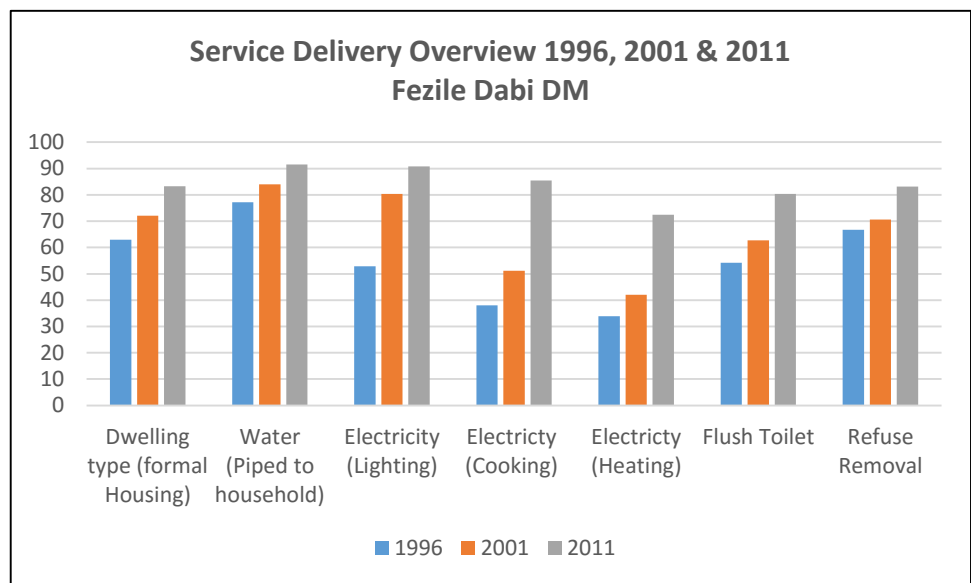
Overall, the Thabo Mofutsanyane District has seen an overall positive improvement in the delivery of services to customers. There appears to be quite a large jump in the supply and or use of services between 2001 and 2011, especially in the use of electricity for cooking; and the availability of flush toilets; although this number, along with refuse removal remains at only 50%; meaning that about only 50% of residents are receiving these basic services.



Graph 14: Thabo Mofutsanyane Service Delivery Over 1996, 2001 & 2011

That very sharp decrease in the use of electricity for heating in comparison to the sharp rise in the use of electricity for cooking could suggest a shift in the individual's prioritisation of resources on a communal scale. This is quite inexplicable and can provide tremendous insight into the particular culture of the area if there was an opportunity to engage with more local residents and investigate why they believe there has been this change.

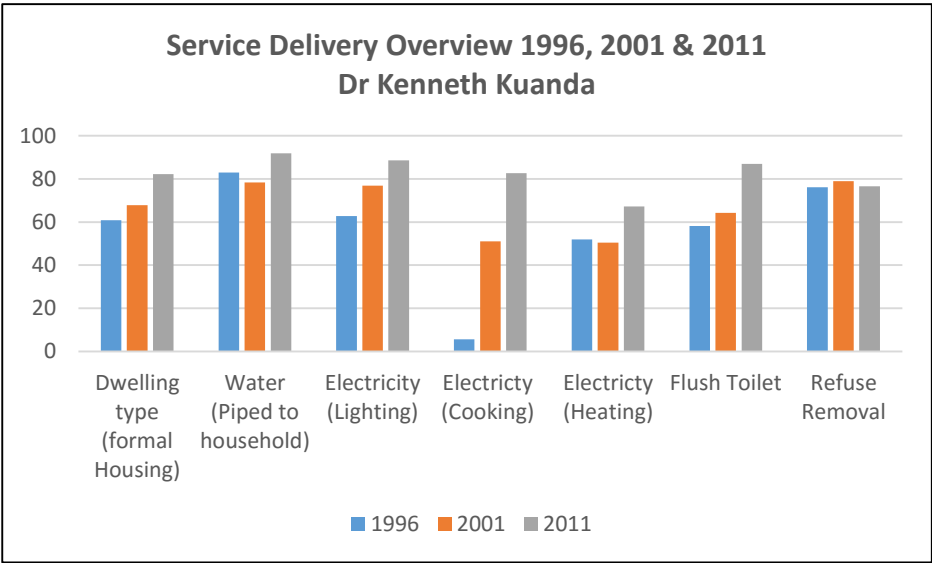
Fezile Dabi District has also seen a consistent, albeit slow progress in the expansion and improvement of the delivery of basic services in the district. Most



noticeably, the use of electricity for cooking and heating had the most significant spike between 2001 and 2011 suggesting that there was an overall improvement in electrical infrastructure as well as an improvement in the security of supply, allowing users to use the resource for more activities. Although the Free State Provincial Spatial Development Frame Work, Phase 2 Report acknowledges this change increase in the usage of electricity as well as the fact that Thabo Mufusanyane is the poorest performing district, it does not provide an explanation, nor a remedy (at least not in this documents) for how this can or will be corrected (see FSSDF Phase 2 Report, 2013).

The document did however touch on an interesting topic. It noted that whilst the availability of flush toilets is a generally positive infrastructural improvement, the municipality cannot keep up with the supply of bulk infrastructure such as treatment plants to accommodate the increased capacity of flush toilets. It would be interesting to investigate the relationship between bulk infrastructure and the ability of municipalities to continue to improve service delivery in order to gain an understanding of how that relationship, amongst others are translated in to service delivery evaluations and experience of the end-user or customer; i.e. the people.

Last, but certainly not least is the Dr Kenneth Kuanda District in the Northern Cape. Despite some apparent development



Graph 15: Dr Kenneth Kuanda Service Delivery Overview 1996, 2001 and 2011

challenges in the

way of formal dwelling type, the district out performed its neighbours in all remaining service delivery areas. It has demonstrated a stead and consistent improvement in the supply and usage of services. The sharp increase in the usage of electricity for cooking between 1996 and 2011 is of particular interest, but no further data can be located on the matter. Also interesting is the particularly sharp rise in the availability of flush toilets in the district, and once again it would be interesting to evaluate the relationship between improved service delivery and the supply of bulk services to the region. A worrying feature of the district’s performance is the small decrease in refuse removal as conducted by the local author, especially as this was one of the best performing services in 1996 and 2001.

One of the challenges with the high level statistical data, whilst valuable is the lack of context and depth. For example, data on the services show only the total provision or access to the services, it does not provide information on the quality of the service. For example, electrical infrastructure can be supplied to all household, formal, informal and traditional – however that does not mean that there is a stable and continuous electrical supply. Or, in the case of water supply, if 92*% of households have access to tap water, this is definitely a developmental achievement, however, if the water is unsafe to consume without boiling then it defeats the purpose. Throughout the research, but particularly in Parys, we were discouraged by local residents to drink the tap water; not that we would have wanted to. When we put water in a clear glass, you could see the water was brown, and murky. In Wolmarranstad, the tap water is also undrinkable, as it comes out of the tap milky, with a cloudy white foam. I was told it was the excess lime in the water, which is used to treat water for drinking purposes, but there is some concern as the high content of lime in the water.

When asked about the services in the town, and the municipalities understanding of the needs of the town in reference to the assumption, this is what some of the participants offered in response.

Isabel from Parys, said:

“The municipality doesn’t understand the needs of this town. If you look at this street, it’s a tourist street, but just look at what it looks like; they can really upgrade them. [Or look] at the grass at the waterfront has been cut only once this whole season....we had a long problem with not having street lights and they came and fixed the lights, but if it goes off then you have a really long problem before they come back and fix

it again...there are some big problem areas. What makes me nervous is that the municipality says they are so far behind paying Eskom; I buy the electricity and put it in, but they can still put it off because the municipality hasn't been paying. (Isabel, 2017)

Liegh-Anne from Senekal had this to say:

"...the municipality certainly does not cater to the needs of this town. There were trains here many years ago but there is no public investment in this town, no public transport network that connects this town to other towns, if you didn't have a car, you would have to rely on a taxi that comes from out of town to get to the next town or Johannesburg... We had quite a big problem with water recently so they started an organisation, called 'Senakel Water', so people are getting more involved. For example, the dam was completely empty for a long time and everyone kept an eye on the municipality in the hope that the municipality would do something but not much happened. So now people are getting more interested in the town, here and there people are fixing their roads in front of their houses, keeping the streets clean, taking care of the business, or property in town, updating and renovating, in the last few years that has really picked up." (Liegh-Anne, 2017).

For Doc and Shameem in Wolmarranstad, they also felt that the municipality was ineffective in catering for the needs and meeting the infrastructure demands of the town. They attributed this to two causes, the first being mismanagement of resources, and the second being the lack of revenue for the municipality. They went on further to explain that much of the services are rather unequally distributed, saying in reference to the provision of services: "If you take the local population, the whites are very stable, the

Indians are moderately stable, it's just the blacks that aren't very stable..." (Doc and Shameem, 2017)

However, it appears that some municipalities aren't without some respite, particularly Ngwathe from Fezile Dabi District as Isabel went on to comment: *"I think they are trying their best... They are quick to respond to a burst water pipe and robot maintenance"* (Isabel, 2017).

As a bonus in terms of service delivery, we will very briefly look at the health facilities in the Free State. In terms of public health facilities, the Free State has a total of 236 clinics,

13 community Health Centres, 25 District host, 5 Regional Hospitals and 3 specialised hospitals. All in all, there are about 4868 serviceable beds in the province which equates to 2.1 public sector beds per 1000 population, compared to 2.4 beds per 1000 population nationally; and the

Health Facilities	Number of Facilities
Clinics	236
Community Health Centre	13
Mobile Services	99
District Hospitals	25
Regional Hospitals	5
Central Hospitals	1
Specialised Hospital	3
Private Hospital	15
Total Public Health Facility Beds	4868

recommended 5 beds per 1000 population according to the World Health Organisation standard (FSSDF Phase 2 Report, 2013). Of the five case study towns, all of them had a health facility. Senekal and Vrede both had provincial hospitals, Parys had a district hospital and The Nic Bodenstein Hospital in Wolmaransstad, which was previously a teaching hospital in the district. Only Vrede, had a health centre, and no other facilities. For one participant, Abdu-Samid, a Wolmaranstad expat, the discussion about the hospital held some pretty painful memories, he narrated:

“When my brother got sick, before he died I took him to the hospital at Wollies that was the first time in my life when I wheeled him in to the hospital that I went through the main entrance. It was the first time in my life I went through the front entrance of the hospital. When they told me to take a seat, I was so angry, because I wanted to tell them I was born in this hospital, raised right here in this town, and yet this was my first time walking in through the main entrance. Up until then it was always through the back doors, just like they did with the blacks, the Indians also had to use the back doors to stop us mixing with the whites. After a long time that came to an end and then it was okay for everyone to be together and to mix, up and until then I don’t even know why they segregated us and why they didn’t want us people of all colours to mix with one another.”

Another Wolmaransstad expat, when asked if he would recommend Wolmaransstad as a place to live commented, “They also don’t have a fully functional hospital so if you were elderly or a sickly person you would have to go to Klerksdorp.” (Rashid, 2017)

In Parys, although there is a district hospital, when asked what would improve the living standard of the town, Isabel said:

“You know what is lacking in Parys is a hospital. Although there is a hospital, but people who are on medical aid cannot go there, they have to go to Potch. A small hospital would be great.”

From the moment I had conducted the interview; I have thought about it. At first I was inclined to think that perhaps the hospital did discourage medical aid members from

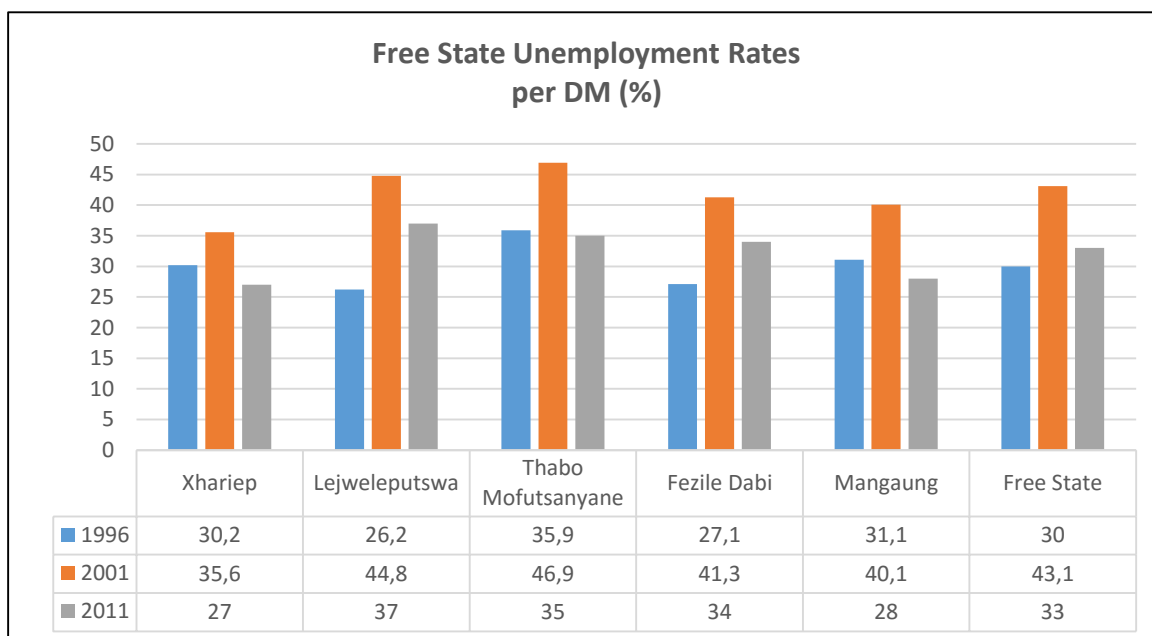
using the facility as there may be limited resources. However, I wonder now if it isn't a case of 'not wanting' to use the facility as appose to 'can't' use the facility. Of course urbanism is very much about choice, but this particular choice is one that impacts the overall experience of the town.

In what ways does the economy of small towns impact the perception of urbanism?

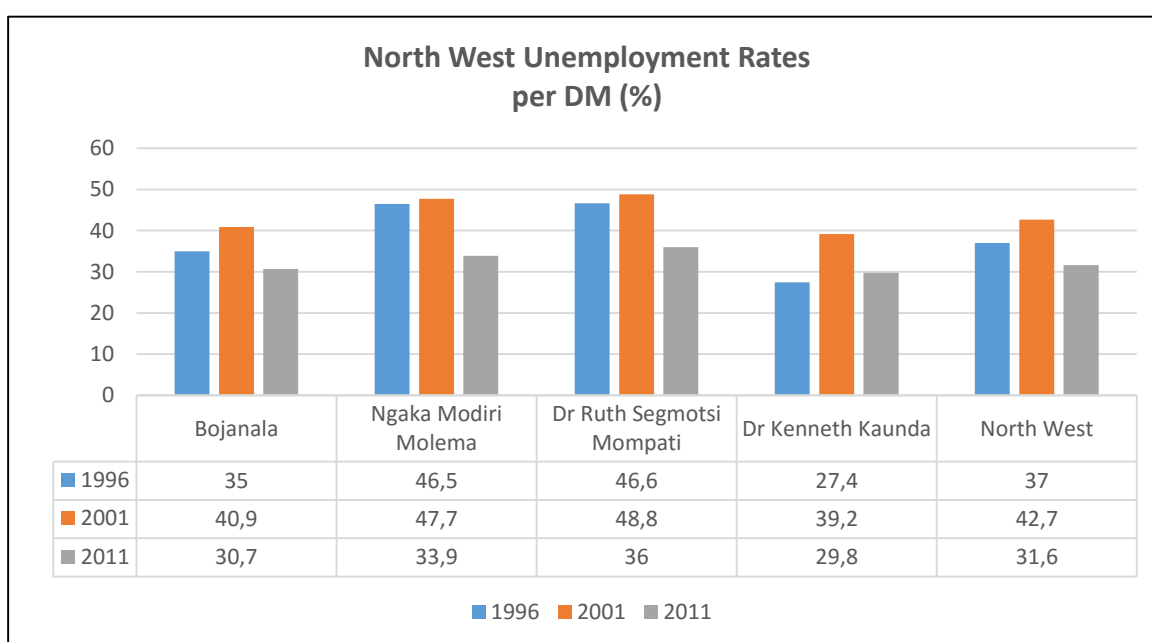
Moving on, strongly linked to economic performance and opportunities is poverty and unemployment. It is difficult to ascertain which the precursor to the other is. Is it that unemployment leads to a declining economy which leads to poverty; or is it a declining economy which leads to unemployment and then poverty? Some very lengthy and detailed studies have been conducted into the economy and poverty levels of small towns with a large number of empirical works forming the basis of the majority small town literature (see: Donaldson and Marais 2012; Gibb and Nel 2007; CDS 2010; Halseth and Meiklejohn 2009; Spocter 2012; Ingle 2012; Van Niekerk and Marais 2008; Toerien 2012; Donaldson and Vermeulen; 2012; Van Rooy and Marais 2012; Van Rooyen 2012).

At a district level for the Free State, unemployment seems quite consistent amongst all the districts with between 27% and 35% of the population facing unemployment in 2011. In the North West, unemployment percentages are closer in relation to each other and range between 29% and 36% unemployment for the same period. Both provinces experienced a decline in their unemployment rate between 1996 and 2011. However, with an average of about 35% unemployment in both is an extremely high percentage for any country to face; and could be indicative of severe economic challenges. Having said that, the decrease in unemployment within the provinces; although still relatively high, does provide grounds which contradict the statement that suggest small towns are likely to have a stagnant or declining economy. Moreover, a change in the trend over the last three decades, coincides with a change in the academic approach towards small towns; only further entrenching the need for continued research in the field. Further to this point is the need for more frequent and locality specific census data with small intervals in order to better and more accurately track economic and social condition.

Whilst working with the census data is relatively reliable, after seven years we can start questioning how representative the data is.



Graph 17: Free State unemployment rate per district Municipality (%) (Free State Municipal Report, 2011)

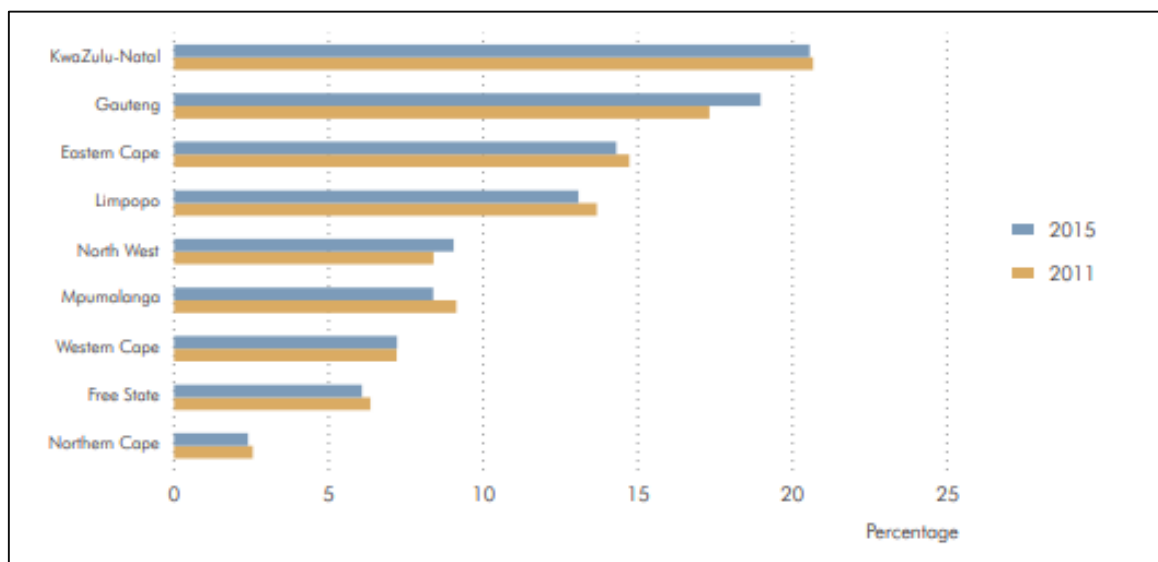


Graph 16: North West unemployment per district municipality (%) (North West Municipal Report, 2011)

An extremely complex element of this assumption is the prevalence of poverty. In 2012, Stats SA published South Africa's first official national poverty lines, which were developed through a rigorous and lengthy consultation with stakeholders, experts and related discussions. The internationally recognised cost-of-basic-needs approach was

adopted and from it, three poverty lines were produced. These lines capture the different poverty degrees, namely: Food Poverty Line (FPL); Lower-Bound Poverty Line (LBPL) and Upper-Bound Poverty Line (UBPL). The report found that rural households accounted for at least 51% of households affected by poverty, and black South African possessed a 90% share in the overall poverty assessment in South Africa. The report also found that as at 2015; an estimated 6,7 million households in South Africa were living below the UBPL; which had increased from 5,6 million households in 2011. Moreover, female headed households were placed at a greater risk of facing poverty as opposed to male headed households. Lastly, the report found that some 70,0% of households headed by individuals with no education were in poverty compared to less than 7,0% of households headed by individuals with a higher degree.

These findings are recorded at a national level, and it is difficult to compare the national average with provincial records. From this then, the general experience of poverty is that has increased, which allows us to assume that the Free State should be experiencing a similar trend. However at closer inspection (see graph below) – the Free State does appear to have experienced a slight decline in poverty rates between 2011 and 2015.



Graph 18: Poverty rates per province, (StatsSA, 2017, 88)

This simply reinforcement the importance of paying attention to the scale of the information which is being dealt with as it affects the hypothesis which are produced based on its interpretation.

We began by wanting to answer a simple question, *what is a small town?* Almost immediately, we were introduced to the idea that the question isn't so much what a small towns is, but rather what makes a small town. In essence this entire thesis is about trying to uncover what is a small town. At first approach the making of a small town is tied very much to the physical realm, which prompted the need for a spatial analysis. Also tied into that, were two of the seven assumptions, which very aptly linked to the broader questions. These assumptions, (1) *small towns are likely to have a declining population* and (2) *small towns have generally poor service delivery and infrastructure*; were deconstructed and addressed in great detail. The findings suggest, that although these are strong contributors to the making of a small town, individually they do not adequately capture the complexities in the lived experience of small towns; and needless to say some very probing questions can be asked regarding the strength of the method used in both gathering and interpreting the data. What very easily come from this approach are a series of sweeping statements, such as the assumptions, which when interrogated don't hold up as substantial representations of small towns. That isn't to say that the assumptions are completely incorrect, as it is highly probable, that many towns are struggling with a declining population and poor service delivery; but that does not retract from the fact that we must maintain an objective focus and be aware how accurate our interpretation and representation of spaces are; and subsequently how appropriate is our approach to remedy the situation. So, in understanding the function of elements such as population size, service delivery and infrastructure in the making of a small towns, to reiterate they do have a function in providing an idea of the needs of small towns, but how we model those needs requires some revision. A model was suggested for this very purpose. As we come to a close on this particular question, we still don't have a complete

sense of what makes a small towns, so this question was posed to the participants in the following form:

“If you had to describe your town to an outsider, how would you describe it?”

All the participants described their towns in a variation of small and peaceful. When probed to explain how their town is different from large cities, they often made use of lifestyle examples such as living costs, traffic and overall quality of life. For example Wing from Vrede compared her home city in China with Vrede as:

“There is a huge difference between Vrede and Fuzhou. Fuzhou is a big modern city full of culture and history. There is at least 4 to 5 million people in that city, here there is only about 1000.” (Wing, 2017).

Isabel, who retired to Parys from Johannesburg explained that for her, the most notable difference between a city and a small town is the traffic:

“The biggest difference is the traveling. From point A to Point B wherever you want to go. If I want to go visit my brother from Sandton to Northcliffe. It takes sometimes 45 minutes. From here it takes the same time. The biggest problem is the traffic (in Johannesburg). Then the biggest thing is the tranquillity and the peace...” (Isabel, 2017).

Jiang from Wolmaransstad described Wolmaransstad in comparison to his home town in terms of architectural aesthetics, as follows:

“My city in China was very beautiful and it was more modern. Here the buildings are very small there is only maybe two floors, but in China the buildings are bigger and higher.” (Jiang, 2017)

Interestingly, the expats generally responded to this question through comparisons rather than an emotively. They would go through a list of things that their home- towns

didn't have, or didn't have enough of and compare it to Johannesburg. From an observational bases, I found them to be quite bewildered by this question – almost in a 'but you know the differences' kind of way. Perhaps the bewilderment came from the idea that I am familiar with both small town spaces and the large city and a description almost seems obvious.

Also of interest, is that the participants, of their own accord and based on their own reflections touched on population size, building typology and transport. All of which are considered important elements which contribute to the definition of small town, and all of which must be viewed in relation to each other to develop a holistic and balanced view of small towns.

Interestingly, what has emerged from the discussion thus far is that towns, in a very unique way possess a degree of individuality when it comes to classification. A unique individuality which has not, until this point been acknowledged and relevant to the overall small town's discussion. However it has been used in discussing and often in the premise of discussing tourism potential in small towns; but that very uniqueness which is to be capitalised on for the sake of tourism; has always been framed as an uncommon and rare occurrence, occurring in isolation. When I began this discussion, there was this mild expectation; at least for myself that I would find similarly populated towns grouped together or at least found in the same local municipality. However, instead there is a variety of populations coexisting in the municipality. This then begs the question as to why could be. In reflection of the findings, it is important to understand that the municipal boundaries are confined to existing in real space. What this means is that we cannot expect towns with the same or similar population sizes to be located in the same municipal demarcation. The reason for this, is that the boundaries are constructed in physical space, and it would be impractical as well as ergonomically or economically impractical to try and group together the same class of towns.

The majority of the discussion in this question has held its focus on the urbanity of small towns. That being the physical constituents of the small town and how they are then experienced and conveyed through narratives of those experiences; this then representing the urbanism of small towns.

In drawing on Karl Kropfer, we know what we are because of what we are not. We have spent a considerable amount of energy trying to ascertain what is a small town based on statistics, physical attributes and so on. My question no, is what should a small town look like. In retrospect, shouldn't that have been the first question?. When looking at the adjacent townships near the case study towns, we would see a clear distinction in the aesthetics of the two spaces; however in most cases the townships had a larger population than their neighbouring towns. Therefore, there is yet another rebuke to the spatial hierarchy in this argument. Why is Tumahole not a small town? Or even a medium sized town? We know that there is quite a large population, it has a significant road structure, and amenities such as a police station, a clinic and schools. I would like to highlight the importance of cultural reference. What is a South African small towns? South Africa being the operant terminology in that definition. We have yet to fully define our out set of definitions of small and town and not-town and not-small; yet we actively and continuously place different spaces on a hierarchy; continuing to entrench the idea of urban ideal. True we are seeing a shift in thinking with more planners adopting an 'urbanism' approach, which is more committed to developing urban spaces that facilitate life as apposed to meeting an particular urban ideal which is more often than not a Eurocentric rendition of what is urban and what isn't.

ii. What is the lived experience of small towns

In what ways does the global connectivity of small towns impact small town urbanism?

Connectivity also plays an important role in the overall experience of small towns. As we have seen in the discussion around infrastructure, most of the small towns are well

connected in terms of their road structure. Connectivity, at least within geography; focuses on transportation and how the physical elements of space are connected to other spaces. However, connectivity is far more than that, as a term, which rather actively encapsulates social and cultural connections as well (see Chow, 2002; Fiske, 2002; Lippuner, 2004; Slama, 2004); all of which are represented in the physical space and connected through transportation and other means. Thus far we have looked with significant different spatial components and structures which contribute to the overall urbanity of small towns; and of particular note the presence of and function of roads and transport in the towns. So this section will focus specifically on social and cultural connectivity in small towns. To achieve this, I will focus on the Chinese Migrant Businesses, their owners and their contribution to the overall experience of small towns.

To recap what was discussed in the literature review, since the 1980s, the world has experienced a massive diffusion of spatial boundaries as a single global community arose through the processes of globalisation. Globalisation occurred on two major fronts. The first was a decrease in cost of technologies that provided communication, information sharing and transport; second, an opening of global markets saw an increase in foreign direct investment, capital flows, gross trade and technology sharing which facilitated integration and connectedness on a global scale (Lee, 2006). Globalization of the global south has been met with both optimism and pessimism regarding the impact of foreign direct investment (Lee, 2006). Globalisation is multifaceted and has had a transformative effect at regional, continental and transcontinental scales across the world (Bouare, 2001; Lall, 2002; Al-Rodhan, 2006). It is most frequently recognised to present with greater economic integration, the strengthening political alliances and increased migration, and the lowering of transport costs and with more efficient technologies (Al-Rodhan, 2006; Bouare, 2001; 2005; Schiere et al., 2011; Park et al., 2013). Moreover, globalisation has a strong economic characteristic which is described as "...the intensification of profit seeking abroad by states or businesses through widening of world markets." (Bouare, 2001: 21). Several key benefits have been

identified in South Africa; as renewed policies intend to capitalise on this the opportunity to grow and improve manufacturing industries through product improvement and diversification to ensure our products compete in the global market through participation in international trade. (Shiere et al., 2011; Park et al., 2013). The national shift towards facilitating continued and expanding global trade can be seen in small towns, just as they are recognised in large cities. Admittedly though, not perhaps in the form one might expect. While it is true that the majority of small towns exist with an uncertain future, there is obvious theoretical danger in grouping all small towns under a single banner of decline (Nel, 2005). Despite the often recognised important role small towns play in relation to the broader urban functioning, as well as their role as the administrative, service or economic centres for rural communities, little attention is given to the detail of their economic systems; other than attempting to provide a blanket LED approach.

Transport remains a key enabler of globalisation, and although most towns have very advanced road networks, they suffer in the realm of public transport, as can be seen in the discussion held with participants; Isable commented: “There isn’t a good network of public transport, but there is a big busses greyhound or something transport that goes through Parys to Cape Town...” (Isabel, 2017). In Vrede, there isn’t a bus service, however, there is a taxi system which Beauty described:

“We have a taxi system, but no bus system here the taxi goes from here in Vrede to Johannesburg and return, but passing through Vrede via New Castle. The taxi service picks up people throughout the journey, which is how people come to this town.”

The situation was echoed by Doc and Shameem as the commented on the lack of public transport in Wolmransstad, saying:

“There is no public transport network, not even a bus, there is one bus to Klerksdorp, to go anywhere you have you take your own car or a taxi... There isn’t even a train here let alone bus stops or bus routes,

there has been no discussions about setting up such transport facilities.”

Lastly, in Senekal, Leigh-Anne mentioned:

“There were trains here many years ago but there is no public investment, no public transport network that connects this town to other towns, if you didn’t have a car, you would have to rely on a taxi that comes from out of town to get to the next town or Johannesburg.”

The lack of transport doesn’t only affect your average commuters, store owners, made it very clear that in order to ensure their businesses remained stocked, they would often go to Johannesburg (as this was closest large city for all the case study towns) to purchase stock for their stores. Leigh-Anne explained:

“We travel to Jo’burg about once a month as I have family up there, we go shopping, we go to china mall, my husband is in construction so we go up to get stock or to get his machines serviced. I do the majority of my shopping in town, but with hospitality you need little sachets of coffee that you don’t get in local grocers, so I normally go out to the closest Makro in Bloemfontein and Jo’burg to get stock. So, if you want larger quantity supplies for your business you still have to go out, but other than that I get everything I need here.”

The Chinese business owners, had similar methods for running their business as can be seen in the extracts below:

“When I go to buy stock, I go to Jo'burg and I go to China Mall, Dragon Mall or Indian Mall, I drive myself there and back, I didn't have a driver's license before so I had a driver, but now that I have a license I drive myself there and back. I use to go twice a month to buy stock, that's

when business was going very well, but now I go once a month.”

(Chinese Army Veteran, 2017).

Although, we can see a definite trend of business owners to travel to Johannesburg to purchase stock, there is more to that journey than merely the act of traveling with one's own transport. Fatima, from Mafikeng highlights some interesting insights as she relates the experience of having to travel to Johannesburg to purchase stock as a child:

“...It's a small business that has a range of goods such as linens, pots, tv's and different electronics. She gets her stock from Johannesburg, so every month or every two weeks she will come up to Johannesburg to buy stock with my dad. The stock that she usually gets, is cheaper goods, but goods that are needed, because if you look at her market, which is middle to lower class (township people) people, they seek to find cheaper forms of goods as opposed to Panasonic's or Sony's as those kinds of goods you can find at wholesale stores in Fordsburg, China mall, Pakistani's, Indians and south Africans Indians stores. They used to leave early, do some shopping and leave at 3pm before sunset. I used to go stock shopping with my parents at Sakyno and all those places, when I was younger, like in high school, they used to come up on Sundays, just for the day. We would get ready to come stock shopping so we would wake up really early in the morning around 4/5am as it's about a 3-hour drive to Johannesburg, we would have a quick breakfast, that we prepared the night before. We also prepared our lunches that were packed and we all would get in to the bakkie for the drive to jo'burg, you spend 2, 3 or even 5 hours on the road, we would have an outline of the shops we wanted to go to and within in a space of maybe 6 hours we would buy whatever stock we needed, at that point in my life, it was like wow Jo'burg was a whole different world.

If we stopped to get lunch it might be in a small restaurant in Fordsburg.” (Fatima, 2017).

The experience of being a business owner extends and includes all business owners, and of particular interest for this research project, migrant Chinese business owners. The informal trade or private sector of Chinese migrant traders is less widely researched in South Africa in general and even less so in areas outside of major cities and metropolitan areas, so little is known about the topic. Park et. al. (2009) and Willemse (2013) argues that these traders are made up of peasant from the Fujian province. They have access to limited resources in terms of start-up capitals and business networks as well education and English language skills forcing them into the “lower rung of the retail sector, operating in small shops in the remote towns all over South Africa” (Park 2009 25). This in contrast to Chinese owned businesses in the formal sector or state-owned businesses that stem from the affluent Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces and come with large capitals and extensive business networks known as Guanxi networks to rely on (Park 2009 and Willemse 2013).

But for some of the Chinese business owners, the increased risks in having to arrange stock in this manner are becoming unbearable, as Yun related his past experience:

“I am at the point of deciding whether or not I am going to leave or stay here in South Africa, you see I have been shot once as has my uncle in Durban. We were going to buy stock in Jo'burg and we were in our car, before we knew it we were being fired at through the cars screen, we both were shot. The criminals had clearly been following us and our routine, they knew we were going to buy stock and were carrying cash money on us when they attacked us. It's such a horrible and frightening time of my life, the criminals used all 24 bullets in the gun and ran away, without taking the money from us.” (Yun, 2017).

Again, returning to the intricacies related to stock, Chen, from Wolmaransstad has had some trouble with the Police confiscating his stock; during the interview he explained:

“I have had some trouble with the police, a year ago, they came and checked my stock, and they confiscated and destroy the expired stock. I understand this, but they also took stock that wasn't expired. If I may give you an example of what they did, I sell wine in papsak, which doesn't expire; but they took it, they didn't take small amount of stock but a very large amount of stock ZAR10,000 to ZAR15 000 stock. What makes it worse is that every time these checks take place it's always my store” (Chen, 2017).

The relationship between the stock and the way in which it connects different people is quite interesting if we take a moment to consider it. As much as small towns are seen as these distant places, whose primary role is to support the city; the city is the location of the majority of goods found in the small town stores; even the Chinese stores. The lived experience of getting the stock is also quite interesting; as it highlights some of the dangers and risks in being a local business owner. What was quite disheartening to hear is the desire of many Chinese business owners to close their stores. It is important to recognise that they do contribute to the overall economy of the small towns, and in most instances provide employment for local residents.

To really appreciate the impact of crime on the business environment of small towns, we can take a moment to reflect on the commentary of Jiang as he spoke about how crime is affecting Chinese owned business:

“When I came to Wolmaransstad, there were about 10 Chinese shops there were no South African owned shops. But due to the tsoti's there are now there are only 4 Chinese stores left. It's a shame they are leaving, but they are leaving because of the many Tsoti's, sometimes they steal the cars full of stock or they take the money. I myself haven't

been robbed, I think its all down to the fact that I have a small car and people don't realise that I am buying stock so they don't target me" (Jiang, 2017).

"The tsotsi's are terrible they have robbed many Chinese people, so they have all closed up shop and gone back to China. People have had their stock stolen, cars stolen, stabbed and robbed at knife point. I myself am quite scared as I don't want that to happen to me, so I have decided this year I will close up shop, sell it and move back to China, nothing like that awful has happened to me but I feel it's only a matter of time before it does. (Army Veteran, 2017)

Park et. al. (2009) and Willemse (2013) theorised that most of the traders are made up of peasants from the Fujian province. This appears to be only partially true; as all of the Chinese business owners which participated in the study were from the Fujian Province in China. Chen from Wolmaransstad commented that he had decided to come to South Africa because many people from his village were emigrating and making money; so they encouraged him to do the same thing. The army veteran in Senekal provided some further insight saying: "I come from *Fuqing* in Fujian Province of China, when I arrived, I was happy to find other people from the same province as me, actually there were many but now they are all leaving." (Army Vetaran, 2017)

The first questions we may be inclined to ask is: if small towns are in such an economically dire strait; why are there an observable increase in the number of foreign owned business, particularly Chinese?

"I used to have 2 shops, this shop and the shop next door which my wife use to run, but now I only have one shop, this is because my wife has gone back to China and I decided to it was best to sell the shop. I sold it to an Indian person I think it could have been a Bengali possibly a Pakistani person, they all look the same to me. In bigger cities you

have a bigger shop but the sales are the same as owning a smaller shop in a small town. It's better to have a shop in a small town you have less competition, every shop's sells different products, so customers have more shops to go to, and the money you make is far better too. I learned how to run a business as I went along, of course I made some mistakes, such as staying with my sister too long, watching how to do business, where to buy stock from, how to interact with customers etc.”(Chinese Army Veteran, 2017).

So we understand that there are definite economic benefits in opening a store in a small towns; but the second part of Parks and Willmse's observations was that many, if not the majority of Chinese business owners were peasants. It is difficult to ascertain how to define a person as a peasant; however we can agree that many of the Chinese business owners who owned small stores were not from business backgrounds. Chen provided some insight as to how he had borrowed money to open his shop; saying “I borrowed money from my family and friends to come here to open a business. Before I came here my brother was already here, he owns the shop next door to mine, that's his clothing shop. I came to see him and saw the town for the first time” (Chen, 2017). Later Jiang, gave some valuable insight into how the businesses operated, given the limited startup capital:

“When I came here I had to borrow money to come open my business. When I go to get the stock, I don't pay for it, I borrow the stock till I can sell the stock only then I go and make payment for the stock I brought. Before, no one would give me a stock loan, so over time I had to first buy stock in smaller quantities, build myself up to the point now where I can get stock on credit. The difficulty is knowing what people like and what they want to buy, before I didn't have the hair (weaves) and now

I see the people want hair products so I buy the stock and bring it to the shop to sell.” (Jiang, 2017).

Although Jiang didn't mention the Ganxi networks, as Pars suggests – he did provide insight into the business model which enables so many Chinese business owners to operate and remain profitable.

In terms on connectedness, small towns are a plethora of examples of both a variety of networks as well as a rather advanced and complex connections. Networks in small towns take the form of transportation, as we have seen above, however; they severely lack public transport which is a form of disconnection of local communities. Additionally, social crisis such as crime have been found to have a direct impact on the economy, as we see an decrease in the willingness for business owners to take on the risks associated with business in small towns. Of course the experience of globalisation between South Africa and China is not the only experience and all participants acknowledged a variety of foreign national business owners including Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Nigerian. It would be interesting to investigate their business models and their business approaches to small towns. The resounding point of the matter is that small towns are a source of economic opportunity and the correct business model is required to see the business successful. There is definitely a lot that can be learned from foreign business owners.

It has become increasingly apparent that much of the literature ignore the role ICT plays in the connectivity of people and towns to other towns, cities and the broader community at large. Globalisation, is marked by global trade, and it is a great injustice to describe globalisation as a present day pheromone, when international trade has existed for centuries. The lowering cost of long distance transport has often been attributed to the increase in globalisation; but this too is not a new or resurging phenomenon as we have been aware of it since the invention of the heavy rail and then the air travel.

What is an absolute innovation in the discussion of globalisation is the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies; and how this has affected, sped up and improved the overall ability and capacity of people to remain connected to the rest of the world. The connectivity which ICT affords individuals transcends most geographical boundaries.

What is rarely discussed is the potential of services industries being run from small towns. There is little to no research being carried out on the internet access or state of ICT infrastructure in small towns. As a large portion of work can and is done via email, online or via a telephone, it may be that many small towns are being overlooked as potential business hosts beyond the traditional go-to saviour of small towns, also known as tourism.

Additionally, ICT is no longer geographically bound. Through the use and presence of cell-towers and satellites, an increasing number of people have access to the internet and mobile telecommunications

Small towns have been described as areas where the impacts of apartheid were amongst the highest. Segregation and separate development were felt to a higher degree because of the small nature of the town. Today, it is difficult to ascertain what the level of transformation is, as it goes far beyond the freedom of movement, economic engagement, education and development. Beauty, which happened to be the only black participant noted that “we share everything now, there is no more apartheid” (Beauty, 2017); however from observations it appears that although people of different races live happily alongside each other, there is very little mixing or integration, and ultimately most people stay within their races or previously allocated areas.

This statement is strongly linked to tourism. Tourism plays a huge feature in South African small town literature, with it seemingly the go to solution to small town sustainability. Whilst this is not confirmed it is also not disrepute, however, in based on

the research – it is far more likely that a town's historic function and natural resources have a far greater stake the sustainability or growth of the town. For example, towns such as Wolmaransstad and Senekal were much larger and were located on major transport routes for goods and raw materials. These towns had rich surrounds and benefited from a variety of activities in comparison to Vrede, which had a limited function in terms of servicing the surrounding farm lands.

We have discussed the importance of function in great detail in chapter two. It was one of the features that were required for assessment.

In addition to physical characteristics, external influences such as governance strategies, demography and socio-economic conditions affect how towns participate in a national space) have presented Beaufort West and Stilbaai as towns that have shown growth and stability through tourism (Kitchen et al., 2008; Rogerson et al., 2007. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that while most small towns do experience economic decline, their populations are actually increasing and their demographics changing as more people migrate from the hinterlands into more urbanised areas (Huyssteen et al., 2008; Duyar-Kienast 2010).

This is still highly debatable and is subject to the how a small town is defined. Whilst the statement may be true from some towns, it is not for all towns. Take for example towns like Parys and Clarence which has gone through a huge endeavour of capitalising on tourism and rebranding itself. Then there are the corner stone towns which act as trade centres such as Wolmaransstad and Senekal. In contrast there such towns as Vredefort and Cornelia, which are the epitome of this statement. Statistically to answer this question you would need to examine a town on a case by case basis to establish whether or not this statement is true. What is clear however, is that blanket statement are irresponsible and from a pragmatic point, the South African top-down approach to legislation and policy making needs to take into consideration the diversity within the areas managed by the municipalities, equipping them with better skill and knowledge on

dealing with the variety of small towns, townships or locations that exist in their boundaries.

Isabel: Now this weekend you wouldn't be able to find parking again like the Easter Weekend it was packed, everyone just walk in the street from one place to the other its really very friendly... Since I've been here, the main street has really transformed, there's all these little shops. It used to be really small when I arrived and now you can't visit all the shops in a day or even two days. It's really interesting to see what people do to make a living, how they use their hands. I don't know if you saw the market that they are building from containers, there on the main road. They are building it for the flower festival.

Beauty: There are more Indian people coming here to open businesses. The Chinese people have been here for a long time. They are getting more. They are coming here, because I think their businesses are making money, maybe they are telling other Chinese people to come to Vrede, and open small shop and you can make money. The Nigerian people are also here, they own the hair salon.

Doc and Shameem: There are very few young people in this town. Because they need jobs or go to university so they leave. There are more middle aged...Shameem: I think they are equal the middle age and the elderly people. I don't think there is economic stability, because the municipality doesn't have money. There is no money in this town...Doc: About last 10 years they started arriving, and then there was quite a lot of them, there was about 7 or 8 stores, now there's one or two left. Now the Pakistani's are taking over. The hard ware was taken over by a Pakistani bought it and the other shops the Bangladeshi's bought it.

This statement is plausible although subject once again to case by case basis. The reason being that while the South African participants, both currently residing and expats have expressed a limitation in opportunities, it does not account for the fact that a large number of foreign business owners are moving in to the towns and setting up businesses. It was noted during the interviews that while Chinese businesses owners do exist, they are not the only foreign nationals in small towns. Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somalian and Nigerian nationals are moving into the towns.

Furthermore, in the literature regarding Chinese migration, it was suggested that the primary motive for migration is economic opportunities. This is both logical and corroborates with interviews with the Chinese business owners. For them there are many benefits to being in South Africa, but the primary reason was to make money.

An important thing to consider is the major role players in the economy. For example, asking the farmers about economic opportunities will provide a very different version than business owners in town and those out of town, i.e. someone in a large town or city.

What was interesting is that Parys which was the only one of the case study towns that have adopted a tourism cantered economic model had a far greater characterisation of small townliness. This could be strongly linked to the 'small town' attraction of the small town. It is not uncommon for places of attraction to over emphasise their attractions and develop a tourism industry around one particular attraction, therefore it is quite possible that other towns who fall within this sub category of small towns will implement the same tactic. With that said, the remaining towns in the case study were quite functional. There was nothing overly characterised about them and they seemed to serve a particular purpose, whereas towns like Parys which have an economy dependent on the tourism tend to be somewhat more whimsical in their design and features.

Although small towns are considered to face some severe economic challenges, there is an observable trend of an increasing presence of Chinese migrant business owners in small towns. Their primary motivation for coming to South Africa is money. In the simplest form possible, money is the primary motivator for Chinese migrant business owners to settle in South Africa. These business owners do not form part of the large multinational corporations that are often spoken about when looking at Chinese engagement in Africa, however their presence and contributions to the economy are undeniable.

The majority of the Chinese business owners expressed an interest in returning to China once they have completed their task, and that is to have made enough money to retire. However there was one couple who were interested in bringing their children back to South Africa to complete their tertiary education. In an offline discussion with them, they mentioned that in South Africa we have opportunity to challenge our government and to think critically about the citizen's participation in politics. To them this was key to living freely. Given the high presence of Chinese business owners it is difficult to conclude outright with yet another sweeping statement that small towns lack economic opportunities.

Probing into this idea of primary motivations; I asked if South Africa was their first country of choice. The shared response was yes, however, the towns where they are currently in was not their first stop and in most cases they inherited or bought it from relatives who had returned to China or who had moved on to another country where there were greater prospects. Interestingly, Argentina was mentioned several times, as was Zanzibar. The Chinese business owners didn't know each other, yet they all gave the same indication of where they would move to next – this suggests that there is definitely a network or social group wherein these sorts of topics are discussed. It would be interesting in the future to explore in more detail the relationship between migrants.

Integration between Chinese business owners and local residence is mostly limited to economic transactions. Beyond that Chinese business owners do not interact or integrate with the local communities at large. Although they indicated that they did have

a sense of belonging and being a part of the community, none of them attended any local events at the school, town hall meeting or the like. Furthermore, there is a steady sense of abandonment and disconnectedness within the responses of the Chinese migrants when speaking about their host communities, it is arguable that this is because they know that they are not here with the intention of becoming a permanent resident and as such do not emotionally invest or invest in any form in their host towns and communities.

However an exception to this was Wing and her husband, who expressed a desire to “want to belong”; but due to the language barrier couldn’t explain fully the barriers preventing them from fully integrating in the community. However they have settled quite well in the community, taking pride in the outside area of their store and interacting with the local community on a more social level than merely through economic transactions.

North West Access to ICT and Other

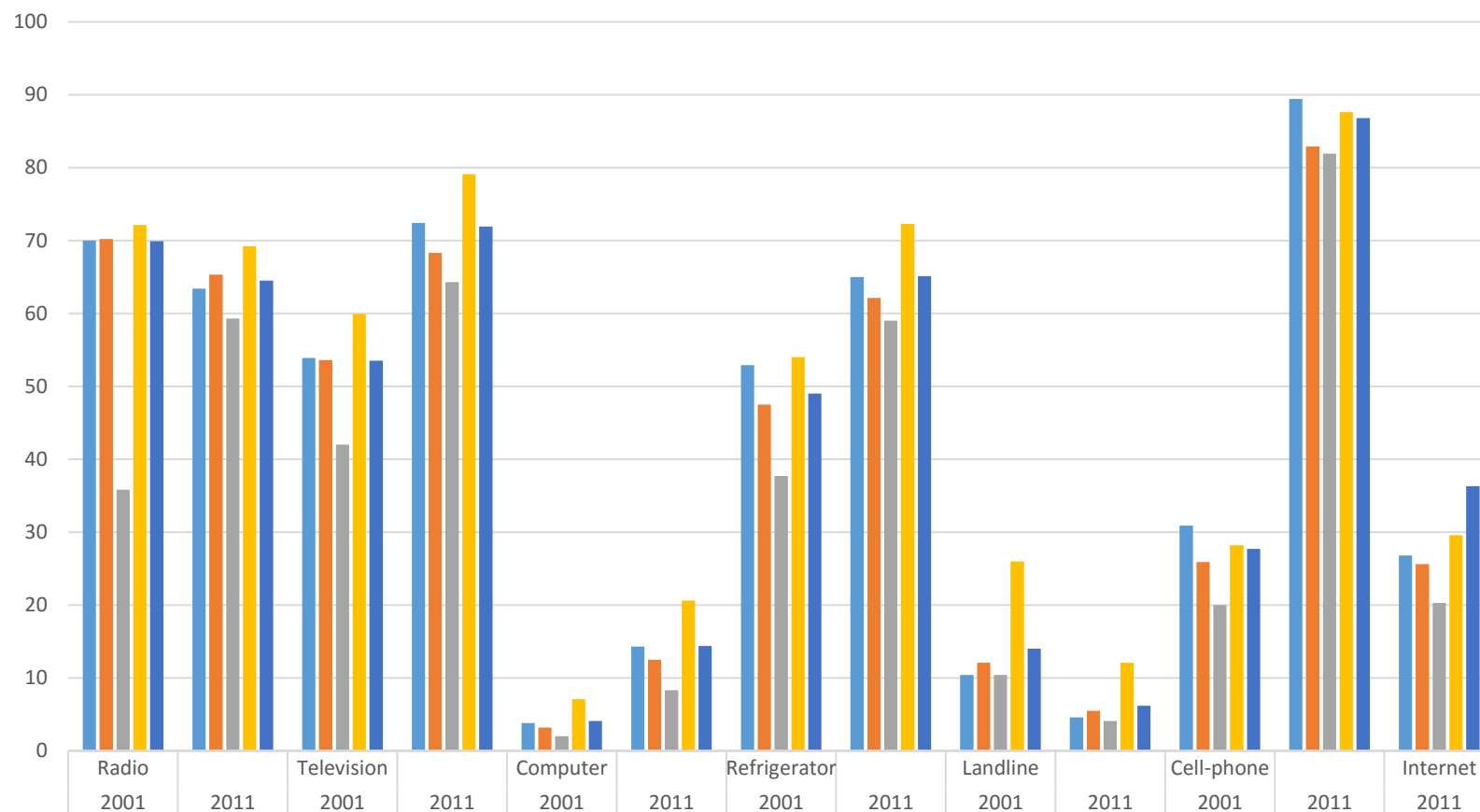
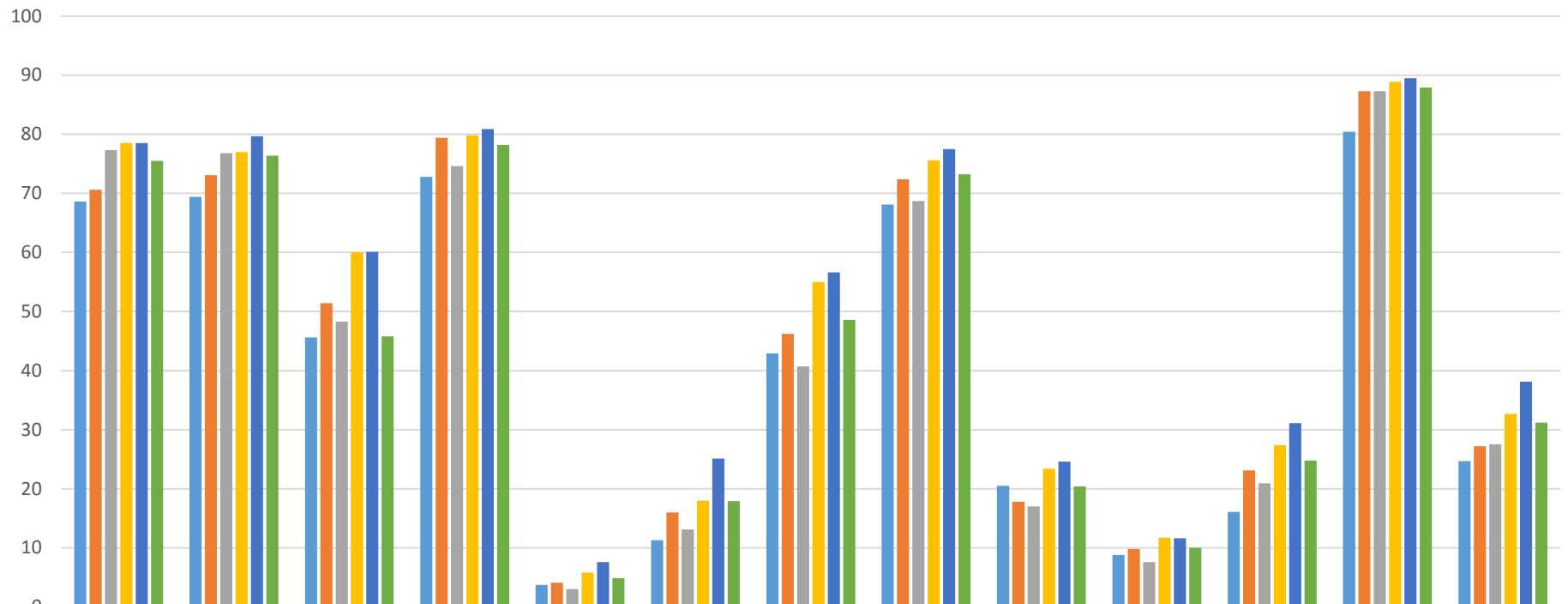


Chart Title



	Radio 2001	2011	Television 2001	2011	Computer 2001	2011	Refrigerator 2001	2011	Landline 2001	2011	Cell-phone 2001	2011	Internet 2011
Xhariep	68,6	69,4	45,6	72,8	3,7	11,3	42,9	68,1	20,5	8,8	16,1	80,4	24,7
Lejweleputswa	70,6	73,1	51,4	79,4	4,1	16	46,2	72,4	17,8	9,8	23,1	87,3	27,2
Thabo Mofutsanyane	77,3	76,8	48,3	74,6	3	13,1	40,7	68,7	17	7,6	20,9	87,3	27,5
Fezile Dabi	78,5	77	60	79,8	5,8	18	55	75,6	23,4	11,7	27,4	88,9	32,7
Mangaung	78,5	79,7	60,1	80,9	7,6	25,1	56,6	77,5	24,6	11,6	31,1	89,5	38,1
Free State	75,5	76,4	45,8	78,2	4,9	17,9	48,6	73,2	20,4	10	24,8	87,9	31,2

Xhariep Lejweleputswa Thabo Mofutsanyane Fezile Dabi Mangaung Free State

Small town urbanism

I think by now, it would be safe to assume that we have a pretty good grasp on how small towns have been represented and conceptualised in urban and rural literature. As the conversation within this thesis has matured, the level of complexity of dealing with small towns has become increasingly apparent. As much as I would like to cover all basis of small town discussion in as much detail as possible, it is simply not within the capacity of this single thesis to do so.

The principle question of this research has been to unpack how we understand urbanism in small towns in South Africa. In the first sub question, we discussed at length the use of heritage, population, infrastructure and service delivery in definition and identification of small towns; which held a very physical overtone, thereby focusing on the urbanity of small towns. In the second sub question we began unpacking a more metaphysical concept of connectivity within small towns; and began touching on the lived experience of connectivity in a small town. This question will however, be dealt with slightly differently, in that the primary foci will be on the theoretical rendition of small towns, and a comparison of the lived experiences within those themes. For this we will focus on two elements, the first is architecture and technology; and secondly overall experience.

Overall experience is a very broad term, however it has been deliberately constructed in this way. Drawing on Karl Kropfs rendering of the character of towns as being rather fluid and difficult to capture (as noted previously) this will be an attempt to arrest more detail of the character of small towns as represented by the testimonies of the participants than by the gaze of the researcher. True this does go against the tradition of research, as it is generally uncommon for the researcher to allow the research subject to drive the analysis results, but as this is a generally more experimental thesis – perhaps there is some room for some *eccentric* or *outlandish* analysis method.

Nel writes: “The developmental future of small towns is impacted on by historical and economic trends, both positive and negative, site-specific

28 factors relate to locational attribute and more recently, by the significant
29 decentralisation of power to local authorities which South Africa has
30 experienced.” (Nel, 2005, 256).

31 With this in mind we shall begin by looking at typologies and technologies and how these
32 influence the experience of small towns. We can appreciate that small towns are often
33 described as decaying spaces, and ‘resemble a land that time forgot’. Admittedly, this is
34 a very specific description of a small town, and in all truth, one would be hard pressed to
35 find this exact phrase in literature; after all it was the product of a confluence of ideas
36 based on a consolidation of different discussions. Perhaps a good starting point would
37 be to have a quick look at how this idea formed and through which mediums it is being
38 perpetuated. As I said, it would be extremely unlikely for you to find any theorist use this
39 particular phrase, after all it is particularly descriptive and hardly scientific. So what does
40 it look like in theory?

41 *“As the centuries move on, small towns are being abandoned.*
42 *Deterioration of small towns is especially significant in developed*
43 *countries. The population of small towns has migrated to great*
44 *commercial and industrial areas and cities. Not only have the*
45 *communities in small towns lost population, but businesses have also*
46 *closed or relocated. The physical environment is deteriorating, the*
47 *community's spirit is low, and the agricultural base had challenged by*
48 *world markets and technology.”* (Awang, Fong and Aziz, 2014).

49 Closer to home, Toerien 2014; sums up the current understanding of small
50 towns in South Africa:

51 *“Despite gloomy forecasts in the 1970’s and the current economically*
52 *compromised position of some towns, the approximately 600 towns in*
53 *South Africa...remain key features of the urban hierarchy and perform*
54 *a range of core functions....Yet there are still a plethora of problems*

55 *that confront small South African towns: (i) spatial fragmentation and*
56 *racial and social division, (ii) low density sprawl and poor land-use*
57 *management require high infrastructure investments, (iii) inadequate*
58 *and after the fact planning for urban growth (more informal settlement*
59 *upgrading than pro-active new developments), (iv) poor municipal*
60 *management and bad service delivery; (v) weak land and housing*
61 *markets; (vi) environmental degradation (often linked to poor service*
62 *delivery); (vii) inadequate public transport and a predominance of car*
63 *based planning, (viii) vexed relationships between administrative and*
64 *political levels and centralisation of powers around mayors; (ix) fragile*
65 *local economies with high levels of unemployment and low levels of*
66 *urban skills resulting in often competing parallel formal and informal*
67 *economies with few integrating approaches; (x) a high level of leakage*
68 *of purchasing power to larger centres, and therefore, weak local*
69 *economic multipliers, (xi) and on-going-out-migration of skilled,*
70 *talented and innovative people...)* (Toerien, 2014, 3).

71 This listing of the wide range of problems and challenges facing small towns, generally
72 creates quite a derelict image in the mind. For Toerien, particularly in the construction of
73 this piece, it has been a composite of works from Donaldson, Hoogendoorn, Marais, Nel,
74 Wessels and Visser, from varying years; and these writers, without a doubt being the
75 heavy weights when it comes to small town theory. It would appear that this assumption,
76 small towns being a land that time forgot will have stemmed from an idea that there has
77 been little to no development the area, and the towns have tended to stagnate. We have
78 already discussed at length the idea of population decline, infrastructure, spatial
79 fragmentation and service delivery, with findings suggesting that there has been
80 progress. Admittedly it is difficult to ascertain where the majority of the progress is
81 occurring, in small towns or in other settlements...this then reiterates the challenges

consequent of not being able to finitely define what a small town is. The point being, when we perceive small towns as a land that time forgot what we are referring to.

Architecturally, a land that time forgot appears to be true when looking at the building typologies of these towns. There is a definite slower evolution of architecture as in comparison to other areas, however this again is highly dependent on factors such as economic growth and population growth. In order to fully answer this question, it needs to be addressed on a case by case basis. Beyond the physical, we can agree the architecture and building typologies set a particular tone for the town; we need to ask ourselves where does this popular idea of small town comes from, as it is often not just seen in academic discussion, but in everyday conversation. When asked if they would describe their town as a land that time forgot, this is what some of the participants had to say:

“Vredefort is a very, very small town. It’s like a little bit going back in the past when you drive through there and when you drive through the whole little town. Just the way things look there’s hardly any house that looks modern, or if you look at the fencing and everything. But they do have this beautiful church and just opposite this beautiful old house. But it’s like going back to the past if you drive through there. I don’t think anything goes on there...Did you know that in Vredeford, is at the Chris van Niekerk School...You can see the school...near by the church and its one of these old stone schools and it’s beautiful and they have a beautiful hall...Parys also has one of the largest indoor domes in the southern hemisphere.” (Isable, 2017).

Fatima, a small town expat shared her experience of moving to Johannesburg for the first time; explaining:

“When you come from a small town, people are very simplistic, we were a middle-class family, so you do find other Indian families who are

109 *higher class, for them I would guess Jo'burg isn't a big shock to them.*
110 *But when you come from a small town, that's all you know when move*
111 *to into a city it gets very over whelming, it also depends on what you*
112 *are exposed to. It's very different, you end up opening your mind to*
113 *tons of stuff, I think as a kid in a town you are limited, even your malls*
114 *are small, you come to Jo'burg, you go to the bigger malls and you are*
115 *like, omg (oh my god) look at that, look at that, you don't really know*
116 *how to process it." (Fatima, 2017).*

117 Rashid, a Wolmaransstad expat spoke about the difference between Johannesburg and
118 Wolmaransstad:

119 *"The five main differences between living in Johannesburg and living*
120 *in Wolmaransstad. I think in Johannesburg we have a lot more schools*
121 *for the kids, in Wollies there is only one primary school that they can*
122 *go to. Jo'burg is a lot busier where it is just go, go all the time. People*
123 *say you don't get time to smell the roses, but I do. For normal people*
124 *Jo'burg is very hectic, Wollies is very slow paced. You can really*
125 *describe Wolmaransstad as a laid back, peaceful town where you can*
126 *relax and be yourself and no one will judge you." (Rashid, 2017)*

127 Senekal, Leigh-Anne a long-time resident, said: *"I would say Senekal is not the smallest*
128 *and not the slowest of towns. It would be difficult to compare this town to others, but*
129 *comparing it to Clarens that has become quite a commercial town, which we aren't."*
130 (Leigh-Anne, 2017).

131 We have now seen the related experience of four different people, of five different towns.
132 The idea of old and dusty does feature to some degree, but if anything, this is a positive
133 feature of the town, more than it is a negative one. When we think about 'a land that time
134 forgot'; how do you measure that? How do you decide whether a town is up-to-date or
135 not...for Isabel it was very much in the architecture; for Fatima, it was about the mind-

set of people, for her small towns had a rather 'simplistic mind set'. For Rashid, the lack of amenities were somewhat of a concern, but the slower pace was highly appealing. As for Leigh-Anne; she highlighted the town's pace as well and drew a comparison between Senekal and Clarens; as opposed to Senakal and Johannesburg. This highlights the individuality of small towns. That isn't to say that some town, like Vredefort seem a little left behind, but as long as people live in the town, we have to acknowledge that life; very literally goes-on there.

The importance of refraining from making sweeping statements, needs to be taken very seriously; as without substantial proof and generalizability, they quickly become a misrepresentation of the towns.

In terms of politics, small towns are as much politically active spaces as the city. All the participants expressed a current and up-to-date knowledge of politics in local, provincial and even national political environments. At the time these interviews were being conducted there were mass and violent protests occurring in several towns, namely Coligny, Lichtenburg and Itsoseng in the North West and Free State. The cause of the protest was the apparent assault of a young boy by a farmer. Analysts commented that these protests were part fuelled by the growing tensions in national government. But for the rest of the small towns, the participants described them as politically stable. As recently as May 2018; the North West was again in a state of unrest, as residents demanded the resignation of then Premier Supra Mahumapelo; an outspoken Zuma Loyalist was facing corruption charges and a motion of no confidence. These charges came after the resignation of President Jacob Zuma, in the face of mounting pressure from the ANC and nine attempts by rival political parties to impeach him. The impact of the protests were so widely felt, that President Ramaphosa (who had assumed power after Zuma) had to conclude his strategic business visit to the United Kingdom early, in order to convene an emergency session with the ANC. Premier Mahumapelo eventually resigned, but there remained tangible political tension in the region. This just shows that the people in small towns are deeply attuned to the broader political on-goings.

Globalisation as a force promoting interconnectivity and communication has had a major impact in information sharing and access. Through these technologies, towns remain as connected and up to date with national and even global politics. In terms of globalisation, there are definite indications of small town globalisation. Returning to the idea that globalisation is a non-material process that hinges on transport and telecommunication technology, small towns are well on par to the city. Access to the internet, satellite TV, media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are all ways of small towns connecting to the globe and participating in that exchange. Senekal for example has a Facebook page which advertises events, and if you YouTube any of the towns in this case study, there are several videos which come up. It is highly plausible that the same may be true for the majority of small towns in South Africa. Moreover, small towns are multicultural and even transnational. This is because there is a definite settlement of foreign nationals in the towns, and with their presence comes a certain degree of exchange. They learn to live in South Africa, and may even participate in local events. Although the Chinese migrants did not integrate to that degree, they often had acquaintances or even friends who were South African and through their interactions there is a definite exchange of cultures. Moving along with this train of thought. The Chinese business owners imported and sold Chinese merchandise. This is a transnational exchange of culture. Chinese brands in South Africa is an international brand, in essence there is no difference between the 'made in china brand' of merchandise and an Armani 'made in Italy' brand. They are both transnational, the difference between the two is the social value that we assign to these equal commodities.

5.4. Macro Urbanism

Very often urbanism is used to describe the very particular rhythm which exists within the urban realm (McFarlane, 2011; Bourdieu, 1989; Chow, 2002; Dijkstra and Poelman, 2014; Karakayali, 2006; Lefebvre, 1974; Wolff, 1950). What is becoming more evident is that there are two very distinct urbanisms in existence, these are macro and micro urbanism. As discussed previously, micro-urbanism refers nitty-gritty of everyday life. The everyday as described in Simmel's 'The Stranger'. Macro urbanism on the other hand – at least in this context refers to the large, most consistent rhythms of life in the

urban real. Rhythms related to climate and season, geographical advantages and disadvantages, politics and economics. More than this, the macro urbanism of our time is seen in globalisation and the global migratory flows of people and cultures and experiences. These deeply impact our micro-urbanisms and what provides the foundations for the constant nitty-gritty but we rarely appreciate dynamic which exists between the two brother – macro and micro urbansims (Mcfarlane, 2011; Bourdieu, 1989; Chow, 2002; Dijkstra and Poelman, 2014; Karakayali, 2006; Lefebvre, 1974; Wolff, 1950).

5.5. Conclusion

As you will have noticed, this chapter did not provide a discussion on the third sub-question 'what is the opportunity for reflexivity in scientific research'. The reason for this is that in order to answer the question, a more theoreticall discussion needs to be had; and this chapter was meant to focus on the more quantitative elements of the research. Moreover, this chapter did not directly address the central research question, 'How do we understand urbanism in South African small towns'; however it is hoped that this chapter laid down in empirical terms the foundation for moving onto other methods to answer these remaining questions.

In this chapter we looked at the possible elements which would likely contribute to the characterisation of a small town, and found the data to be someone lacking in robustness. If we are to put to the rest the ability of every theorist to put forward their own characterisation of small towns during their research; and should we be truly committed to reducing the fragmentation in small town literature as we saw in chapter one, then we require rigorous and infallible data. That isn't to say the census data is incorrect, however as was demonstrated in the discussion it lacks depth and furthermore, often lies in conlict to the lived experience.

At this juncture, the question of what is a small town still stands. As yet we are unable to extract from the empirical data any list of characteristics which may provide a conclusion as to what is a small towns. With regards to understanding what is the lived experience

223 of small towns are, we can conclude that there is a definite sense of urbanism in small
224 towns. Admittedly it was interesting that the majority of participants described their
225 experiences in relation to larger cities, or other areas which may have appeared more
226 familiar to the researcher. It is possible, that when the researcher introduced herself, she
227 indicated that she was from Johannesburg and therefore participants felt obliged to
228 compare their towns with what was familiar to the researcher.

229 Overall the method was considered successful, as discussed in previous chapters, in
230 that the data collected provided a much more detailed account of the experience of
231 living in a small South African town, by both South African citizens and some non-
232 South African nationals; as opposed to the frequently appropriated empirical data so
233 often used to understand small towns.

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6

An Alternative Research Approach to Small Towns



6. AN ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH TO SMALL TOWNS

6.1. Introduction

As we have seen in the previous chapter, empirical methodologies have both advantages and disadvantages. As was noted in the very beginning of this thesis, there appears to be an over reliance of theorists on empirical data to understand and unpack small towns. The consequence of this is a reading of small towns which seems largely disconnected from the lived experience. Once again as seen in previous discussion, the lived experience as illustrated by participants often challenges what appears to be true of small towns.

Moreover, statistics struggle, if not outright fail to capture the true essence of urbanism in small towns. Or the true essence of the lived experience and the rhythms of the everyday of small towns. Being able to truly understand the urbanism of small towns is what will allow us to further develop and expand our current understanding of small towns.

Whilst it is not nor has ever been the intention of this thesis to outright dismiss current methodologies, and surely it would be in error to even attempt to purport such a thing— instead it is the intention of this thesis to suggest the inclusion or adoption of methods or expanding the current range of methods within the field of geography in order to encourage a new way of thinking about urban and rural spaces, using small towns as the conduit for testing this idea. This chapter will unpack several arguments for and against the use of film, photography and ethnographic narratives as an effective method for capturing, studying and representing urbanism within South African small towns.

6.2. A brief ontological recap of Urban Anthropology

The subject of historical anthropological development is highly complex and spans several centuries. Therefore, it is not the intention of this section to try and capture or represent the full extent of the evolution of the method, however as far as is possible, it will touch on key stone moments and events.

Anthropology is a discipline which uniquely premises the emersion of the researcher among the research participants and subjects in a particular location, with the sole intent to study the people and culture; capturing and later representing those people in a written form, known as an ethnography. The ethnography, which in its' most basic form is an extended essay or literary exposition of the researcher's findings, observations and analysis. Anthropology and ethnography has considerably evolved and transformed in the current era – in comparison to its historically ethnocentric, topographic examination of the *other*. Anthropology is the progressive manifestation of early 16th century travel writings; from a time when European adventurers took to the sea in search of the 'worlds end'. Much to their surprise they did not find a 'cannot proceed beyond this point' sign; instead they ran aground upon the 'new world'; unclaimed and ripe for the picking- the world that would become Europe's utopian legacy (Trouillot, 1991).

Early anthropological works focused on the culture of indigenous peoples, set against the backdrop of the environments they inhabited. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2003) explain:

“...spatial dimensions of cultural belief and practices have always held an interest for anthropologists. Studies of tribal and village societies customarily included descriptions of the natural landscape and material conditions of everyday life, and quite often contained an analyses of these in support of other theoretical arguments.” (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003)

288 An increasing awareness amongst anthropologists of the influence the
289 physical environment played in the everyday life of people spurred an
290 adaptation, and had increasingly begun featuring spatial dimensions at
291 the forefront of the urban research foci. From this shift, a long series of
292 literature streamed, expanding with ideas of how different spaces
293 facilitate life (all of which is cultural) actively participating in the creation
294 of the lived experience and moreover how life both adapted to space but
295 equally held the power to transform and bend spaces. A very prominent
296 feature which arose is the intrigue of the anthropologist to the way life
297 played out in different host spaces, particularly cityscapes. This became
298 a sub-set of research interests known as the 'everyday' or the 'lived
299 experience' and was later unified into a single idea known as Urbanism.

300 Urbanism as the foundational thought of most lived experience research in urban
301 settings, was birthed as a child of many parents – having not emerged as a single, fully
302 formed idea – and to this day remains a highly fluid concept that continues transforms
303 as it transitions in and out of various fields (Watkins, 2005;Wirth, 1938).

304 The value of using anthropological method as a basis for urban research is that it allows
305 the researcher the manoeuvrability to reframe the subject and engage with the subject
306 matter from a different perspective or angle. Especially, for example in this instance
307 where the researcher has a 'specialist' geographical and planning background; which to
308 an extent limits the thinking to the fundamental rationalities and methodologies of the
309 geographical and urban planning faculties, ultimately disallowing any exposure to other
310 methods or the potential of cross-disciplinary engagements.

311 But the question we may be inclined to ask, is: 'why change what works?' For decades,
312 there has been a successful line of division between the sciences and humanities,
313 between the methods and the theoretical contributions of the different faculty's. They are
314 separated because they are not compatible and this is the natural order of things. They

315 have worked independent of each other and have produced strong theoretical basis and
316 arguments; more importantly they have progressed steadily expanding their discourses.
317 The short answer is that whilst the sciences and humanities have positively progressed
318 as independent disciplines, therein lies the problematic...they have progressed rather
319 exclusively and are subject to their own internal controls and protocols...which are
320 difficult to change.

321 Whilst it is not nor has ever been the intention of this thesis to outright dismiss current
322 methodologies, and surely it would be in error to even attempt to purport such a thing–
323 instead it is the intention of this thesis to suggest the inclusion or adoption of new
324 methodologies or methods other why's not inherent in the field of geography in order to
325 promote a new way of thinking about urban and rural spaces, using small towns as the
326 conduit for testing this idea. Yet the question remains, 'why', why go through all the
327 trouble of testing new methods; for what purpose should we challenge the discourse and
328 wish to shake up the discipline?

329 Throughout this thesis, there has been a presentation of current data models and a
330 discussion on current techniques, with the conclusion of each discussion ending with
331 more questions than answers. What has emerged from the discussion is the importance
332 of and the role of the researcher in constructing the research and then presenting and
333 analysing the data. Many disciplines, especially in the humanities have undergone some
334 serious introspection; questioning the different voices representing and being
335 represented in the discipline as well as the attitude and positionality of those voices to
336 certain hot-topic discussions. For African countries, one most notable example of this is
337 the move away from Eurocentric methodology and literary sources as a basis for data
338 analysis in the African context. The sciences however, have not experiences such an
339 introspection. Whilst I cannot comment to any full extent on this, I am inclined to question
340 why human geography which is one of the softer sciences and deals so heavily with
341 human context; has not itself undergone such an introspection. Perhaps it remains utterly
342 protected; being held within the scientific discipline. But is that enough?

343 The creation of the 'other' is a critical foundational step in any research topic. In order to
344 become objective about a particular topic we distance ourselves, and very unconsciously
345 create a division between the researcher and the 'research subject' especially when
346 dealing with human-centred topics; and in doing this create the 'other'. Within geography,
347 especially in the topic of small towns; we see the creation of the other, not only amongst
348 people; but amongst urban forms as well. As we have seen in the previous chapters,
349 there is a concentrated focus of literature to understand small towns in relation to cities,
350 to assess them in relation to what we perceive they are not.

351 It may be beneficial to take a moment to understand the *Other*. In the beginning the Other
352 was a term that denoted the subject of investigation; but during the centuries that
353 followed the-first-encounter with the Other; was transformed again and again - until no
354 longer recognisable from it's original form, and was discarded; and replaced with: the
355 Savage, the Barbarian; everything and everyone that is or was not European; that was
356 not the West but that constitute the rest (Said, 1978). The concept and idea of the Other
357 is a benchmark in human-cantered subjects and in truth cannot these cannot function
358 without it. Edward Said in his text: *From Orientalism* (1978) he explains the other in
359 terms he calls the 'Orient' (Said, 1978, 132) and as his text progresses he describes the
360 uneven and modernly-rickety relationship between the Rest and the West in a dynamic
361 dialect of the Orient and the 'Occident' (Said, 1978, 132). Said states with particular
362 conviction: "...the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the
363 Occident itself is not there either [but that the] Orient and the Occident are both man-
364 made" (Said, 1978, 132); that is to say the very model of the *Orient* and its *Occident* are
365 synthesised; and in this synthesis a sense of opposition and conflict is embedded. The
366 Orient has become the polar opposite of the Occident and consequently has become the
367 confirmation of the Occident's civility by assuming the position of savage. "The Orient
368 was Orientalised", it was brutalized, barbarianised and transformed to represent the most
369 boorish of persons in existence - all in the name of civilisation. Entire nations were cast
370 into the darkness, "made oriental" (Said, 1978, 133); beyond helping themselves and in

371 desperate need of European salvation; and all for the substantiation of Western telos
372 (Said, 1978).

373 The dialogue that ensued between the east and the west fuelled a continuous need of
374 the west to reassure itself of its supremacy to the east; and in this endeavour the 'East'
375 became a career of the West; a project that procured every effort to the continual
376 orientalised of the orient (Said, 1978). Through this imagined career in the production
377 of the Orient, the Occident assumed the role of representer, for the orient; thereby taking
378 away from the orient the freedom of own representation. As long as the Occident had
379 control of representation of the Orient, it could determine - through its own discretion;
380 what it; the Occident - thought the Orient was and or could be (Said, 1978). What
381 emerged in the dialect, was European thought and 'the other'. The Occident continued
382 to and became responsible for the production of knowledge about the Orient through
383 explicit empirical ethnographic investigation that consequently created a literary
384 validation that cultivated the existence of the Orient. Beyond the literature the orient could
385 not exist. The production and reproduction of the occident and the orient came to exist in
386 a make and remake and re-remake cycle. It was within the other that the occident's, civil
387 occidentality resided. The idea that 'I know what I am because of what I am not' permeated
388 academic presentation of the other; and all research about the other was constructed in
389 stark contrast and opposition to the researcher. In this way the "orient has become an
390 academic tradition" (Said, 1978, 142); The production and direction of knowledge is
391 possibly the most overriding feature of the relationship between the occident and the
392 orient; because the West had control over what was written and about who it was written,
393 the west succeeded in taking complete command over the orient in a kind of prosody
394 and puppet show, from which the orient could not and has yet to escape from (Said,
395 1978). The production of knowledge between the occident and the orient is one
396 directional and which tended flow as knowledge from the occident onto and about the
397 orient. A very simple example of this style of knowledge is the children's novel *The Big*
398 *Friendly Giant (BFG)* by Roald Dahl (1982). The story is a meta-narrative about a little

girl's adventures to the Giant Country where she encounters the giant inhabitants who she judges and deduces as all brutish, savage and altogether very ferocious beings. She understands the giants to be an unruly, unreasonable group with which negotiations or civil conversation cannot occur. The point of this example is the story is told from the perspective of the little girl and mimics that of an ethnographic investigation; the child like human is subject to a warped sense of reality, yet as a reader we ingest every word of hers and every description illustrated of the giants and the girl in the book as truth. It may seem ridiculous to indulge in this kind of academic debate around a children's fictional novel but the point remains: the position of the author and of the text; guide the reader's view.

Eurocentrism has evolved to become embedded in the researcher's gaze, and although many have made significant strides in untangling themselves from the one-dimensional Eurocentric model of academia, it is far more difficult to disentangle the self from the far less obvious researchers gaze, the inherent 'othering' that occurs...the perpetuation of 'what it is not' which ultimately justifies the majority of research undertakings. This is what has happened in the academic literature which remains and protects it's Eurocentricism. Those who represented the Other; represented the Other in such a fashion that the Other was left yearning of want-to-be and envious desire of civility whilst possessing only incivility; and became an outcast looking in at the West. The Other's continuous aspiration to be like the West, to mimic European perfection only perpetuated the notion that the other was less than the West and consequently continued to construct the binaries of the representer and the represented as well as maintain and prolong the uneven distribution of power through knowledge.

Academic literature has become the principle and only method available for communicating research, whether about the orient or other; and yet despite this "The discipline, never really developed an armoury of objectifying instruments, standardizing strategies, and quantifying formulas. It has continued to be, as [Evans-Pritchard (1950; 1961)] insisted long ago, a humanist art, in spite of its sometime scientific pretentions."

(Comaroff, 1992, p8); this acknowledgement of 'scientific pretentions' is also what some call and understand to be post-structural in thought.

Geography, specifically human geography has within it these same semblances of human art which Evan-Pritchard identifies and like most social science subjects have been dramatically influenced by post-structuralist thought. The influence of post-structuralist thought is not a mark of some or other dramatic shift in social condition from one to another; and the term has not fixed period of advent, although we do attribute the transition in attitude from the modernist, structural -isms to the post-isms in the early twentieth century. Rather the emphasis is on 'influence'; on the curatorship of post-structuralist thought to encourage a deeper thinking of the many pluralistic epistemologies of the world. As we have seen; there is a definite movement within some disciplines toward deep and thorough introspection that ultimately concludes in a deeper understanding of our world; and this by its definition is a post-structuralist thinking.

Post-structuralism, is a highly valuable concept, particularly in providing a departure point for challenging a prevailing concept within a discipline. However, it is not a core line of thinking in this thesis as it deserves and requires extensive consideration in relation to other concepts and theories which tend to dominate the urban discussion. For this reason, it is recommended that future endeavours surrounding small town's research or alternative-urban concepts research; that post-structuralism be discussed in more relevant and greater detail.

Post-structuralism is strongly linked to language, the power of language and the impact it has on how objects are represented and who is representing them. It was Saussure's work in a structuralist capacity that made the first major strides in identifying the non-commitment of words to represent their intended objects. What this means, is that purely for the fact that we call a particular object by a certain name, that does not mean that the name represents that object, therefore seeing language as absolute in its representation of the world is inexact. Instead, language is most accurately described as a system of

signifiers and symbols whose mean we attribute. What came from this was an understanding of mechanisms serving as foundation for the rhythms of the world (Murdoch, 2006).

The discourse of language and the discourse of writing are inseparable. Once upon a time they were separable; the Europeans had an advantage of text over the other, but with the globally neoliberal state of the world, the limitations of language differences are no longer a formidable, unconquerable force. It is upon this plane that the production of knowledge and the direction of representation can be challenged and changed the “representation of dialogue” (Comaroff, 1992, p9) from one-dimensional to a multi-dimensional conversation of academia. Anthropology needs to be liberated from its grounding focus of them and us and remove its Eurocentric centrality by replacing it with a more pan-global, unilateral one (Comaroff, 1992). Thereby redistributing the power of representation onto a more even plain with new terms of representation. The way of accomplishing this, in my opinion is not to turn the anthropological or interpretative gaze onto the Occident by Orient as Said (Comaroff, 1992) suggests, it isn’t even about reorganising our method of research (Comaroff, 1992); but perhaps the success of reorganising the terms of representation in Anthropology lies in acknowledging that we are all Other to Everyone else. As long as we are all other, there can be no dominating West; there can be no Occident and no Orient.

6.3. The Sensuous City

By now, we really cannot deny that the small town is a widely discussed and heavily debated idea in South African urban geography; which seems to endlessly oscillate between being urban and rural. A multitude of attempts have been made at trying to define small towns, so much so that the topic now appears theoretically fragmented within the discourse, but remains an equally immovable feature within the very definition of rural and urban typologies. The traditional approaches to small town geographies have yielded significant gains in our understanding and conceptualisation of the space, however, as we have discussed these methods have some limitations – as all methods

do. One of the most notable challenges when implementing rigid quantitative and qualitative research methods, is the dehumanising influence it has in the acquisition as well as interpretation of the data. So therefore it is not a matter of where we look for the answer, but rather in how we ask the question. If you will allow me the metaphor, *it is not a matter of how to build a bridge, but rather how to cross the water*. Decades ago, our perception of city life was expanded to include an understanding that life in the city is comprised of the everyday, a routine and unexciting repetition of activities and rhythms and day-to-day events mixed together with unexpected encounters within the city. There are a wide range of possible examples that together form the sensuous character of the city, and contribute to the superabundance of internal and external stimuli– all of which is mentally managed by the individual. “This in contrast to the ‘slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the small town and rural existence” (Low, 2015).

What we have come to understand is that urban dimensions; however they are defined - are sites of human experience and it is these varied sensory experiences within our environments which are bursting with social meaning and utility. When we begin to understand that it is not so much the question but the frame of the question that allows us to further unpack environments we may have thought as previously fully-unpacked we begin to realize how much of what we know is sometimes outdated, or more likely incomplete, or how much of what we can learn may reinvigorate a sleepy subject or altogether revolutionize a topic.

If we were to argue that all things in the built environment are not merely objects which are neutral to that environment and inertly exist; but rather actively contribute and affect the ways in which people relate to the world then we can begin to appreciate the many forces acting within a single space and which create the experience of that space. We experience space in both tangible and intangible ways,

In other words, we need to draw our attention to sensation, which occupies the centre of human perception. In being able to recognize that the researchers body is probably our

best and principle research instrument, we can appreciate the many sensory experiences in the built form as being only the first step in fully exploiting an ethnographic tool. The researchers body, in its entirety is a research a tool, and similarly is an object within the research. something that particularly stands out during the research was the feeling of being the spectacle. The premise of ethnography and participant observation is being able to blend into the crowd. But this was not the case for us.; we really stood out. It wasn't even the equipment that we were dragging around from shop to shop that made us stand out. I think it was this incomprehensible diversity in our little group that attracted people attention.

A lasting change in the method, has to first begin with a change in how we teach the practice of method. There would be an advantage in teaching students how to manage their research from an administrative point of view, which include project management and grant application.

6.4. Documenting Evidence

The entire premise of the thesis has been to explore different research methods which could possibly be adopted within the human geography to provide a richer understanding of the urban. I will continue to reinforce, that existing methods which have been implemented in unpacking small towns or areas beyond the city, have been extremely valiant, and have continued to drive the discourse forward, however, despite the progress, geography at large has remained methodically dominated by quantitative practices. Whilst we can acknowledge just as Fotheringham (2000) has, the commitment to the "... major goal of [all] geographical research, whether it be quantitative or qualitative, empirical or theoretical, humanistic or positivist, to generate knowledge about the processes influencing the spatial patterns, both human and physical, that we observe on the earth's surface." (Fotheringham et al., 2000: 8); a dominance of one of the methods has created a reliance on the methodology which at times can lead to ignoring other, equally meaningful segments of small town realities.

According to Aitken and Valentine (2006), quantitative geographers fall into one of four categories: (1) those who wish to reduce large sets of data into smaller and more meaningful pieces of information, (2) those who explore spatial data sets, (3) the geographers who dedicate themselves to finding the generalizability ration of data and (4) those who work towards mathematical modelling and prediction of spatial process. Incidentally all four of these characteristics can be found in this thesis, especially in the chapters that deal with the raw data and the research questions and sub questions. With this in mind, we can at the very least assume that the handling of the data was sound in accordance with Aitken and Valentine. Moving along, according to the authors yet again, they suggest, that within these four types of geographers, they each hold within their central beliefs, one of two foundational perspectives (or frequently both) – which is a strong commitment to positivism and quantification. That is to say, these four methods speaks so strongly to individuals because they nherently possess an affinity to thinking that “the only meaningful items of study are those that can be verified...” (Aitken and Valentine, 2006, 239). Whilst data verification and comparability is paramount to ensuring reliability; an inability to verify data does not automatically mean that the data is unreliable. For example, how does one validate ‘feelings’ of a particular matter, or ratings of experience? The implication of these practices whilst methodical, can restrict knowledge production to that which can be measured and verified through rigid controls and consequently exclude a large portion of what remains to be discovered.

This reinforces the need to look at and explore different means of capturing data, or documenting information in a more versatile way, which is both practical, methodical and most importantly, pragmatic. The question becomes how *do* we circumvent some of the challenges inherent in predominantly quantitative research, and no the answer is not ‘qualititative research’ which appears to have been positioned as the anti-thesis to quantitative methods. Perhaps the answer lies with Glaw, Inder, Kable and Hazelton, 2017; who discusses the use of Visual Methodologies in qualitative research. According to Glaw *et.al*, we know with a degree of certainty that “Visual methods enhance the

richness of data by discovering additional layers of meaning, adding validity and depth, and creating knowledge.” (Glaw et.al, 2017. 1). It is necessary to make the distinction between qualitative methods and visual methods; because they are not one and the same. Qualitative research methodology is a category of research methods, and qualitative visual methods is a specific practice of research within that category. Even though we tend to consider visual methods ‘new and novel’ (Glaw et.al, 2017); the use of photography, film, video, painting, drawing and sculpting as a form of research is not new and in fact a traditional form of research within anthropology and sociology. That said, visual methods may also be transposed to quantitative research – for example, quantity surveyors regularly use photography to calculate building height (brick-height). Therefore to merely assume visual methods are qualitative, is naïve (see, Glaw et.al, 2017; Petersen, Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers 2002).

Photography as Method

Within photography as a sub-category of visual qualitative methods, there are two techniques which are most commonly used, these are: first, auto-photography and second, photo elicitation. Auto-photography is used to allow the participants to create an environment which seems like the researcher and observer are seeing the world through the participants eyes (Glaw et.al, 2017). This is often achieved by handing a disposable camera to participants and encouraging them to take photos as they go about their everyday activities or within the particular research theme. The second method, photo elicitation; is a technique which relies on the photographs ability to evoke certain feelings and memories in participants by showing them selected images. This is most often used in an interview setting and the reactions and narratives from the participants in response to the selected images are recorded. Harper (2002) explains:

“The parts of the brain that process visual information are in evolutionary terms older than the parts of the brain that process verbal information; therefore visual images evoke deeper parts of human consciousness than

words do. Words alone use less of the brain's capacity than processing visual images using words..." (Harper, 2002 in Glaw et.al. 2017, 3).

Photography is quite a common element in geographical and urban research, with theorists making use of the technique in a variety of contexts. However, the technique is more frequently used as a means of capturing data than it is for presentation. For example, in physical geography; photography is frequently used to capture the size of lichen populations on rock formations. However, other uses have been quite prevalent, particularly in the form of capturing the symbols of different urban and rural forms.

For this research, a form of auto-photography was used; but from the perspective of the researcher. The idea was to create an immersive environment where the reader could experience some of the sights observed by the researcher 'through the researcher's eyes'. The photos were compiled into a photographic essay, and was meant to demonstrate to the reader the many different urban and rural forms which were observed during the research; additionally the photos captured the huge distances which was covered during the fieldwork. The photo-essay was distributed between each chapter of the thesis, acting as a plot device of sorts, which in a sense mediated the experience of the thesis in the same way the researcher was often caught between two worlds, that being the theoretical underpinning which formed the foundation of knowledge about the many places that were visited; and the lived reality of actually physically seeing these places. However, a picture is truly worth a thousand words, because each individual that looks at the image may feel and experience something very different...perhaps it is appreciating what the researcher saw and the realities of conducting research or it may be something completely different such as enticement, intrigue and a desire to want to conduct one's own research.

Documentary Film Making as Method

Referred to by Friend and Caruthers (2016) documentary film making is 'post-qualitative' in nature; thereby presumably making it the next step in qualitative research. As an element in visual qualitative methods, documentary film making "[as] a postmodernist

project, film crosses, incorporates or reconstructs borders of different disciplines, research paradigms, geographical locations and cultures (Friend and Caruthers, 2016,35-34)”; making it perhaps one of the strongest techniques available for cross disciplinary research.

Documentary film making is itself, a highly innovative, complex and challenging method. Within the academic documentary film there are two distinct forms, the first being the collection of audio and visual data for analysis (AVO) and second, the use of audio and visual material as a medium (AVM) (Figueroa, 2008). The distinction between these two forms is subtle, but highly relevant. AVM may be used to analyse data “as the objectified depiction of reality” and AVO is basically the use of different methods and techniques in constructing reality in different mediums (Viswambharan and Priyam, 2015). What this means is that one form, will assume that what is being shown is a portion of reality placed under a microscope and objectified but remains a depiction of reality (AVM) and the other is a true depiction of reality which is undistorted.

AVO operates under particular methodological constraints, these are (Viswambharan and Priyam, 2015, 5):

- “Explication of researchers’ epistemological standpoint and interpretative framework...”
- “Considering audio-visual material as a whole for initial analysis of data...”
- “Use of grounded theory procedures for the purpose of data analysis”

AVM looks very critically as how the AVO is presented. Each documentary film will to some degree demonstrate characteristics of both audio-visual forms as in the final product of the film (depending on the audience and purpose) the film can provide both data for analysis and will implore techniques for maximising the medium to ensure that message is taken across (Konecki, 2011). In short the AVM and the AVO determine the function and purpose of the documentary and it is this function and purpose that steer the director or researcher.

Documentary film is very much a stand-alone methodology and has a wide array of elements which contribute to the completeness of the method. However, like all other methods (regardless of how robust it seems), documentary film making like method is a series of unitary approaches bolstered together in sequence to form an output – a film.

The production of a documentary film was an integral part in the attempt to expand our current knowledge horizons of small towns, with the optimistic vision of creating a holistic and multidimensional reading on small towns in South Africa. With that said, it was also the most challenging element of this thesis, second to actually writing it (Raijmakers, Gaver and Bishay, 2006). There are five dominant types of documentaries which occur, these are (i) *Expository Documentary*, which typically address the audience and is led by a presenter; (ii) *Impressionistic Documentary*: which may simply be described as poetic or stylised and places a great deal of emphasis on the AVO and cinematographic elements; (iii) *Observational Documentary*: which relies on the subject being unaware that it is being filmed and tries to capture the true and unhindered essence of life and realtion; (iv) *Reflexive Documentary*: which hinges on exploiting self-reflexive and addresses the process of representation; and (v) *Experimental Documentary*: which simply put do not resemble any of the other types of documentary film (Bill, 2001; Walker, 2007). Atop of these documentary typologies, are a series of techniques which enable the documentaries. As Raijmakers et.al. (2006) summarises them:

“The documentary approaches we have described here are ordered according to the explicit involvement of the filmmaker. Fly-on-the-wall observation represents the attempt to maintain neutrality in service of objectivity, while other films illustrate different forms of intervention, compilation and finally performance as alternative ways to uncover insights about situations and people of interest.” (Raijmakers et.al. 2006, 4)

Although photography has found its footing within urban and geographical disciplines, film has yet to establish itself in the same way and remains a neglected and underutilised

qualitative research tool with uncapitalised potential (see Bill, 2001; Friend and Caruthers, 2016; Raijmakers et.al. 2006; Konecki, 2011; Viswambharan and Priya, 2015). Nevertheless, the potential of documentary film as both a data-capturing tool and a data presentation tool is evident; but the question is, if it is really as beneficial as it is purported; how pragmatic is it.

To understand the visual film technique and its challenges, a documentary film was produced as part of the research. It was used both as a data capturing and presentation method.

To elaborate on what was outlined in the methodology chapter of this thesis. The help of research assistant with a background in film was enlisted to assist in the production of the film. The approach taken was to film within particular themes, these being *small towns; participants* and the *researcher* (for reflexive purposes). Due to the nature of the researcher it wasn't possible to write the film beforehand nor to script the documentary – although we had discussed ideas and visions of the documentary before setting out on the field work. What emerged was a very organic method of filming. The footage collected was then classed and separated. It underwent review and the 'best' or most valuable parts were identified with the intention of being edited together in post-production.

Documentary Synopses

The footage was edited into two separate documentaries. Although the initial intention was to have a single informative documentary that held together all the major themes of the research, such as the lived experience of small towns as narrated by interviewee's; explorations of the rhythm of small towns and the experience of conducting research in a small town; it was visually not possible. A disadvantage of using film as medium to present data (which was identified and will be discussed later in the chapter) is the limitation of film to convey complex themes and ideas – especially when it isn't scripted. In writing it all seems very easy and possible, that is until one gets into the editing suite.

702 The documentary went through several version, being edited by the research assistant,
703 a film student and the researcher in an attempt to try and produce a single, coherent and
704 interesting documentary. However as stated previously film is a complex method with
705 many intricacies that need to be mastered before a film that can be considered decent
706 is produced.

707 In all about 60 hours of footage was collected and edited in the first film which is about
708 15 minutes in duration, and has attempted to present a sing coalesced view of the small
709 towns, the lived experience of participants and the experience of doing research from
710 the researchers' perspective. The film is guided by the narratives of the participants, and
711 footage of the small towns is interspersed within the narratives. The footage tries to
712 depict, in image and sound the story of the participants and the wade through the
713 interview designed to extract an understanding of their lived experience.

714 A highly important element of the film is the role of the researcher, and the researcher is
715 included in the film in a reflexive capacity which was also intended to help guide the film
716 and give it context. The researcher is depicted in a calm and sterile environment,
717 commenting on the experience in post-production. The importance of this is to
718 demonstrate the 'veil' of research which often surrounds research. What I mean is that
719 research is a highly messy process, which can be seen at times during the film;
720 particularly when the researcher and her team are asked to leave by one of the
721 participants' wife and the team have to end the interview quite abruptly, moreover, other
722 moments, like when the team are sitting and waiting for participants who said they were
723 happy to do the interview, but asked the team to come back a little later, or when the
724 researcher and the team were stuck with a flat tire on a dirt road. What has presented to
725 the viewer is a highly polished and orchestrated final product, however the process
726 behind it were wrought with difference challenges and the difficulties which although
727 subtly contributed to the finished product and are often ignored or hidden.

728 Upon completing this film, during the review with some stakeholders (i.e. the supervisor)
729 it was found that the 'town; did not feature as prominently in the film as we were hoping
730 this then prompted a remake of the film, into a more poetic film with no narratives. The
731 idea of this was that the narrative; although important, also distract from other elements;
732 particularly of the town. In removing them, we are able to extenuate certain elements
733 and play down other elements. A black and white aesthetic style was used in this film;
734 as Miller (2017) explains:

735 "From a technical aspect, the aesthetic has changed the way
736 filmmakers play with texture, lighting, sets, and depth. But more
737 importantly, black and white changes a movie thematically, providing
738 atmosphere, tone, and visually providing stark contrasts and a
739 dreamlike view of the world. It can at once make a film feel more real
740 (like time period accurate film and photographs) while making it feel
741 unreal (real life is in color)." (Miller, 2014, 1)

742 As mentioned by Miller, the use of black aesthetic in films has a particular thematic
743 impact on the film, chief amongst this is the association of black and white with film noir.
744 Film noir is traditionally understood as a rather dark technique in representing a narrative,
745 usually set in the city, making visual use of talk towering building over the film subject.
746 The genre is also deeply psychologically seated and has been used post-technicolour
747 as a way of constructing the mind-scape of the principle protagonist- and emphasis a
748 dark and eerie perception of reality (Miller, 2014).

749 Elements of film noir include:

- the psychological exploration of the darker side of humankind that takes place
- the social exploration of the darker side of society that takes place
- the urban 'realism' that often sees modern life as a labyrinthine hell
- the use of light and shadow as representations of good and evil/danger
- the use of sparse sets that could be seen to represent the bleak psychological world in some way
- the use of psychological and actual violence, often within relationships and particularly within the sexual dimension of male–female relationships.

750

751 Amongst the characteristics of film noir, there are definitive and appealing elements
752 which seem appropriate in the representation of the many dystopian ideas of small
753 towns. However, the motivation for the use of black and white in the poetic documentary
754 did not come from a tradition in film noir, but rather in photography. As XX describes the
755 use of urban photography to highlight the many 'grey' areas which acts as the stitching
756 between the different fabrics at work in the city. He goes on to explain how we often try
757 to isolate an element in photography and present it as an individual piece, which has its
758 position within the academic and art faculties, however, when it comes to photography
759 and the city, taking photos of the different urban landscapes allows us to highlight the
760 many in between spaces that contribute to the completed image we process of the urban
761 landscape, emphasising the important on the many grey spaces that bring it together. In
762 a metaphorical sense, we can argue that similarly in research we try to isolate certain
763 topics of scrutiny, and whilst it has its place in the overall discipline, we cannot ignore
764 the many grey areas that connect with and interact with the subject; adding to and
765 enhancing the complexity of the research subject.

That said, the lived reality of small towns is that these are vibrant and culturally rich spaces. They are not sparsely set or void; but rather scenic and natural. These are not spaces which are a living labyrinth of hell, albeit at times they can be; but are particularly tranquil, the people warm and in general welcoming.

Ethnography as Method

Ethnography can be the star research method in anthropology. It has survived decades of anthropological thought and revision of thought. It has its roots in observational research. It is the systematic study of people and cultures; and the data collected can be presented in visual and written forms. Ethnography is frequently miss-associated to mean qualitative research, however, this is incorrect. True ethnography, whilst a subclass of qualitative research is a unique method which entails an attempt by the researcher to maintain as much of the authentic experience of research topic and the subjects identity as possible. Ethnography as a tool has become especially useful in allowing the subject to take responsibility of how it is represented in research and take ownership of its identity (see)

Ethnographic research relies on three principles, which have emerged as both a best practice and a critique to qualitative research methodology to fairly and authentically represent the subject. The three principles are (a) *Naturalism*; this is the understanding that true representations of a character or subject can only occur if it's natural environment surrounded by a setting the subject is familiar with. An important element of naturalism, is the anonymity of the research, and the minimalist disruption of the researcher in the environment of the subject (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008) (2) *Understanding*; this premises the idea that all cultures are different and as such a hyper-acuteness to understanding and appreciating that things may appear different in different contexts and the ability to capture that is what makes ethnographic research valuable. This combined with the minimalist interference of the research in the subject's environment means should produce a rather rich and detailed ethnography (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008). (3) *Discovery*; the final principle which makes ethnographic research

unique from other methods is the premise of discovery. Ethnographic research is more fixated on discovery than it is on testing certain hypothesis; and for this reason, it allows the research to relinquish control of the research matter ever so slightly and let the subject operate organically thereby catalysing the opportunity of discovery (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008).

Even though the ethnography, provides the reader with the opportunity to engage with the subject authentically. Rethinking around the power dynamics in research have led to a greater awareness of the researcher's influence of the subject matter as discussion in the ontological recap of anthropology. It is for this reason that the use of the ethnographic method in this research was slightly different to the traditional or recommended implementation of the tool (Day, 2012). An ethnographic monograph was produced as a separate element which supported the overall thesis, however, the content has derived from the interviews conducted with the participants. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were editing into a flowing narrative. Although there was some data manipulation, the intention was to provide the reader with a literary experience of life in small towns. Contrast between the different narratives of the participants in the narrative of the experience of the research. The interviews were kept in first person speech, in order to keep intact the identities and independence of the participants (see Day, 2012).

6.5. Reflecting on the appropriateness of the research techniques

Photography as method

From amongst the three qualitative methods which were used as alternatives to quantitative research, the photography was the simplest and yielded significant results with the least effort. It certainly doesn't have the same depth and quality of film, nor the imaginative and descriptive qualities of the ethnographic monograph, however it was certainly successful in relaying a particular narrative.

It is also possible that I found this research tool the most appropriate as I am most familiar with it. Therefore, the inherent bias of my experience needs to be considered. That said,

as a medium for conveying information in a relatively quick and easy manner; photography is definitely the choice tool.

Reflecting on the ethnography as method

The method was highly successful in creating a text rich with detail and insights into the personal experience of people who currently live in small towns and those who no longer. It is a definite step away from academic literature in sense that there is nothing that can be measured from this method, and the contents of the monograph needs to be appreciated for itself and its content.

The technique was easy to implement but the data processing was especially laborious; especially given that English was not the first language of many of the participants. Additionally, this method requires a reliable recording device. Unfortunately during one of the interviews the recorder failed for some or other reason; and which we hadn't realised until after the interview. There was no possible way that we could go back and redo the interview so we had to leave that participant out.

Reflecting on the use of a Documentary Film Making Method

For all intents and purposes, film is a highly effective way to capture data and present it. It allows for the researcher to capture the complex textures, sights and sounds of the research subject – it also allows one to capture other rather intangible elements such as body language and eye movement or facial expression or changes in tone for example. But as much opportunity for enhanced data collection as there is, there are limitations of the method; in that we can only really capture what is within the field of view of the lens. Although on the surface, it doesn't seem problematic, it can become quite a difficult navigation. Moreover, other previously unconsidered elements such as lighting, and camera angle and background or foreground matter, because they frame the subject and speak very subtly to the unconscious which creates the basis for our experience and interpretation of the subject.

The use of film as a technique had both advantages and disadvantages. Probably the biggest advantage, at least from my experience as a scientist using a humanities

850 solution, is that film has an unparalleled ability to capture movement and sound, or audio
851 and visual. It succeeds photography in providing the additional stimuli of motion and
852 sound; certainly providing a more immersive experience.

853 Disadvantages of film, primarily, it can be extremely expensive to outlay the capital
854 required to purchase the necessary equipment. What is important about this point is that
855 understanding what equipment is necessary and what isn't changes on the scope,
856 requirement or audience for which the documentary is being produced. Additional to this
857 is that there is a variety of equipment ranging dramatically in price. Nevertheless, the
858 initial outlay of the money can put strain on funds especially if it wasn't accounted for in
859 the initial allocation of the budget.

860 The primary motivation for choosing to do a documentary film was the potential that it
861 held in capturing a more authentic sense of the subject. To the lay-person, film making
862 may seem like a simple enough task, especially ethnographic film making – which (in the
863 traditional sense) attempts to represent the subject in its most natural, unaltered and
864 authentic manner. However, this is not the case. Film making and research through film
865 is a very, very different device altogether. The complexities begin with firstly deciding
866 what time of documentary you would like to make and in what way you would like to
867 present the subject; thereafter the complexities increase with decisions related to the
868 sourcing and use of camera, sound, lighting and editing technology. Thereafter, you are
869 faced with the mammoth task of collating and organising your data which may take the
870 form of either video with audio footage, audio only or video only; which all needs to be
871 uploaded into a single editing suit to be cut and reworked into a coherent film that is true
872 to the subject but also interesting and appealing to the audience. In retrospect,
873 documentary film making was far more difficult than the employ of any other research
874 techniques that I have encountered thus far.

875 One of the most important moments for me was reconciling in my own mind and coming
876 to a sense of acceptance of what the documentary film was going to look like. Upon

embarking on the project, I had very high hopes and expectations of filming and presenting the documentary in a beautifully cinematic way, with equally beautiful music and sound quality. It isn't that this was possible, but on one hand I was determined to use the documentary film as a tool for conducting research and on the other wanted desperately to transverse these magmatic scenes of cinematic beauty throughout the film. Although highly possible, it also required a lot more time and an actual documentary script. Determined that the script would detract of the authenticity of the subject I surrendered one part of my ambition to the documentary. I am certain that there is a definite way of combining the two, but this is definitely where my inexperience is seen the most.

Thinking about how this will be represented as part of the broader work

Another of the challenges came in deciding how best to include the documentary in the larger body of work. As a standalone project, the documentary would not survive a full PhD examination, especially in the science faculty. Initially, the idea was to have it as a presentation of collected and raw data only, however, this made the film quite tedious and boring to watch. The decision was then taken to work towards a film that could be presented as data and analysis.

Reflecting on post-production analysis

Analysis of the ethnographic material in this thesis appears to be absent, however this was quite deliberate. An important concept which has been developing through the various arguments, discussion and conversations held in this document has been leading to words a consensus that too much power is held by the research, and with that power comes an unprecedented bias. With this in mind it becomes impossible for the researcher to provide an analysis of the material, as the researcher is too involved and is aware of the different circumstances as well as the decision making process that went into producing the material. Therefore, there researcher may be naturally inclined towards defending certain decisions as apposed critically reflecting upon it.

It's about what's most comfortable (change is always hard)

During the research process, I often thought of simply abandoning the documentary film as a research tool, simply because it was difficult. Admittedly, the traditional tools, written

quantitative and qualitative data seems more simple and easier to acquire than the filming and editing of the film. However, as difficult as it was it was also an important insight into effect is has on the researcher's feelings towards a research topic or the potential frustrations involved in deploying non-familiar methods for those who may wish *to try it in the future. I will however, recommend that should anyone want to use this as a tool, it would be well worth it to enrol in a short film course, wherein you can be instructed in the method of film making. This is something I wish I had done.

The Ethics of cracking software

A huge consideration is the ethics around the use of video editing software. The reality is that access to this softer is necessary to turn the raw footage into a solid documentary that conveys a story and has both meaning and value. Another reality is that film making, its equipment and software is extremely expensive making it largely inaccessible to many people, especially researcher on a tight budget. The consequence of this is that it may be the cause of a lot of disinterest in the method, because it is so expensive.

An important conversation to have with yourself as the researcher is what the ethics around using cracked software is. I tried my utmost to procure the software legally, in order to edit the documentary film, but after continuous failed attempt, I was running out of time and was forced to download pirated software off the internet.

Discussing the meaning of titles

The title was chosen with the definitive intention to invoke thought and intrigue. It was also selected to represent the major complexities in these otherwise small places, thereby alerting the viewer to an idea that there is more to be discovered.

6.6. Understanding the dimensions of the research

Conducting any kind of research can be a difficult and complex task that requires a variety of resources as well as personal motivation, dedication and resilience. Needless to say there are many dimensions to any research project which ultimately contribute to the overall production of knowledge in any particular field. For this research project five

elemental dimensions were identified that required both facilitation and management. These are: Researcher Interest and Topic, Supervisor, Intellectual Contribution, Research Logistics and Data Management. Each of the five interact, affecting the progress and structure of the others.

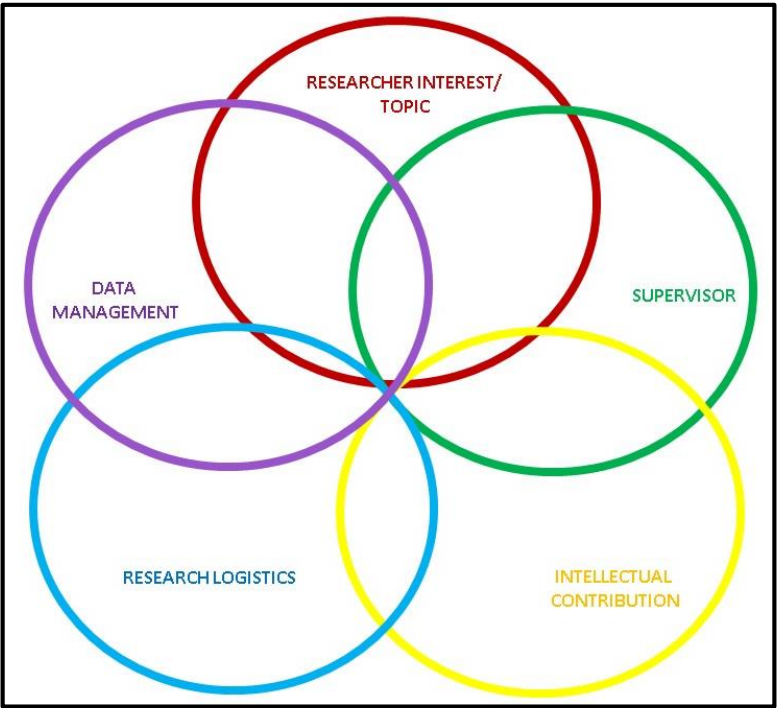


Figure 44: Research Dimensions

Researcher Interest and Topic, refers to the personal academic interest of the researcher. These interests are strongly linked to the individual's personal motivations and background and therefore translate into the research question and sub-questions. It is also the researcher's personal interest and investment in the topic that will ultimately maintain the momentum of the research during the duration of the research period; which in the case of a PhD is a minimum of 2 years (depending on the institution). For example, for this research, I was particularly interested in the lived experience of spaces,

957 furthermore, I have always been more interested in exploring different urban forms
958 outside of the city than within the city limits.

959 Academic fatigue is a real thing. Especially when engaged with such a long-term project
960 that is mostly self-motivated. It is important to understand that the demands and the
961 associated stressors are complex and actively affect our overall state of wellbeing and
962 the research progress. Mental, financial and emotional strains that accompany the
963 research process as well as external pressures such as relationships or social demands
964 for our time and energy, often the demands of work, institutional requirements and even
965 obstacles to completing the research such as permits or within the research itself such
966 as writers-block can negatively affect the researcher and the research if improperly
967 managed. Researcher fatigue can take several forms, amongst the most common is
968 procrastination, disinterest or purely a lack of motivation to complete even the simplest
969 of tasks related to the research (Almeida-Souza and Baets, 2012). The inability to work
970 on the research in which ever stage it is in, and the accompanying guilt often leads to
971 thoughts of being a failure and feeling unworthy. Overcoming mental fatigue is a much
972 discussed topic in psychology, with many suggestions coming from a variety of sources,
973 as to exactly how to overcome what can become a cycle of frustration. Personally, I
974 addressed this in three particular ways. This first was to not allow myself to succumb to
975 feelings of failure, or allowing anxieties related to feeling unworthy – to get the better of
976 me. Although there were times when I felt overwhelmed, especially in the writing stage
977 of the research process, when all I wanted to do was sleep because I couldn't compose
978 more than two sentences at a time and I had an ambitious target of writing 12 pages a
979 day in order to meet my submission date. The first thing I would do would be to identify
980 where this anxiety is stemming from. In the majority of cases it was due to time pressures
981 and the need to meet certain targets. My strategy was to first identify what my main
982 stressors were in addition to the time pressures. At times it was dealing with a difficult
983 concept or topic or emotional anxieties. Once I identified the stressor I deconstructed it
984 into a series of smaller tasks that when completed would contribute to overcoming the

stressor. Secondly, when I began to feel over whelmed to the point that I couldn't actually achieve anything, I would change my environment, by going to work in a completely different space or taking a walk in a calming environment such as in the garden where I could hear the birds chirp or feel the sunlight on my skin. Lastly, I would seek help my discussing the difficult topic or my anxieties with someone I trusted, like my mother or supervisor. In doing this I wasn't necessarily looking for a solution but being able to verbalise my challenges was relieving. I tried my best not to go to sleep as I didn't want my body and mind to begin associating stress and anxiety with sleep, that is to say, every time I felt stressed or anxious in the future, my primary response would be to sleep.

The Supervisor, plays a pinnacle role in the overall research project. The relationship between the supervisor and the researcher is highly layered. The main function of the supervisor is to guide a student by offering intellectual support, ideas and potentially offering solutions at times to problems that require experience, knowledge of the institutions or a greater in-depth knowledge of a topic. It is also extremely important that a supervisor is interested and supportive of the researcher's topic, but it is equally important that the supervisor and the student are able to get along professionally, as a poor supervisor-researcher relationship or disinterest in the topic by the supervisor can be devastating to the research project (Mainhard, Rijst, Tartwijk and Wubbles, 2009). My supervisor had played an indispensable role being the voice of reason and calm throughout my research process. Essentially, it was his positive and warm attitude that brought be back to the university and my research when I was determined to deregister and quit within my first year. Regular meetings and discussions held with your supervisor is also important for maintaining steady and focused progress during the PhD Process.

The *intellectual contribution* of research can be considered one of the most difficult aspects of any research project. It is often a pivotal point of discussion between the researcher and the supervisor and is one of the primary conditions against which a dissertation or thesis is measured. The assessment of the contribution of knowledge varies amongst institutions and disciplines (Baptista, Frisk, Holley, Remmik, Tesch and

Akerlind, 2015). The intellectual contribution to a field can be seen as an exchange between two constituents during assessment, the first being 'original, creative and innovative' research (Baptista et al., 2015) and the second: 'knowledge and theory' (Morrison, 2003). The quality of the originality of a thesis has been recognised as essential to the doctoral thesis. Furthermore, theory building is an essential part to new knowledge development. Understanding that data and information report on the experience, or the 'what' of observations, and theory being the explanation as to 'why' something has been observed – is key to understanding how the intellectual contribution of a thesis is assessed. In this thesis, identifying a solid contribution to knowledge was challenging, particularly because it spanned multiple disciplines. Arguably, one of the primary intellectual contributions of this research has come from the use of 'experimental' research methods, that being documentary film as tool for engaging with small towns.

Then there are the *research logistics*. Each project has its' own unique set of logistical requirements in order to be completed. This can include and is not limited to elements such as transport for getting to and from research sites, the need for a research team and their personal requirements on the trip, acquiring and maintaining funding, budget management, research tools such as surveys, sourcing or acquiring equipment, scheduling, meals planning as well as participant sourcing and relationship management. This PhD was approached as a 'project' and thus managed using traditional project management concepts and tools. The project was quite logistically intensive, as a car needed to be hired that was large enough to carry three adults, plus luggage and supplies. Being a Muslim, I had very specific meal restrictions and it was necessary to the majority of our meat from Johannesburg that would last just over a week. Furthermore, arranging 'decent' accommodation was critical. Whilst it may be acceptable for me to rough it out a bit (and I have), I couldn't expect my research team to have to endure challenging sleeping arrangement. These requirements generally had a budgetary implication and budget management was a difficult but imperative part of the research logistics.

1041 Lastly, *Data Management*. Different projects will require different data management
1042 systems. For this project, we collected approximately 110 gigabytes of digital data in
1043 two weeks of field work. This excluding other photos and video footage that was collected
1044 during other trips. This was a massive amount of data that needed to be sorted, stored,
1045 backed-up and shared with the team members. An external hard-drive was used to back-
1046 up the data, and both I and the research assistant would directly copy the data from the
1047 SD cards of the camera's to our computers before clearing or formatting the cards.
1048 Lastly, I used google drive to store the most critical pieces of data, and even more
1049 completed documents such as the written thesis.

1050 **Thinking about language barriers and the use of a translator**

1051 The need for a research team was necessary for this project because of the nature of
1052 the project. However there are inherent advantages and disadvantages of having a
1053 research team. Language was a huge barrier, if with regard to local South African
1054 languages. Whilst I aptly understand Afrikaans as a spoken language I, cannot speak it
1055 fluently nor can I write it. Secondly engaging with Chinese migrants hosted its own set
1056 of challenges with regard to the language barrier. Even though I had a mandarin
1057 translator, what would often happen is that they would insist in speaking in English even
1058 though it was broken. Very often their answers would be simplistic and would result in a
1059 thin answer without much detail.

1060 A major advantage of having a research team was the presence of support from a group
1061 of people who understood the mission of the research and with whom I could engage
1062 with on an academic level, to overcome challenges during the field work.

1063 A disadvantage of having a research team was the added responsibility of monitoring
1064 the research team. Having more experience in the field and being more aware for the
1065 potential dangers, the protocol, ethics and expectations are a vital part of the field work.
1066 I held a sensitivity workshop with my team and briefed them explicitly on what to expect,
1067 how to respond and how best to act in an ethical and non-threatening way. However, the

1068 team still required continuous monitoring to ensure that they did not act unethically in
1069 any way and that they adhered to the protocols of the research. Additionally, I had to
1070 ensure that the research team, especially my research assistant was not in danger. She
1071 had the responsibility of handling and using the equipment. The need to get certain shots
1072 and footage, often put her and myself in dangerous positions like in the middle of the
1073 road. My biggest fear was that she would be attacked for the camera, or the audio
1074 recorder which looked like a cell phone. And she may have been hurt and or the data
1075 lost.

1076 **Reflecting on the presence and the presentation of the researcher**

1077 An important element is the way that the researcher positions themselves during the
1078 research. It is always recommended that the researcher try to blend in as much as
1079 possible. A reality in the small towns, is that you simply cannot bend in. the GP number
1080 plates on the car is the first give away. And secondly, I don't know how, but people from
1081 the small town can just recognise that we are not from there. Even if it was a matter of
1082 us walking through the local Spar or Shoprite, we would often be stopped, and a small
1083 conversation would ensue about where we come from and what we are doing there.

1084 An interesting interaction was with the CMBO. I often try to wear non branded clothing,
1085 with earth tones so that I don't stick out. However a habit of mine, especially when I am
1086 travelling is to wear a hat, to keep my hair out of my face, and protect my skin from the
1087 sun. Secondly, I wear glasses, which naturally change colour and look like sunglasses
1088 when I walk in the sun; they take a few minutes upon entering an enclosed space to
1089 return to their clear colour. The CMBO saw this as threatening when I first entered the
1090 store, and I was made aware of this. Later when we approached potential participants, I
1091 was careful to remove my cap before entering their stores, or approaching them.

1092 **Consolidating the research components (how it all comes together)**

1093 The most difficult part of this was consolidating the research components. With the three
1094 streams that were active throughout the research process and needed to be investigated,
1095 results recorded and analysed made it especially difficult to bring together.

1096 A core feature to the success of this was working with a strong team to whom I could
1097 delegate tasks, with meetings held twice a week where we reflected on progress and
1098 adjusted the content and set goals for the coming days.

1099 **Continuous Problem Solving and major challenges**

1100 A core feature of any research project is the continuous need for problem solving and
1101 overcoming or mitigating obstacles and challenges. In truth no matter how prepared you
1102 are, during field work and the final stages of writing the research report there is
1103 continuous need for problem solving. The field work makes it especially challenging as
1104 most of the time you are out of your comfort zone and in an unfamiliar area.

1105 Things like problems with the equipment, managing the data and being able to stand for
1106 three hours at a time during interviews are amongst the challenges. Also in addition are
1107 matters around getting lost on your way to places you have only been to once or twice.
1108 Overcoming rejection by declining-participants, and the emotional strain of the pressures
1109 of the research in general, being away from home and so on. These are all amongst the
1110 never spoken about realities of field work. Whether or not we like to admit it, it does in
1111 some way or another affect the way the research is carried out.

1112 Another problem was fatigue during the research. As the field work was set over 8
1113 continuous days in small towns, mental fatigue began setting in around the 4th day, and
1114 by the 8th day the entire team began showing signs of mental and physical fatigue. It was
1115 a long and tiring trip. The second round of field work was only four days, but again mental
1116 fatigue eventually set in, as the researcher there is no chance of turning your brain off
1117 and taking a rest.

1118 **Dangers of field work and knowing when to walk away**

1119 A poorly discussed element of research in general is the dangers of research, knowing
1120 when to walk away and some of the unique challenges faced by female researchers.

1121

6.7. What is the opportunity of narrativity in urban research?

The methods tested in this research are not new methods within research, however with the exception of photography; film and ethnographic narratives are considerably less common in urban geographical research. Human geography has made significant strides in expanding its common practice research methods by borrowing and incorporating different approaches from a variety of different fields.

Film as a technique for capturing and presenting data has been both successful and unsuccessful. Initially I argued that video and audio would give more independence to the voices of the participants, thus allowing a truer narrative to be accessible. Whilst film does provide a lot more stimuli, it is also subject to the potential of a lot more manipulation which affect the visual representation and reception of the subject. Footage, once collected will need to undergo intense editing and arrangement into a collection – also known as a documentary film. How sequences are arranged, plots developed, characters represented and a narrative is constructed is critical the ability of a film to convey a message, idea or story. Film, despite its richness has far less time to capture an audience and convey a story than text. Moreover, film has become a medium which often competes with text (take for example learning how to do something over youtube as opposed to reading a book) and as such it is important to consider who your audience will be and how they will receive the message or story being conveyed in the film. An additional disadvantage of film is the cost implications linked to film production. Sourcing equipment as well as the skills necessary to produce even a half-decent film can be quite costly and ultimately experience plays a vital role to the ability of a film to relay its intended message or to achieve general viewer success. Furthermore, the production of a documentary film, can become rather expensive and very time consuming.

Ethnographic narratives have also proven to be very effective in capturing and rendering a rich-text document which is capable of conveying the subtleties and nuances of small town urbanism. Text as a medium is also able to actively captivate its audience with little expense. However, to achieve an ‘academically’ acceptable level of literature; the data

1150 needs to undergo several rounds of editing and cleansing – in order to produce a
1151 coherent and concise document. The greatest criticism in this is the opportunity of the
1152 data to be distorted and the original message may be lost, or at the very least
1153 undervalued in favour of more catching themes. Moreover, this method does little in
1154 preserving the authenticity of the participants narrative when constructed and presented
1155 in the manner that it has for the research – which has followed a traditionally
1156 ethnographic methods.

1157 Photography appears to be the most autonomous of the three methods, as it more
1158 accurately preserves the authenticity of the subject – however even this is limited to the
1159 bias and manipulation of the researcher. A photograph can capture landscapes and
1160 emotion and can even be arranged so that they become an emotive force. Colouring
1161 techniques, lighting, angle and arrangement of photographs in a collection impact the
1162 effectiveness a photograph has in conveying a particular idea, story or argument. That
1163 being said, photography has the least opportunity to be manipulated.

1164 An important element within research, which has become apparent during the course of
1165 this research, is the researcher's own narrative. Whilst we are actively aware of
1166 researcher bias and it is common practice of academic writing to remove the researcher's
1167 own narrative as much as possible, arguing that objectivity in the field will produce the
1168 best and untainted results – in practice however; the researcher cannot fully remove their
1169 bias, nor can they completely decontextualize themselves. The most significant element
1170 of film is its emotive quality. The ability of film to engage directly with an individual's
1171 senses and emotions through a combination of images and music. The power that this
1172 then gives the researcher over the audience makes this untenable and possibly
1173 dangerous as is often seen in propaganda film.

1174 All the methods used and discussed in this thesis have advantages and disadvantages.
1175 When deciding which is the more appropriate and useful is truly left to the researcher
1176 and their individual affinity towards any of the methods. The most significant achievement

of testing these methods is demonstrating – in parallel the use and outcomes of the methods in relation to each other – all of which has yielded new and interesting results about small towns.

A consideration with any of the methods discussed above, is the subject. It is within the researchers prerogative to decide what to make the subject or object of the research, and by inference, this discounts or ignores another potential subject. For example, the researcher may be particularly interested in capturing urban decay, and symbols and signifiers which demonstrate this such as broken paving, homelessness, and graffiti and so on; in choosing to focus their attention on these images they ignore other possible images which may contradict the reality. Moreover, once these images are arranged in a sequence they may construct a particular narrative about a space that depicts a very skewed and one sided view – however without knowledge of this manipulation an observer may be inclined to develop a particular perception of a space based on the information provided. The same concept can be applied to research in general.

6.8. Conclusion

In this chapter we looked at photography, ethnographic narrative and film as potential methods for engaging more directly with small town urbanism. The results and outcomes were mixed with each of the three methods proving to have both advantages and disadvantages in capturing and presenting data.

Film was the most challenging of the three methods, as it required the most about of technical knowledge. Moreover, as vocation it is expensive and time consuming – and provides the opportunity to greatly manipulate and distort data and results. However, there is also ample opportunity for the use film in capturing raw data for review by the researcher – allowing the researcher to have continuous access to the research site in a multidimensional and multi-sensorial way without having to physically revisit the site. Additionally, recorded footage allows the researcher to replay events and moments which may have been captured for a more detailed analysis.

The ethnographic narrative approach also proved quite effective in producing a rich text which captured in great detail the urbanism of small towns – however as with film, the text needed to be edited and the data cleansed quite extensively in order to produce a

1208 single piece of work which was coherent and pointed. Again, as with film, the need for
1209 extensive data processing leaves the data vulnerable to potential distortion and and a
1210 loss of authenticity.

1211 Finally, photography appeared to be the most cost effective and required the least
1212 amount of technical skill in comparison to the to the other methods. But there are also
1213 opportunities to use photographs in a biased and uneven way – distorting the narrative
1214 of the image through colour correction, angle and of course the decision on what to make
1215 the subject of the photograph.

1216 To answer the question, what is the opportunity of narrativity in South African urban
1217 research: There is a definite opportunity, and the potential in advancing the
1218 understanding of urban dynamics is significant. However, the disadvantages of the
1219 methods need to be taken into consideration prior to embarking on the research as
1220 reasonable steps will need to be taken to mitigate the disadvantages and maximise on
1221 the benefits of these methods in urban research.

1222



1223 *Image 19: Inside the living quarters of a Chinese business owner, Vrede*

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Image 20: Scenes of rurabness

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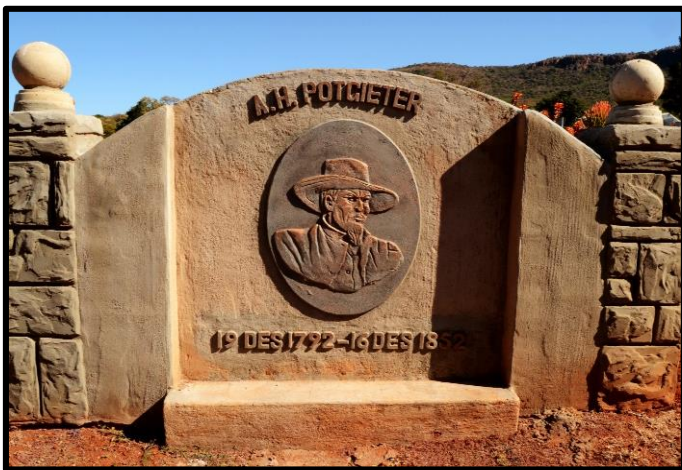


Image 21: Scenes from small towns in South Africa



Image 22: Afridome in Parys, Free State



Image 23: Street Scape of Parys, Free State



Image 24: Church in Wolmaransstad, North West.



Image 25: Street scape images from Vrede, Pilgrims Rest, Vrede and Senekal

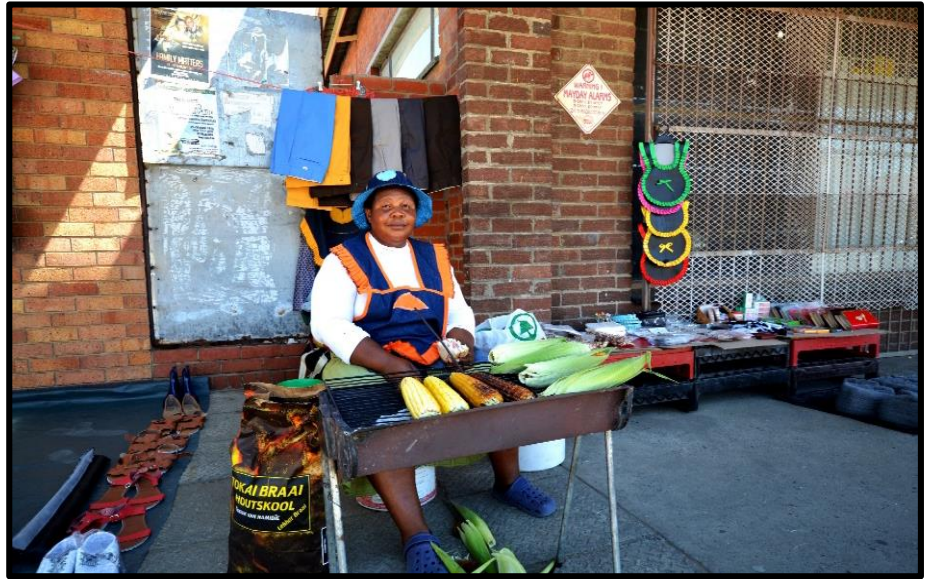


Image 26: Business owners in small towns

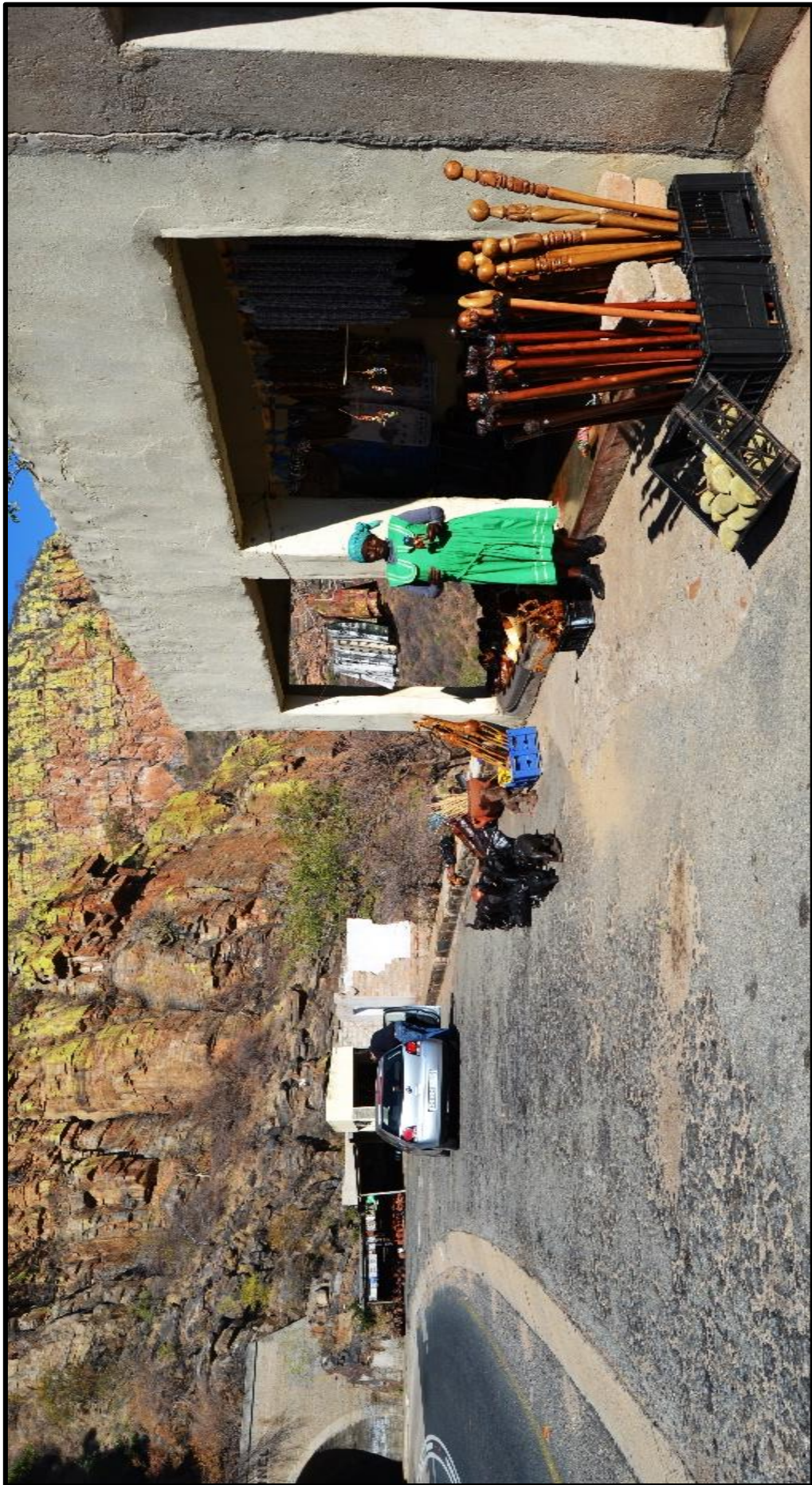


Image 28: Business owner at Strydom Pass

7

Conclusion: The Anthropomorphic Town



7. CONCLUSION: THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC TOWN

7.1. Introduction

The focus of this research was to understand the urbanism of small South African towns and the different mediums and ways available to unpack the lived experience. This very idea has been the premise of many research attempts as we have progressed further into our democracy, new government and confronted with the many challenges which accompanied the transitions - such as an increase in migration of people from rural to urban areas, a transformation of cities which were previously reserved for a minority and other such experiences.

The urbanism, or way of living in the city appears panoramic in literature, as it is extremely well documented with a variety of perspectives provided by from scientific, humanistic, political, economic and other viewpoints. However, urbanism as a principle of human studies has been limited in its application of urban studies; being confined to discussion of the cities and well established urban areas – perhaps it is in the name *urban-ism*. It is at this juncture and within these fissures of urban knowledge that this project has attempted to establish a foothold that could ignite a conversation around firstly, what and why we allow certain topics to take precedence of - and preoccupy the academic attention. Secondly, how choose and employ specific methods for studying a particular topic and how we then represent the topic through our data, analysis and conclusion.

It has been a long and complex journey to get to this point, and I deeply thank the reader for enduring the many pages of this discussion. Due to the nature of the research and the methods used during this study, three stand-alone and interactive pieces were produced, each of which holds a specific function in providing a holistic and dynamic view of small towns. The first piece or module produced was the written thesis, which you are currently reading, titled: *Small Town Geographies; Rethinking South African Urban Imageries*. This document follows a mostly traditional academic thematic structure

in processing the chapter alignment beginning with an introduction, followed by a literature review and then contextualisation of the research sites and moving onto the method(s) used; rounding off with presentation of findings, discussion and conclusion. The second module; titled: *Findings in a small town, an anthology of experiences* was an ethnographic monograph, produced by compiling the majority of the interviews which were conducted; into a series of essays about their (the participants) lives in small towns. The third and final module of the submission was the documentary film, of which there are actually two films. The first film follows the experience of the researcher as they conduct their research in the various towns and the second film is a poetic film making use of more technical film elements to demonstrate the available scope of film as a method of research. In viewing or reading all three modules, it was expected that the observer would be able to construct a more holistic and dynamic view on small towns.

This is the final and concluding chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, we will go through a summary of the different conversations that has been had, bringing together the many elements of this research project into a single conclusion that highlights and identifies some of the salient points of discussion and outcomes of the entire thesis and research process.

7.2. Summary of the research premise

Geography is very much a subject of synthesis in that it brings together a variable motley of concepts and ideas to be hosted in a single disciplinary frame work. However we can admit that the discipline can be at times prone to popularist thought, giving the majority of its academic attention so a few hot topics. Yet like all disciplines there are ample opportunity to veer off the beaten track and take the path less travelled, sometimes very literally such as in the case of this research topic, which has taken us on a journey through small towns across South Africa.

With at least 40% of the South African population living in areas outside of cities. mmall towns have been recognised by Nel and other theorists as a somewhat undervalued

topic within geography; interest in which has frequently been deferred to more pressing issues present in and around cities in South Africa. Nevertheless, there has been a general acknowledgement and call by the geographical community for a reinvigoration of interest in small towns with particular dedication to progressively modern and nuanced thinking around small towns and methodological approaches. Increasing trends in diverse patterns of migrations, continued globalisation, climate change and its impact on farming as well as political and economic activities have further animated, especially young theorists to relook at small towns with a fresh perspective. There are several major challenges with the current attitude towards small towns' research, these are (a) being unyieldingly committed to traditional methods which yield pragmatic results. What this means is, promoting specific research tools which are designed to acquisition data that can be translated into local economic development solutions. Moreover, an over commitment to results has created an out-of-touch experience of small towns as they are presented in literature. (b) There is a reductionist value to the majority of small town literature. In an attempt to remain highly pragmatic, many of the complexities and intricacies in small towns are reduced to a series of statistical values, or altogether ignore. (c) Small towns are very rarely appreciated for more than the support they offer to the continued maintenance and sustenance of small towns. This means that softer topics such as in migration of towns are no considered when establishing a status quo, instead out-migration and impacts on larger cities in reaction to urbanisation take presence and dominate most small town conversation which establish themselves in terms of migration.

In response to this, the aim of this research project was to understand the perceptions of urbanism and urbanity in South African small towns by exploring the different constructs of imageries of small towns; through three processes. The first was to provide a cross-sectional view of current trends in geographical and other common approaches to small towns, identifying shortfalls in the approach; secondly, to propose niche methods

to research in small towns and lastly to review the viability and appropriateness of these 'new' and relatively 'experimental' methods and the information they are able to gather.

The central question of this research is: *How do we understand urbanism and the perception of urbanity in South African small towns?*

The research question was then broken down into four sub-questions; these were:

I. What is a South African Small Towns?

II. What is the lived experience of small towns?

III. What is the opportunity for reflexivity and narrativity in urban research?

A critical element in the conceptualisation of the topic of small towns in South Africa, was the consideration of the scale of the conversation to be had and the generalisability of the findings. An important question that was asked; was: "is the research about *the small town* or is this research about *a small town*. Although it seems insignificant, the distinction between the two semantics is pivotal in the framing of the research topic, the presentation of the data and the overall reading of the data and conclusions which were presented. This thesis has opted to take a highly generalist approach with the expectation that the findings may be applicable to the majority of small towns. Part of the motivation for this decision, actually lies in current trends in small town literature; as most research occurs at a case-study level, findings are often generalised to be applicable across multiple sites.

7.3. Literature review summary and critical reflections

In chapter one we discussed at great length the various ways a small town is defined and understood in a South African and other contexts. The majority of the paradigms examined were based on empirical data such as population statistics, population density, gross domestic product, function and so on. The discussion concluded that there were no single universally accepted arrangement of statistical data that could be applied to define a small town. The discussion also highlighted the fact that the majority of theorists who begin any research or discussion on small towns as a matter, begin with the same

1 or similar question: 'what is a small town'. Further to this point in chapter two we
2 embarked on a lengthy discussion around what is urban and what is rural. Questioning
3 the position of small towns as being urban and rural. It was found that, here too, there
4 lacks a consensus as to whether or not small towns are in fact urban or rural. This goes
5 without saying that within the genre, the very notion of the meaning of urban and rural is
6 questioned (Kaplan, Wheeler, and Holloway, 2004; Smailes, 1966; Best and Rogers,
7 1973; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005; Scott and Stroper, 2015).

8 At present small towns are caught in the midst of a raging classification war. Many
9 discussions are often driven by structuralist thinking with the urban considered in
10 dialectic opposition to the 'rural', country-side or hinterlands. The definition of urban is
11 surprisingly difficult to locate in literature, however, discussion about the city, continue to
12 link urban and the city, as if they are one and the same thing (Kropf, 2005). Recognising
13 this rhetoric is the first step towards recognising of the problematic with urban studies,
14 both in geography and elsewhere (Scott and Stroper, 2014). In contrast, rural is
15 understood with slightly more certainty and is defined as being sparsely populated with
16 agriculture being a primary employer. This concept is particularly difficult to apply to
17 South African small towns, as the census data doesn't take into account the type of
18 employment of residence as being either agriculturally based or other; and instead
19 records individuals as simply being employed or unemployed. Furthermore, the historical
20 establishment of towns in South Africa vary, from agricultural to mining; and then
21 secondary processing. Therefore, we cannot validly understand urbanity and rurality in
22 these terms.

23 Closer to home, South African theorists have attempted to solve the riddle with varied
24 bodies from national government to the CSIR and StatsSA taking a stab and trying to
25 identify urban and rural based on a list of characteristics and attributes. The resultant
26 matrix of characteristics are then used as a base of interpretation and further research.
27 However, the lack of commitment to a single method or characterisation means that

1 research often competes with each other rather than compliments each other in
2 producing a single, dynamic understanding of small towns. It is definitely time to move
3 away from attempting to produce a matrix or linear washing list of characteristics that
4 can be check-boxed in order to cluster a town amongst other empirically similar towns.

5 The necessity for rethinking our lines-of thought and move towards newer concepts is
6 evident. If we are to appreciate that the compositions and signifiers of urban areas differ
7 dramatically depending on their varying contexts or their social, political and economic
8 regions, also known as their country of origin. It is for this reason that any inquiry into
9 cities and the urban sphere should begin with the following question, and that is to ask:

10 'is this a culturally specific built form, or is it a built form in a culturally specific location'.

11 Ergo: 'is this a South African urban settlement, or is this an urban settlement in South
12 Africa?' Based on the evidence collected, it would appear there is no definitive resolution
13 at this time; principally due to the fact that we (as planners as national government) have
14 yet to gain a sturdy grasp on the 'urban ideal' we should achieve. We have several
15 expectations of what we may want to see when we discuss South African urbanity, but
16 what can work in South Africa and what can exist in our context and in our climate and
17 with our resources are all determining factors to the construction of the South African
18 Urban Ideal.

19 Tied within this debate is the lack of terminology that aptly describes and represents the
20 uniqueness of small towns as they are neither urban nor rural. A potential resetting of
21 our association of words as symbols to reality could be the introduction of a hybrid
22 concept. Based on research conducted in India, Sumana Chattergee (2014) suggests,
23 that these in-between spaces be referred to as 'rurban'; a hybrid word reflecting rural
24 and urban. Interestingly, the word rather accurately reflects the inbetween, neither urban,
25 neither rural nature of small towns.

26 As the answer to what is a small town could not be found be found within urban and rural
27 definitions; the opportunity to explore other theories which could be used to define small

towns or act as a catalyst for further out-of-the box thinking was identified. Urbanism, which is understood as the way life occurs or the everyday which plays out in urban areas – was a concept that was identified to have potential in further unpacking small towns in South Africa, and as such was used as a guiding theme in the development of methods in an attempt to capture the difference between small towns and other areas maintaining the philosophy that there is more to urban and rural than the washing list or urban characteristics that had been previously used in small town research methods.

7.4. Summary and Reflection of the Methods Used

The methods used in this research were separated and aligned with the three streams of the project and were divided into phases. A case study approach to the research was adopted and the research was conducted in five small towns in the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa. The criteria for identifying small towns were based on (i) Minimum population 1500 people; (ii) Maximum population of 5000 people; (iii) Located on primary (N) or secondary (R) route; (iv) Must have an evident central business district or business corridor; (v) Must have Chinese migrant businesses; (vi) Towns selected should be established in about the same period; (vii) Towns should have similar current or historical functions (If possible) and (viii) Towns should be within a particular (1-3 hour) driving radius of Johannesburg. From these parameters, a total of 5 towns were selected as case studies for research. These were: Parys, Vredefort, Wolmaransstad, Vrede and Senekal.

In the first phase, qualitative interviews were used to construct the lived experience of the three different target groups; these groups were Chinese Migrant Business Owners (CMBO), South African Local Business owners (LBO) and Small Town Expats (expats). Three separate interviews were constructed for each of the target groups. This means that there was an interview designed for the CMBO, LBO and small town expats. The interviews consisted of a brief introductory section that was quantitative based, which was used to understand the context and lenses of the participants, the remaining

sections were a series of open ended questions that were used to unpack the lived experiences of the participants.

Interviews with the CMBO were conducted in their stores, with the store owners. The interviews lasted for about an hour, depending on the how talkative the participant was. It was conducted with a translator. A total of 11 interviews were conducted with CMBO, but only 5 were used due to the consent that was given to record the data. The remaining interviews were considered in the participant observation that assisted in the interpretation of the data.

Interviews with local business owners were arranged prior to the second round of field work. The owners of the bed and breakfast accommodations where we stayed were my first port of call, and were given first option to participate in the interviews. If they declined the invitation, the snowball method was then used wherein, the researcher asked the owners to refer to me to people in the town who may have been interested in participating in the interview.

Lastly, interviews with small town expats was arranged primarily through word of mouth. The majority of participants in the population group were from the researcher's personal network of friends.

A major challenge in the small towns was the lack of familiarity with the people of the town. The towns' inhabitants, Chinese and local were generally nervous and wary of participating in the research by outsiders. Their largest concern was that we were government officials and there was a fear from the Chinese migrant business owners that in talking to us, it may lead to some legal action. However, after a few minutes of talking to the both the Chinese migrant business owners and the local business owners, answering all their questions and reassuring them that we were not from the government, they consented to the interviews

1 Phase two was the filming of the documentary. This phase including acquisitioning
2 filming equipment; developing a shooting schedule, going out to the field to film according
3 to the schedule and lastly editing the filmed footage in post-production to produce the
4 documentary.

5 The use of film as a technique had both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage
6 is that film has an unparalleled ability to capture movement and sound as it succeeds
7 photography in providing the additional stimuli and is highly successful in providing a
8 more interactive and immersive experience. The use of a camcorder in the field was
9 paramount to being able to recognise rhythm in small towns, and understanding that it is
10 in fact the rhythm of small towns which define them. One of the principle disadvantages of
11 film is that it can be expensive to outlay the capital required to purchase the necessary
12 equipment. However it doesn't have to be, depending on the scope, requirement or
13 audience for which the documentary is being produced; equipment can be considered a
14 necessity or not. Moreover, there are a variety of mediums and effects which can add a
15 particular aesthetic value to any film, and may require specific kind of equipment. For
16 example, the use of a cell-phone to film a documentary would work well, if the producer
17 or director of the film is interested in depicting a certain aesthetic.

18 The third phase produced the ethnographic monograph. Based on the qualitative
19 interviews which were conducted with the three population groups, their interviews were
20 transcribed and then edited into single narratives that were then compiled into an
21 anthology of short stories about their experience of living in a small town. The monograph
22 was an interesting element and required a different thinking to either of the other two
23 methods. Ethnography, whilst non-fiction appears somewhat less academic in tone and
24 use of language and requires a slightly more fluid and gentler method of writing. It was
25 successful in providing a different dynamic to the research and certainly exonerated the
26 more human side of research and participants, and gave a well-constructed image of
27 everyday life in small towns as a South African and a migrant; but equally looked at the

1 life of a researcher beyond the research. What was particularly challenging about this
2 method was finding the balance between remaining academically true and maintaining
3 the authenticity and independence of the participants narratives. As some of the
4 participants weren't native English speakers, and required a translator, measuring the
5 authenticity of their narratives was difficult, because it was going through a translator,
6 but also constructing their narratives into a coherent, single piece was wrought with much
7 internal conflict of where or not the researcher was maintaining that balance.

8 The fourth and final phase was based on participant observations by the researcher.
9 Using photography as a method, a photo-narrative was compiled of the many urban
10 forms which exist in our South African land scape. The intention of this composition was
11 to provide in a sense life which occurs in different urban formats and in different parts of
12 our beautiful and vast country. Therefore each image is a moment captured within a large
13 and integrated fabric of urban and rural. The most challenging element of this method
14 was compiling the images into the narrative and not just being a collection of images
15 (which ironically it is). In reflection of this, it comes down to the meaning and value that
16 the observer takes from the images. It would be interesting to revisit these places in a
17 year or two and take photos of the same image, documenting the changes or
18 transformation. In this way, the narrative may be more successful in telling a particular
19 story, whatever that may be.

20 Throughout this thesis, there has been a presentation of current data models and a
21 discussion on current techniques, with the conclusion of each discussion ending with
22 more questions than answers. To reiterate it was not nor has ever been the intention of
23 this thesis to outright dismiss current methodologies, the focus has been to encourage
24 the inclusion or adoption of new methodologies or methods other-why's not inherent in
25 the field of geography in order to promote a new way of thinking about urban and rural
26 spaces, using small towns as the conduit for testing this idea.

7.5. The Findings and Answering the Research Questions

Findings were documented in three format according the methods used; these were the scientifically traditional written thesis (this current document) which contains the literature review, part of the finds and entire discussion on the findings and the conclusion which assists in bringing all elements of the research together.

What is a South African small town

The first of the sub-questions: 'what is a small town?'; is at the centre of much debate, and falls within larger conversations regarding urban hierarchies. When one applies some thought to the question and begin considering parameters such as *how small is small?* Or, *how big is too big for a small town?* we realise that it is actually quite a complex and loaded question. The more appropriate question 'what makes a small town?' became an intellectual pivoting point upon which this sub-question was answered. Several components were considered to contribute to the *making* of a small towns; and included physical attributes such as morphology and street patterns, as well as intangible influencers such as population size, infrastructure, economic performance and so one; as well as a particular sense of experientiality. The initial assumption of this research argued that there were enough shared characteristics among small towns to be able to define exactly what a small town was. That is to say; it was possible that there existed a set of homogenous similarities amongst small towns, and improve upon the already exhausted stock of urban hierarchies. Subsequently the new additions would aid in placing or ordering small towns in a more meaningful position within the existing hierarchies; thus, giving the small town a greater foot hold in broader urban studies. The reality however, is that this train of thought lacked inspiration. To pursue this would have been, to be caught in the same intellectual trap as many previous urban thinkers. In truth, every theorist, geographer and observer who deals with urban spaces and hierarchies has the potential to present their own method and rationality for the development and ordering of an individual hierarchy, and further, can provide a critique for existing and new hierarchies. Having said that, it isn't to say the urban hierarchy doesn't have its place

1 in urban geography or pragmatic value and importance. Perhaps the real challenge
2 comes in when we lose sight of the many complexities present in different urban areas
3 and concentrate too heavily on the limited features often focused on, in order to develop
4 the hierarchy.

5 Be that as it may; the first and initial assumption of this research was that there were
6 enough shared characteristics among small towns to be able to define a shared set of
7 characteristics. In the spirit of providing a cross section of existing approaches and a
8 topical analysis a spatial analysis was conducted to test viability of a single definition of
9 small towns and attempt to understand some of the potential methods which were used.

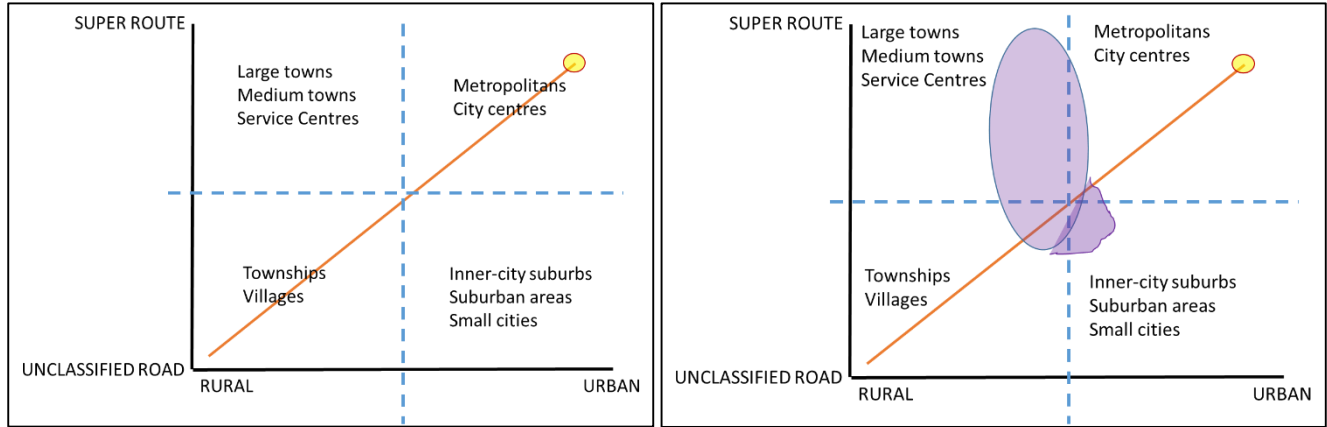
10 Eight of the almost infinite characteristics of small towns were selected for analysis; these
11 were: (a) year of establishment; (b) population size; (c) migration; (d) physical area
12 coverage; (e) street pattern, (f) road networks, (g) spatial pattern, (h) building typologies,
13 (i) unemployment rates, and (j) the lived experience of small towns. In order to assess
14 these characteristics and evaluate their importance in small town characterisation, a
15 spatial analysis was conducted at district and local municipal level of the municipalities
16 which host the five towns, as the information required was not available for each town
17 individually. Three district municipalities (Fezile Dabi, Thabo Mofutsanyana and Dr
18 Keneth Kaunda) were studied, along with four local municipalities (Ngwathe, Setsoto,
19 Phumelela and Maquassi Hills).

20 It was found that the majority of towns which were included in the sample size were
21 established in the same period, which would mean that they experienced similar
22 historical events that shaped them spatially, economically and culturally.

23 In terms of population, findings suggested no clear trend; and provincial and municipal
24 data trends tend to conflict with each other. Whilst several issues with using population
25 size in the characterisation of small towns was identified, one of the most important is
26 that the data available on population growth and decline is one-dimensional in that the
27 data only considers the total population size and does not consider migration patterns

1 as a whole. . For example, the total population size only assess one level, population
2 total, and doesn't assess how much of that population are permanent or seasonal,
3 additionally, the data doesn't take into account more complex population flows such as
4 cyclical migration; which can span several decades and pending on the phase it is in,
5 can affect the census outcome. Therefore, we can conclude that population size as the
6 only criteria for identifying small towns is ineffective, and can produce very inaccurate
7 assumptions of the space. However, comparative population size of individual towns
8 revealed that under the small town umbrella, we can identify classes of towns.

9 In terms of infrastructure and service delivery, according to the data the majority of towns
10 were well serviced. From this discussion a model was proposed which could potential
11 assist in the classification of small towns in the future. If we were to combine a teleology
12 with Pasteurs Quadrant model we could have a more dynamic means of characterising
13 urban and rural areas. It is difficult to ascertain if it is the combination of roads and
14 urbaness that produce actual spaces, or if it the spaces that produce the varying
15 combinations of roads and urbaness. That aside, as demonstrated in the diagram below,
16 towns, particularly small towns as in this case study; present with both urban and rural
17 traits; and the varying combination and strength of those traits will affect the towns
18 location within the model. As demonstrated in the image, it is likely that the majority of
19 small towns will fall within the top left quadrant of the model.



1 In terms of spatial patterns and building typologies, all the towns within the case study
2 had a similar street pattern and demonstrated building similar building typologies.
3 Spatially, all the case study towns possessed a grid-iron spatial patterns, which
4 demonstrated a clear boundary of the town. The towns were adequately connected
5 through road networks. The presence of a central business node is critical for the
6 formation of a spatial structure. Initially the inclusion of the central business corridor in
7 identification of case study towns were for practical reasons in terms of being able to
8 locate Chinese migrant business owners more easily, the awareness of the varying
9 spatial structures amongst small towns highlighted the absence of it in other less urban
10 areas.

11 From a statistical point of view, small towns can be reduced to a series of numbers and
12 graphs which can be analysed. It is limited in how effective these statistic are in their
13 ability to represent small towns. Case and point. The lived experience represented in the
14 ethnographic monograph tells a different story to that of the statistics. This does not
15 mean that is necessarily tells a story in conflict to the statistics but provides more detail
16 and context – which has been found to be lacking in the statistical representation of small
17 towns. For example, most participants described their roads as being poorly maintained,
18 however the statistics available does not measure road quality. Another example is the
19 experience of racism in small towns and how this affected the lived experience of small
20 towns. Within the census there is no measure of the experience of racism; or the
21 experience of being an LGBT person in a small town. These are important and valuable
22 elements of life in a small town that give meaning to the sterile statistics which are
23 available and often represent small towns.

24 The reality is that whilst the spatial analysis was beneficial in understanding the different
25 characteristics of small towns and the potential each character has in the
26 characterisation of small towns; it does lacked inspiration. To utilize this method and
27 pursue the identification of small towns through their compositions as feverishly as it has

1 been in the past would lead to being caught in the same intellectual trap as previous
2 urban thinkers. In truth, every theorist, geographer and observer who deals with urban
3 spaces and hierarchies has the potential to present their own method and rationality for
4 the development and ordering of an individual hierarchy, and further, can provide a
5 critique for existing and new hierarchies. This then becomes an exercise in futility.
6 Findings suggest that small towns and urban spaces whilst possessing some shared
7 characteristics remain highly heterogeneous and complex spaces. Moreover, the data
8 available is lacking to some degree in depth and its methodical basis is often
9 questionable. It is established on this that we can appreciate that it may well be time to
10 move away from attempting to produce a matrix of characteristics that can be check-
11 boxed in order to cluster a town amongst other empirically similar towns. The proposal
12 in this thesis has been geared towards a reimagining of the way small towns are conceived
13 – with the intent focus on moving away from empirical rationality; and reimagining the
14 positioning of small towns by removing it from existing discourses, absolving it from its
15 conflict with ‘the urban’ by seeing it as a space that has inherent urbanity because it
16 essentially occupies a built form. Therefore, the small town is not so much about bricks
17 and mortar, but instead is more about experience, urbanity, urbanism and experientiality;
18 expectations, scale and what I am calling: ‘accents of small towns’. The accent of a small
19 town is a combination of all of the above and empirical statistics such as population,
20 density, area coverage, infrastructure ratings, amenities etc. that comes together, like at
21 the centre of a Libverian triad, to produce...the sense of a small town that allows us to
22 all relate and agree on one or multiple levels of what a small town is without absolute
23 definition.

24 **What is the lived experience of South African small towns**

25 Urbanism at its core is the way of life in urban areas. As we have seen throughout the
26 many discussion on ruralness, urbaness and everything in between; urbanism is not
27 confined to a particular location. However, urbanism in the many –isms id possess does
28 rely on urbanity to unfold. Urbanity being the physical framework in which life occurs.

1 Small towns possess a particular rhythm of everyday life; therefore small towns possess
2 a sense of urbanism. How we understand this urbanism depends on the method which
3 we implore and it is the way we conceive urbanism. If we are to consider that urbanism
4 can only occur in the city we may be inclined to believe that it cannot and does not exist
5 elsewhere. Moreover, if we rely too heavily on quantitative methods, which depend on
6 statistics and statistical analysis we assume a sterile environment and again cannot
7 engage with the messier parts of human life; numbers do not describe experience. As
8 we have seen in the various discussion held in this thesis, an over-reliance on statistical
9 data can and does produce a skewed sense of small towns. This does not mean that the
10 existing representation of small towns is completely wrong, but that there is an argument
11 for enrichment.

12 As has been demonstrated there are many ways to capture and present the urbanism of
13 small towns; whether in film, photos or literature. What is most valuable within these
14 mediums is the acknowledgement that small towns present with a unique culture and
15 therefore an experience beyond of life beyond the city. Understanding urbanism is about
16 more than understanding the lived experience, it is about the 'how'. How do we study the
17 topic of urbanism in small towns and how do we present the urbanism of small towns;
18 ensuring that we maintain and protect the authenticity of the lived reality.

19 Small town culture as a part of small town urbanism is highly diverse. Although not well
20 documented; the continued traditions passed through generation after generation in
21 small towns has retained the cultural heritage of these spaces, be it the indigenous black
22 South African, or White Boerer bearing heritage from their Dutch and mixed European
23 Settlers. Added to the mix is the induction of external cultures in the form of immigrants
24 from other African countries or from the east including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and
25 China. Beyond their mere presence, these immigrants are active participants in the way
26 the spaces are moulded and functions. From having work benches outside on the
27 pavement, to mannequins that advertise their stock, or large signs, with obviously non-

1 South African store names – all participate in the space, affecting the inherent culture of
2 the space, producing a uniquely flavoured, culturally rich small town .

3 Spatially, small towns are very complex spaces as previously argued. With its historical
4 establishment dating back to the mid 1800's at a time of industrialisation and mid-
5 settlement-era politics, much of the spatial fabric and spatial modus operandi has been
6 in affect long before apartheid. Something that is very important is the consideration of
7 the activeness of the 'urban land system' and 'Town land structure' in research and
8 academic review. The difference is the former includes the adjacent township as part of
9 the town's structure and the latter doesn't, seeing the town and its adjacent black
10 township as separate entities. An important feature of small town research is that the
11 black township is often ignored for not being part of the 'town proper', and this research
12 was guilty of reproducing this same intellectual discourse. The reason being that the
13 black townships were spatially segregated from the town, and are generally under
14 developed, creating a stark difference between the aesthetic of the spaces – leading one
15 to conceptually conceive of these spaces as independent of each other and requiring
16 separate methods of research, or requiring a different approach to meeting their spatial
17 needs. This largely speaks to the concept of intellectual colonialism and the
18 consequences of having a white dominated discourse that has for so long undervalued
19 and displaced the black narrative that the active repetitions of this is common practice.
20 Black South Africans are an integrated part of small town urbanity, a narrative that is
21 linked with the 'orient' and 'other' of academic research.

22 Furthermore, small towns have a very clearly defined sense of form and function of
23 spaces within space. This means that within the town-proper there is a clear central
24 business or economic corridor where various stores that service the town line the streets,
25 there are definitive primary and secondary movement or transit corridors and there is an
26 obvious upper- , middle- and lower-class residential pattern that can be seen as you
27 drive through the town. Evidence of this is lacking in this thesis as during pilot studies,

1 the undermined complexity of small town spaces were becoming evident prompting the
2 researcher to have to be very selective of the areas of interest within small towns.

3 It was assumed that small towns were economically homogenous in that they were all in
4 a state of economic stagnation or decline. This is completely untrue. Although the
5 research cannot debunk this idea for all small towns, and admittedly these symptoms
6 may be prevailing and prevalent in many towns. The research findings suggest that there
7 may actually be an 'economic cycle' linked to human in- and out-migration of the small
8 towns. It is possible that these towns go through cycles of about 30 to 45 years, beginning
9 when the youth depart the small town in search of opportunities and wealth in larger
10 cities. Then return around their middle ages, settling with their own families. As they age
11 their children grow, eventually departing the town, leaving their parents, who are now
12 become the aging and declining population. These stages of human behaviour may be
13 linked to economic flows in the following way: As the population ages, their needs are
14 simplified, once the population begins to decline, the potential for economic activity also
15 declines. When people return in their middle ages, there is a revitalisation of the economy
16 as people inject into the economy through the establishment or refurbishment of
17 'retirement businesses', home improvement or the building of new homes for retirement.
18 Property processes are strongly linked to an areas desirability. The economic and social
19 cycles of the black township is unknown at this time, this proposal is made specifically
20 based on trends seen in the town proper but may be applicable to the black township as
21 well. Lastly, the economies of these towns are not socio-economically monogamous as
22 many stores are owned by foreign nationals, especially along the main business strip.

23 Little is known about the politics of these spaces beyond their historical social and
24 economic segregation. What is clear is that there is very little integration between the
25 different racial and ethnic groups, it's not to say that there is any racial segregation, but
26 there is little integration. Black people still tend to remain in the township, with few

accounts of black people moving into 'town', or the previously white residential areas. But other than this, everyone seems to get along.

These small towns are just as globalised and globally connected as any large city. Access to television and the internet can be presented as the primary catalysts for this connectivity, however in addition to improving technology, we must also include the individual experiences of the people who live there and their personal encounters, in whatever form with the 'global'.

The initial focus of this research was to investigate Chinese migrant business owners and their migration in small towns. But this only perpetuated certain dangerously inaccurate misconceptions of an over-simplified idea of small towns. The rationality was that if there is nothing going on in small towns, then why are Chinese migrant business owners settling there, opening stores and staying. The results were unexpected to say the least, and while Chinese business migration offered plenty in the way of understanding how international migration occurs in small towns, it was a definite gateway to challenging many of the prevailing assumptions around small towns. Therefore, instead of only looking at the experience of small towns from a migrant lens, their narrative became a conduit for exploring broader small town spatiality's and being a featured element of small towns, which needed to be rooted in a broader spatial system.

The missing discussion of the urbanism of small towns has left a rather large hole in the discipline. Little to no attention is given to the idea that there can be an urban-ism in small towns; after-all, the idea that small towns are too rural to be considered urban dominates academic thought. We cannot deny, that as long as there are people that are living in small towns, there is a way of life which is accompanied by a lived experience. It is that lived experience which we call urbanism in academic terms.

It is strange to me that theorists often write about the anonymity of cities; to quote Simmel 'the stranger in the city'; of course this in contrast with the much more intricate interpersonal relationships within towns. Yet, at least two of the participants, at one or other

point during their interviews, commented on how 'you can just be yourself' in a small town. Where there is no one to judge you and you can just be. Fatima, a Mafikeng expat who identified as a gay and muslim, had a very different experience of the freedom of small towns, explaining that she felt stifled and unable to express herself fully in the small town - as news spread extremely quickly amongst the people of the town and it could affect the inter-relationships within the community. So in these three different experience of small town scapes, we see a beautiful tension emerge in the way of urbanism; the lived experience. In the book *How to be a Real Gay: Gay Identities in a Small Towns in South Africa*.

What is the opportunity for narrativity in South African urban research

Human geography has made significant strides in expanding its common practice research methods by borrowing and incorporating different approaches from a variety of different fields. It is important to continuously be enhancing our own field with experiences, technologies and techniques that can be appropriately appropriated and used in the field. The positivity of this is seen in the generation of new or different results and the potential for overcoming obstacles or short comings in a particular topic.

It is for this reason that I have tried to pursue and investigate the use of different research methods, particularly documentary film making as a method of engaging with the subject but also a method of presenting the found data. Film as a technique for capturing and presenting data has been both successful and unsuccessful. Initially I argued that video and audio would give more independence to the voices of the participants, thus allowing a truer narrative to be accessible. Whilst film does provide a lot more stimuli, it is also subject to the potential of a lot more manipulation which affect the visual representation and reception of the subject. An additional disadvantage of film is the cost implications linked to film production. Sourcing equipment as well as the skills necessary to product even a half-decent film can be quite costly and ultimately experience plays is vital to the ability of a film to relay its intended message or to achieve general viewer success.

1 An important element within research, which was became apparent during the course of
2 this research, is the researcher's own narrative. Whilst we are actively aware of
3 researcher bias and it is common practice of academic writing to remove the researcher's
4 own narrative as much as possible, arguing that objectivity in the field will produce the
5 best and untainted results – in practice however; the researcher cannot fully remove their
6 bias, nor can the completely decontextualize themselves. The most significant element
7 of film is its emotive quality. The ability of film to engage directly with an individual's
8 senses and emotions through a combination of images and music. The power that this
9 then gives the researcher over the audience makes this untenable and possibly
10 dangerous as is often seen in propaganda film.

11 This research attempted to create a sense of awareness of the relationship between the
12 researchers own narrative and that of the participant or subject, but demonstrating the
13 ways in which the researchers own positionality, background, personality and personal
14 motivations in making certain decisions throughout the research process. In practice,
15 regardless of how objective a researcher tries to be, their own soundboard will inform
16 the way they structure the research, interact with participants, interpret responses and
17 present the findings. It is also important to understand that the researcher's soundboard
18 is quite a complex thing, informed by identity, gender, up-bringing, socio-economic
19 background religion and personality. For example, as a muslim researcher with strict
20 dietary requirement to only eat halaal, one of my biggest fears during my field work was
21 encountering a participant who may have invited me to their home, or to have a meal
22 with them. Due to my religious practices I would have to decline thus risking the rapport
23 that we had built and possibly losing a participant.

24 Furthermore, the use of the researchers own narrative was used to reflect on the position
25 of subject that is inevitably created during research, exposing the researcher to the
26 experience of being in the 'lime light'. But this again is not a true reflection of the
27 experience of being a participant in a narrative based research project as the researcher

1 is in a position of privilege, knowing the questions, and having a chance later on to amend
2 their answers.

3 Something that was quite interesting that I noticed was the level of trust that was reached
4 between the participant and the researcher. In retrospect, the participants were trusting
5 me with their stories, often mentioning after the interview that if there was something in
6 there that I thought would be damaging to their reputation or to other people or properties,
7 that I should please use my discretion to remove it or alter it. This trust and responsibility
8 comes with a bit of a cost and only highlights the level of power that a researcher has
9 over the data and narrative that is being constructed.

10 All the methods used and discussed in this thesis have advantages and disadvantages.
11 When deciding which is the more appropriate and useful is truly left to the researcher
12 and their individual affinity towards any of the methods. The most significant achievement
13 of testing these methods is demonstrating – in parallel the use and outcomes of the
14 methods in relation to each other – all of which has yielded new and interesting results
15 about small towns.

17 **7.6. Future Research**

18 Research, regardless of how rigours the method, how exhaustive or comprehensive is
19 host to a multitude of opportunities for enhancement, validation and further research.
20 Research never ends. The quest for knowledge and a greater; more expansive
21 understanding of our world may diminish with individuals but the prospect for new
22 discoveries does not.

23 This thesis has made some significant strides in identifying, laying the foundation for and
24 partially unpacking urbanism in small towns. However, it has only partially addressed the
25 topic. An opportunity lies in further exploring the lived experience of small towns, and
26 taking this new found knowledge and translating it as well as transposing it into more
27 pragmatic forums such as at provincial or local government level.

1 Another opportunity lies in the use of film. The process of producing the documentary
2 film was key in defying the foundational rhythms of small towns, it was also highly useful
3 in acting as a sounding board upon which I could record my reflections, measure my
4 emotional state through my body language and rapidly review a through or idea I may
5 have had at that moment. The success of the films in relating their intended messages
6 is difficult to ascertain at this time, however, I would love to use the method again, and
7 concentrate on it, placing more emphasis on the film and the utilising more techniques.
8 Alternatively, I deeply encourage other to use the method which can provide support at
9 various stages of research, as a means of recording data and or presenting data –
10 without necessarily following the documentary production route.

11

7.7. Closing remarks

Admittedly unusual, the entire thesis was comprised of three components, these being first the academic thesis, second an ethnographic monograph and third a documentary film. Whilst it may appear unobvious at first inspection, it was the intention of the research that all three components interact with each and contribute to a holistic and dynamic understanding of South African small towns.

In combination, all three elements of the research does cover a vast array of topics, there remains opportunity for enhancements as well as further research.

This thesis has demonstrated the complexity of small town research and has provided a cross section of existing approaches to small town research. Furthermore, it has proposed alternative research methods, and has attempted to test these methods in the field; measuring the value and contribution they may have in enhancing the discipline of human geography.

It has been an incredible journey, and it is hard to imagine even for myself that I visited so many places across South Africa; and I am in disbelief that I have gotten this far in writing a thesis. I often think about the many thousands of kilometres I have covered and the gruelling hours I have spent writing. Some days, the four years I have spent completing my research feels tragically long, but then I reflect on the true nature of what has gone into this; into the research and realise it was time well spent. I thank you for sharing in this journey through the words of this document.

This document makes reference to two films, which can be found at: <https://youtu.be/CKMJX6cmgms> and <https://youtu.be/gYGwLLkx3k4> .

8

Odds, Ends & Extra's: Bibliography, References and Appendices



8. ODDS, ENDS & EXTRA's: BIBLIOGRAPHY, REFERENCES &

APPENDICES

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1 IMAGES REFERENCE LIST

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IMAGE 1: A ROAD IN LIMPOPO	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 2: SMALL FILLING STATION IN RURAL LIMPOPO	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 3: ABANDONED NEWLY BUILD HOME, VREDEFORT	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 4: DIRT ROAD NEAR NIEKERKSHOOP, NORTHERN CAPE	© KARA, 2016
IMAGE 5: ROAD NEAR BLOUBERGSTRAND, LIMPOPO	© KARA, 2016
IMAGE 6: OUTSIDE A CHINESE OWNED 'CHINA SHOP', VREDE	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 7: INSIDE A CHINESE OWNED 'CHINA SHOP', VREDE	© KARA, 2017
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IMAGE 18: STREET SCAPES (1 & 2) HANOVER, NORTHEN CAPE; (3) ROAD IN NIEKERKSHOOP; (4) STRYDOM TUNNEL, LIMPOPO; (5 -7) STREET SCAPE IN GROBLERSDAAL, NORTHERN CAPE.	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 19: INSIDE THE LIVING QUARTERS OF A CHINESE BUSINESS OWNER, VREDE	© KARA, 2017
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IMAGE 26: BUSINESS OWNERS IN SMALL TOWNS	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 27: STREET SCAPE	© KARA, 2017
IMAGE 28: BUSINESS OWNER AT STRYDOM PASS	© KARA, 2017

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1 **APPENDIX A: SURVEY (Chinese Migrant Business Owners)**

	ID NO:
Province:	Date Completed:
Town Name:	Analyst:
Route/Road	Date Captured:
Completed: _____ OF _____	Date Checked:

2

3 **SECTION 1: Personal Information & Background**

1. Are you ☐ Owner ☐ Employee ☐ Other	2. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Are you a South African Citizen ☐ Yes ☐ No	4. In what year did you arrive in SA ☐ Before 1990 ☐ 1990 -1999 ☐ 2000 - 2009 ☐ Less than 5 years ago
5. Age ☐ Younger than 18 ☐ 18 - 25 ☐ 26 - 35 ☐ 36 - 45 ☐ 46 - 55 ☐ 56- 65 ☐ Older than 65	6. Marital Status ☐ Unmarried/ Single ☐ Engaged ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow/ Widower ☐ In a committed relationship
7. Do you Have Any Children? ☐ Yes ☐ No	8. How many children? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

	☐ 5 or more
9. Do they live with you? ☐ Yes ☐ No	10. Do they attend school here? ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>If no provide reason:</i>
11. Is the school local or in another town? ☐ Local ☐ Other town	
12. What is YOUR highest education level? ☐ Primary ☐ Middle School (higher primary) ☐ Junior High ☐ Senior High ☐ University/ Graduate degree ☐ Post-graduate degree	13. Do you have any professional training? ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>If YES, what?</i>
14. Where do you live? ☐ In your store ☐ Apartment/ Flat ☐ Semidetached ☐ Backroom/ Outbuilding	15. What did you do before you came here?
16. What Province in China do you come from? ☐ Beijing ☐ Tianjin ☐ Hebei ☐ Shanxi ☐ Liaoning ☐ Jilin Province	17. Why did you decide to come to South Africa?

☐ Heilongjiang ☐ Shanghai ☐ Jiangsu ☐ Zhejiang ☐ Shandong ☐ Anhui ☐ Fujian ☐ Jiangxi ☐ Henan ☐ Hubei ☐ Hunan ☐ Guangdong ☐ Hainan ☐ Chongqing ☐ Sichuan ☐ Guizhou ☐ Yunnan ☐ Tibet ☐ Shaanxi ☐ Gansu ☐ Qinghai ☐ Hong Kong ☐ Taiwan ☐ Other	
18. Are you related to or know anyone in South Africa and did they help you get set up?	19. Are there other Chinese owned stores near you?

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Section B: Business

1. When did you open ☐ Before 1990 ☐ 1991 - 1999 ☐ 2000 - 2005 ☐ 2006- 2010 ☐ In the last 5 years	2. What type of business ☐ General Retail ☐ Grocery ☐ Hardware ☐ Service ☐ Health Care ☐ Financial assistance ☐ Food/ Takeaway
3. Why did you decide to open this business ☐ Take over ☐ Start from scratch	4. Why did you decide to settle here?
5. Did you work in or own a business in your home town/city in China; if so what was it?	6. Do you own or rent this property ☐ Own ☐ Rent
7. What are your working hours?	8. Do you have holidays or Off-days

1

9. Do you have any employees, Who are they ☐ Family ☐ Friends ☐ Local people ☐ Other Chinese (Non-relation) How many:	10. Will you expand you business ☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Will you move to another town? ☐ Yes ☐ No	12. How did you finance your business ☐ Personal Savings ☐ Family and Friends loan ☐ Chinese bank loan ☐ South African bank loan ☐ Chinese business men or other business ☐ The Chinese Government
13. How long will you stay in South Africa? Where will you go next	

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Section C: Migration

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1. Was South Africa your first choice? ☐ Yes ☐ No	2. Which other countries did you consider?

3. Why did you choose South Africa?	4. Do you have relatives or friends in South Africa?
5. Why did you decide to leave China?	

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Section D

3

1. Do you feel safe? ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, why not?	2. Do you interact with local people? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes or no explain:
3. Do you participate in local events? ☐ Yes ☐ No Explain	4. Are locals positive or negative towards you? ☐ Positive ☐ Negative

	Explain
5. What are some of the challenges you faced during migration?	6. Do you support local businesses? Which ones?
7. Have you adopted any local business practices? If so which ones and why	

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Generic)

1. Introduce yourself

- a.** Name (unless other whys specified)
- b.** Where you were born, the year/ era
- c.** When you arrived in this town
- d.** If you ever left and came back or just never left.
- e.** Who were you parents, where did they come from and what work did they do

2. Describe your town and what it is like living there

3. What was your town like when you were young?

4. How has it changed?

5. Were there any major points in history that igniting a change in the town and can you describe the change

6. What do you what people from outside to know about your town

7. Do you enjoy living here or would you rather move to another town or city if so why and where to.

8. Can you tell me about the foreign owned businesses in this town?

9. Did they buy it from local people if so what happened to the locals?

10. Did they start it on their own, how do you think they did this?

11. _Have many black people moved into the town since the end of apartheid.

12. Is there anything you would change about your town, is so what?

13. Many people believe that these towns are getting poorer, do you agree with them.

1 **APENDIX C: LIST OF SMALL TOWNS IN FREE STATE AND NORTH WEST**
2 **PROVINCE**

Free State Provincial Town'sLlist					
Town	Year Established	Age	Population	Households	Area
Clocolan	1906	112	1349	429	15,76
Ficksburg	1867	151	5400	1719	50,35
Marquard	1905	113	1033	431	7,3
Senekal	1877	141	3466	1252	32,88
Bethlehem	1864	154	16236	5214	27,83
Clarens	1912	106	751	246	12,68
Fouriesburg	1892	126	664	223	10,26
Paul Roux	1909	109	473	214	5,32
Rosendal	1908	110	4688	824	15,26
Arlington			192		0,81
Lindley	1875	143	1010	354	19,87
Petrus Steyn	1914	104	596	231	8,75
Reitz	1889	129	3362	1130	22,33
Aberfeldy					
Bolata			14893	4359	7,07
Harrismith	1849	169	27869	7937	138,8
Kestell	1905	113	1109	362	9,95
Makwane	1977	41	10174	8376	11,78
Qwaqwa/ Witsieshoek/ Phuthanditjaba	1870	148	54661	17529	23,83
Swinburne					
Thibela			469		0,76
Tseki			7888	2338	3,56
Tshiame			14856	4251	26,05
Memel	1911	107	619	229	8,91
Zamani					
Verkykersdorp					
Vrede	1863	155	1962	689	46,52
Warden	1912	106	2088	641	15,61
Excelsior	1910	108	748	194	11,34
Habhouse	1912	106	244	105	11,62
Ladybrand	1967	51	4218	1345	42
Marseilles					
Thaba Phaswa					
Tweespruit					
Bloemfontein	1946	72	256185	81286	236,17
Botshabelo	1979	39	181712	50593	103,98
Thaba Nchu	1930	88	70118	21792	36,39
Bain's Vlei	1849	169			

Brandfort	1866	152	3134	891	27,08
Florishbad					
Soutpan			2157	695	12,75
Theunissen	1906	112	1549	519	9,15
Verkeerdevlei			93	45	7,27
Winburg	1837	181	1373	423	69,46
Boshof	1855	163	3858	992	89,69
Dealesville	1899	119	5446	1629	29,31
Hertzogville	1915	103	978	347	19,93
Builtfontein	1873	145	2176	808	39,5
Hoopstad	1876	142	1295	405	27,81
Allanridge	1947	71	2361	848	28,16
Hennanman	1927	91	3793	1281	5,92
Odendaalsrus	1912	106	9393	3099	30,61
Riebeeckstad			11268	3772	13,22
Thabong			126013	39710	29,45
Ventersburg	1864	154	1297	368	3,09
Virginia	1949	69	21846	6708	74,11
Welkom	1947	71	64130	19000	167,55
Whites	1913	105	366		3,46
Balkfontein			154		1,12
Bothaville	1897	121	4152	1372	33,26
Wesselsbron	1920	98	26807		14,1
Kroonstad	1855	163	24723	7315	74,81
Steynsrus	1910	108	1312	227	6,11
Vierfontein	1953	65	825	369	8,21
Viljoenskroon	1921	97	2091	697	12,67
Edenville	1912	106	6294	2098	7,3
Heilbron			5486	1667	11,91
Koppies	1910	108	1136	326	5,12
Parys	1870	148	8071	3256	23,3
Vredefort	1876	142	1326	561	16,77
Deneysville	1936	82	1833	671	40,61
Holly Country	1900	118	586	236	1,39
Kragbron	1948	70	1059	358	6,34
Oranjeville			5166	1553	8,57
Sasolburg	1954	64	30699	10508	58,56
Viljoensdrif	1857	161	751	313	63,3
Cornelia	1876	142	1356	389	7,6
Frankfort	1969	49	5840	1753	15,14
Tweeling	1918	100	821	192	2,83
Villiers	1882	136	1287	483	4,01
Bethany	1834	184			
Bethulie	1829	189	2100	676	35,81
Edenburg	1863	155	1409	427	40,08
Fauresmith	1851	167	1430	450	52,14
Gariep Dam	1965	53	1568	462	24,83

Jagersfontein	1854	164	1819	590	43,74
Philippolis	1823	195	950	298	38,35
Reddersburg	1859	159	669	205	18,62
Springfontein	1904	114	711	228	14,69
Trompsburg	1891	127	963	918	127,43
Jacobsdal	1959	59	3504	1003	59,63
Koffiefontein	1892	126	10402	3203	36,85
Luckhoff	1892	126	3699	1007	30,92
Petrusburg	1891	127	8435	2639	19
Rouxville	1963	55	1355	382	17,02
Smithfield	1930	88	1195	435	34,11
Uitkoms			576	161	0,2
Zastron	1976	42	1893	748	19,73
Dewetsdorp	1876	142	9498	2890	25,77
Van Stadensrus	1920	98	820	367	118,59
Wepener	1865	153	1281	447	36,3
Hartebeesfontein	1955	63	63	484	6,37
Total	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
102	1901,728	116,2716	12366,02	4002,264	31,24424

1

North West Provincial Town's List					
Town	Year Established	Age	Population	Households	Area
Amalia	1927	91	226	74	2,35
Babelegi					
Beestekraal					
Bloemhof	1864	154	2339	817	47,33
Bray			1357		4,24
Brits			25604	8489	110,87
Broederstroom					
Christiana	1870	148	3571	1261	50,2
Coligny	1923	95	2271	743	4,36
Delareyville	1914	104	10630	3040	36,53
Derby			3470		1,78
Ganyesa	1765	253	19290	5204	21,46
Ga-Rankuwa	1860	158	90945	28147	52,18
Groot Marico			3384	1092	36,17
Hartbeesfontein	1955	63	1467		6,37
Lethabong			7763	2155	2,28
Hartbeespoort			22374	9012	125,89
Hekpoort					
Jericho			8612		11,66
Klerksdorp	1837	181	186515	55351	105,98
Kosmos	1920	98	528	0,91	

Koster	1913	105	2342	573	18,22
Kroondal	1858	160	3195		
Leeudoringstad	1920	98	5054	1542	5,63
Lehurutshe			6888	2323	23,11
Lichtenburg	1873	145	26338	7541	108,9
Maanhaarand					
Magaliesburg			6363	2036	11,44
Mahikeng	1852	166	15117	4525	24,57
Makwassie	1822	196	13351	3155	6,19
Mareetsane					
Mareetsane					
Marikana	1870	148	19522	11679	17,54
Mathibestad			25945	7202	24,02
Mmabatho	1980	38	38297	13176	18,47
Mogwase			10743	4320	19,51
Mooinooi			4733	1321	5,59
Morokweng	1790	228	14260		24,17
Motlhabeng			7610	2645	2,58
Orkney	1940	78	13435	4795	16,43
Ottosdal	1913	105	884	263	5,15
Ottoshoop	1876	142	2043	4,95	
Pampierstad			124	45	0,15
Potchefstroom	1838	180	128353		185,4
Ramokokastad			5141	1483	3,36
Reivilo			4182	957	4,57
Rustenburg	1851	167	104612		282,42
Sannieshof	1928	90	11016	2872	5,42
Schweizer-					
Reneke	1888	130	41226	9829	22,75
Setlagole			19452	4688	30,78
Setlopo			10970	2705	14,72
Skeerpoort					
Stella			890		9,06
Stilfontein	1949	69	17942	6651	138,82
Swartruggens	1875	143	1969	574	10,74
Taung	1924	94	18289	5250	20,75
Tlhabane			5428,18	1901,97	9,22
Tosca					
Ventersdorp	1866	152	22073		57,47
Vryburg	1882	136	21182	5521	64,24
Wolmaransstad	1891	127	3 633	938	42
Zeerust	1858	160	9093	2437	57,09
Total Number of Towns	Average year of Est	Average Age	Average Population	Average Households	Average Area
62	1885	133	19472	5310	38

APPENDIX D: DATA TABLES – CASE STUDY LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Case Study LM										
Province	DM	LM	Town	Year Est.	Town Age	Population	Households	Area	Density	Function
Free State	Fezile Dabi District Municipality	Ngwathe	Edenville	1912	106	6294	2098	7	860	Agricultural, mining, manufacturing, service
			Heilbron	1872	146	5486	1667	12	160	
			Koppies	1876	142	1136	326	5	222	
			Parys	1882	136	8071	3256	23	364	
			Vredefort	1878	140	1326	561	17	79	
		Mafube	Cornelia	1876	141	1356	389	8	178	agriculture (13.9%), finance (12.1%), trade (9%), transport (7%),
			Frankfort	1969	48	5840	1753	15	386	
			Tweeling	1918	99	821	192	3	291	
			Villiers	1882	135	1287	483	4	321	
		Metsimaholo	Deneysville	1936	81	1833	671	41	45	Manufacturing, retail, community services
			Kragbron	1948	69	1059	358	6	167	
			Oranjeville	1900	117	5166	1553	9	603	
			Sasolburg	1954	63	30699	10508	59	524	
Moghaka	Kroonstad	1855	162	24723	7315	75	330	Agriculture Commercial transport Business Services Mining		
	Steynsrus	1910	107	1312	227	6	215			
	Vierfontein	1953	64	825	369	8	100			
	Viljoenskroon	1921	96	2091	697	13	165			
		DM Ave	DM Ave	1908	109	5843	1907	18	295	
Free State	Thabo Mofutsanyana DM	Dihlabeng	Bethlehem	1864	153	16236	5214	28	583	Services (29.7%), trade (18.6%), finance (18%), manufacturing (14.4%), transport (9.3%), agriculture (7.1%), construction (1.9%)
			Clarens	1912	105	751	246	13	59	
			Fouriesburg	1892	125	664	223	10	65	
			Golden Gate Highlands	1965	52	1568	462	25	63	
			Paul Roux	1909	108	473	214	5	82	
			Rosendal	1908	109	4688	824	15	307	
		Maluti-A-Phofung	Harrismith	1849	168	27869	7937	139	201	Social services / government (28%), agriculture (18%)
			Kestell	1905	112	1109	362	10	112	
			Phuthaditjhaba	1870	147	54661	17529	24	2294	
		Mantsopa	Excelsior	1910	107	748	194	11	66	Commercial farming, private sector, public sector, tourism
			Ladybrand	1967	50	4218	1345	42	100	
			Thaba Patchoa	1900	117					
		Nketoana	Tweespruit	1900	117					Agriculture, retail business
			Arlington	1900	117	192		1		
			Lindley	1875	142	1010	354	20	51	
			Petrus Steyn	1914	103	596	231	9	68	
		Phumelela	Reitz	1889	128	3362	1130	22	151	Agriculture, tourism
			Memel	1911	106	619	229	9	70	
Vrede	1863		154	1962	689	47	42			
Setsoto	Warden	1912	105	2088	641	16	134	Finance, insurance, real estate and business (21.21%), manufacturing (17.62%), wholesale and retail trade (13.07%), agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing (11.83%), government services (11.45%), community, social and personal services (11.31%), transport, storage and communication (6.79%), electricity, gas and water (3.5%), construction (2.17%)		
	Clocolan	1906	112	1349	429	16	86			
	Ficksburg	1867	151	5400	1719	50	107			
	Marquard	1905	113	1033	431	7	142			
		Senekal	1877	141	3466	1252	33	142		
		DM Ave		1899	118	6094	1984	25	234	
North West	Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality	City of Matlosana	Hartbeesfontein	1955	63	1767	484	6	230	Mining, agriculture, manufacturing, services, construction, transport
			Klerksdorp	1837	181	186515	55351	106	1760	
			Orkney	1940	78	13435	4795	16	818	
			Stilfontein	1949	69	17942	6651	139	129	
			Potchefstroom	1838	180	43448	17372	162	267	
		JB Marks	Ventersdorp	1866	152	56702	14562	3764	15	Agriculture, community services, manufacturing, trade, finance, transport, mining
			Leeudoringstad	1822	196	5054	1542	6	898	
		Maquassi Hills	Makwassie	1822	196	13351	3155	6	2156	Agriculture (49%), domestic (17%), community services (15%), manufacturing (14%)
			Witpoort	1890	128	856	204	1	1373	
Wolmaransstad	1891		127	3633	938	42	87			
		DM Ave		1881	137	34270	10505	425	773	

APPENDIX E: RESEARCH SITES

Province	District Munic	Local Munic	Town	Year Est.	Town Age	Population	Households	Area	Density	Year Est Average
FS	Fezile Dabi District Municipality	Ngwathe	Parys	1882	136	8 071	3 256	23	364	1881
			Vredefort	1878	140	1 326	561	17	79	1881
FS	Thabo Mofutsanyana DM	Phumelela	Vrede	1876	142	1 962	689	47	42	1881
FS	Thabo Mofutsanyana DM	Setsoto	Senekal	1877	141	3 466	1 252	33	142	1881
NW	Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality	Maquassi Hills	Wolmaransrad	1891	127	3 633	938	42	87	1881
			Total Number of Towns	Average year of Est	Average Age	Average Population	Average Households	Average Area	Average Density	
			5	1881	137	3 692	1 339	32	143	

ANNEXURE F: GOOGLE'S LIST OF TOWNS IN SOUTH AFRICA

805									
41	65	71	93	193		64	84	76	118
Limpopo Province	Gauteng Province	Free State	Eastern Cape	Western Cape	Western Cape	North West	Northern Cape	Mapumalan ga	Kwazulu Natal
Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name	Town Name
Afguns	Alexandra	Arlington, Free State	Adelaide	Atlantis	Grabouw	Amalia	Barkly West	Aankoms	Charlestown
Alldays	Johannesburg	Bethlehem	Alice	Bellville	Greyton	Bray	Campbell	Acornhoek	Dannhauser
Ba-Phalaborwa	Lenasia	Clarens	Aliwal North	Blue Downs	Hawston	Ganyesa	Delporthoop	Amersfoort	Hattingspruit
Bandelierkop	Midrand	Clocolan	Balfour	Brackenfell	Hermanus	Mareetsane	Douglas	Amsterdam	Madadeni
Bela-Bela	Randburg	Cornelia	Berlin	Cape Town	Hotagterklip	Morokweng	Griquatown	Anysspruit	Newcastle
Bochum	Roodepoort	Excelsior	Bhisho, (previously Bisho)	Crossroads	Infanta	Motlhabeng	Hartswater	Argent	Utrecht
Bosbokrand	Sandton	Ficksburg	Braunschweig	Durbanville	Kleinbaai	Pampierstad	Jan Kempdorp	Avoca	Amanzimtoti
Dendron	Soweto	Fouriesburg	Burgersdorp	Eerste River	Kleinmond	Reivilo	Kimberley	Avontuur	Cato Ridge
Duiwelskloof	Alberton	Harrismith	Cathcart	Elsie's River	L'Agulhas	Schweizer-Reneke	Modder River	Badplaas	Doonside
Ellisras	Germiston	Hobhouse	Dohne	Fish Hoek	Napier	Setlagole	Warrenton	Balfour	Drummond
Gravelotte	Benoni	Kestell	Dordrecht	Goodwood	Onrusrivier	Stella	Windsorton	Balmoral	Durban
Haenertsburg	Boksburg	Ladybrand	East London (eMonti)	Gordon's Bay	Pearly Beach	Taung		Bankkop	ekuPhakameni
Hoedspruit	Brakpan	Lindley	Elliot	Guguletu	Pringle Bay	Tosca	Green Kalahari[edit]	Barberton	Hillcrest
Klaserie	Daveyton	Marquard	Fort Beaufort	Hout Bay	Riviersondere nd	Vryburg		Belfast	Illovo Beach
Lephalale	Devon	Memel	Gonubie	Khayelitsha	Rooi Els	Setlopo	Andriesvale	Berbice	Inanda

Letsitele	Duduza	Paul Roux	Haga-Haga	Kraaifontein	Stanford	Babelegi	Askham	Bethal	Isipingo
Leydsdorp	Edenvale	Petrus Steyn	Hamburg	Kuils River	Struisbaai	Beestekraal	Augrabies	Bettiesdam	Karridene
Louis Trichardt	Germiston	Phuthaditjhaba	Hogsback	Langa	Suiderstrand	Brits	Danielskuil	Branddraai	Kingsburgh
Messina	Impumelelo	Reitz	Hofmeyer	Macassar	Suurbraak	Broederstroom	Groblerstroom	Braunschweig	Kloof
Modimolle	Isando	Rosendal	Katberg	Melkbosstrand	Swellendam	Derby	Kakamas	Breyten	KwaMashu
Modjadiskloof	Katlehong	Senekal	Kei Mouth	Mfuleni	Van Dyksbaai	Ga-Rankuwa	Kanoneiland	Brondal	La Lucia
Mogwadi	Kempton Park	Steynsrus	Keiskammahoe	Milnerton	Vermont	Hartbeesfontein/Lethabong	Keimoes	Bushbuckridge	La Mercy
Mokopane	KwaThema	Swinburne	Kidds Beach	Mitchell's Plain	Villiersdorp	Hartbeespoort	Kenhardt	Carolina	Mount Edgecombe
Mookgophong	Nigel	Tweespruit	King William's Town	Noordhoek	Albertinia	Hekpoort	Lime Acres	Chrissiesmeer	New Germany
Musina	Reiger Park	Van Reenen	Komga	Nyanga	Boggomsbaai	Jericho	Louisvale	Davale	Pinetown
Naboomspruit	Springs	Vrede	Mdantsane	Observatory	Brenton-on-Sea	Kosmos	Mier	Delmas	Queensburgh
Nylstroom	Tembisa	Warden	Mhlangeni	Parow	Buffelsbaai	Koster	Olifantshoek	Diepdale	Tongaat
Ofcolaco	Thokoza	Winburg	Molteno	Simon's Town	Calitzdorp	Kroondal	Onseepkans	Diepgezet	Umbogintwini
Phalaborwa	Tsakane	Allanridge	Morgan's Bay	Somerset West	Dana Baai	Maanhaarand	Postmasburg	Dullstroom	Umdloti
Polokwane	Vosloorus	Boshof	Ngcobo (previously Engcobo)	Southern Suburbs	De Rust	Mabopane	Putsonderwater	Dundonald	Umgababa
Potgietersrus	Wattville	Bothaville	Oyster Bay	Strand	Dysselsdorp	Magaliesburg	Riemvasmark	Eerstehoek	Umhlanga
Roedtan	Atteridgeville	Brandfort	Peddie	Aurora	Friemersheim	Marikana	Upington	Ekulindeni	Umlazi
Senwabarwana	Bronberg	Bultfontein	Queenstown	Bitterfontein	George	Mogwase	Andriesvale	Elukwatini	Verulam

Seshego	Bronkhorstsp uit	Dealesville	Seymour	Chatsworth	Glentana	Mooinooi	Askham	Embhuleni	Warner Beach
Thabazimbi	Centurion	Hennenman	Stutterheim	Citrusdal	Gouritsmond	Mathibestad	Augrabies	Emphuluzi	Westville
Thohoyandou	Cullinan	Hertzogville	Tarkastad	Clanwilliam	Great Brak River	Ramokokastad	Danielskuil	Enkhaba	Winkelspruit
Tzaneen	Ekgangala	Hoopstad	Venterstad	Darling	Groot- Jongensfontei n	Rustenburg	Grobblershoop	Ermelo	Chatsworth
Vaalwater	Hammanskra al	Kgotsong	Whittlesea	Doringbaai	Haarlem	Skeerpoort	Kakamas	Fernie	Wentworth
Vivo	Irene	Kutlwanong	Zwelitsha	Dwarskersbos	Hartenbos	Swartruggens	Kanoneiland	Glenmore	Umkomaas
Zebedeila	Mamelodi	Makelekela	Aberdeen	Ebenhaeser	Heidelberg	Tlhabane	Keimoes	Graskop	Magabeni
Zion City Moria	Pretoria	Odendaalsru s	Addo	Eendekuil	Herbertsdale	Coligny	Kenhardt	Greylingstad	Phoenix
	Refilwe	Theunissen	Alexandria	Elands Bay	Herolds Bay	Delareyville	Lime Acres	Hartebeespo p	Ballito
	Soshanguve	Ventersburg	Bathurst	Goedverwacht	Keurboomsrivi er	Ganyesa	Louisvale	Hazyview	KwaDukuza
	Zithobeni	Verkeerdevle i	Bedford	Graafwater	Keurboomstra nd	Groot Marico	Mier	Hectorspruit	Salt Rock
	Boipatong	Virginia	Cookhouse	Grotto Bay	Knysna	Lehurutshe	Olifantshoek	Kaapmuiden	Bulwer
	Bophelong	Welkom	Cradock	Hopefield	Kranshoek	Lichtenburg	Onseepkans	Kinross	Franklin
	Evaton	Wesselsbron	Despatch	Jacobsbaai	Kurland Estate	Mareetsane	Postmasburg	Komatipoort	Himeville
	Sebokeng	Winburg	Graaff Reinet	Jakkalsfontein	Ladismith	Mahikeng	Putsonderwat er	KwaMhlanga	Ixopo
	Sharpeville	Bethulie	Grahamstown	Kalbaskraal	Little Brak River	Mmabatho	Riemvasmaa k	Lochiel	Kokstad
	Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein	Hankey	Klawer	Mossel Bay	Ottosdal	Upington	Loopspruit	Matatiele

	Vereeniging	Botshabelo	Humansdorp	Koekenaap	Nature's Valley	Ottoshoop	Aggeneys	Lydenburg	Swartberg
	Meyerton	Dewetsdorp	Jeffreys Bay	Koringberg	Noetzie	Sannieshof	Alexander Bay	Machadodorp	Umzimkulu
	Heidelberg	Edenburg	Joubertina	Lamberts Bay	Oudtshoorn	Zeerust	Carolusberg	Malelane	Underberg
	Ratanda	Fauresmith	Kareedouw	Langebaan	Pacaltsdorp	Bloemhof	Concordia	Marble Hall	Harding
	Carletonville	Itumeleng	Kenton-on-Sea	Langebaanweg	Plettenberg Bay	Christiana	Garies	Mbhejeka	Hibberdene
	Khutsong	Jacobsdal	Kirkwood	Lutzville	Port Beaufort	Hartbeesfontein	Hondeklip	Middelburg	Ifafa Beach
	Kagiso	Jagersfontein	Krakeelrivier	Malmesbury	Rheenendal	Klerksdorp	Kamieskroon	Moddergat	Kelso
	Kromdraai	Koffiefontein	Middelburg	Moorreesburg	Riversdale	Leeudoringstad	Kleinzee	Nelspruit	Margate
	Krugersdorp	Luckhoff	Nieu-Bethesda	Paternoster	Sedgefield	Makwassie	Nababeep	Ngodwana	Palm Beach
	Magaliesburg	Mangaung	Patensie	Piketberg	Slangrivier	Orkney	Okiep	Ohrigstad	Park Rynie
	Muldersdrift	Petrusburg	Port Alfred	Porterville	Stilbaai	Potchefstroom	Pella	Perdekop	Pennington
	Mohlakeng	Philippolis	Port Elizabeth (eBhayi)	Redelinghuys	Uniondale	Stilfontein	Pofadder	Piet Retief	Port Edward
	Randfontein	Reddersburg	Salem	Riebeek-Kasteel	Volmoed	Ventersdorp	Port Nolloth	Pilgrim's Rest	Port Shepstone
	Bekkersdal	Rouxville	Somerset East	Riebeek West	Victoria Bay	Wolmaransstad	Soebatsfontein	Sabie	Ramsgate
	Westonaria	Smithfield	St Francis Bay	Saldanha	Wilderness		Springbok	Secunda	Scottburgh
		Springfontein	Steynsburg, Eastern Cape	St Helena Bay	Wittedrift		Steinkop	Siyabuswa	Sezela
		Thaba 'Nchu	Steytlerville	Strandfontein	Zoar		Britstown	Skukuza	Shelly Beach
		Trompsburg	Sunland	Vanrhynsdorp	Beaufort West		Colesberg	Standerton	Southbroom
		Van Stadensrus	Uitenhage	Velddrif	Laingsburg		Copperton	Trichardt	Umtentweni

		Wepener	Willowmore	Vredenburg	Leeu-Gamka		De Aar	Vaalbank	Umzinto
		Zastron	Chintsa	Vredendal	Matjiesfontein		Hanover	Volksrust	Umzumbe
			Coffee Bay	Wupperthal	Merweville		Hopetown	Wakkerstroom	Uvongo
			Dutywa (previously Idutywa)	Yzerfontein	Murraysburg		Hutchinson	Waterval Boven	Balgowan
			Flagstaff	Ashton	Nelspoort		Loxton	Waterval Onder	Boston
			Gcuwa (previously Butterworth)	Bonnievale	Prince Albert		Marydale	White River	Byrne
			Nqamakwe	Ceres			Norvalspont	Witbank	Hilton
			Centani	De Doorns			Noupoort		Howick
			Lady Frere	Denneburg			Orania		Merrivale
			Libode	Franschhoek			Petrusville		Mooi River
			Lusikisiki	Gouda			Philipstown		New Hanover
			Mount Fletcher	Kayamandi			Prieska		Pietermaritzburg - Capital
			Matatiele	Klapmuts			Richmond		Richmond
			Mount Ayliff	Kylemore			Strydenburg		Wartburg
			Mount Frere	Languedoc			Vanderkloof		Dalton
			Mthatha (previously Umtata)	McGregor			Victoria West		Hluhluwe
			Port St Johns	Montagu			Vosburg		Ingwavuma
			Qolora Mouth	Op-die-Berg					Mkuze
			Willowvale	Paarl					Mtubatuba

			Tsolo	Pniel					Ubombo
			Bizana	Prince Alfred Hamlet					Dundee
			Qumbu	Rawsonville					Glencoe
			Ngqeleni	Robertson					Greytown
			Xhorha (previously Elliotdale)	Robertsvlei					Kranskop
				Rozendal					Muden
				Saron					Pomeroy
				Stellenbosch					Wasbank
				Touws River					Nquthu
				Tulbagh					Bergville
				Wellington					Colenso
				Wemmershoek					Elandslaagte
				Wolseley					Estcourt
				Worcester					Ladysmith
				Arniston					Weenen
				Baardskeerdersbos					Winterton
				Barrydale					Babanango
				Betty's Bay					Empangeni
				Birkenhead					Eshowe
				Botrivier					Mandeni
				Bredasdorp					Melmoth
				Caledon					Mtunzini
				Dennehof					Richards Bay
				De Kelders					Louwsburg

				Elgin					Mahlabatini
				Elim					Nongoma
				Fisherhaven					Paulpietersburg
				Franskraalstrand					Pongola
				Gansbaai					Ulundi

APPENDIX G: ETHICS CLEARNCE CERTIFICATE



Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Kara

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: H16/02/11

PROJECT TITLE

Small town globalisation: Post-apartheid small towns
through a migrant lens

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Ms M Kara

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

GAES/

DATE CONSIDERED

19 February 2016

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE

06 June 2019

DATE

07 June 2016

CHAIRPERSON

(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr A Wafer

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **Agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX H: FINDINGS IN A SMALL TOWN – A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES



National
Research
Foundation



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

SMALL TOWN GEOGRAPHIES

**Rethinking south African urban
imageries**

FINDINGS IN A SMALL TOWN

A collection of short stories

MUNEEBAH KARA

SUPERVISED BY
DR ALEX WAFER



**DEC 20
DEC 18**

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Preface

Research is generally a long and arduous series of failures and flukes. It can take many forms and can occur over very long and very short periods of time. This book is based on the research endeavours of myself, as I journeyed for almost four years in search of what makes a South African small town. I had used both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to unpack and address several major themes; however by the end of it I had come to a very important realization. This was that not all methods are completely compatible with each other and for this reason, the qualitative interviews which were conducted as part of the primary research method did not sufficiently coalesce within the main body of the dominantly quantitative thesis. There was an evident clash of worlds and the result was a fragmented, distracted documented that struggled for its identity.

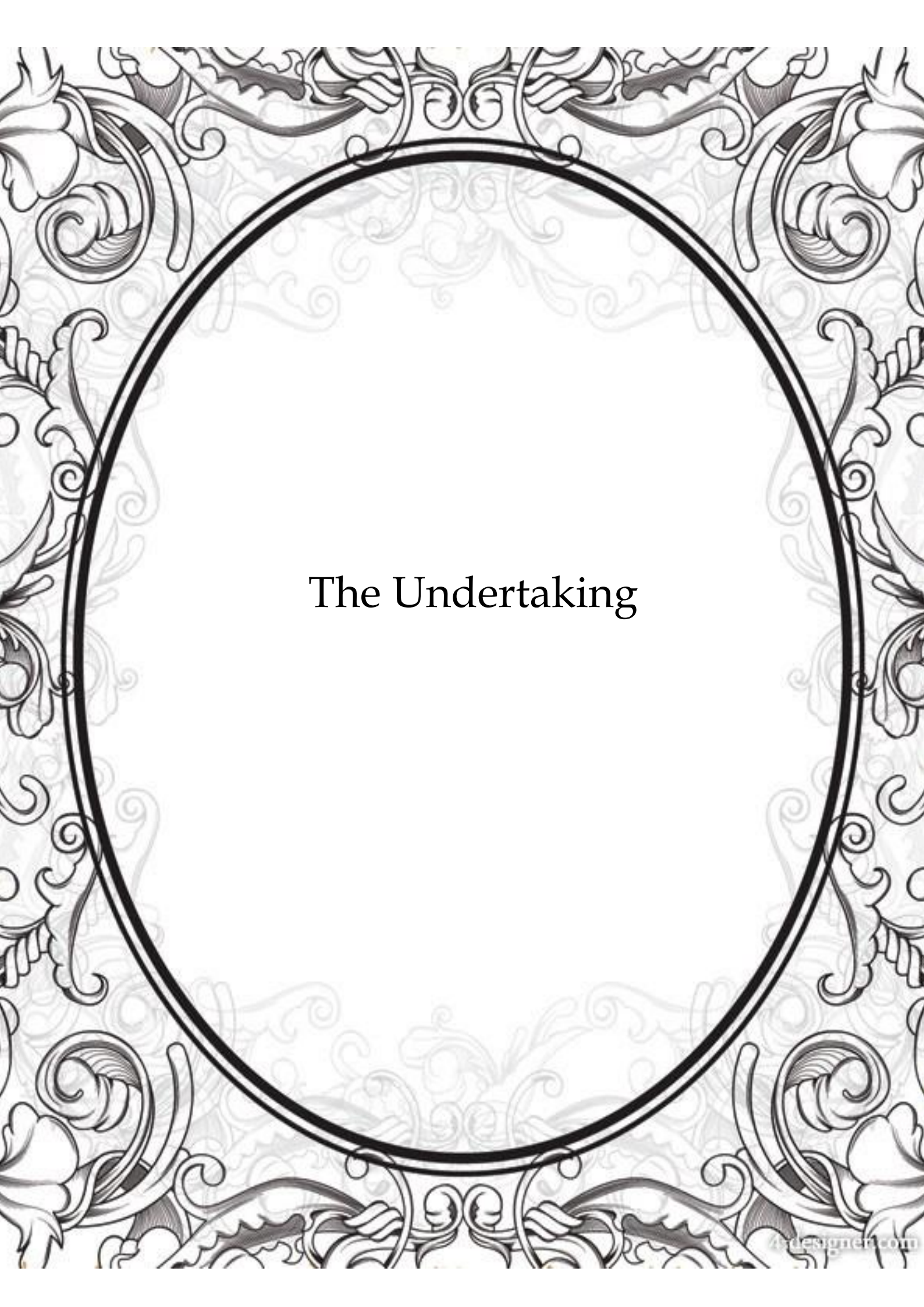
A core feature in trying to better understand small towns was a rethinking and explorations of more experimental methods; and as such I was unwilling to accept defeat and opted to push forward in utilizing the qualitative ethnographic method to its fullest and in its purest form; which meant producing a stand-alone ethnographic monograph.

In this book, you will find a collection of short stories and narratives from myself based on my experience of conducting the research and being a researcher in the field. You will also find a collection of narratives belonging to Chinese migrant business owners, local residence and lastly, South African expats who once lived in small towns and no longer do. The intention of the book, it to provide a literary experience that encapsulates the lived experience of small towns and the lived experience of research.

As a standalone piece; this book can be considered light-non-fictional reading; and therefore is not meant to be of a deeply academic nature; beyond being a traditionally ethnographic monograph. However this book and its contents does interact with the other two components of the research and together all three elements produce a holistic and dynamic experience of small towns and small town research.

The production of knowledge is highly orchestrated. Data as extracted from the environment will go through several lengthy and stringent cleansing processes to ensure the information is reputable, understandable and provides information on that which was studied. What is produced is almost always a highly polished and well-structured document that safe-guards in secrecy the realities of the messy often chaotic ongoing behind the scenes. It is with this in mind, that I invite you into the pages that acted as captures to the different types and levels of experiences within small towns in South Africa. There is no prescribed order in which you should read these

narratives, and I personally encourage any reader to make yourself comfortable and enjoy the literature.

The image features a large, ornate circular frame composed of two concentric black lines. The frame is set against a background of intricate, repeating scrollwork and floral patterns in a light gray color. The central area of the frame is white and contains the text "The Undertaking".

The Undertaking

It was autumn in South Africa, March to be precise. The leaves had already begun changing colour and the evening air now processed a crisp freshness. It had been almost three years since I had begun my PhD, and only now I felt, I was at last ready to complete my final round of field work. *Big Little Town, Uncovering the South African Small Town* had become an obsession. A self-imposed duty to tell the story of South African small towns had consumed me and my only mission was to answer my research question: *how do we understand urbanism and the perception of urbanity in small towns...*

My project was ambitious, I say that now with more caution and an accompanying sense of mild regret, the kind of regret that often tailgates maturity. At the time of inception, I was ambitious - at least more than I am now – the fatigue and scepticism from a long and arduous struggle associated of PhD writing, having not yet set in. So without a true understanding of the magnitude of the undertaking to which I was about to commit; I took up the reigns of the proverbial wild horse that was small town geography. Determined to tame it, I dug in my heels and began unpacking the many theories, and texts and literature on small towns. Resolute in my mission to coalesce the field, I would bring harmony and clarity to the otherwise foggy discipline by organising, critically reflecting on, disregard out-dated knowledge and connecting all the dots of a genre I believed was geriatric, grizzled and in desperate need of revitalisation. I was ambitious. I wasn't wrong, but nor was I entirely correct in my assessment of the situation. Very early in my research, I recognised a need for a new method in the genre... and driven by my aspirations, I believed the development, completion and presentation of a documentary, based on the lived experience of small towns would be the proof needed to demonstrate the need to move away from the archaic approach to small towns and beyond this, illustrate benefits of new blood in the genre. It was a good idea, I had some film experience... but only some.

My towns, as I had come to call them, were five small towns shared between the Free State and the North West Provinces of South Africa. Located between 1 and 3 hours from Johannesburg, I had visited them relatively frequently in previous months, both in anticipation and preparation of this this last hurrah, diligently building relationships and a thorough understanding of the complexities of the small towns. Those trips I had taken alone, or with some poor family member I managed to guilt into coming with me to keep me company on the road or at the very least pass me snacks as we drove. This time however, I would be gone for almost two full weeks, stopping over in various towns, conducting interviews and some surveys; but most importantly, at the heart of the research and the this trip was the collection of footage for the documentary. Therefore the final research trip was going to be longer and more intense than my previous one-day excursions. With me this time was my research assistant, Tyler Kink, but more than this she was a final year film student who held the knowledge of film-making, and provided consultation in regard to the documentary. Also with us, was Peter; whose surname I

never could pronounce. A Chinese migrant who arrived in South Africa in the early 1990's, as part of the second wave of Chinese Migration into South Africa. Peter was going to assist me as a translator – as the conduit between myself and the Chinese migrant business owners whom I was interested in; he would provide the bridge between the lived reality and the academic construct.

Before we proceed I would like to take a moment, to describe to you in more detail my companions. Tyler, as I mentioned was a fourth year film student. She was medium in height, and medium in weight. She wore glasses, thick, black frames – yuppie. Her hair was a mixture of textures, she was a mixture of people, being neither coloured nor black, nor white, nor indian... she didn't fit into any of the boxes one might find on any official form. She was young, younger than me; but by now, after so many years most people at the university, especially in undergrad were. I met Tyler in the basement of a building on campus; that's where the Wits school of film and television was.

I had met Peter through the Wits School of Journalism. They had a unit which reported on Chinese activity in Africa – I never went there, nor did I ever meet the man that recommended Peter to me; and gave me his contact details. Peter was also medium in height, I would like to say he was the average Chinese man's height; but I have no reference. In his mid-50's he was much older than both Tyler and myself. He had short hair, was clean shaven and didn't wear glasses. He was soft spoken and was extremely proficient in English, but even after almost 25 years of being in South Africa, he maintained his accent.

This was my team. In the days leading up to our departure, we met in Pretoria East, at Panaroti's to discuss the logistics and the plan for the field work. I had prepared booklets for each them, I called it the '*guide to fieldwork*' and it was tailored to their specific roles and contained information such as emergency contacts, details regarding our route, times, activities for them to carry out and outcomes I expected from them at the end of the field work. Also in there was our meals, carefully planning out and time set aside for resting or reflecting. In my master-copy was information on the budget, and expenses, payment confirmations from accommodation booking and space for field notes. The discussion was short given the hour long drive to get there; nevertheless it was important that everyone knew what their role was and what I needed from them in order to achieve the outcomes necessary for the completion of my fieldwork. Peter lived in Centurion, and had agreed to meet us half-way in Midrand, where he would leave his car with his friend.

I had arranged to rent a car for the duration of the fieldwork, there was no way we would all fit in my tiny VW Golf, plus luggage. We were meant to leave on Monday, but some unforeseen complication delayed our departure to the Wednesday after. According to my scheduled we would need to depart the city by 9am, in order to be in our first town, Vrede by 11:00. But at 10am, we were still in Midrand,

caught in traffic. Frustration, edged itself into my face, prompting Tyler to ask how I dealt with things not going according to plan. There was an apprehension in her voice and she stiffened slightly in her seat; almost as if she were expecting me to lash out at her for the delay. I responded, calmly, that it wasn't that I was going to freak out if we didn't go according to the schedule; but there was more depending on the maintenance of the schedule, than just the time, as delays will ultimately place pressure on the activities that we need to achieve in each town.

We drove in silence for some part of the way before normal conversation resumed, and each of us discussed our backgrounds in more detail. Tyler was in the process of completing one or two subjects at Wits. She had not set her mind on a solid plan for the future as yet, but she was interested in script-writing and saw that, as a likely avenue for her career. Peter, explained his rich history and journey to South Africa. He was once a truck driver which delivered goods to many of the small towns in South Africa, some of them being the same towns we were about to visit. It had been many years since he had done this job; and although he tried he could offer very little in the way of what these towns were like when he visited them on his delivery route. As for me, I was balancing a full time job and a full-time PhD. There wasn't much more to be said about that.

We arrived in Vrede after noon, we turned off the R546, off the provincial road and into the town. The main street, or 'high street' was Kerk Straat or 'Church Street' ; and it was a long road that ran the length of the town, from the South to the centre of town, at the end of the road was the towns 'main' church. This detail is important, as in most towns these churches, are heritage site or buildings and there use is often reserved for special occasions such as Easter Service or Christmas Service. For the remainder of the year, there are small churches scattered in the town, and worshippers attend them regularly. We drove around the town, slowly. It was simply an exercise in exploration and orientation. It was too early at this time to check into our accommodation, as the standard and universal check in time was after 2pm. We passed several schools, and eventually came across a cemetery, located next to a set of tennis courts. The cemetery was large, and extended to a ridge, the literal edge of the town. Beyond the ridge was a beautiful valley, wherein you could just barely make out a settlement. The cemetery was un-kept and overgrown. Long, waist-high grass shrouded the tombstones. We decided to walk through the cemetery, these sort of invisible spaces always fascinated me, as being spaces that every town or city had, most people know where they are and may have even visited it out of necessity, but they have get little attention as the reminder of our mortality, they hold a silent vigil over the broader urban spaces.

There were several older graves, dating as far back as the early 1900's. The graves of young children, sometimes two or three were reminders of the harsh conditions that the Trek-boers often faced on their expeditions; as well as the harsh reality of life during that time. Very surprisingly; located in a

section cordoned off from the rest of the cemetery were tall, black tomb stones. They were branded with the Jewish symbol and dated as equally far back as some of the other tomb stones in the main part of the cemetery. This find instantaneously debunked the idea that small towns were traditionally religiously homogenous spaces; as is typical idea of found in the settlement history of small towns. There we people at the tennis court who watched traipse through the deserted area – they never came any closer to investigate what was going on, but we can assume they thought our actions strange.

The graveyard was large and hundreds of tomb stones stretched out of the ground in various shapes and sizes from different periods in history. We left there, and returned to the main street of the town; it was now time to start our interviews. I hadn't had much luck in my previous visits in convincing people to talk to me; moreover the language barrier was often the greatest challenge I faced when approaching participants on my own. But this time would be different, this time I had Peter with me and he was as charismatic as they would come.

We stepped rather gingerly into our first store, led by Peter who didn't approach the front desk immediately, but instead slowly abled through the store, looking at some of the items available for purchase. I followed him rather unconsciously a little way into the store, before thinking it was pointless trying to blend in. Tyler looked like a transformer with the many cords and electronic appendages hanging off her. The man behind the counter looked tense, he watched the three of us closely as we walked through part of the store. Peter eventually made his way to the front desk and introduced himself and us. After explaining who we were and what we were there to do; the man relaxed. I stepped up closer to the counter and the man looked at me with a quizzical expression, at this point peter explained we were actually there for my research and translated my request to do an interview with him. He declined, however suggested we ask his wife who was standing at the back of the store watching the exchange. She eventually agreed to talk to us, however refused to be filmed.

Eloping to Vrede
Wang's Story



My husband arrived in South Africa in 2003. 7 years later I followed him here after I finished my schooling. I learnt to speak English in China through books, but didn't have much opportunity to practice speaking. Since we have come here, we get to practice our English by talking to people. My parents weren't too

happy about me coming here in the beginning; let alone getting married to my husband.

Before I came to South Africa, I worked in a cell-phone store as a sales women. We spend most of our young life in school studying, until we finished college at about 20 or 21, only then we have to start working. But here in South Africa 16 to 18 year olds start working. I prefer being independent and self-employed, because I am working for myself in my own store. In 2010 when I arrived; we officially got married. My husband's whole family is in Durban and they all attended the wedding, but there is no one from my family in South Africa and none of them came. I am from Xiamen City in Fujian Province. Xiamen is a big port city in China, like Durban - but bigger. I have two sisters and a brother, my older sister went back to China, and she ran this shop for 15 years before she gave us the lease. She and her husband left because her husband's visa expired, so he had to go back and she followed him. My other sister is here in South Africa as well as my brother, he is also here in Vrede. We all get together to celebrate Chinese New Year, or have a food party together to celebrate mid-autumn festival and we have moon cake. We don't

Other than my children, I miss the food in china. I try to look for the food I want in China Mall, Dragon city and China Mart when I visit Johannesburg. So when I go and get more stock, I buy it and keep it in the fridge.

have a house in Vrede, we stay in the shop – but we still manage to get together and have a nice time. When my children arrive, they will first stay with us in the shop, then maybe we will look for a house.

We have two children who are in China and they live with my husband's parents in Fuqing. My daughter is 14 and my son is 6 years old. I would like to bring my children here to finish school so that they can

learn English and have a chance to speak it. My daughter was here, but she didn't learn *Chinese language* and she couldn't speak to her grandmother - this was a problem. So we took her to China about 9 years ago when she was five, and she has been in China since then. I will bring my children back to finish their schooling in South Africa. I want them to go to university here as well. I know they will have to go to another town, possibly Newcastle so that they can finish school. Newcastle has an international school there, where they accommodate Chinese students. Language is very important, my parents don't speak English, but I want my children to be able to speak English fluently as it's very important they know the language and can speak it well. Although I haven't seen my children in a long time, my permit will expire in two months and I have to go to China to have it renewed. I will take a short holiday to see my children, and my husband will stay in the shop. I am excited to see them.

I have one South African friend, her name is Adams she is here in Vrede, sometimes if we go to Johannesburg, and we go together so we can talk.

Since we have been here in South Africa we have visited Durban, Cape Town and some other places. If I had to move, I would like to go to Durban. In China we have a very different life than here in South Africa, there is a huge population and it is very hot. We still feel unsafe as we see ourselves as foreigners. I don't feel very safe in Vrede, even though nothing has happened to me. I read the news and everything in the media, all the robberies and the violence... My parents watch the news on TV in China and they see things about South Africa, especially things about protesting and violence and they weren't too happy about me coming here in the beginning. Now it has been many years and they see everything is fine so they don't worry so much. They used to think that if something happened it was near me. I speak to my parents at least once a week. I have explained what has happened and how far away the incidents are.

There are also some good things in South Africa, like there is good air here, not like in China with such bad air pollution, that's the biggest difference here. With regards to shopping, in China we spend money in cash, but here people mostly use the card. In China there is a full range of restaurants whereas here it is still limited. The city, which I can relate mostly to is Durban as it's the closest city that resembles the place I come from, because it is more modern and more developed. There are many international schools in Xiamen City so there are quite a lot of students from different countries.

*I want to
belong here...*

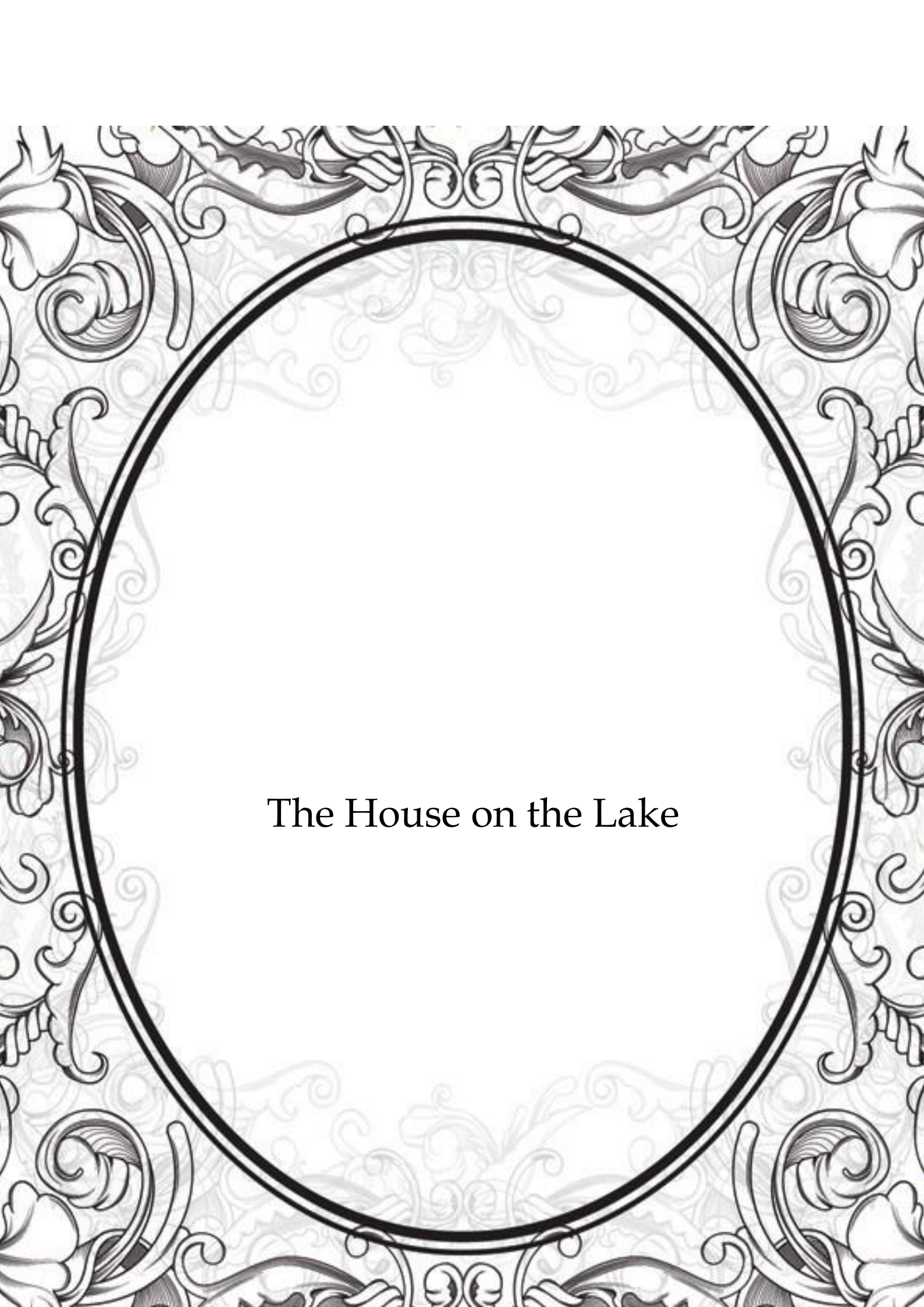
People came from Asia, Pakistan, and India and also from different African countries, but we were just excited to see them, they are so different from us. The first thing in my mind when I saw those people I thought that maybe they lived a different lifestyle to us. When I came to

South Africa, I was more surprised to see so many Chinese people in South Africa, and not only that but people from Pakistan and India too. The city I come from Xiamen has been an international city for about 100 years, it has developed very early, and there are already a lot of foreigners so I have been used to seeing many foreigners since I was a child. Since 1945 we have a freedom day, and the government spends a lot on the education system, especially the languages. We also have a lot of English teachers from America and Canada.

I want to belong here, but I'm not 100% sure. There is a nice community here; we all help each other out. Sometimes we have to close the shop late to go and get stock, so we return late, our neighbors will come and check up on us to make sure everything is alright and if they can help at all. My neighbor is South African, I feel a part of the community, especially when they care for my safety. I also try to belong by taking care of the street, parking area and pavement in front of my shop. Even when I was in China as a child, I tried to keep everything in my surroundings clean. As it gives people a good impression of you and how much you care so I do the same here in Vrede.

We don't take any holidays we run the shop from Monday through to Sunday every week except Christmas and New Year's Day. On the weekends we don't open shop for full days just half days, as this gives us some time to ourselves.

We are renting this building from a white man, his son manages the buildings for him. Most of the chain stores are owned by local people, but the other stores are Indian and Pakistani owned, but the other businesses are Somali owned. There are more Indian, Pakistani businesses here than in town.



The House on the Lake

The first time we went to Vrede, we stayed at Mrs Gerna's guest house. The guesthouse was located about 10 minutes from the town; but still within the boundaries of Vrede; along a secluded dirt road. When we eventually returned there for a second previously unplanned round of field work I had yet to identify any South African residents of the town who would be willing to participate in my research. Although the town's people were very friendly, and they were generally willing to assist us – they were also extremely shy. I had initially contacted Mrs Gerna, and requested an interview with her as a long-time resident and business owner in the town, however, she was on holiday in the Cape with her entire family, particularly her young grandchildren as she gleefully mentioned on the phone, and wouldn't be back in Vrede for another month. She did however invite us to talk to her long-time employee and assistant – *Beauty*. Even though she was away, she took my booking to stay at her guesthouse.

When we arrived at the guest house, we parked up close to the gate in a similar we did the last time. However something was different. The guesthouse and general areas was quiet, unsettlingly quiet. I got out of the car and walked around to the office expecting to find at least somewhere there...but there wasn't. We scanned the property from the car looking for someone who could let us in. I knew Mrs Gerna was on holiday but I did expect her to leave someone in charge of the guest house, especially since she was expecting occupants tonight. I called Mrs Gerna who casually instructed me that the key for the room where we were staying was under a flowerpot, I was welcome to park anywhere on the property and....we were alone on the property, so...if we didn't mind, please make sure the dogs don't get out. At first Tyler and I were excited at the idea that Vrede was so safe they could leave the key on the property and trusted enough to allow strangers to stay without supervision.

We brought our luggage into the small apartment and settled in. The two tiny sausage-dogs which belonged to Mrs Gerna and who we nicknamed *Pancake and Syrup*, followed us at our heels during our multiple trips to and from the car as we off-loaded. It was evident that they hadn't had some company in a few days. When we were done, we shut the gate counting all the dogs to make sure we hadn't left one out. It had been a long drive, but being able to step out on to a balcony overlooking one of the most serene lakes as it reflected the sun beginning to set beyond the horizon of the savannah was one of the finer moments that made the entire trip rather spectacular. Tyler and I enjoyed a beverage on the balcony as we both commented on the beauty and stillness of the area, appreciating the change from the smoggy city.

That night we cooked pasta with a cheese sauce. I had forgotten to purchase salt and pepper. We contemplated driving into town, but the dirt road deterred that and we concluded the spar had already probably closed since it was already past 6pm.

The sun set and the night drew darker, and with the darkness came the realization of just how alone we were and how far from anyone who would be able help us if anything went wrong. Unfortunately, this visit was at the same time when massive protests had erupted in Litchenburg, in the Northwest Province, and Farm murders were on the rise. What now seems like unfounded paranoia kept us both awake for most of the night. I remember trying to force myself to sleep as I knew I had a very long drive to Wolmaranstad the next day. As I laid in bed, I googled “*crime statistics in Vrede*”, a sparsely populated PDF came up and it noted very low statistics...not that I had any reference. The apartment was secure, well as secure as glass doors with aluminum frames as no burglar gates. The night eventually passed and Vrede returned to its ever more charming self. In the morning we followed our routine and packed up, double and triple checking all parts of the apartment to ensure we hadn’t left anything behind. We drove back into town and drove straight to Mrs Gerna’s store, where we were expecting to find *Beauty*.

Admittedly, some interviews are more difficult than others. What makes them difficult isn’t necessarily the person whom you are interviewing but sometimes they are especially shy and find it difficult to answer the questions – at least to the full and rich expectation that I as the interviewer often carried. *Beauty* was one such difficult interview. When we had at last checked out of Mrs Gerna’s accommodation, we drove very slowly to Mrs Gerna’s second hand Church store – apprehension evident in the slow able into the town. The Church store was a house on the main road which had been converted. It had a long drive way, step driveway that led to the back entrance where we found *Beauty*, sitting outside enjoying the sun.

We greeted politely, Mrs Gerna had already called *Beauty* to inform her that we would be coming and asked her to please assist us. I wonder if Mrs Gerna hadn’t called *Beauty*, if she would have taken the interview on her own...something tells me she probably would not have accepted the interview. Nevertheless, *Beauty* showed us inside, and invited us to sit in the kitchen – she then offered us some tea and coffee but we declined. *Beauty* spoke softly and didn’t want us to video-record her. It took some convincing for her to allow us to take a photo of her.

Ou Hout Van Vrede
Beauty's Story

“I am 35 years old now, and I live right here in Vrede where I was born in 1982. I’m one of four children; all of us were born here in Vrede. I left school in grade 11, to look after my mum when she fell ill and passed away.



I still live in the family home, with my daughter; her name is Nqobile and she is 15 years old. She goes to a private school in Eroma. She’s very ambitious, she wants to be an actress, just like the ones on TV. Sometimes when she gets home she will say with excitement “mamma, I want to do like this and like that”, that is when she shows off her actress skills to me and I find it so heartwarming. When I wake up in the morning, I cook for my child. Then I clean my room and I bath and get ready, then come to work. She comes home every day at 15:30. On the weekend, on Saturday we come to town for shopping. I go to the Chinese shop for maybe a jacket or cloths. Also they are having grocery shop and sometimes I buy stuff there. I also use Shoprite or Spar. I come shopping at the end of the month like this weekend I will come with my child.

My sister is married, she has four children and lives in Pretoria. I have two brothers and they both work at the municipality but live here in Vrede. My older brother is married and has one daughter, she is 16 years and she goes to Vrede Secondary school.

It isn’t easy, but we always get together on special occasions, like Christmas. This home of mine is too small to have us all here at once, if we get together here one of us has to sleep in the kitchen, so instead we go over to my brother’s house, as it’s nice and big .



I have been working for Miss Gerna for 2 years now, as a cleaning lady, but I have known her for a long time, I was her daughter’s nanny at *Ou-Hout*. I help her do the cleaning, but I also help run the church charity shop, where I work 5 days a week. You see Miss Gerna opened this business on 17th October last year (2016). The shop does get very busy, especially on 15th and 25th of every month and people come and buy the cloths, or they take a lay-by. Mostly the black people and the white people come here to

shop. We get a lot of customers coming into the shop, this is how we raise money for our church and it's how we gather donations.

I love this town because it's a small town and its quiet and I enjoy being here. I live next to the police station, I don't have an RDP house you see. What I have is what my mother built, and she built it with her bare hands, a house built of bricks. I don't have any facilities like a flush toilet, no shower or bath but what I do have is a lounge, kitchen and two bedrooms. I like where I live, I wouldn't ever want to move, and the beauty of this town is that there aren't many fights or protests going on. There are many different types of people in this town and I feel like I belong in this town, it feels safe in this town. I have many friends in town and near where I live, it's nice to get out and speak to them every day and I get to visit my neighbor's too. People are very friendly here; if you go to Shoprite, you will meet people and they are very friendly, whether or not they know you, they will talk to you.



But if I ever had to consider moving, I would move to Atlas. Atlas is a quiet town, you step outside and all you see it greenery and water where

you can go fishing, it's very beautiful. As nice as my town is, there isn't anything to do here for fun, Vrede is a small town, but this small town is now growing. We have a new area at extension four, there are a lot of RDP houses there, and they also have electricity. I have been to Durban once, in 2013. I was enjoying myself it was so nice, on the beach. I like Durban. It's nice down there. Its fun that side. I could move there if there is work. I think there are more jobs there than here, because I see it's a big city so I think I will get a job there. But I will only go with Miss Gerna. I really like working with her. She is very good to me.

Since the end of apartheid, there has been many changes here, we didn't have any types of grounds before but now we have grounds as well as RDP houses. There is a lot of things here that we didn't have before. People's attitudes have also changed, we talk with all different kind of people, we share all the same things, black or white it makes no difference. The people who live here don't drink too

much, but we do have some people using drugs, but it's not a lot of people. We also have people who are sick with mental health illness.

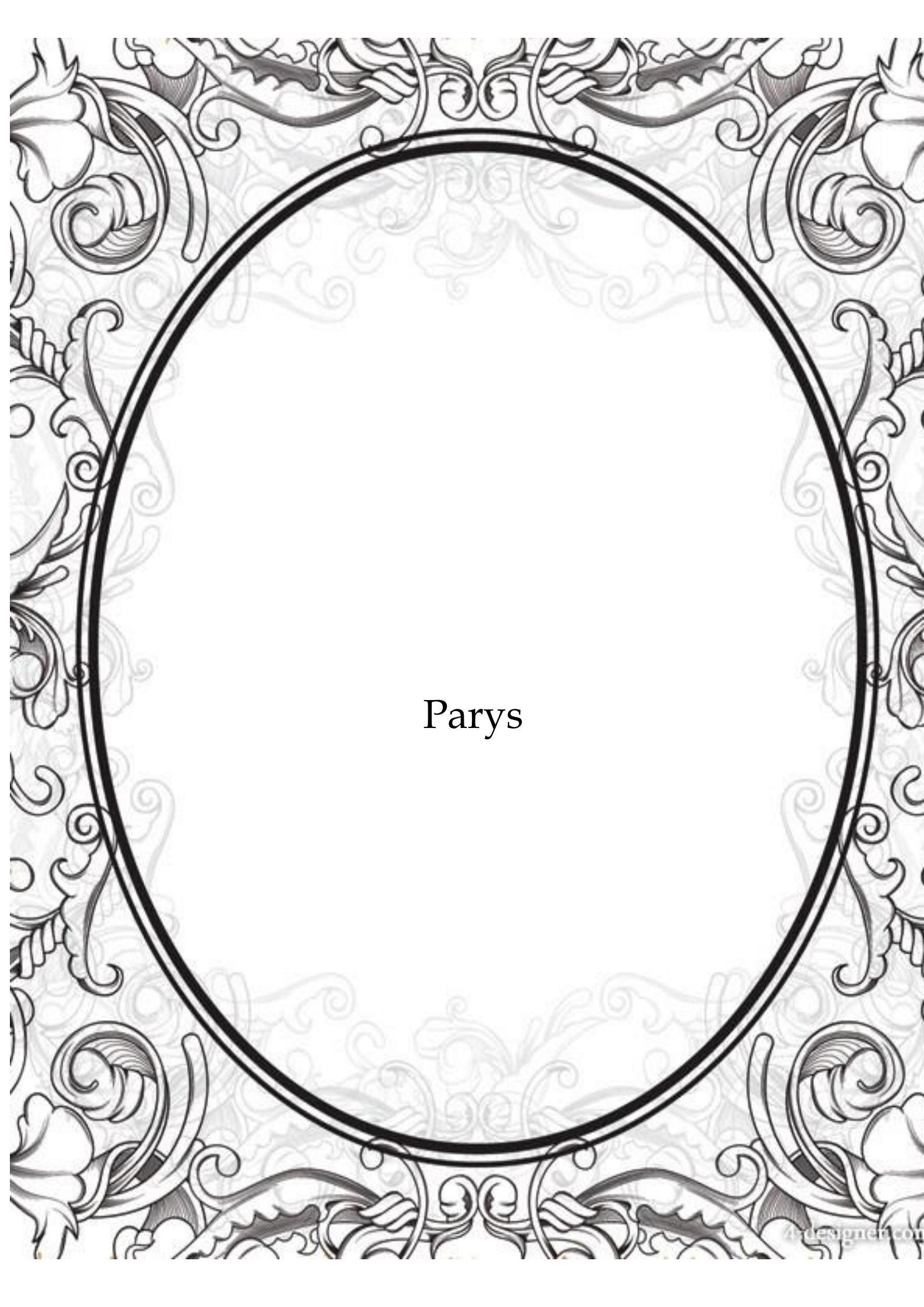
We have a taxi system, but no bus system. Here the taxi goes from here in Vrede to Johannesburg and return, but passing through Vrede via New Castle. The taxi service picks up people throughout the journey, which is how people come to this town. I don't use any transport to go home, it's not too far for me I like walking home.

There are many different kinds of people that come to open businesses like the Chinese, Indians and now even Nigerians. The Chinese people have been here for a long time and over time they have been getting more and more businesses here. They are coming here, because I think their businesses are making money, they must be telling other Chinese people to come to Vrede, and open small shops as there is money to be made here. The Nigerian people are also here, they own the hair salon.

There are a lot of young people in this town, but we also have the same amount of middle aged people and older people in this town.

There are no problems between the ANC and the DA political parties. Here nothing happens when it is voting. It's just the people they come and campaign and put posters and you go to the station to vote and there are no problems."

The interview was short in comparison, but nonetheless we thanked Beauty for her participation and walked back up the steep driveway to the car. Before leaving we stopped at Spar one more time for some cold drinks and left Vrede. The magnificent Church still dominated the architecture as it grew smaller in the rearview mirror.

A large, ornate circular frame made of two concentric black lines. The frame is surrounded by a dense, repeating pattern of stylized floral and scrollwork motifs in a light gray color. The central area of the frame is white and contains the text "Parys".

Parys

Ah! Parys. I was first introduced to the little town in my first year in Geography. We went on an excursion to the town...I don't remember what exactly we did (which is problematic); however I remember the field trip included a trip to Tumahole, the township located near Parys.

Parys is about an hour's drive from Johannesburg and although not particularly a scenic drive, the town itself makes up for it as it is located on the very edge of the Vaal River, which without a doubt is the main attraction of the town which seems to have transformed to cater for the many visitors it hosts throughout the year. Along the high-street there are a variety of shops ranging from eateries to desert specialist and arts and crafts stores. From the moment you enter the town you are bombarded with cultural sights, sounds and smells...yes smells. It is particularly common to find a truck full of sheep or cows stopped at the local filling station as the owner tops up on fuel or some drinks or snacks for his journey to who knows where.

Parys wasn't initially one of the towns I was interested in studying; but our failure to secure any viable interviews in Vredefort, just 14 kilometers away made it a necessity to include Parys in my collection of towns.

Parys is really a vibrant and bustling town. I am not sure where else in the world you could purchase a genuine sheep skin from the side of the road. I say this with the secret knowledge that I was on one such person. But now it was June, and the weather was beginning to turn from a crisp freshness to a chilling cold. As is typical of South African winters, bright sunny days even in the heart of winter means that we can at times forget it is winter, especially if you have been sitting in a car for over an hour. Nevertheless, as we drove into the town, a man stood in the middle of the road at a four-way stop, showing off a large and beautifully plush sheep skin. I couldn't resist and stopped asking the man how much it was. I was never one for animal furs, but certain items, such as genuine wool was too good an opportunity to pass up. I paid him in cash and he rolled up the skin, placing it in the back seat.

We were booked to stay at a guesthouse named Vaal De Rama, on the banks of the Vaal river. It was here that I met Isabel, the owner and caretaker of the establishment. After our little purchase on the side of the road, we carried on through the town, almost at the edge we turned into the road where our guesthouse would be located. The Vaal on our rights and a row of very large, very beautiful architecturally modern houses to our left. The road itself did not match the surroundings. It was a liminal or 'between' space in the truest sense of the word. Between the modern and well maintained concrete homes and the rough bushveld on the edge of the river, the road was a patchy motley of deep pot-holes exposing the gravel upon which it was built, and tar.

We arrived at the guesthouse, and drove up a steep driveway as we climbed the once natural bank. There were about 6 empty parking bays lined next to each. The property was large and the lawn was lush, green and clearly well maintain in contrast to the browning natural grass just beyond the boundary wall. The grass was still damp, whether from being water, or some recent rain I wasn't aware of, blades of green stuck to my dusty hiking boots. My work boots as I called them.

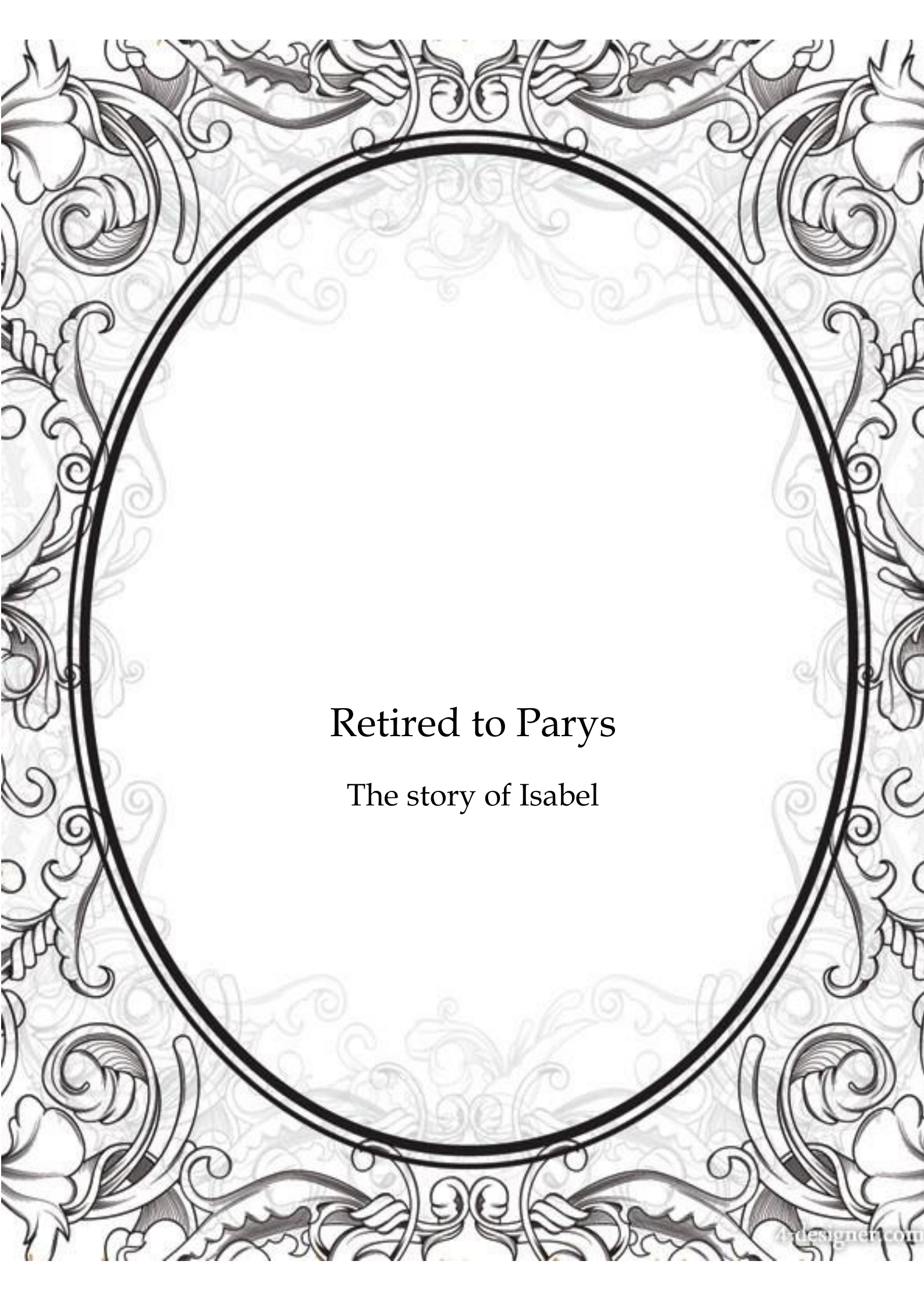
There was a path that led from the small car park to the main house. At the door, framed, Isabel stood surveying us with a pleasant smile. A trained smile for her guests. We was a tall and slim figured lady, years and history evident on her face but well kept. Her hair was colored shades of blond, and styled – short. She wore a black trousers, and matching black top with functional shoes. I have never run a guesthouse before but I would imagine that comfortable shoes are imperative to keeping up with the demands. As a person of Indian decent and heritage, I always marveled at the white ladies who continued to take such pride in themselves and keep their weekly hair dressing appointment.

There were a few steps leading up to the door which I assumed is what gave Isabel her rather menacing height, as I climbed the stairs I felt her eyes continue to survey me, assess me...I wondered how I was doing. As I reached the top, I extended my hand to greet her, which she met – even though I had reached the top of the stairs I still had to stretch my neck up and backwards to face her. She welcomed us inside and there was some paperwork to complete before we could settled in our rooms. She invited us into her home which served dually as her base of operations. As we entered, I grimaced. I knew my shoes were still wet and muddy from the walk across the grass and although I didn't want to go any further, Isabel had her protocol and insisted we wait in the lounge for her to fetch our documents. I stepped on the beige Persian carpet and felt instantly horrible on the inside. I hated leaving a mess and hoped that she hadn't noticed. We sat in the lounge or welcome area. It was positively stunning. The décor was light earthy tones with dark wooden furniture and gold colored lamps and vases. There were paintings on the wall and it was all arranged...rather perfectly. That was just the problem, the décor seemed highly out of place in this small town. We later found out that all the furniture had come from Isabel's previous home in Sandton – and to be honest this made a lot more sense.

Self-catering was always an important factor in the choice of our accommodation. As a Muslim, I follow a strictly halaal diet, and this meant I had to prepare my own food most of the time, as most restaurants and fast food options in small towns didn't cater for halaal. Tyler took the single bedroom in the main house and I was given the single bed, self-catering apartment on the edge of the property; Peter stayed in a cottage beneath my self-catering room.

That evening, Peter, who had a friend in Parys went visiting, and Tyler and I decided to take a drive through the town to see what nightlife there was. There wasn't any nightlife. The roads were dark and empty. The many restaurants and stores that were bursting at their seams with GP (Gauteng Province) customers just owners before were dark, their owners gone home for the night. We had found ourselves at the end of the town at a garage, where we bought ice-cream and ambled very slowly through the town back to our accommodation, looking at all the names of the stores, fascinated that such novelty and specialty stores could exist in a town like this. I was aware that I was driving well below the speed limit and on the occasion when a car would pull up behind me, I would move onto the shoulder of the road to allow the car to pass. I had never had an issue with this previously but on this night, at one point a white VW Polo pulled up behind me, his lights on their brightest setting, reflecting painfully in my rear-view mirror into my eyes. I moved over to the side to let him pass, but his didn't. I continued to drive in the shoulder of the road and signaled him to pass until eventually he did. Eventually the polo passes to the right of us, his windows darkly tinted so I couldn't see who was inside. As he passed, I expected him to carry on driving, to speed up – after all for the last 5 minutes he had been sitting on my bumper, pressuring me to drive faster; but the Polo didn't, instead began to drive in front of me, very slowly and put the cars hazards on, pulling off to the side of the road. I mentioned to Tyler, 'what a stupid driver this was' he overtook me so that he could stop just in front of me. I moved over to the side and passed him, continuing on my journey through the town. As we passed him, he pulled off again and again passed us, putting on his hazards he pulled over to the side of the road. By this time I realized the driver of the Polo wanted us to stop. I don't want to sound paranoid, but I am from Johannesburg, and to me this was a classic high-jacking technique! When I realized what might have been happening I quickly turned off the main road and down a side street and then another and then another; in a way zigzagging away from the Polo, keeping my eye in my rear view mirror to see if we were being followed. Once my zigzagging stopped we found ourselves in a rather unfamiliar part of town and used the GPS to get back to our accommodation. I cannot be sure if that was actually a high-jacking attempt. It may have been a good samaritan trying to help us; however, I have always felt that at times of GP number plates were somewhat of a hazard in these small towns as they instantly alert all people to the fact that we are not from around there. That we are indeed insiders who are actually outsiders.

We hardly ventured out again at night in any of the small towns.



Retired to Parys

The story of Isabel

Previously we had lived all over Johannesburg and Sandton before my husband bought this house, and converted it to a bed and breakfast as a way for us to settle down and keep busy during our retirement. Parys wasn't completely new to me; my parents used to bring us here for family holidays. I will admit, Parys wasn't the first place we thought of when we wanted to retire. One day my husband said he wants to leave Johannesburg, so we took a map and drew a circle around Johannesburg; we started visiting places like Hidelberg, Hartebeestpoort, Brokespruit and Parys. We finally decided on Parys, as I had visited it as a child and now in our retirement it was the place we liked the most; but even so, it took a long time to make a decision, we couldn't really find the property that we wanted, I didn't want to live on the island, I wanted to be in-between the people.

I will never forget the day the truck left Johannesburg, it was a big truck moving into this little town. I frequently go to Johannesburg but I don't think I could move back there. I like to take a drive, and I drive myself; but my car just makes a u-turn and comes right back here. When we first moved here, I had to make friends, but I didn't find it difficult, you know in a little town it's easy to make friends. I went into all these little shops and said 'hello'.

I enjoy it, living in a small town like this one is very nice. It's not always easy running this bed and breakfast business as it's quite a large property to manage on my own, but this town is just lovely. Parys is very different from Sandton. Sandton is a place where no one knows their neighbor's; it's a place I wouldn't want to return to, despite the fact I still have a home there. When I got married we moved to Sandton, at first everything was good but then we were held up in Sandton, it got to a point when it became very unsafe, that's why we moved here, we just wanted a normal life. We don't want anything special we just want a roof over our head, we are all the same, no matter what colour we are, we might eat different foods, but even then, we have the staples. I think there is something very unique about South Africans which came through from various cultures, but ultimately what we all want is a normal life and to be safe and comfortable



I am 74 years old now have been a resident of Parys for eight years, my husband and I got married quite late in our lives and we had been married for 26 years before he died. I was born in Krugersdorp and raised in Carltonville, I have 5 brothers and sisters. My mother was a wonderful musician and my dad was a miner; if he wasn't in the mines he couldn't have sent six children to school. My first

qualification after school was only a diploma, my parents couldn't afford to send us all to study, but in the past, you could go to college just by registering and you can pay it back once you started working,

they would take the money from the salary you earned. My sister passed away two years ago in Pretoria, it was very sad. My youngest brother is a dentist in Johannesburg, he has four children and they all went to Stellenbosch University.

I have various qualifications of them being taught at the Teachers Training 23 years, then at RAU Afrikaans University) years, its' now called University of Johannesburg. I have



without all related, I Goedstad College for (Rand for four The

taught in many places; some where you had to drive 120Km through farms and bush just to get there, I was never nervous going to these places. I did a lot of different jobs, but the one I am most proud of is bringing rhythmic gymnastics to South Africa, and the different doors and avenues this opened for me, the children and the people of South Africa.

There are many good points about living in Parys. I don't think I could cover all of them – even if I spoke for a few hours. The biggest difference about living in a city to a town is the traveling, to get from point A to Point B it takes time, say for example I want to go visit my brother. So, my brother is in Northcliff and I am in here it takes sometimes 45 minutes, it takes the same amount of time if I was in Sandton going to Northcliff, the biggest problem is the traffic (in Johannesburg). Then there's the community. There is a strong sense of community here. This is one thing in small towns, people form groups and they have a lot of things going on at the churches and the community starts at the church. I, myself am a Cristian (NGK). Like on a Friday evening they will have a small dinner, so people will get together, even though it's not always for the church, they get together at the church and enjoy each other's company. Although I don't

those type of things, because I am working busy, but I do have different ways of I have friends, but I also know a lot of know my neighbours very well and we greeting each other, we sometimes visit least once a week, and it depends what we



participate in here and I am reaching out. people, I always each other at do, we go

out to eat and we bring each other stuff. My other friends coming from other parts of the town as

well, we do help each other out like when the electricity goes out, we have a water problem or if someone is sick we offer to take them to the doctor, we are there for each other. We do keep track of each other, if my neighbour goes away I keep the key of the house and I keep an eye out for them, and they do the same for me. We have formed little groups, we each bring something and we get together, we eat and have a sit down together and chat. Mostly its old people that come together, sometimes you have to invite a few younger people and then it's different. There's also quite a number of gay people and they are very nice people, I am very good friends with them, so you can say this is a very cosmopolitan town.

This is why I enjoy living here, because if you want to dress a little out of your box or something, no one looks at you, you can really be creative and be yourself. If I had to describe this town to someone who has never been here, I would say, it's a small town with a lot of things to do. Not like you find in a big city, you can go out and enjoy yourself. There are so many things to do on the just outside like horse riding, quad biking, going to look at the dome which is a world heritage site. Then of course there is a lot classical music orchestra's. There aren't any theatres but in Vredeford, there is a beautiful big church and they have a lot of shows there with big choirs. Did you know that in Vredeford, is the Chris van Niekerk School, the lady who is the head master, she is very highly qualified in music, they even have a violin school and there are a lot of kids playing the violin there. You can see the school there is near the church and its one of these old stone schools, the building is as beautiful as is the large hall. Last year we had a Christmas show there, the head master taught about twenty children from the township in about six months, to play the violin. They even put on a show for about 20 minutes. You think it's only in the city, but there is an art school here, where they do drama, music, art and piano. In the beginning of the year, you can see what events are planned for the year on the internet as well as the local paper. Parys also has one of the largest indoor domes in the southern hemisphere, they have cattle shows, they sell the cattle, have lipazaners with music and they do all kinds of things in the dome, it's the same for Vredefort.

Parys is quite a tourist attraction, I think the most important thing here is the river and everything that goes on around the river, like the weddings, and the number of wedding venues is growing, it's all around the river. Also, with all the activities like river rafting, the boat racing and rowing, which is quite a big thing at the school here, once a year, all the school's children go and compete with other nearby schools, they have the races, which is an end of the year activity for them and then the whole town goes to watch. There's a lot of things going on that's not just on the river, we have the flower shower it's called The Free State Flower Shower, it's been done with Madera, Portuguese people. We had the first one last year and it's absolutely amazing, I've been everywhere in the world and I've seen lots of things but I was blown over. The floats are what made it special, they were built by the

Madeirans, I've never seen floats like that, there were 40 000 flowers and 600 dancers, they were all dressed in very colourful costumes. They were all from the Free State and there was a Durban man that came to do the choreography, he travelled through Free State looking for dancers to teach, and on the day, it came together perfectly, the dancers were dancing between the floats, even the streets were shut down for the float parade. Then this man wrote a musical, it was put on during the night, just in the street, it was massive. There were a lot of tourists but I think this year there will be a lot more and it will be a lot bigger it's due to take place in November.

Then of course the motorbike show comes to town, around 3,000 to 4,000 bikers come out on their bikes, they usually go to Mimosa Park, which they do every weekend, but this year they are holding the mass gathering at the Dome. Once a year they have the big show which is in September, there will be all sorts of activities there, it's very buzzing, you can't even buy ice that weekend, everything is sold out. Then they have this show where all the bikes go through the town, then it's really buzzing. This weekend you wouldn't be able to find parking again just like the Easter Weekend it was packed, everyone just walks in the street from one place to the other it's really very friendly. For me it's like being on holiday all the time, I can't say this town is a sleepy town, the only time it's really quiet is in winter, it's a bit quiet. People told me it would be cold in winter when I came here, but for me it's the same as in Johannesburg. I have a nice house that's facing the right way, so I don't put any heaters on, the temperature is perfect.

This is definitely not a boring, sleepy town like people often think, there is so much happening and so much organising going on here, I think Parys is very well situated. Some children that are going to university go to Potch (Potchestroom University) or the Vaal Ryuk campus, they stay here and travel to their universities, just like so many other people do. Do you know how many people travel to Johannesburg and to go to work? If you go out there to the main road you can watch the people going in and out of the town.

We do have crime, and it's gone up a little bit, but I can't say it's the same as in other places, it's mostly by the top end of the town. Some people have been held up, had their stolen cars and even some break in's but not as bad as it is in bigger cities. I've never heard of a bank robbery here, the Checkers or Spar haven't been held up or robbed, but they did once hold up at the Ackerman's but it was a small hold up they just took stuff and ran. I do feel safe in this town, even at the taxi rank, I don't have a need to go to the township, but I know people who are there. Perhaps at night I wouldn't go walk there, I haven't heard of problems, but there was handbag grabbing, but I haven't heard of this for a long time, perhaps 2 or 3 years now.

This town is a pleasant place to live, and I feel like this town caters to my needs, I would recommend it as a place to live, as your needs change when you come here. I went to Sandton the other day and I walked into Woolworths, to see all the stuff they have there, I got quite nervous, as here you buy stuff that you need and when I go places like Woolworths I buy stuff I don't need and spend more money. They really bowl you over with all the beautiful stuff, it would be nice to have a Woolworths here, but I suppose there isn't enough foot traffic for such a store. I prefer the new checkers, it's a nice pleasant shopping experience, and they have everything I need. The Checkers was totally newly built, they had Shoprite, it's still here, then this new little shopping center was built and Checkers is in there. It's the one behind pick-n-pay, when you enter the town you can see the signs, it opened about 3 years ago, I used to go to Pick 'n Pay but now I go to checkers, its big and spacious, you don't have to wait too long to pay.

This town is definitely culturally, racially and ethnically diverse, there are lots of different people. I think there are even Pakistani people here, definitely from all kinds of races, there are even some German people and polish people that live here. There are a few migrants from many different faiths, there are many different kinds of churches, there's even a mosque that was built from a house. There are a lot of Chinese people, that's becoming more and more now they own a lot of the shops, well that's been the case since I've been here. Since we moved to Parys, the main street has really transformed, there's all these little shops now. It used to be really small when I arrived but now you can't visit all the shops in a day or even two days. It's really interesting to see what people do to make a living, how they use their hands. I don't know if you saw the market that they are building from containers, there on the main road, they are building it for the flower festival. In the last 8 years I would say people are mixing well, like people have started to move into predominantly white areas where as before they lived in Tumahole. They also ride bicycles, which I haven't seen in a long time, but I see that as something positive. There are a lot of young people these days as before it was for old and a retirement place the young travel to and from school and universities. Now with the new primary school opening and soon the opening of a high school it will attract more families to come to the area, even Tumahole has some very good schools there too. I'm beginning to think that there are more young people than middle age people here, but we also have a lot of old people in their old age living in the old people's homes, there is a nice retirement village here you see. Just recently somebody brought both his parents nice places at the retirement village, it's costing him 14,000 rands a month, whereas in Johannesburg it's about 26,000. rands a month, so a big saving. I think this town for many years has been economically stable, it's difficult to say if it's politically stable, depends how you look at it. If you take mayor for instance, the mayor is politically stable, but sometime we get people in government position that are not necessary, I think the political stability comes from the top down to

the little towns. But you can see that over the last year it's been quite the economy has taken a turn, even the shops owners are complaining about how slow things have become. We keep track of what's happening in parliament as it does have an impact on the people, even the voting elections we had here, and it had a definite impact. I also find this year, I've hardly seen some of my customers from the government, I don't know what's going on, why they not coming out here, because before we use to have the welfare department people come to town to do their visits, but now there's nothing from government. There has been quite a number of people starting business from Free state and within a year you see the shop has closed down, people are not doing their homework and then they close out.

There is a lot of alcohol problem, especially with the black people, it's actually quite sad to see, because the ones that get paid weekly, have money every week and drink a lot more. It's more the older generation that has the alcohol problem. With the younger generation they are more educated and so there isn't alcohol problem with them. There is a problem with drug abuse, there is a drug called *Tik.*, the schools educate the kids about the drugs and make sure they don't get involved with drugs. It's difficult to say if people have a lot of debt, but I think a lot of people are living just above the bread line. People go and buy what you need, there aren't a lot of things that can attract you to buy what you can't afford which I think is a very lucky thing.

The only thing I don't like about the little town is the condition of the streets, they really need upgrading, it makes me nervous that the municipality says they are so far behind paying Eskom for electricity that Eskom will shut off the electricity. I put in about 1000 rands a week, there are nine rooms here, and the usage depends on how many people I have here at any given time. The municipality doesn't understand the needs of this town, if you look at this street, it's a tourist street, but just look at what it looks like, the grass at the waterfront has been cut only once this whole season. They are quick to respond to a burst water pipe and robot maintenance but we had a long problem with not having street lights here, eventually they came and fixed it. But if it goes off then you have a really long wait before they come back and fix it again. Or when they steal the cables, this happens quite often but then the municipality is quite quick to fix it. We also don't have much public investment either. There isn't a good network of public transport, but there is a big busses greyhound or something transport that goes through Parys to Cape Town. You know what is lacking in Parys a hospital, although there is a hospital, but people who are on medical aid cannot go there, they have to go to Potch.

If you ask why Parys seems to be doing better than Vredefort which is only about 14 kilometers away, I think it's because there used to be a court in Vredefort and they moved it to Parys and since then Parys has grown bigger but this could also be because Parys is next to the river. So, I actually don't know how true it is that moving the court from Vredefort caused it to become like it is. Besides, there

are a lot of people from Parys who go to Vredefort to visit the church, especially when they have events. Vredefort is a very, very small town, it's like a going back in time, when you drive through Vredefort, it's as if it has stood still in time, the builds are old as are the house, there are no modern houses there, but they do have this beautiful church just opposite a beautiful old house. There are a few people who live there that are working here, I think because it's quite cheap or people who have lived there for many years may actually own the houses there. Some people have their business there, the kind of business that doesn't need foot traffic. Like one of my neighbours, he fetches cars from there that have been in an accident, or when he needs car parts, there are a couple of people out there with such businesses that make their money this way. I wouldn't recommend people to go there unless, they wanted to look at a nice church or stay at the hotel which is quite nice, as are the old building there but I wouldn't say go to Vredefort and have lunch there. I did hear once they were going to open a big factory there but that never happened, neither did the building for the world heritage areas, but it never opened its just a white elephant that never opened. The smallest town I know of is Venterskroon and it's the smallest town in the country; or it used to be a town, but not anymore. There's this hotel where you can go eat on a Sunday, but there's very little else there. If you go through Potchestroom there's a dirt road that goes there through the mountains it's very beautiful, also there's a meteorite site there. Even though its considered the smallest town in South Africa, it seems like there is more to do there than in Vredefort.

The more I think about it, I don't think I ever thought I would land up in a town like this; I was still the chair lady of arithmetic gymnastics when we moved here. In the beginning I use to see bakkies that have a sheep in the back, it made me to want to give it a rub, it was such a strange thing to see. Just like when a man was riding on a horse, that's something else I hadn't seen in a long time. So, the other day I found a lady in the hairdresser with a blanket in her lap, I thought it was a puppy, but you know what it was, a lion. So, you do find very strange things in a little town like this. The lady lives on a farm nearby and she looks after animals that have been neglected by thier parents There haven't been animal escapes, but I've found 2 snakes here, one was last week, it was about a meter long and I found a puff adder and a rinkals (an indigenous snake). I phoned the snake man, and he came very quickly to capture them and safely set them free away from the public. The other day there was an alligator, lying in the sun on a neighbor's lawn, I looked over and there was this big thin alligator lying on the lawn. You do get a few wild animals that pass through like the monkeys and the meerkats, I once heard a commotion, I went to investigate and in my bathtub was this very big monkey. I reversed my foot steps and opened the office window he eventually made his way out of the building.

The Immigrating Youth in Vrede
Wing

My parents immigrated to South Africa in 2008. I stayed in China with my grandmother and my two sisters. My eldest sister is in China and the youngest, is here in South Africa, she is working with my parents in their shop. I arrived in South Africa in 2013. We are originally from Fuzhou in the Fujian province in China. I didn't complete my matric, my grades weren't great, actually I barely got by, eventually I left school without finishing. My parents asked me to come to South Africa to help the family. My parents are in Perdekop, that's where I worked first. It is quite far from Vrede, more than an hour's drive. I came to work for my uncle and his wife in Vrede, because they were short of people to work in the shop, so I came to help them out. I have always wanted to make my parents proud of me, so now I will do whatever it takes to help make money so we can all be comfortable. I do get paid for the work I do.

I live in Vrede with my uncle and his wife, they don't have a house but we sleep in the back of the shop. My uncle and aunt sleep in the back of the other shop. We have our meals together with my aunt and uncle. I have many friends here, but I am mostly friends with the Chinese people and the other staff that work here.

Perdekop is a small town in the Mpumalanga province. It has an estimated 3500 people. It is located about an hour east of Vrede and 2 hours south-east of

The biggest difference between Perdekop where my parents are and Vrede, is there are a lot more black people in Perdekop. Vrede which is a lot more mixed, Vrede is better than Perdekop as it is bigger town and its streets are

much wider.

I don't think you can compare Vrede and Fuzhou. Fuzhou is a big modern city full of culture and history, its population is at least 4 to 5 million people whereas here there is only about 1000 people if that.

I haven't been to any other cities beside Perdekop, Vrede and am just not interested in visiting South Africa, when I want to go go to China. Unfortunately I haven't been back to China since I arrived here in 2013, it's all down to working in the family shop.



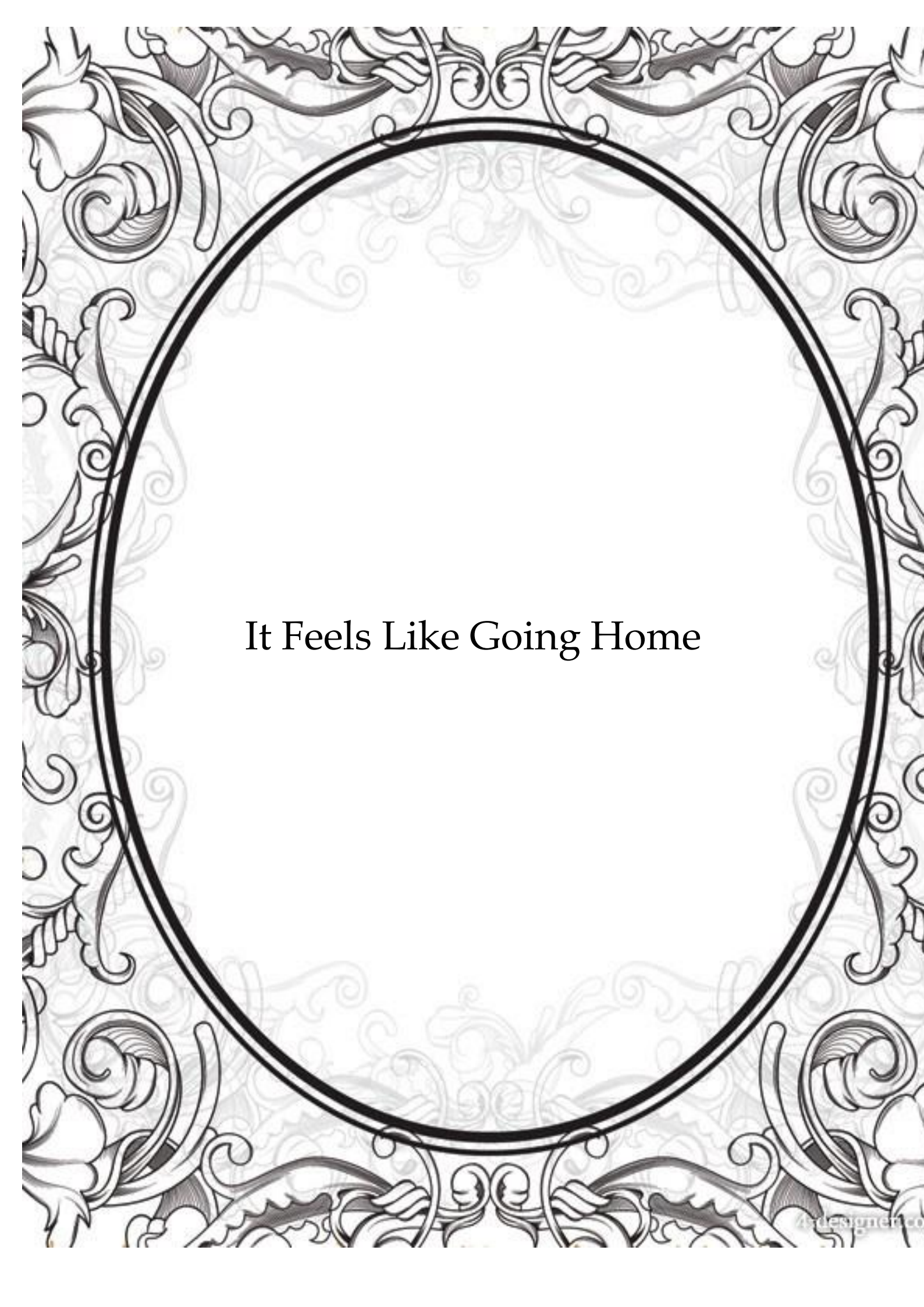
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I have only been to Johannesburg twice. As a family we prefer to go to Dragon City, China mall or Fordsburg. We buy the products from China mall or dragon city and bring them back to Vrede to be sold. Only when you know the supplier for a long period of time, is how we get good discounts on the products we buy to sell here.

I don't feel safe in South Africa, there is always the threat of being robbed. My uncle was robbed twice, and they took his money once when we were all on our way to go buy stock and secondly at the shop. I won't even walk anywhere here, I just don't feel safe, and if I do go anywhere it will be to Shopright but never too far from the shop.

I don't know when I will go back to China for a visit or a holiday, but when I want to get married I will go to China. I don't have any future plans of where I will go, I will follow my parents anywhere they go, if they want me to stay here in South Africa or go back to China, which ever it is, I will do whatever makes them happy.

I do stay intouch with my grandmother and my friends in China, I haven't been in contact with them recently, but when I came to South Africa, my friends were still in school, and I miss them very much. I would like to invite them to come over for a holiday to South Africa, but at the moment I know they are busy with their schooling and exams.

A large, ornate circular frame with a thick black border. The frame is surrounded by a dense, repeating pattern of stylized floral and scrollwork motifs in a light gray color. The central area of the frame is white and contains the text "It Feels Like Going Home".

It Feels Like Going Home

I was born and raised in Johannesburg. By definition, I am a city girl. Yet my sense of place and identity has always been seated elsewhere; out-where; in the farmlands of South Africa. My family, by which I mean my great-grandparents arrived in South African during the late 1890's to early 1900's from India. It is quite a funny story if I think about it. My great-grandfather, Ebrahim Kara who was only a teenager at the time found himself facing quite an opportunity. My great-grandfather had left several years prior to come to South Africa, and the plan was Ebrahim; his son would eventually join him. Nevertheless, years had gone by and for whatever reason, my great-grandfather never left India until it just so happened that someone from his village had bought a ticket on a ship to come to South Africa; but had fallen ill died. The ticket was going to go to waste, and as my great-grandfather and this person shared a name; *Ebrahim*. So he took the ticket and arrived in South Africa under the name of the person that was supposed to come. Even though my great grandfather's surname was *Kara*, because he had used another passengers ticket he then entered the country with that passenger's name and was registered on the official files with it. All transactions which followed used the other man's surname. In short my great-grandfather was a stow-away to from India.

A few years later he travelled back to India to get married; but returned to South Africa after some time with his wife and children. They travelled through different towns and areas in South Africa, staying very much in the north, eventually settling in Wolmaransstad where they bought a shop and opened up a small café. This all happened prior to the 1946 the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act forced my great-grandfather out of his shop and into another part of the town, and by 1950 the Group Areas Act forced them to live and work in the designated Indian area relatively far from the town.

As time went by, their children grew and got married having children of their own, who themselves grew and married and had children. This is where I come in. My grandfather left Wolmaransstad to work in Johannesburg, and settled in city. My father, also never left – but despite this, growing up – we were taught about our heritage and learned very quickly that our family was in Wolmaransstad. To this day, when I meet strangers who recognize my surname they will often ask which 'Kara's' are you. And the reponse is "Wollies"; which somehow they instantly know who I am and who I am connected to.

Growing up we returned to Wolmaransstad relatively frequently and by our late teens my brother and I began spending several weeks at time. When I began my research, Wolmranstad was one of the first towns on my list. I was a safety net in a way, because I knew that if I could get the information I needed from other towns, I would be able to use my networks and community familiarity in Wolmaransstad to collect the data I needed. No matter how many times I have driven to Wolmaransstad, and no matter the length of time between visits; going to that town feels like going home.

It seems strange to me, even though a large portion of my family is in Johannesburg and I have grown up here, and lived in the city (particularly the suburbs) my whole life – going to Wolmransstad is like going home.

Wolmarranstad needs an Indian Doctor

Doc & Shameem

My wife and I met through a mutual friend, it was love at second sight (laughter) and got married in 1988. My wife Shameen; is originally from Durban, she studied a BSc genetics from Wits University in Johannesburg. I was studying medicine at the time, and we moved to Pakistan for two years so that I could finish my degree. Our eldest son was born in Pakistan the same year we moved. When we came back, we stayed in Lens (Lenasia) for three years and then in 1991 and then we moved here to Wolmaransstad. We didn't plan on moving to Wolmaransstad, but one day we attended a wedding in Johannesburg and sat with people from Wolamransstad. They told us how there was a demand for an Indian doctor in Wolmaransstad as their previous doctor left for Durban, and the surgery had been vacant surgery for 2 years. At that time, I was employed at a government clinic in Lenasia, and opportunity existed for me to have my own surgery so we decided to make the most of it and moved here. We moved into the Indian Location. You see the previous doctor just left, he didn't sell his house our anything so when we bought it from him, it was in a very bad state and had been broken in to and stripped. So I took over the doctor's surgery and last year or the year before, also took started renting Muhammed's shop (another resident) to extend the surgery and make it bigger.

It varies how many people I see, because it's a small town they depend a lot on pension, and so in the beginning of the month it can be quite busy, it can go up to 60 or 70 patients and in the middle of the month its 20 or 30.



If I had to describe Wollies to an outsider, I would say it is a one street town, if your breaks are not sharp, you'll miss it (laughing), there's nothing to do here socially, we don't have a sports facility, or a cricket or soccer grounds. This is quite a small town, it's more congested than places like Parys because we are on

the N12 business route, it's quite a busy route, our town is a lot more congested compared to others like Ventersdorp

Much hasn't changed in this small town since the end of apartheid, the blacks are still very underprivileged, their environment at home might have changed to the point that they have a toilet which has improved personal hygiene and they have RDP houses. Unfortunately, they still don't have sporting facilities, clinics are not up to standard, education hasn't improved at all, all the blacks' go to black schools, segregation still exists. Unfortunately, the racial thing is still very strong here, the white schools won't employ a non-white teacher, whereas the black schools will employ a white teacher. Like in Lenasia we still send our children to Indian schools because we know the education there is good, because the teachers who teach there are well disciplined and have raised the standard of education. Education hasn't changed much in the rural areas, the lack of good education leads to crime, which we see here all the time, crime has escalated here in the last 5 years, and it was a more peaceful place to live before. We haven't left the location because we didn't want to change during the middle of our son's schooling. I don't want to go into the politics of teachers and salary, but let's have a look at it, teachers produced by apartheid were all substandard they are not committed. Whereas the teachers in the white schools are of a higher standard, they are more committed, despite the fact the salary is the same. Even older people who are living here and came here during the retirement years are slowly moving away to towns with better facilities. With age comes health problems, and we don't even have a hospital here so they move away to where there are better old age peoples home and hospital facilities nearby.

The local government is not doing much to upgrade the spaces, that's why service delivery protests take place, you can't blame them, and they want better things for themselves, their children and for their future. The government might put in new roads, but it's still very over crowded, that's where the downfall is coming, the old locations are not equipped. A lot of people live in Klerksdorp and work here as opposed to living here and working there, a lot of teachers, counselors and a few shop owners don't live in town, and they live outside of the town and travel here for work. Mainly all these councilors, which should be living here in Wollies, but for their own gain so they live outside of Wollies. The municipality doesn't understand how to cater to our needs or the need of this town, the roads are very poor, there is huge mismanagement at the municipality. If you take the local population, the whites are very stable, the Indians are moderately stable, it's just the blacks that aren't very stable. This town is quite politically stable, we hardly have riots, the last big riot one was about 4 years ago, recently there was the Zuma must fall marches but we didn't have anything here. There is no public transport network in this town, not even a bus, there is one bus to Klerksdorp, to go anywhere you have to take your own car or a taxi.

The biggest problem is there are too many taverns and clubs that are a bad influence on the children, 15 to 16-year olds; they are going there and once the bad habit starts, it's the start of problems. There are

about 5 or 6 liquor stores in town, which is quite a lot in a small town, even Spar, Shoprite and Pick 'n Pay sell alcohol, drugs aren't such a big problem. Nameer went to speak to the drug officer at the police station as part his school project, the officer said that although we can't see it, but there is quite a problem, but it's more the small stuff like dagga. It's very common, because people aren't well off so they can't afford the expensive stuff and it's mostly at the taxi rank.

If I had to recommend this place to live for anyone then I would say, consider your job and your reasons for wanting to come to a small town, because won't find facilities here that you may find elsewhere. The kind of job you may get here, with great difficulty is a teacher's job. You would also have to consider that there are no office blocks or buildings here, everything is ground floor and first floor level. You would have to give a lot of thought for your reasons for wanting to come here and if this small town could meet your needs too.

The passing traffic definitely aids in the business, the truck drivers park up overnight across the street, the takeaway business's also do very well from the passing business.

There are a lot of foreigners like Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somalian, Ethiopian, so there is a demand for housing. Just last week we were at a function and we met a doctor that was appointed as a pharmacist recently and she couldn't find accommodation here, so, she lives in Maquasi and travels here for work. Also, the accommodation is quite expensive, it's about 4500 Rands for a two-bedroom house, the bed and breakfasts are quite expensive too. We also have a lot of people who are working in the mines and coming to stay in the location, so that has caused the overcrowding, other than the councilor, mayor, teachers, and the policemen there is no other facilities here for the young. There is a church here and some school sports, the usual shops, but socially there isn't much at all.

I don't feel a part of a community here, we are still very segregated and people don't really mix; like each race will only mix with themselves. I suppose it's just been like that through all the years, people grown up in an area, stay there and don't often venture out. Even like Nameez (youngest son), his friends have never come to our house, they don't really mix after school. They tried to have braai's and stuff for the sports teams, but they don't really know about halaal food so if we do go we have to bring our own stuff and even though we are there we don't actually mix. There is definitely a growing awareness in the non-Muslim part of the town, they've learned a lot about Islam, when my eldest son started school, they didn't know much, so now with Jumah (Muslim Friday prayers), they allow the Muslim children to leave early and go to the mosque. So there is a definite change.

I think financially, people aren't very stable here, there is a lot of people buying on credit from these furniture shops. People aren't earning well at all they also use Edgars card and Woolworths card which has put them in debt. People are also going all the way to Klerksdorp to go buy there instead of buying at

these cheaper stores. There are a lot of foreigners, especially from different African countries who come do business here or work here in the mines etc. There used to be a lot of Chinese shops but now they have left, there's only two or three Chinese shop owners left, they haven't helped themselves by selling expired foods. The police have done a lot of raids on the Chinese stores and maybe that is one reason why so many have already left and now only 2 or 3 remain. There was a plant manufacture set up here that was producing stolen spices and mixing it with other stuff and selling it to the shops, that has also shut down now.

Our routine every day is the same, we get up at about 5:30am, we pray and take our son to school for 7:30am, we have breakfast, 8:00am I go to the surgery, and twice a week I go to Bloemhof or Hoopstad. I come home for lunch from about 1:30pm and 14:00hrs I go back till about 4 or 4:30pm then it's come back home. I pray and do some work and then watch some TV, we sleep about at 10pm. I have my own surgery in Bloemhof as well.

When we go to Johannesburg which is every weekend, it's mostly just visiting family and seeing the children, we eat out at least once during the weekend. We don't have a favorite takeout, it depends on the children what they want to eat. We usually stay in Lenasia, we don't go to town (Johannesburg inner city), and we don't go to Rosebank or Sandton.

Into the Bottle Store
But I'm Muslim

Quite frankly, prior to my research; I had never been into a liquor store...

Or, a bottle store...

Or, a bar.

For practicing Muslims, alcohol is considered completely forbidden and therefore, there really isn't a need to ever be in a liquor store. This is very much the case for me; it's not to say I haven't been to restaurants which sell alcohol; because I have – yet somehow places such as bar's and bottle stores are quite taboo and if a Muslim were to frequent these places, they wouldn't generally flaunt it or discuss the experience openly. The cultural significance of these places are such that, even though I was there for research purposes, I haven't openly discussed the fact that I had to conduct several of my interviews in bottle shops with my parents.

The pattern of Chinese migration in South Africa follows a similar trend in all towns. Chinese business owners target at least 1 of 4 store types. These are usually a clothing or general dealers store; a grocery store; a liquor store and cash-loans. It is not unusual to find Chinese business owners with more than one business; but it will almost always be within these four categories. Therefore, when I embarked on my research it was more than likely that I would find myself faced with this sub-conscious and internal dilemma.

Chen's store is located along a side street, perpendicular to the main road of Wolmaransstad. We had parked around the corner, as there was another store there; whose owner we had asked for an interview; although he had agreed, about ten-minutes into the interview, his wife burst into the store – long story short we were asked very impolitely to leave. After that we regrouped and continued walking through the town looking for willing participants. Chen's store was a small shop, with shelves covering every inch of wall space and fully stocked. His wife remained the background during the entire conversation. Being from Wolmaransstad in a manner of speaking, it was particularly interesting to hear what life in Wolmaransstad was from a migrant perspective. Chen was an extremely friendly person. Although his story is included quite early in the chapter, his interview was one of the last which were conducted during the first round of the fieldwork. It is always strange to me the sense of anxiety and nervousness which settles over me when beginning an interview with anyone. Chen spoke English quite fluently, and was quite capable of understanding and responding to the questions. However, some more technical questions, such as me asking him to describe his home-town from China were more challenging. Not that he didn't understand the question, but that he couldn't answer such a detailed question in English.

Despite my familiarity with the town, it was one of the hardest places to conduct the research. For this interview especially. Jiang was a wonderful and friendly person. But he was old and tired, and struck me as a person that was ready to settle town and retire. Throughout the interview, whenever he mentioned China, there was a dark sadness that settled over him, something that said to me – he couldn't return to China. Perhaps it was that he didn't have enough money, or perhaps there was something with the authorities that were preventing him from returning.

Wolmaransstad Bottle Store:
Chen's Story



My name is Chen, I am 33 years old from Fuqing town in Fujian province in China. I finished high school, but I didn't attend college or university. I wanted to support my family and this was my primary motivation to come to South Africa. I wanted to be a policeman when I was growing up, but then things changed for me and I got married. I have three children, two girls and one boy, my eldest child is a girl, she is 9 years old born in China; then my second child is also a girl who was born here in South Africa, she is 7 years

old and my youngest child is a boy also born in China, he is three years old now and they live in China with their grandparents. I don't think my children will ever come back here. The next time I go to China will be in 2018 to change my visa and to see my parents and children. My return to South Africa all depends on my visa being renewed, if for whatever reason it is not renewed then I will stay in China.

I borrowed money from my family and friends to open a business here. My brother was already here, he owns the clothing shop next door [pointing across the street]. When I came to visit him in 2007, I saw the town for the first time. I first landed in Lesotho; where I helped my friend in his shop for about two months and then crossed over into South Africa. I came directly to Wolmaransstad, before I opened the bottle store I had a clothing store on the other main road. In 2009 I asked the owner to buy this store from him and he sold it to me he was a white South African man.

I miss the food most from China.

I used to go visiting other cities and towns like Johannesburg, but now I don't, there are too many tsotsi's. Before I used to go every other week I used to get my stock and see what is on special, but the criminals, they started watching me, saw me going to buy stock with my driver, and that's when I was robbed. They attacked my driver and took the stock from the back of the truck. That taught me a big lesson, I don't open the store too early anymore and I close early as well. The tsotsi's too much now, if the tsotsi comes, I don't talk or fight with them, I give them what they want. Even though there is a lot of crime now, I feel safe because in this town, we don't have a problem with the community, they come here and shop with no trouble. I feel a part of this town and the community I have been here a long time.

I like it here in South Africa, I really like Cape Town, I went there on holiday it was beautiful.

I have a house in this town, about a block away from the store.



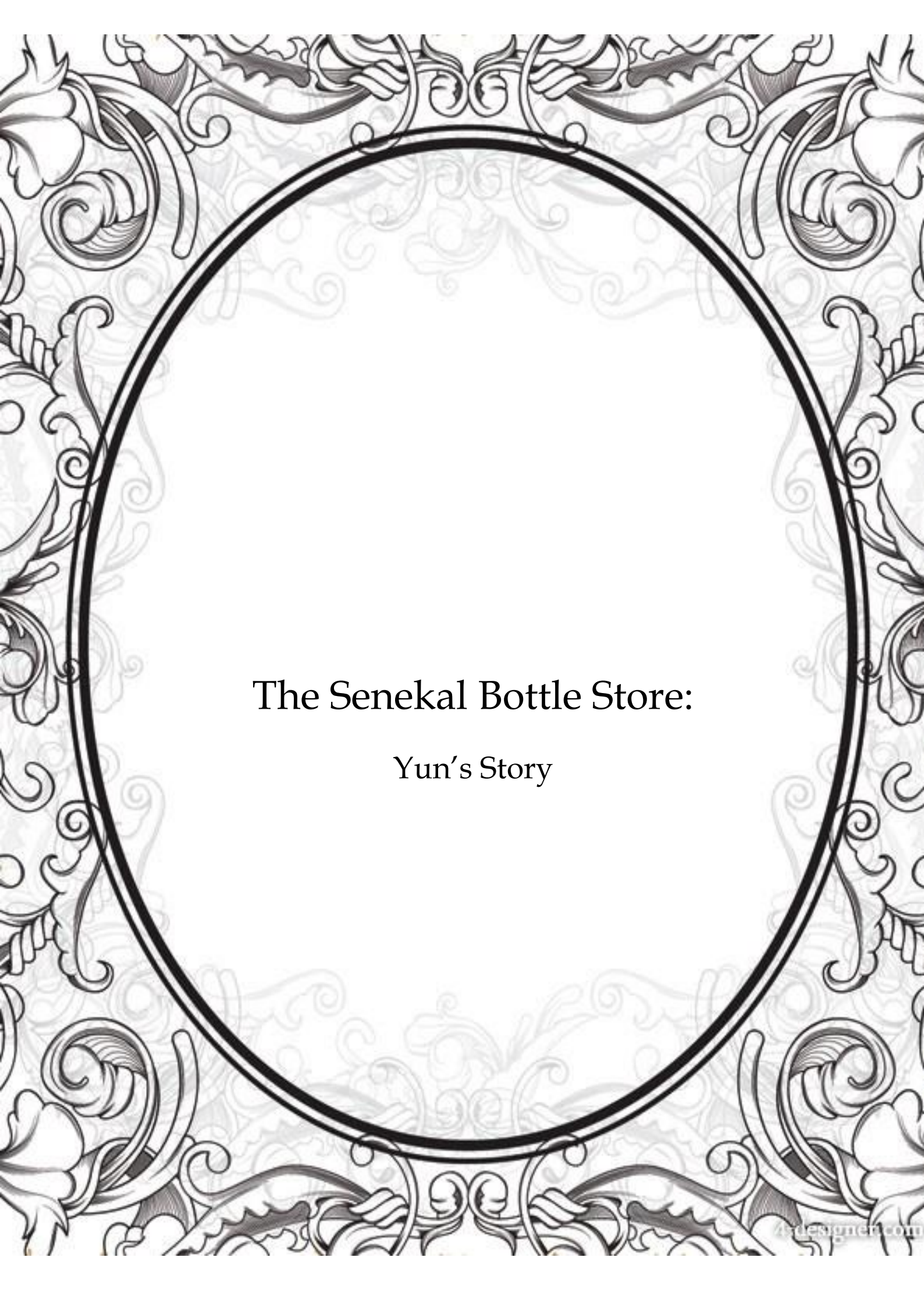
There were more Chinese shops in Wolmaransstad, but now they are all leaving. The tsosti's are targeting the Chinese because they know they carry cash, so they plan the attacks, to get the stock money, it has become too much.

If I close this business I will go back, I won't stay in South Africa, because I have a problem now for visa. If I leave here I will go to the UAE because I have family there now. In the last two years there is a lot more fighting and tsoti's. So many Chinese people are leaving because the visa's application process is harder; and its difficult to get a visa to work now. With a current visa you need at least six months on your visa to stay here, if it is expired and the police are doing inspections and you don't have a visa, the police arrest you and that counts against you getting a visa again.

I have had some trouble with the police, a year ago, they came and checked my stock, and they confiscated and destroy the expired stock. I understand this, but they also took stock that wasn't expired. If I may give you an example of what they did, I sell wine in papsak, which doesn't expire; but they took it, they didn't take small amount of stock but a very large amount of stock ZAR10,000 to ZAR15 000 stock. What makes it worse is that every time these checks take place its always my store, as you can see there are neighboring bottle stores but they never get inspected or checked just my visa gets checked and my store gets inspected, it's very frustrating to be targeted this way. At one point home affairs got involved, they came, checked my visa and told me I can't run a store and shut me down for 2 days. After going to court to have the matter over turned, the court couldn't see any justifiable reason for the closure. My store was closed for two days, and I lost money, so I asked the

court who is going to pay for the loss of earnings, but the court just didn't care. I am in a position where I want to open another business, but the visa is a problem because it expires far too quickly. I have owned this shop for 4 years now, I sell cases of stock to some shops and they sell it in their own shops. I only close on a Sunday and work a half day on public holidays. I open the store everyday myself every day and I have two South African employees that work for me, one of them has been working for me for 2 years and the other has been working for 4 years, they work from 8am to 6pm.

I would like to bring my children here, but it depends on the visa, I would like them to come to school here. Klerksdorp School looks very good, if my children do come to South Africa then we will live in Wollies and drive up and down, it isn't very far. Before I used to go to Klerksdorp every week, but now I only go once a week.



The Senekal Bottle Store:

Yun's Story



I am 30 years according to my passport but in China I am 32 years old, somewhere somehow someone made a mistake, but it doesn't bother me. I arrived in South Africa as an 18-year-old in 2003, shortly after my wife arrived here in South Africa and we got married in 2004, we have 3 children all 3 are boys.

The eldest is 12 years old, then the second child is 10 years old and the youngest is 8 years old, they were all born here and stayed with us for 6 years before we decided to send them back to China to stay with my parents, I miss my children very much, but what can I do, what I do is best for them to continue their education there. We have Wi-Fi at our house here in Senekal, I speak to them every day for 2 hours, we use video calls and WeChat. My wife goes to visit the children once a year but I don't go as there is no one else to look after the shop.

I miss everything about China, it's my home, my children and parents are there, working here is very hard we don't get to have a holiday away together, or are able to go back to China together for a visit, we are opening and running this business every day even on Sunday. If I ever go back to China it will be a permanent move back there, I will sell this shop and business and just move back home to China.

I rent a house here in Senekal, it's at the top of the road, but back home I own a house in the village and one flat in a tower block, it's on the 10th floor in the city, that's where my parents and children live. I come from *Fuqing* in Fujian Province of China, when I arrived, I was happy to find other people from the same province as me, actually there were many but now they are all leaving.

I have two sisters and an uncle here in South Africa, one sister is in Nelspruit and the other is in Port Elizabeth. It wasn't difficult for me to come to South Africa as my whole family was here including my parents. After I arrived here then my parents went back to China.

Before coming to South Africa, I was still in school and completed my high school in China. I don't remember what I wanted to be when I was in school, when I arrived here I started to work in the family clothes shop in Virginia, I worked there for about 2 years before I started to move around and do other jobs. I next went to Durban, opened my own clothing shop. for about a year before I closed it and moved to Nelspruit. In Nelspruit, I was just visiting my sister, not working just sitting there, doing nothing, my sister also had a clothing shop, since then she has closed up shop and has gone back to

China. Then I went to Welkom, I was working there in my uncle's brick factory as a manager, my uncle opened the factory in 2008, I worked for a year with him and left and open up my own fruit and vegetable super market, it was called: *Welkom Mini Market*. Having a fruit and vegetable shop was difficult, you must wake up at 4am every morning to buy the stock from the farmers wholesalers.

After Welkom I came to Senekal, but I also took some time just traveling up and down with my uncle and my sister. I have another sister in PE and an uncle in Bloemfontein, they all have businesses.



I found this shop while driving to Durban, when I came here I had a good look around to see which shops were here and which were not here. I eventually came to this bottle shop I spoke to the owner of this shop and asked him to sell it to be, at first, he didn't want to sell, but eventually I made him a good offer that he and I were both happy with, this was back in 2012. I had to borrow money from my uncle and sister at the time to buy this shop I brought it as a partnership with my brother in law but he decided to open his own shop in Jo'burg, so I brought him out of his share of the business. I have not only paid back my uncle and sister, but I also brought the building from the local South African man who owned it, so I am very happy with what I have done.

When I first came here there was allot of Chinese people, but over time people have started to leave. Some have left for personal reasons, others due to financial reasons, slow business, too much crime, no one to help run the business, family back in china, there are many reasons.



I learned to speak English in South Africa, I have many friends here, some are working for me, others are neighbour's or are just friend. I do feel a part of the community, I have been here for half of my life, 14 years is a long time and I have made many connections with people and the community. The last time I visited China, was in 2012, I haven't been back in almost 5 years.

If I could change anything it would be to fix the crime, if there were less crime I would stay here forever.

I am at the point of deciding whether or not I am going to leave or stay here in South Africa, you see I have been shot once as has my uncle in Durban. We were going to buy stock in Jo'burg and we were in our car, before we knew it we were being fired at through the cars screen, we both were shot. The criminals had clearly been following us and our routine, they knew we were going to buy stock and were carrying cash money on us when they attacked us. It's such a horrible and frightening time of my life, the criminals used all 24 bullets in the gun and ran away, without taking the money from us. My brother-in-law was also shot when he was in Newcastle, I remember that time and it scares me even now. I don't want to own a fire arm, but I have no choice, even thou I don't like confrontation or fighting, I have had to arm myself to protect myself and business, I now hold a firearms license. It has gotten so bad that after 6pm I close the shop and only serve the customers through the window. I love this country, the food is nice, the people are nice and so is the food, but it's a shame about the crime, it has been increasing over the years.

I don't know if I will leave South Africa and close my business but if I do, I will go to Zambia. I already bought a store there in partnership with my brother in law, I plan on going there in two months, as by then my brother-in-law would have opened up the general store. My brother in law is just like me he likes traveling all over South Africa opening and buying different stores. When he went there, he saw a good business opportunity and asked me if I am interested, we are just waiting for them to finish building the building there. If I do leave and go back to China, I will probably sell the business, but this is my building so maybe I will keep it and rent to someone and they can pay rent every month.

My wife is already a South African citizen but soon, maybe next month I will be South African citizen too. I had a chance to become a citizen a long time ago, but I didn't take that chance. I don't know how to explain this feeling, but I don't know if I am more South African or more Chinese, maybe I will know when I get my ID. I still feel a-part of China and my home town, but the Free State is also my home, I have been here for such a long time. I am hoping that my children can come here in July, they will be on school holiday and can come for 2 months. Before they move here, they need to finish high school, my youngest is always at the top of the class, I'm very proud of him.

Every day my routine is the same, I wake up, open the shop, watch some movies on my phone, go visit my friend in the town. I don't have to travel to buy stock anymore as now everything is delivered. I am busy all day, every day, today is Friday, it is very busy. But this year is a bit slow, but it is better than the clothing store.

I play ping-pong as a sport, I have a table here in Senekal, the Chinese guy from the clothing shop, and the guy from the super market come to my house to play ping-pong. We play maybe three times a month on a Sunday, after we play, we have a braai and drinking some beer, and all the shop owners come. Before it used to be every day, and we used to take it in turns to go to different houses. But now they are leaving one by one, I don't know if they will come back, I know most of the Chinese, when they leave here, they go to China, then they go to Argentina for more business opportunities.

The police were in store twice during the interview, I asked Yun if there was a problem, or if he often had trouble with the authorities in the town.

I also have a cash-loan business in this town, I bought that business from another Chinese guy, but the landlord chased me out of his building. Then I had to bring the business here, to the bottle store, but the police are saying the cash loan business cannot be in the bottle store. They don't give me a hard time, they are just here to tell me I can't have the two businesses together and they are telling me I must get another premise's. I am busy fixing up another building behind this store which I bought, all the police say is that I can't have private files in the bottle store, even though I have a license to hold private files, but to make it better once the store behind this one is fixed up I will move the loan business into there.

There are many Indian and Pakistani people here who are also doing business, they own fruit shops, take a way shops and furniture shop. I talk to them often we get along well, we are having a good business friendship, sometimes they buy stock from me to sell in their super-markets.

If Chinese were coming South Africa, I would tell them about South Africa, I would say, that everyone is leaving this country, even I am thinking of leaving. I wouldn't encourage more people to come, because getting a visa for South Africa is difficult. Also, the people who live in South Africa have a bad misconception of Chinese people they think we take their women and children and make crime, but in the 14 years I have been here my police record is clean. Chinese people are nice and friendly people who want to do business and live their lives peacefully in the community.

The last of the Chinese Stores in
Wolmaransstad
Jiang's Story

When I came to Wolmaransstad, there were about 10 Chinese. But now because of the tsoti's there are only 4 Chinese stores left. It's a shame they are leaving, but they are leaving because of the many tsoti's, sometimes they steal the cars full of stock or they take the money. I haven't been robbed, I think it's because I have a small car and people don't realize that I am buying stock so they don't target me.



I left China and came to open a shop here because there is more opportunity here, whereas in China there is far more competition. I came here because of my brother, he called me and said come here for better opportunities, but unfortunately my brother has now left and returned back to China, he had a store in Cape Town but it got to the point where he just wasn't making enough money to stay afloat. When I came here I had to borrow money to come open my business. When I go to get the stock, I don't pay for it, I borrow the stock till I can sell the stock only then I go and make payment for the stock I brought. Before, no one would give me a stock loan, so over time I had to first buy stock in smaller quantities, build myself up to the point now where I can get stock on credit. The difficulty is knowing what people like and what they want to buy, before I didn't have the hair (weaves) and now I see the people want hair products so I buy the stock and bring it to the shop to sell.

I used to live in Jo'burg with my wife and children, I stayed there for a long time. I had a shop in Kempton Park; I left that shop because it wasn't making money and it was expensive to live there. I spent 3 years in Kempton Park and 1 year in Vryburg. My children stayed with me in Kempton Park then went back to China to finish their schooling. My children are all grown up now they are 28, 27, and 26 years old, they are all in Argentina where they all have their own shops. One of my daughters started this store but she didn't want to run it anymore so I took it from her in 2010 and she went to Argentina. That's how I came to Wolmaransstad. My daughters keep asking me to come to Argentina, but I don't want to go there, I don't want to learn another language.

I am 57 now; I am from Fuqing city in Fujian province; I haven't been back since I came to South Africa; not even to visit. I have a house in China, only my older brother lives there, everyone one else including one of my other brother are in Argentina. So I doubt I will ever go back to China. Before I came to South Africa I had a fruit shop selling apples and bananas I also sold sea food. If I go back to China I will have to get a working permit, but I won't be able to get a working permit due to my circumstances, I don't have enough money to buy a flight ticket or for living there.

I have a house in Wolmaransstad, but sometimes I sleep in back of the store. The rent here is cheap, about R2000 for a 3 bedroom house.

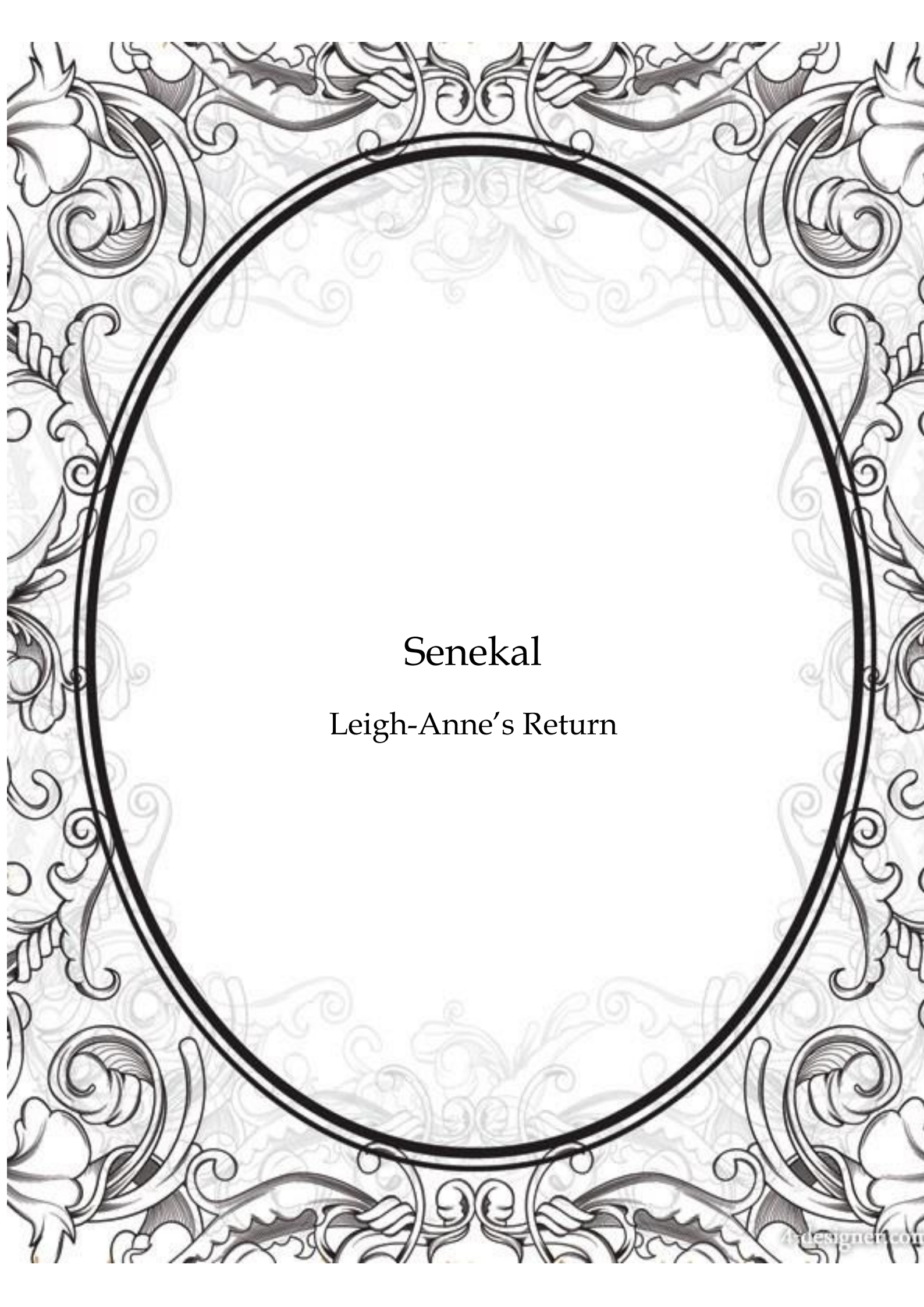


I haven't visited any other cities in South Africa besides Jo'burg. I don't go to Jo'burg often, maybe about once every two months to buy stock. Business isn't as good as it used to be, it's slow, I make enough money to cover my rent for this building that my shop is in. The Pakistanis and Indians have come to this town and they also have shops, so it's competitive price wise. You see they don't care about the quality of the product they sell, as long as it's cheap. But that very same stock is usually cheaply made, faulty and not good for business or customers. These people they can take a lot of risk, the Indian and Pakistani often get raided, but they bribe the cops and get away with it. For example, they came here and showed me some flash disks, the price was good and promised me the product was good too, but when my customers brought the product, they weren't happy at all as the product was faulty, I was left with no choice but to refund them all. Like in Jo'burg, when there shops are raided they can't pay off the cops and so end up going to jail for a few days before they are out again. Here there are lots of people from, Zimbabwe, Somali and other African countries. But in Vryburg there isn't many people from other countries, I have never had trouble with the police, they don't come here to do raids, the police are number one, I don't have any problems what so ever, even when home affairs come around to do their check I haven't had a problem with them either.

If I compare where I live now to the city I am from in China, then I must tell you there are a lot of differences. My city in China was very beautiful and it was very modern, whereas here the buildings are very small there is only maybe two floors, but in China the buildings are bigger with many floors, like skyscrapers..

It's difficult to say whether or not I feel a part of this community. I can only say how I feel, and I feel a part of the community here. You see I keep a low profile, I don't do anything, and I don't take part in anything or go to any community events because there are no Chinese people that go to them. I just want customers and I want to help my customers. I think my customers like me, no one has complained. We don't have a holiday from the shop, this shop is all we have, and maybe some Sunday we have a holiday. Or today is a public holiday, if we don't see any customers then we close by one or two o'clock.

Yes we use the local grocery stores, because some time I go there to buy food. I haven't used any techniques from local businesses and I don't know if anyone is copying the way I do business. We all look after each other, especially the Chinese business owners.



Senekal

Leigh-Anne's Return

I was born in Senekal and after I matriculated I moved away from Senekal. I lived in a few others places and then moved back here to in 2015. I went to the United Kingdom for a few years and then I moved back to the South Coast of South Africa in Kwa'Zulu-Natal for 10 years moving on to the Northwest for two years to Sun City.

When I was in the U.K I lived in a market town called Bury St Edmunds, it was about the size of Bethlehem, but still in the country side about an hour out of London. My husband is originally from the U.K, so the long-distance relationship wasn't easy so we decided to move to the U.K and settle down. Unfortunately, due to the changes in immigration and visa requirements we ended up moving back to South Africa. If the opportunity arose again for me to go back to the UK, I would go today.



My main reason for coming back to Senekal was because my dad wanted to put up his business for sale, we convinced him not to, because as a retirement plan, this is perfect for them as it provides them with a substantial and reliable income. My parents wanted to travel in their retirement years so we offered to come back and run the business for them so that they didn't have to sell it, while they still got to enjoy their retirement. Money in the bank just isn't secure enough and the sense of having a property and business is far more viable these days, my parents just wanted to get to retirement where they could travel more, with the business ties this wasn't possible for them so, we offered to

take it over. My parents still live on the property, me and my husband live on the property too, I have no children so it's just the four of us including my parents.

My parents have been in Senekal for about 35 years, my mums originally from Bethlehem which is 70 kilometers (km) away and my dad's from Bloemfontein which is also 70km's away, many, many moons ago my parents sort of settled in between the two. I would describe Senekal as a close-knit community, it is a small town so everything is close in proximity and not a lot to do, its peaceful and quite. When people check in, I tell them that what they will get here is peace and quiet and not much else as I do consider this town to be a small town. Compared to Bethlehem or Clarence, I think we are bigger town than Clarence of permanent residence, but on weekend they have more people visiting. We are probably about half the size of Bethlehem, I think Bethlehem is actually a medium sized town in comparison to Senekal.

Besides the business, a lot of my family do stay here and I grew up here so I have lots of friends, also since we moved away, I had quite a busy life, I was doing photography on the South Coast, I was working 7 days a week for about 8 years, it was hectic. So, moving back here, it's the quiet a different life, it's good for settling down its getting to that part of life; not saying I am planning on having children, but if I did it would be ideal to place to raise them. It's still fairly safe, when we were on North West Sin City there were break-in problems, so in comparison security here is still quite good, we don't really have violent crime, it's a lot quieter and the pace of life here is slower too.

For a small town it is still quite busy, there is a lot happening, it is quite a big community, although the majority of towns people are farmers so they don't stay in the farms, but between the schools. We just had our annual show, the church has their fates throughout the year, so there is quite a bit happening on our calendar and we are in the center of quite a few big towns. The big towns we are closest to are Bethlehem and Bloemfontein, so there is a lot to do in the area, I would say Senekal is not the smallest and not the slowest of towns. It would be difficult to compare this town to others but comparing it to wouldn't be right Clarens because that has become quite a commercial town, which we aren't. The majority of people that come into town are coming for a specific reason, or visiting family; so, we don't have an influx of people on the weekends. I think we are a to and from place for people coming from Jo'burg, where people would make a weekend of coming here.

We had 107th consecutive annual show which used to be an agricultural show, it then became a horse show where they do show-casing, not jumping but where they parade their horses and they get classed in certain categories and win prizes. This was the first year when we introduced other aspects to the annual show, it's became a more of an agricultural show, where we had cattle, sheep, ox and ox-wagon pulling as well as the normal stalls. The stalls consisted of the traditional food stores

alongside the church who come out to make pancakes, have face painting for the kids and the boere sports aimed at the kids, like sack racing. We are as a community working towards having the annual show like this, we called it 'The Senekal Show', this was a feature of the show when I was growing up and I have seen how the show has evolved. The show takes place during a weekend in April, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and on a Friday night they have an entertainer, and there's a big show taking place. It takes place on the Show grounds just outside of town, just between the town and the location of the show, the space is maintained very well, there's the ring for the horse parades and around there is also a stadium with quite a few other buildings including indoor and outdoor stalls. We had people visit it throughout the course of the show, even on a Thursday which is normally a quiet day, with Facebook advertising, we did get quite a lot of people from other small towns to come visit us, we are ideally located the center of Arlington and we had quite a few visitors throughout the show. As a community we also have a committee that organises this event, I am on the committee, there are some new members and others have been there for 30 or 40 years, there is a president, and 12 other members. The organisation is 'The Senekal Lambert Genootskap', as far as I know it is an Non- Profit Organisation (NPO), they raise the funds and do all the organising. We start organising in January but planning has already started now and we are in July, this is because the show is back on but it turned into more of a horse show and we are heading it towards its more original form.

The high school does host a large mountain biking event, which takes place in September, it's quite big they had a couple of thousand entrants last time so they are probably expecting similar numbers this year. Another big one for this year is by the High school, they have a couple of bands coming down to perform and that's in August but in between there are little things, like cancer-do's and walk-athons, that kind of thing stuff.

We travel to Jo'burg about once a month as I have family up there, we go shopping, we go to china mall, my husband is in construction so we go up to get stock or to get his machines serviced. I do the majority of my shopping in town, but with hospitality you need little sachets of coffee that you don't get in local grocers, so I normally go out to the closest Makro in Bloemfontein and Jo'burg to get stock. So, if you want larger quantity supplies for your business you still have to go out, but other than that I get everything I need here.

We are drawn more towards Kempton Park then the industrial side of Jo'burg, we also go into Pretoria every three months as we do archery. We don't have any Archery shops in the entire Free State but we do have an archery club, but it's indoor, we also use the church once a week too. With the up and coming show, we have started to include archery in it, we are working towards it becoming a more permanent feature, which it isn't at the moment. We are seeking to hire an area somewhere in town or just outside of town so we can host events where people can come out on a Saturday and take part.

There are currently 10 members in the archery club, there is a golf course and golf is quite big in town but I don't play but It's one of the better ones as they often host golf days and corporates golf events. Beyond this, there is no such thing as entertainment, the church, liquor stores and the pubs keep the town going. There's 3 pubs, *Cheetah's* they have a pub and restaurant and *J J's* pub and *Buffles*, I'd say *Cheetah's* and *J J's* are the most popular on a Friday and Saturday and then Wednesday. I do think there is an increase in taverns and liquor stores, but beyond that I don't think there is a negative economic style, unfortunately there's nothing for younger people. We actually had this discussion the other day; where a lot of the kids, just after they finish school they move away, the reason being they are young people and they have a need to want to go out at night to socialise with their friends while having stuff to do. As for the older generation when they get to a certain age that they are happy they usually want to spend their evenings at home, have a braai and invite their friends over.

In terms of moving to another town, that is difficult answer as I'm quite happy where we are here, if we got an opportunity and to start up something similar outside of Senekal I might consider that. We have a good business here, its growing and we started renovating and expanding on the services that we provide, it would have to be quite a good opportunity for me to give this up, as this is a good business, it's been running for 21 years. Considering where I would move to next is a difficult question, but I know I would like to do the same thing in a warmer place, as winters here can be very harsh, the pipes freeze and in summer it gets very hot to bear.

This is a pleasant town to live in, this town accommodates my needs, I would recommend this town as a place to live, I have many friends and relatives in this town. I visit my friends and relatively frequently, but not too often because I'm quite busy here and it's difficult to get away some times. I know my immediate neighbours very well and we greet them all the time but we don't really visit each other, but we know each other and tend to help each other out. This town is ethnically, culturally and racially diverse, I think the town in itself is more diverse than what it used to be, it was predominantly white until 15 or 20 years ago. I don't even think there is an area where you have more Chinese people or more Indian people, it's quite mixed, we are well integrated. I feel a part of a community here; this town feels pretty safe as there isn't a lot of alcohol abuse in this town and drugs aren't such a big problem here either. I don't think depression is a problem here, people are generally quite happy, there are a few people that do suffer from depression, it's not a majority of people. Everyone knows their neighbours, it's not where you feel secluded, you are really quite involved in each other's lives and I think that helps to a certain extent, you don't have time to feel alone. With regards to people's debt, I don't know much about that but the municipality certainly does not cater to the needs of this town. There were trains here many years ago but there is no public investment in this town, no public

transport network that connects this town to other towns, if you didn't have a car, you would have to rely on a taxi that comes from out of town to get to the next town or Johannesburg.

There are some positive economic changes in this town, in the last couple of years we have had some of the more financially secure people of the town, have been putting back into the community. I would say about 10 of the business people in the town are getting more involved, they have started up the neighbourhood watch about 2 years ago. We recently has a big problem with water, so they started an organisation, called 'Senakel Water', so people are getting more involved. For example, the dam was completely empty for a long time and everyone kept an eye on the municipality in the hope that the municipality would do something but not much happened. So now people are getting more interested in the town, here and there people are fixing their roads in front of their houses, keeping the streets clean, taking care of the business, or property in town, updating and renovating, in the last few years that has really picked up.

Most of the businesses are local owners, but there are some foreign nationals who also own businesses here, around 50% plus, is locally owned where people have inherited their dad's business, that has been in the family for a long time. Some of the properties have been bought out by bigger organisations like Hinterland Co-op, they either hire out the businesses or manage it themselves. Probably 30 percent are foreigners or people from Jo'burg or other large cities, like the shell owner is an Indian guy but he lives in Durban and he has had it for about 10 years. With regards to Chinese businesses, I would say it has picked up 5 to 10 years ago, there are quite a few Chinese shops in town, but in the last year most of them have moved out, others have moved into small premises or down scaled. I don't know why this has happened, but it may be that they aren't getting the support from the people in the town, our locally owned businesses have a passion for the town so they go out of their way to provide a good service for all people. The Chinese were giving people a layby, where the buy but pay at the end of the month or pay over a period of time. maybe their rates were a bit high. Whereas the local businesses who have been here for 20 or 40 years they are a bit more lenient or competitive with their prices and they are getting more of the business. I think the larger chain stores are good for the town, we have the Okay Grocer and Spar, the Okay Grocer has expanded quite a bit and they have an in-house bakery and do cooked meals. I can't remember when Spar started here, but there was a time when a lot of the local people had to go to the next town to do shopping. Our supermarkets are of a standard that matches the next towns level, unless you have something specific you need from Woolworths or Edgar's then people will go to the next town. A lot of the local people are doing their shopping in town again, as the local businesses are stocking a larger variety of products so it's quite beneficial. They local businesses also get involved in the events we have, they sponsor stuff for the schools and so on. The business state seems to be increasing, as I mentioned we had a

water problem for a while and this led to a lot of people selling their properties and leaving because you can't live in a town without water. Then we got rain and although the problem won't go away, it's more manageable so people are coming back into town, especially if you are looking for a place to rent. Before there were lots of vacant properties and now it looks like there are a lot more people in town and obviously the business will pick up as a result of people coming back to town. As I mentioned the farming community is quite big, and a lot of the people are farmers or rely on the farms for their incomes, so with having a bit of a drought the farmers were all battling to survive. Luckily the last year or two there's been rain, and the farmers are under a little less stress, they can spend more money. We deal with a lot of corporate people and more representatives are coming out to see the businesses and I think sales are overall better.

I do think there is a link between people moving back in to towns, as for quite a number of years the older generation used to be the majority of people in town, but in the last few years there has been a change. I don't know if that is just the town growing, or if it's just trends, but definitely since; 2015 and even before then there was quite a bit of an increase of people in their mid-30's moving into Senekal. There aren't any notable cultural, social changes in this town, negative or positive, there are younger people and middle-aged people living in this town, I think middle age and elderly is probably the majority.

The golf is quite big and there is a pub there, they have specific days as golfing days. People will start going out, probably about 7 or so, because a lot of times they will go out for a meal and then go for a drink at the restaurants so last meal orders are at 8:30pm, so they go out earlier and people get home earlier, if you leave work at 5 you probably get home at 5:05pm. During the weekend, people will stay out till 1 or 2 in the morning, it would be like a decrease in numbers from 12, but not really, people stay out late because they don't have far to drive.

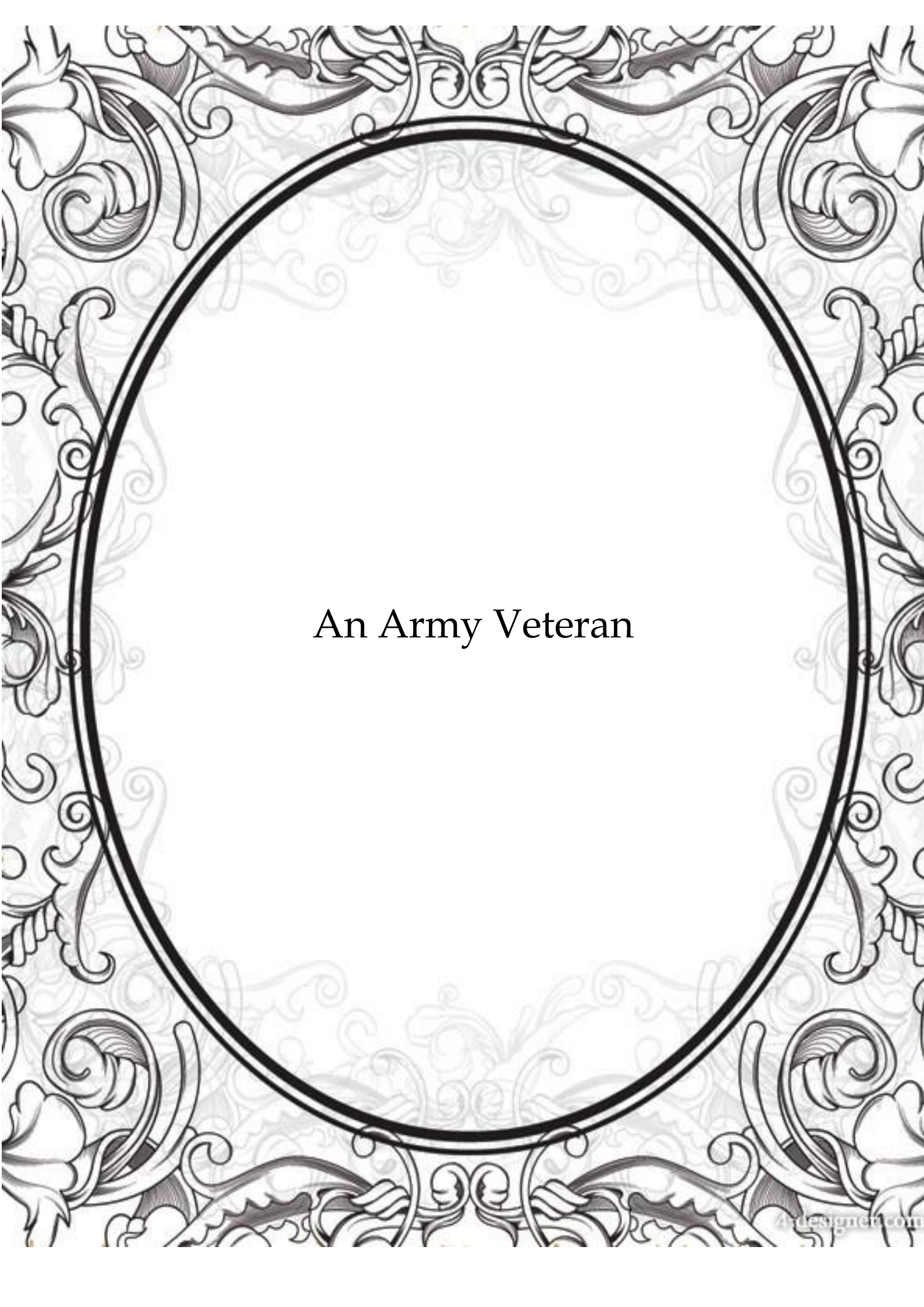
Being where we are, I would say Parys or Clarens are quite big towns, but we do get quite a lot of people, coming into town, for weekend holidays, visiting their family members. So that type of demand keeps businesses like mines running as well as the groceries stores that now stay open during holidays and weekends to meet demands. People also come here to fish, wild life sightseeing tours, all because it's not too far to travel too. The majority of people that live here have 1 or 2 annual holidays where they will go to the Cape Town or the coast,

There is no economic stability, because it fluctuates a lot with the drought, the farmers get affected, then that affects our business cycles. I am sure we are affected by a broader economic cycle, like with imports and exports, but the major influences would be the weather with the farmers, if they don't

get much rain in a specific season, they might have a failed harvest. This affects the entire community, so like if her was making donations to the school or had to lay off workers, that directly affects the community and the farms. There is relative political stability in this town. There aren't many migrants, there are some but not many. There a people from different faiths and people from different ethnicities.

On Sundays I have church after that its back to work, I do all the admin for this business and all the admin for my husband's company, I work about a half day. Tuesday night's we have archery club, then nothing much else happens for the rest of the week, might be a bit more social on a Friday. We often have family come up on the weekends and have a braai on a Saturday, we don't often socialise with people from the. We do celebrate birthdays, or anniversaries and get all of our friends from the town to come over and we celebrate together.

There are 7 to 8 churches, but during the school term everyone's goes to the smaller church, but once school term is over there is more than one NGK group, so, we will go to the big church in the center of town as there are more people when school term is over. It's a bit of a monument at times because on Christmas or Easter weekend we go to church and the two different churches will have a service together. The attendance can be quite sparse, for instance when we have a combined service there will be only 100 people. During the school term the children have Sunday school so the church is quite full as there are quite a few kids attending.

A large, ornate circular frame with a double-line border. The frame is set against a background of intricate, repeating floral and scrollwork patterns. The patterns are rendered in a light gray color, creating a subtle, textured effect. The overall design is elegant and formal, suitable for a commemorative or memorial document.

An Army Veteran

I am from Fuqing City in Fujian Province in China, I'm 36 years old, married with 2 children and a wife. I came to South Africa in 2005 it was the same year I got married as well. In China I trained in the Chinese Army as a soldier and served in the flying-squad for two years before coming to South Africa. I learned English in school, but only really spoke in English when I came, with my customers and friends.

I have three brothers and one sister, my sister is in Senekal and one of my brother's is in Cape Town. My other two brothers were also here in South Africa and they had businesses, but they closed their shops and went back to China. I came here after my sister told me to come here as she has her own business in Johannesburg. She



said to me, "You come here after you finish being a soldier and can have a potential business". I came here, followed by my brother and my wife, and we opened the business together. Besides my sister, there are a lot of people from my town who came here to open a business so I felt more comfortable to come here and do the same, I never thought I would be a businessman.

I have 2 children, both of them were born here in South Africa. My eldest child is boy is 13 years old and my daughter is 9 years old. My children are staying in China with my wife's parents. What I miss most about China is the beauty, in my home town of Fuqing the beauty is vast in my city, there is a further small town called Jiangyin, that's where I have my own home. Fuqing is a much bigger city than here, it's more modern and has lots of facilities. This town is small in comparison, but the air here is better. In my city in Fuqing there is a further small town called Jiangyin, that's where I have my own home. Fuqing is a much bigger city than here, it's more modern and has lots of facilities. This town is small in comparison, but the air here is better. I have 2 close friends in this town who are Chinese, but all Chinese people here are friends, I play sports with my friends sometimes. I did have some South African friends in Fuqing, I also taught them some Chinese.

In general I miss the normality of it all, the people the atmosphere etc. The last time I visited China was in 2016, before that my wife used to come visit me here, I did use to go to China every year, but now I can't go it's difficult, business is slow and the income isn't what it used to be. I want to sell the shop and go back to China, I don't have a house here, it's hard for me when my family come visit we

have stay in the back room of the shop. When I came here there was allot for me to learn, like cooking for myself, cleaning up, planning my meals, shopping, I had no family to rely on but myself.

I haven't been to any other cities in South Africa, this is because if I go I have to close the shop, and the furthest I will go for a holiday is any location nearby, like, Bethlehem or Welkom.

I borrowed money from my friends in China 9 years ago so I could come here and open this business. South Africa is the only place I have had a business outside of China, I didn't know about Senekal until I came here, I did some research to see in which town there was a lot of people and in which town would my business make the most money; that is how I chose Senekal. Before Senekal I stayed with my sister in Kroonstad, that's where I did my research about where to start my business, I use to drive around looking at different areas before I stumbled across Senekal. I also spoke with my friends about Senekal, and well a friend recommended that Senekal was a good location for a business.

I used to have 2 shops, this shop and the shop next door which my wife use to run, but now I only have one shop, this is because my wife has gone back to China and I decided to it was best to sell the shop. I sold it to an Indian person I think it could have been a Bengali possibly a Pakistani person, they all look the same to me. In bigger cities you have a bigger shop but the sales are the same as owning a smaller shop in a small town. It's better to a have a shop in a small town you have less competition, every shop's sells different products, so customers have more shops to go to, and the money you make is far better too. I learned how to run a business as I went along, of course I made some - mistakes, such as staying with my sister too long, watching how to do business, where to buy stock from, how to interact with customers etc.

When I go to buy stock, I go to Jo'burg and I go to China Mall, Dragon Mall or Indian Mall, I drive myself there and back, I didn't have a driver's license before so I had a driver, but now that I have a license I drive myself there and back. I use to go twice a month to buy stock, that's when business was going very well, but now I go once a month. The products are becoming expensive, people don't have jobs or income and as a result the business is getting slow. I have only 2 employees, both of them came asking for a job, that's how I employed them to work for me.

When I came 9 years ago people had money, but now 9 years on people have no money, money is the big problem. Before there was around 20 Chinese owned shops, but slowly over time that number has halved. You also have to look at the problems that come with low employment and incomes, it has given rise to security problems, people are getting robbed and mugged. For instance, if you were to go to the bank now you have a high number of security personal present, around 5, that's a lot of

security for a bank and its all due to robberies. The tsotsi's are terrible they have robbed many Chinese people, so they have all closed up shop and gone back to China. People have had their stock stolen, cars stolen, stabbed and robbed at knife point. I myself am quite scared as I don't want that to happen to me, so I have decided this year I will close up shop, sell it and move back to China, nothing like that awful has happened to me but I feel it's only a matter of time before it does.

Yes there are many shops here owned by other international people like, Pakistani, Bengali's etc. When I came here to do business it wasn't a surprise to find other international people here having businesses, this is a common thing. The main thing that has changed here in Senekal since I came here was that business were doing well but now so many businesses have closed down.

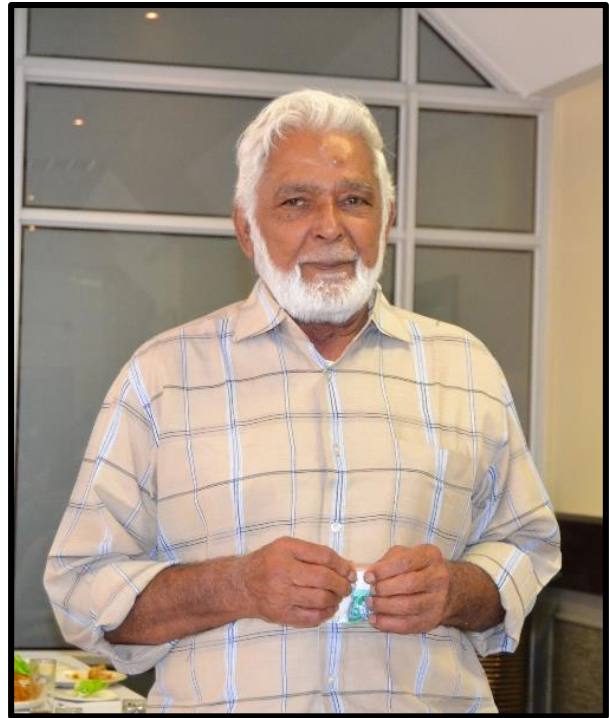
My daily routine is as follows, I wake up at 7:30am, I cook at 8:30am I eat and I open shop, I close shop at 5pm and cook my dinner again, before I go to bed, this is my routine every day, if I am lucky I may go to the gym. As for local events, I never go to any local or national events any more, just Free State. Before I use to go, but that was when my wife was here, with her help she would stay at the shop and I was able to attend events and go out with friends, but since she has returned to China, I don't go anywhere or do anything anymore, I just don't have the time for it.

Also, with the whole visa permit has become a huge problem, the requirements for it have changed, for me to get a new working permit, is almost impossible. The home affairs office doesn't like that too many foreigners are here taking away jobs and businesses from the local people. Maybe that is one of the reasons why getting a working permit now is so hard. Plus, like I said earlier, business was good before, now it's slow, I doubt this time next year I will be here, I will mostly likely be back in China.

The Second Generation,
Abdu-Samid's Story

I was born on the 7th of April in 1939 and was born and raised in a small town called Wolmaransstad, in the North West Province, my family was one of the first Indian families to settle there, about 100 years ago.

My father's name was Ebrahim Kara, he was the first person to come to South Africa, his father was a farmer in a village called Lachpor in India, it was by happenstance that my father even got to come here to South Africa. There was a man in the village in India, named Ebrahim Hafajee, he had purchased a boat ticket to come here but he fell ill and died. However, it happened, my



grandfather came on to that ticket, and my father travelled on that ticket to come here he used the name Hafajee. It's so strange, because thereafter, everything he had to do, that was official i.e. like government registration it had to be done under his registered name. I don't know anything of my grandparents; not even what they looked like.

My father was around about twelve years old when he arrived here, at that time they didn't have passports, you had this piece of paper that had your details on it, it was an opportunity that came across in the name of Ibrahim Hafajee that resulted in my father coming here to South Africa.

My mother was from India, she and my father arrived separately, my mother and my dad were married already in India, my father came here first to South Africa to see how they can set up and what the opportunities here for them.

I had five brothers and sisters, my two eldest sisters were born in India, the rest, and myself were born here in Wollies (short for Wolmaransstad). I only know of one sister that didn't survive her name was Katheeja, she was older than me, one other sister who was also born in India, but she died here in South Africa, it happened a long time ago, when I was around 1 years old. She died in a fire, in those days we use to have candle for light, she had long hair, very, very long hair. One morning she got up early when everyone else was still a sleep and she lit a candle for light. Somehow her hair caught a light and then her dress caught fire and she died, after that, my father didn't allow us, to use candles.

I don't know exactly when my father landed in Wollies, he was working in the Rustenburg area first and then he came to Wollies and Maquasi side. He used to be a traveling salesman when he found this

area, he came back and he opened up his shop there, but he didn't like the area or something and he moved to Wollies.

At first, I went to a government African school for about a year or 2 in Wollies, this was before the segregation came in. From there I went to Bloemhof for 6 months to a year, then I went to Mia's Farm School in Jo'burg. My parents wanted to educate us and at the time Mia's Farm was the cheapest place where we could go, in terms of boarding. If you had to go to a boarding school in Jo'burg let's say for argument sake, they would have had to pay ten Rands a month, which they couldn't afford, but Mia's Farm was two Rands a term, so you see it was very cheap. A lot of people wanted to go to Mia's farm because you got your normal education and your Islamic education, up until 1948 to 1949 the education was very good, especially the Christian schools, but for the Muslim's we didn't do too badly. Islamically it was all well and good, we had Mulvies (highly educated Muslim scholars) and but no Mullana's (highest educated Muslim scholar). I left school in standard 8, two more standards and I would have been a Matriculant (chuckles), but that's life. We couldn't afford to come to high school in Jo'burg, I had lost interest and we didn't have the money for it either. I wanted to learn a profession but there was nothing open for us. I would have liked to become a mechanic or carpenter, but there were no venues for learning such skill that we knew about where we could have gone to, there was nothing for us to do.

Growing up, we used to play around, we use to play a lot, cycling, swimming, hilling, we call it hilling but it's like mountaineering. In those days there were baboons, apes there and things like that, we went hunting, we never caught anything, but we use to do a lot of things. I cycled everywhere, I started driving when I was 18 or 19 years old, when I left school and after that, when I had holidays I used to go everywhere I could with my bicycle.

Wollies was my hometown, I was living there, I would go back there even today, I liked that place, its peaceful, everyone likes one another, and everyone gets along. For example, here I haven't got a car, I'm on my own, there is no one to go to, no one can help me. Those times in Wollies, there were plenty of people you could easily go to for help, you could go to the person who had a car and say "hey I need your car, I need to go somewhere like Jo'burg"; and they would give you the car, no one would think twice and if anyone asked us for our car, we did the same for them too. I could go stand in front of anyone's doors and ask for whatever I needed and no one would refuse me, maybe one, but most would give, and say here, off you go. I remember once, when there was a wedding and we had to go around asking for crockery, one person said, you can take it from the store room but you must also return it to the store room as well.

My father used to send me around to the farms, then we only had party lines, all the farmers had party lines, there were no telephones and the post office used to close by 5pm. The party line also used to close, we had made an arrangement with the party line office and the post-office that we would pass on emergency messages. We would take calls at all times like 12 midnight or 1:30am in the morning, then I would go around and pass on the messages. People used to see me and they knew I was coming around to give them a message.

I want to go back, I go back right now as I am sitting here I would go back, but there is no potential there on that side, if I could make 3000 or 4000 rands a month through work then I would go back. As for my wife, she wouldn't go back, I don't know why, but me, I would go back if there was potential, I was born there, I like it there, and it's very peaceful. Like I said everyone knows one another, now things may have changed and things may not be the same anymore.

The last time I visited was a long, long time ago, maybe a couple of months back. Before we used to go back to Wollies every month or every 6 weeks or so, any long weekends we spend our time in Wollies, my two eldest brothers, one of their wives and sister and her husband are still in Wollies. Up to a few years ago they were all there, my eldest brother's wife passed away a long time ago, and my other brother's wife passed away about 4 or five years ago, but the others are still there. We would go fishing whenever we went down, but since my brother died we hardly go down.

I miss the social life and lifestyle of Wollies, like I said most people knew each other, we all got on well and the social life vibe was amazing, once our joined the community you were a part of it. Like Jo'burg isn't for everybody, when I look at Jo'burg I would say, everybody is out for them self, they don't socialise, when they do socialise it's a different vibe not really the same, if you look at it I don't even have any friends here. Even though in Jo'burg I talk to people in passing as they will talk to me, but it's not proper socialising, like going to someone's house and they come to your house to sit and talk, like the Nazier family opposite, they talk to me outside their house they never invite me in and say let's have a talk or socialise or play cards or anything, there is none of that, like I said it's like everyone is out for themselves.

I met my wife in Wollies, her grandmother had a boarding house in Bloemhof, I don't remember when it happened, but we met somehow in Jo'burg and not long after we got married. We stayed in Wollies and I had a little café which I took over from my father. I worked at the cafe for 10 years and I wasted my bloody time there, my uncle told my father not to open a cafe but to open a bicycle shop, but for some reason my father stuck to opening a café shop. I do wonder sometimes why my father settled for a café, when we all liked fixing things, and a bicycle shop would have been a lot better for us. Back then you see the government-controlled prices too, its controlled pricing on everything, so we

couldn't even manage our own prices, the only thing that could set its own prices were the clothing stores. After I left the café to come to Jo'burg my sister ran it for a while with my father until she got married, shortly after they closed the shop.

In 1956/1957 I was in a terrible car accident, it was bad, I went through the windscreen, I was nearly slaughtered like a chicken, every part of me was cut up, my face, my body nothing was left untouched, even a huge cut on my throat. I was a mess, they stitched me up, I don't even know how they managed to stitch me up but they did, my both eyes needed stitches, nose, mouth, neck face, everything. I didn't cry at all, after a few days I went to the bathroom and I saw myself for the first time, my face was the size and shape of a rugby ball.

I went with these young guys, they had a Chevrolet 2 door or maybe a 4 door, we were good friends on a Sunday morning they came around, Hafiz Abdullah's one son was in the car so was Bashir, we were about 4-5 guys already, they invited me over, asked me where I was going, I told them I was heading to the barbeque, they said they were going to fetch petrol and why don't I ride with them so I did. When we came up to Ravonia Road, on the main road, there was a 4 way stop, we turned right, the road ahead was all downhill for about 5-6km so the guy driving put the car in neutral and he put his foot down, the car was flying, the car was freewheeling, you can't control a car like that, well he lost control and went straight into the ditch. It had like a slab of concrete on each side like a small bridge, and the tunnel at the bottom, this one was quite deep, the car went straight into it, the car had no seat belts, on impact I went straight through the windscreen. We had overloaded the car, there was 3 or 4 of us in the front and four in the back, so that's 8 people in a car made for 6 people. On impact I was hanging half out of the windscreen and half in, I managed to open the door and fell backwards into the ditch, 2 guys fell on top of me, that's where I broke a few more bones. I was very lucky the car remained balanced up there and didn't fall on top of us, we were lucky the accident happened opposite a swimming pool, a college and a girl's hostel. The teachers came running out to help us and somehow someone went and informed our families, quite a crowd had gathered, some of the families arrived and took their sons to the hospital for me they said wait for you ambulance will come to take you to the hospital. The ambulance took me to Edenvale hospital where they looked at my wounds, put a towel over my wounds and took me to the Johannesburg General Hospital, where they assessed my wounds further, they started to stitch me up where they could stitch me up, with no aesthetic or anything. The accident happened in the morning around about 10/11 am and my families were informed by someone calling the 14th street to find out who we were. After stitching me up they transferred me to Baraguanath hospital, I was there for about a week, after that I got well enough to be sent home. There were parts of broken bones which they weren't able to put in a cast, then I went to Wollies hospital, I use to go there for treatment. At Wollies I went for checkups and treatment, but

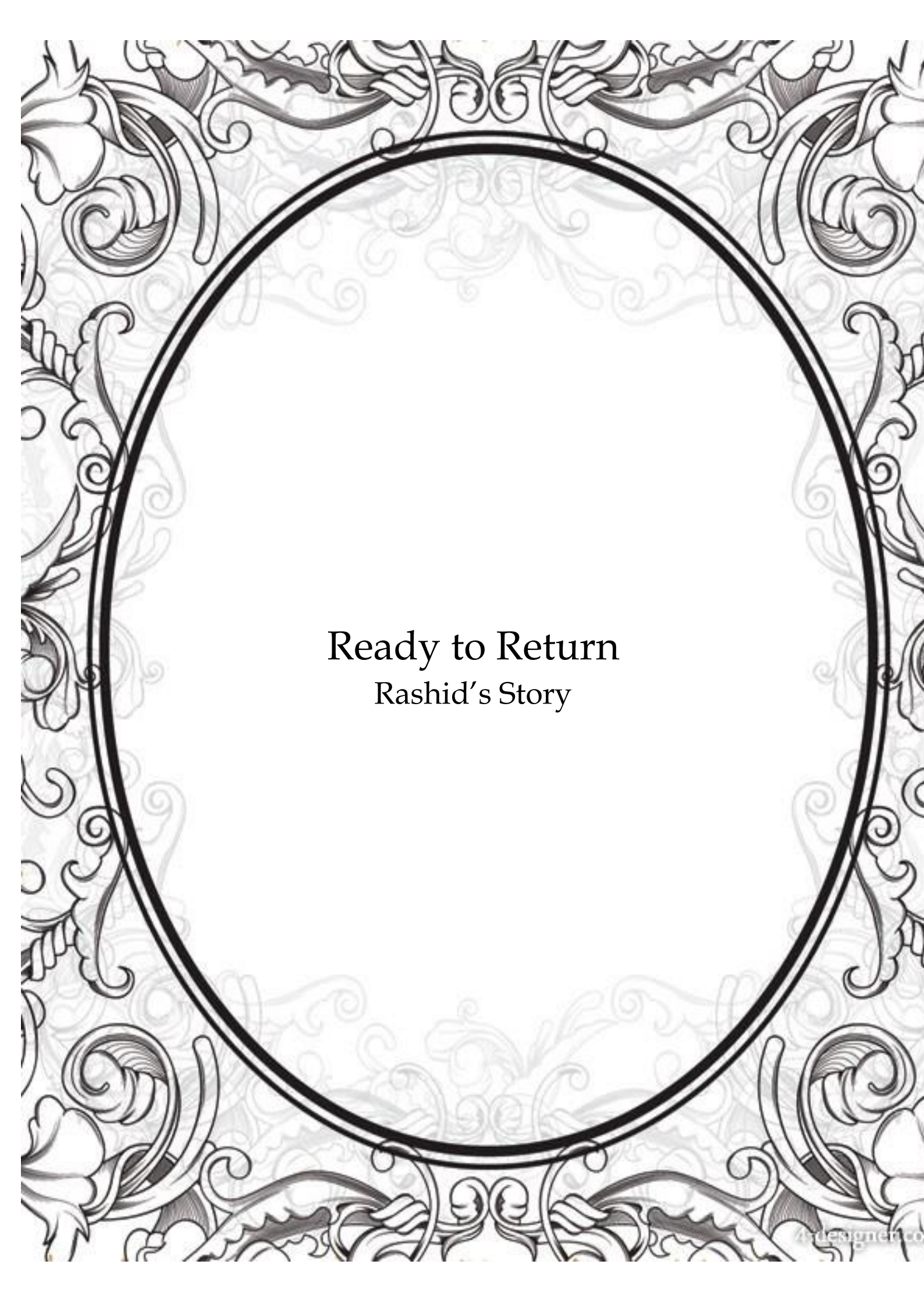
back in those days you went at 8am, you stay in the little passage outside and when the doctor was available the doctor would come out and see you. That didn't necessarily see you in the order your arrived, oh no, he would see his other patients who were wealthy or white, when he was done he would come see you. I felt like a fool as there was no waiting room for us.

Take for instance the Wollies hospital itself, as you entered the hospital they had segregated wards based on your race, like the first ward was for Indians but it was outside the hospital. That was the same ward I went to when I had my appendix removed, there was about 2-3 wards there, then later on they gave us a ward inside the hospital. Prior to that we were totally separated from the whites and a hallway was all that linked us to the main hospital. For convenience to come give us treatment they moved us on to hospital grounds so Indians now had a ward on hospital grounds, it was bad like that it wasn't good, totally separated from the whites.

When my brother got sick, before he died I took him to the hospital at Wollies that was the first time in my life, I wheeled him in to the hospital that I went through the main entrance. It was the first time in my life I went through the front entrance of the hospital. When they told me to take a seat, I was so angry, because I wanted to tell them I was born in this hospital, raised right here in this town, and yet this was my first time walking in through the main entrance. Up until then it was always through the back doors, just like they did with the blacks, the Indians also had to use the back doors to stop us mixing with the whites. After a long time that came to an end and then it was okay for everyone to be together and to mix, up and until then I don't even know why they segregated us.

People who lived in Johannesburg didn't experience the apartheid, those who lived in small country towns they experienced the apartheid, apartheid was all over the country, it was the small town Indian shops owners who first experienced the boycotts '. There were callings for the whites to boycott the Indian shops that started in Schweizer Reneke; and from there it spread to Wollies and other small towns too. It came up through the east, not sure how strong it was here but it happened all over, despite the apartheid, the conservative people still came brought things from Indians. You had to be very careful during the apartheid, you could be at the right place at the wrong time and people use to give you a hiding, you had to run. We weren't allowed to walk beside the white people; you walked behind them or off the footpath. There was a incident involving a few Indian guys who had gotten a bad hiding in Wollies, they either stood up for something or didn't listen to what was being said to them, the Boerer that were there got out of the car and had given them a right beating - left them pink and black all over. There siblings were in politics at the time, it was all over the papers, it had to do with Mozie Mullah and his brother, they are still alive, the press had gotten a hold of them at the hospital and brought them to Jo'burg, but that's all that could have been done for them, as there was still the apartheid going on.

What you hear what the whites did to the Indians was terrible, they even hit the people here in Johannesburg on 8th street and 9th street in Vrededorp; my son also had such an experience with them. It all depended on where you were, the law was always on the white people side, and they were never wrong always right. In the apartheid years the Indians and the colored's saw the apartheid in its rawest form.



Ready to Return

Rashid's Story

I was once a resident of Wolmaransstad, I left Wolmaransstad to study, IT there were no job prospects in Wolmaransstad for what I studied, so it made sense for me to stay in Johannesburg. I am an IT analyst, I specialised in stock trade floor applications in the banking industry.

I moved to Johannesburg about 19 years ago, before I moved here, I visited Johannesburg quite often, mostly to visit or to fetch my sisters, who were boarding here, but we never spent holidays here. This was during my pre-teen years, we mostly visited my uncle that's where we spent most of our time when we came up here. My father's family lived in Lenasia, back then I didn't know anyone here, we never ventured out of the area, because it was always too dangerous. We went a few times to Mayfair or Fordsburg to visit more of the family and that was the extent of our visits.

We live in Johannesburg South, there are currently 7 members who share my household with me that include my children and the domestic helper, I the home I live in and I also own my car. My daily routine is that I go to work daily, but my work is flexible working hours, so I tend to go to work as and when I am needed, but mostly I tend to go to work five days a week. My weekends are about relaxing around the house with the kids and doing the weekly shop, attend family functions, or take the kids where they want or need to go. My hobbies include fishing, but I don't get to go enough. I'm also not associated with any clubs around here either.

My family has been in Wolmaransstad for I think over 100 years, but the first the first Indian family to have arrive in Wolmaransstad was either the Saleh's, or the Ibrahem's, or actually the Habib's but I'm not 100 percent sure; their families are still in the town.

My grandfather had a business in Swartruggens (two hours north of Wolmaransstad), and his father was with him. I'm not sure on the details, I know my grandfather had a shop in Vrededorp in Johannesburg as well; but for some reason or another, he left Johannesburg. My father's father stayed in Swartruggens and my father decided to come to Wolmaransstad to work for the Saleh's and that how he landed up here, he eventually bought his own business. When he arrived, it was the pre-group areas act, although there were still racial divisions, they could still stay in town and there was no Indian area at the time. When the group areas act was came in to affect, they were forced to move out of town without compensation for their shop.

I lived with my dad, my brother, two sisters, 2 uncles and their 2 wives, my mum also formed part of my family, but she passed away when I was very young. I attended a primary school in the Indian area in Bloemhof, we used to travel by it was 60km one way, so the Jamaat (Muslim community) put money together and bought a kombi for all the indian children to travel to school and back every day. We used to leave early in the morning and go to school, there was a lady there who's house we went to,

to have lunch, change out of our school cloths and then go to Madressa (Islamic school), which was in Bloemhof as well and then come home in the afternoon.

I was born in Nick Boderstein hospital in Wolmaransstad, it was attached to the nursing teaching hospital. My high school was in Klerksdorp, the government arranged a Kombi for all the children and it was the same arrangement as primary school. It was an 80 km journey one way, my daily routine consisted of waking up, shower, have breakfast, and wait for the kombi to hoot. They used to pick us up in the cul-de-sac, whoever was in my age group all went to the same school. We grew up with the same people, who you went to the same school and did the same things with the same people. I don't think that it fostered any more concrete friendship.



My life growing up was hard, it was tough (chuckles), growing up, we grew up differently than your normal kids. My mom passed away when I was 10 years old, my younger brother (Suleiman) was 5 years old and my two sisters were away boarding at my uncles place here in Johannesburg. My uncle, his wife and my aunty were left there and they raised us, it was different, we never lacked in terms of normal things. Later on, in life you come to know that you didn't have a mother, if you had a mother then there are certain things your mother would have told you, those are the things no one else can tell you about. The way a mother would have guided her child is different to how your uncles and aunties guide you. My grandfather died a year after my mum, and the year after that my neighbour died and his funeral was at our house, so those are three years of bad memories. I did feel lost after my mother and grandfather passed away, I didn't know where my place was. My dad tried his best,

but financial constraints dictated how those cards played out in terms of my sisters having to board at my uncle in Johannesburg. I remember waking up on a Sunday, and normally you would wake up and go for breakfast which is normal, but somehow it became awkward as my dad and Suleiman were in the small house, and I used to wait for them to wake up and they were late risers. The separation from my main family was only because of a space issue, so I stayed with my uncle Moti-ma and aunty Foy. Foy eventually got married and left Wolmarranstad and then it was Moti-ma and her family (which included my cousins) that were left and that's where the awkwardness came from. It was awesome when my family used to come and we had family reunions, we used to have a lot of braai's and it was really joyous.

We would spend our school holidays at home in Wollies, we would fly kites, and go fishing, ride bicycles and hunting during the winter months and help out in the shops. That was our holidays, we never went on lavish holidays to Durban, but we did go the beach, maybe once in 3 years. In my entire childhood, I remember going once to the beach and once to my grandfather house. We were part of the cricket club, and we used to go and play cricket at the neighbouring towns. It was nothing serious it was all just social so we used to take our car and all the players jump in and we would go. Growing up I ventured out throughout the town in Wolmaransstad, even into the location. I can't think of any spaces that stand out to me in a bad way. There was once a dam, it's not there anymore, it was a nice hang out place.

There wasn't too much inter-racial interaction growing up, but like we used to go to the white people farms to go and pick fruit, or we used to go fishing on some white guys farm and we still do it. Apartheid was definitely felt in the town, when I was younger I didn't understand why I had to travel so far for school, but later on in my life I understand the affects that it had. Now when I think back on it, I feel very resentful towards it, mainly because of the schooling. If I could go to school in my town, the difference would be that I would have been at home every afternoon. I spent two hours every day of my schooling life traveling, besides that you have to wake up earlier, and when you come home you have to wind down, but you still had home work for school to do as well as madrassa homework before you could sleep, so you don't have any time for yourself. The white school used to be and still is an excellent school, it's not KERS or Saint Stithians, but for a small town they have a good hostel, they have rugby grounds, tennis courts, they even have a shooting range.

My top three reasons for leaving Wolmaransstad beside work, was because my sisters were based in Johannesburg, better work opportunities and better chances of making money. Now that I am here, I stay for the sake of my children to put them through school, so they can learn and have opportunities too. If I had the chance to go back I would in a blink of an eye, the reason being, that I think that it's peaceful, the quality of life is better, it's relaxed, it's laid back, the quality of life is different.

If I went back it won't be only for retirement, it would be so I can open up a business and give back to the community. When I say give back, we have the Jamaat there and it is my home town, I would like to be an active contributor to the area. I still feel very connected and very much a part of the community there, my uncle (*Motabajee*, Gujarati word meaning eldest brother/ eldest uncle) is still there and he raised us. Our family house is there and it's still belongs to us, the shop we own is still there too. Contributing financially is fine but I feel like if I was there I could do more than just give money, the Jamaat used to be a corner stone of the community. My father played a huge part in the community and in the Jamaat, my father was someone people use to confide in. He played a huge role in people's lives, if there was a dispute, my father would help settle the dispute, family worries, he was the man they went to, matters of dividing inheritance again it came down to my father. My father played a very active role in the community, he helped mould the community into what it became, a loving, peaceful place. I think where our house is positioned played some part of a role, it's close to the masjid, so when everyone came out they stand and chat there, so that may have played a role in it. He used to take part in community sports like cricket, to some extent I imagine myself picking up where my dad left off, after he passed away I feel like everything there has fallen apart. What they need is somebody to come back in there and pull it all together because right now there are a lot of divisions in the community and its silly things that are dividing us. Like brothers aren't talking to brothers, sisters aren't talking to brothers, people have just become very hostile to each other. It's becoming a place I don't recognise any more, like the community no longer exists.

I do feel connected to Johannesburg, it is where I have come and landed up, I am connected in that way, it's the place that has made it possible for me to buy my house here, met my wife here, and I have had my children here. Although I don't feel like I belong here as much as I belong to Wolmaransstad, due to all the family and memories I have in Wolmarransstad, even though my siblings have also left, it doesn't affect the way I feel about the town. I know my siblings feel the same way, and we try to meet there as often as possible. I am a part of the Winchester Hills Jamaat here in Jo'burg It's not the same as Wollies, but it's similar and they do make you feel included, there are no spaces in Johannesburg that I feel excluded from, nor from Wolmaransstad. Here in Johannesburg, we find our entertainment, going out for dinners, going to the theatre, enjoying the junk food that we have here twice a week. I don't think I would miss these things if I went back to Wollies, my wife wasn't always very keen about the small town, but last week when we went down, something changed and she loves the place.

The five main differences between living in Johannesburg and living in Wolmaransstad is that in Johannesburg we have a lot more schools for the kids, in Wollies there is only one primary school and there is a lack of tertiary education in the town. They also don't have a fully functional hospital so if

you were elderly or a sickly person you would have to go to Klerksdorp. The closest university is Potchestroom or Bloemfontien University. Another issue is that there also isn't a halaal butcher there, so you have to get your meats from Klerksdorp, because we slaughter our own meat there, so you would need the butcher for things like polonies and so on. Also, there is no Woolworths or a virgin active there and I need to keep my points up (chuckles), but you can do without those things. Jo'burg is a lot busier where it is just go, go all the time, people say you don't get time to smell the roses, but I do. For normal people Jo'burg is very hectic, Wollies is very slow paced, you can really describe Wolmaransstad as a laid back, peaceful town where you can relax and be yourself and no one will judge you. I would think that Wollies is a lot safer, but I think I am mistaken, because recently there has been incidence that I have been made aware of. I actually am probably alot safer here in my house, where I have a guard dog and security alarms in place. If I moved to Wollies I don't think that I would take any of the architecture in terms of wall culture there. There is a trend where people leave Wolmaransstad and go and establish their lives elsewhere, one of my sister is in Lenasia, my other sister is in Mauritius and my brother is in Witbank.

I have many friends and relatives there. When we visit the town, its more to visit my relatives, and if we bump into my friends that's great. Neighbours greet each other all the time, but may not necessarily visit each other.

During the fishing season, we used to go fishing every weekend and play a lot of soccer, cricket and squash and even golf. We used to play a lot of golf, but not on the white course, on the black course. Well there is the white golf course which is the big one that you can see from our house, so we never used to play there, we used to play on the black course. Not that we weren't welcome, but we were just starting out and we didn't know how to play golf that well and we didn't want to embarrass ourselves. So, we used to go play on the other golf course which was fun because you would look and see a small flag and you say 'oh there the hole is there'.

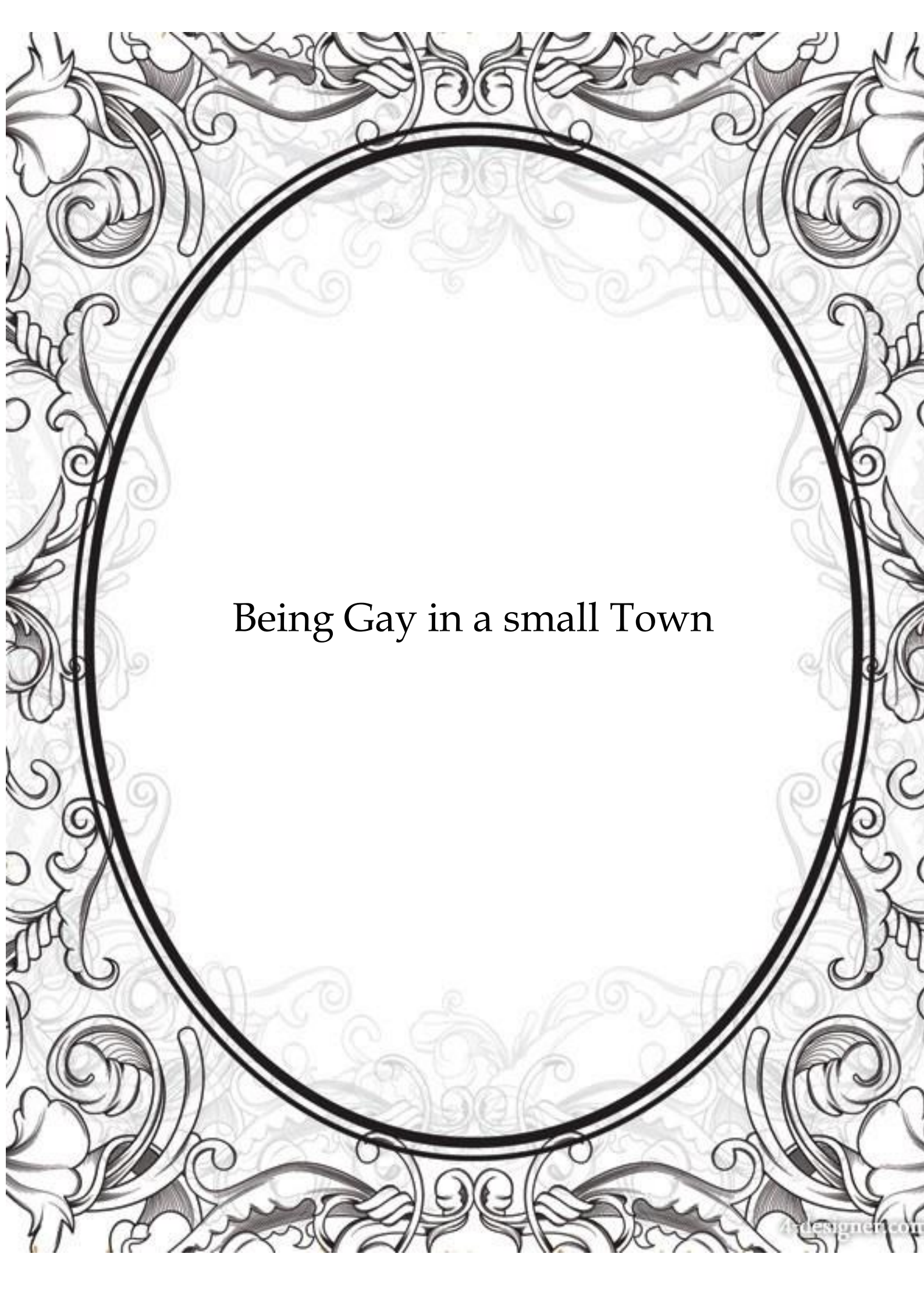
I can't think of any instances with the white people during apartheid, because we never went were there was trouble. I was born in the Indian area, so I wasn't affected by the group areas act, but the part where I couldn't go to school in the town or go to the white golf course. Come to think of it, I didn't want to associate with them, or go to those spaces, so it didn't really affect me that badly. But, we were told that 'you know what, this is the segregation and this is the way it is', but it was strange for us because we used to go fishing on the white farms and have free range on the white farms, but these were the same people on the golf courses. I never really questioned it, but now that I think about it. On the golf courses, there were a lot of white people together and they could be seen as being friendly to an Indian, and on his farm, you are just one Indian on his massive farm and nobody sees that he let you in. Never have I had an experience of being chased out of an area or by the white

people, Wolmaransstad was different when I was there with my brother and my dad, because we had a business, and lots of people knew us and they knew who we were.

I was there just last week and then 3 weeks before that, I took the kids while they were on holiday, although I don't visit it enough, I see a lot of changes in the town, especially in the businesses. There are a lot more chain stores, and there seems to be a lot more activity in the town itself, which is strange because all the people complain how bad the chain stores are coming in, I can't seem to be making that connection. I know for a fact that the diamond mines are closing down, the smaller mines that used to be in the Wolmaransstad district are also closing down so there isn't much of a mining industry left there.

I would say that the general population is made up of small business owners, people that are working on the mines or the farms. Sometimes there are more people than businesses, a nearby mine in Kimberley is quite active so the mines owners come into town and take workers to the mine a week before bringing them back on a Friday. There has also been a lot of transformation in terms of housing, there is a lot more Indian and black people that have moved out of their designated areas and into the town. In terms of Indians, my dad was the first person to buy a property in the town after the group areas act was lifted, he also bought the car peer head office. A lot has changed, you see a lot of black people driving cars and they have small businesses now as well, there are a lot more foreign nationals coming in, foreign owned businesses.

I have also seen many changes in the mosque, there are now Somalians, Ethiopians, Bangladeshis, but in terms of Nigerians and that, I haven't seen any there might be, there are a lot of Chinese people in town too.



Being Gay in a small Town

My name is Fatima, I am a finance manager in the banking industry, I was born and raised in Mafikeng, I first moved to Johannesburg when I was about 18 years old to study at University Witswaterand. Since then I have lived in Jo'burg (Johannesburg), I currently live alone in Parktown south/ Hilbrow, it's close to Jo'burg Central Business District (CBD). I've lived in the flat for about 3 to 4 years, prior to that I stayed with my brother, in the same apartment building.



As a child I went to Sol Plaatje Primary school and then on to Mafikeng High School it was known as Sol Plaatje High School, back then Mafikeng and Mabatu was known as two separate places. Mabatu is a 10 minute drive, for us it was seen as the same thing, but for the older guys they could distinguish between the two. I think now, more recently, they joined both as Mahikeng, but I could be wrong. So, my primary school was 10 to 15 minutes from home and my high school was 5 minutes away from home.

Both my parents are still alive and live in Mafikeng, we are a family of five I have two brothers, one's older and one's younger, my elder brother is 32 and my younger brother is 25. My elder brother lives in Pretoria while the rest of my family is in Pakistan. I am first generation South African, both my parents are from Pakistan and they moved here about thirty years ago. My parents are from an area in Pakistan called Rawal Pindi, it's a town that has grown into a city close to Islamabad, which is the capital of Pakistan. My dad is originally from Pakistan where he was born and bred, he did his PhD at Dandi University and then got a job in Botswana, later on he went back to Pakistan to get married, he then brought my mum with him to Botswana. After my elder brother was born in Botswana, they moved to South Africa about 2 years later I was born in Mafiken with my younger brother.

My father is a mathematician, he is a lecturer at North West (NW) University, while my mum has a small business in Mafikeng. My mum and my dad had the idea of opening a shop, because my mum, her first language actually isn't English its Urdu, for her it was a barrier, coming to South Africa she had to learn English. In Mafikeng, the majority of people weren't actually English speakers they were Sitwana speakers, so interacting and learning her market was also difficult. There were also other racial barriers, but she worked very well with that. There were a few well known Indian business people, and my parent used to come up to Jo'burg just for shopping or just a trip out of Mafikeng and visiting friends, through that type of exposure they said, okay, let's see if we can open a shop. I know they spoke to a few business people in Mafikeng and got guidance from them and that is how it all

sort of started, it just continued from there, with her learning over a period of time, with what her market is looking for and what's hot and what's not. People also would come to the shop asking for goods, my mum tailored her shop to meet the needs. It's a small business that has a range of goods such as linens, pots, tv's and different electronics. She gets her stock from Johannesburg, so every month or every two weeks she will come up to Johannesburg to buy stock with my dad. The stock that she usually gets, is cheaper goods, but goods that are needed, because if you look at her market, which is middle to lower class (township people) people, they seek to find cheaper forms of goods as opposed to Panasonic's or Sony's as those kinds of goods you can find at wholesale stores in Fordsburg, China mall, Pakistani's, Indians and south Africans Indians stores. They used to leave early, do some shopping and leave at 3pm before sunset. I used to go stock shopping with my parents at Sakyno and all those places, when I was younger, like in high school, they used to come up on Sundays, just for the day. We would get ready to come stock shopping so we would wake up really early in the morning around 4/5am as it's about a 3-hour drive to Johannesburg, we would have a quick breakfast, that we prepared the night before. We also prepared our lunches that were packed and we all would get in to the bakkie for the drive to Jo'burg, you spend 2, 3 or even 5 hours on the road, we would have an outline of the shops we wanted to go to and within in a space of maybe 6 hours we would buy whatever stock we needed, at that point in my life, it was like wow Jo'burg was a whole different world. If we stopped to get lunch it might be in a small restaurant in Fordsburg. At that point in time I even remember we used to go to Jumbo cash and carry, what else was there, gosh taking me back. I don't think the China malls were up and running as they are now, so it was mainly the Indian local cash and carry, there was Africa cash and carry, and Jumbo cash and carry and there were linen stores that sold linen wholesale and stuff. It was just a very busy day, it was compact, you end up getting home between 5 or 7pm in the evening, we were tired and the next day is school (chuckles). My mum has had her shop, for a long time, I can't remember how long but I would say possibly 15 plus years.

When you come from a small town, people are very simplistic, we were a middle-class family, so you do find other Indian families who higher class then you, for them I would guess Jo'burg isn't a big shock to them. When you come from a small town, that's all you know when move to into a city it gets very over whelming. It also depends on what you are exposed to, it's very different, you end up opening your mind to tons of stuff, I think as a kid in a town you are limited, even your malls are small, you come to Jo'burg, you go to bigger malls and you are like, omg (oh my god) look at that, look at that, you don't really know how to process it.

To be honest, I actually don't know if there has been any incidence with my mum or with rising xenophobia, but I think in general with the politics of the country, I don't think she has had any

instances, that she has a fear of. I know there has been stories where she has told me, Chinese people shops get broken into, get shot at and even killed the owners in the shop. There was also a story where they burnt down a Chinese shop with the owners still tied up in the shop. I have a couple of friends whose families also have businesses and stuff, one of my best friends, when I last spoke to her, she was told me that its quite bad, and the crime is getting out of hand, they target the Indians quite a lot to the point where they follow the shop keepers home.

So, about a month ago, an Indian family, actually, one of the business owners who is quite well known who own a successful supermarket, the owner was kidnapped for a ransom of 1.5 million rand and they ended up paying it. It was an inside job, and they knew what was going on to the point that the kidnappers, would say there are too many people in the house tell them to leave. So, they do monitor you, it's not rocket science, they watch the kids going to school, they watch the family and the owners, they are well planned attacks, when they happen. Also, you are in a town that has a routine, small towns usually have a fixed routine, it's very rare for something ad-hoc to happen and so it's very easy to become a target of crime. It's happening to a lot of the Indian businesses, they are being targeted, even the Indian households.

A friend of mine, she is a black girl and lives in an Indian area, some guys came and broke into her house, suddenly they realised that a black woman was in the bed, they started apologising saying "We are so sorry, we thought you were Indian". They were apologising, and they said "but we have to take some stuff, we won't take your tv, but just give us your cell phone, "but we really thought you were Indian" and they continued to apologise and eventually left the house, only taking something for their boss. So, you can see Indians are being targeted and a lot of it is racially driven and there is this stereotype thing where they assume Indians are wealthier, than blacks or blacks assume Indians took away opportunities from them.

Mafikeng is very Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) area at the moment, but I haven't been there in the a long time, maybe two or three years, so obviously Economic Freedom Fighters have popped up in that space. The thing is when it comes to politics, its different, for example if you're from an Indian family and have very good connections with the African National Congress (ANC) and they have provided you with buildings and tenders and stuff you go with them because this is your bread and butter, as it is with all politics.

The last time I visited Mafeking, I think it was about three years ago in November, I actually went home to write exams there, I don't particularly go home because of my sexuality. I find Mafikeng to be very old school, being born and bred there everyone's family knows everyone, so it reaches a point that if I were to go home, I don't want there to be any kind of discomfort for my parents. The community will

react like 'Oh my god your daughter is gay', you know everyone knows me and all the families know each other, I don't want the community to come to my parents and go on about how my sexuality is unacceptable. As it is, when I go home, there are a lot of questions about when am I getting married and to whom but for me I am more than happy, I spend enough time with my parents when they come, so there is no need for me to put myself in that environment or to go back there.

Growing up, I was raised in an Pakistani Islamic family, the idea of my parents being open to me being gay was non-existent, I never thought it would ever happen. Throughout my childhood, I never came out until I was in Johannesburg, it was very much suppressed, I think I had blocked off the possibility that I am gay. I knew throughout my school years that I would have feelings for women, but I left it at a place of just befriending them as opposed to seeking out relationships. By saying hey I'm gay, I was very fearful, I, myself didn't know where, or what my future was. A very large part of me felt I would be disowned and then there was the stress around the fact that would I ever be financially independent that I could leave home. So, I was in a very fearful place throughout my teens and also in a very self-destructive space, I knew I wanted to be happy, eventually moving to Johannesburg, it took me a few years before I could come out to my closest friends first, then coming out to the rest of my friends and finally coming out to my parents. My parents were actually accepting and the biggest thing for them was for me to just be happy, there was definitely something about Johannesburg that gave me the sense that this would be okay.

I remember the days when I was at campus I was in the closet for a good 3 or 4 years, I recognised that a gay person could very easily identify another gay person. Especially when it comes to a female that is masculine in appearance, I would see those who were already out, I remember seeing a couple of people who were out, they were very open with their girlfriends, comfortable and kissing, it's something you wouldn't find in a small town. It was very reassuring even comforting to know it's okay to be who you are, it can be accepted. The fact that I could see it around me, and see others accepting it, it gave me sense of hope, knowing that your destination isn't actually what you perceived it to be when you were younger or what it is perceived to be in a town.

The other biggest thing in a town is that the second something happens, it ends up becoming everybody's business. Whereas here in Jo'burg, when you come out with your sexuality it's not town gossip, a few intimate people know, it's such a common thing there's no big deal about this person. I think for me the fact that my parents were still in Mafikeng and their close friends were also there, I had that element of freedom here, where I could create my own life and my own circle of friends who would accept me for who I am, and live completely away from what my teenage years had perceived a life to be.

All my extended family are actually in Pakistan, it's just my brothers and parents that are in South Africa, I have one family of five cousins, my aunty and uncle that are staying in the states (America), the rest are in Pakistan and they don't know about my sexuality. I have been to Pakistan and I understand the way they think and their beliefs or whatever, I think the largest thing for me is that it's not about me. I am comfortable and happy with who I am, my parents are comfortable and happy with who I am, I don't have the need to go to my extended family and get their validation. I don't need the drama behind that, my extended family don't know about my sexuality nor do my cousins.

My parent's initial reaction to me coming out was the first conversation I had with my mum, I was completely broken down, I had just come out of a relationship and I was completely heart broken. I was crying like crazy, and I had always shut my mum out, I just reached a point where I said to her, "do you want to know more about my life, because you always ask about it". I just burst out crying, I just let it out, and told her that I have been trying so hard, I tried not to be this way and I tried dealing with it and accepting it for so many years. I am just this way, I'm sorry for disappointing you and I don't know why God has made this way. She just said that if you say God made you this way, then you are made this way, and you are still my daughter, just don't go around hurting yourself. I was like Okay cool, so my mum knew, it took her a while to get to a point of tolerating it. My parents aren't like 'where's your girlfriend, bring her home'; or when they come to Jo'burg, they don't say "hey come why don't you and your girlfriend for lunch". I don't even expect them to figure it out or try and get it, the fact that they are okay with me and know about my sexuality is more than enough for me. I don't have this expectation for them to welcome me with open arms, and say, let's plan your wedding or when are you having kids, you know, the stuff you'd expect with a heterosexual couple. I don't have those expectations with my parents. So, my mum would always say tell your father, but I was always fearful of my dad, I am also a bit of a daddy's girl and I was always fearful of him and what he would say, how badly I disappoint him but my mum would say no, your father is chilled and you can tell your dad. That was the only time I didn't tell him directly, my mum probably told him and they had their own discussions, I just remember that in my previous relationship I had a discussion with my parents. I said I plan on moving in with my girlfriend, I would like to get married and I would like to have a nikkah (vows) and they were just like okay, there wasn't even a thing of let's try and understand this. It was just a matter of, if this is what makes you happy, that's fine we don't need to know any more. I am just glad that it is civil and it's not nasty and there are no side comments or anything. I can fully understand that if they can't understand my sexuality it's because, for them what is natural, isn't natural to me and so they can't understand that. You also find that a lot of people are driven through only understanding or experiencing, and if that's their way of living then that's their way of living, so I am pretty chilled with that, I think my parents have reached a tolerance of it.

If I had stayed in Mafikeng, I think my life would have been incredibly secretive, when I was younger it was an incredibly heavy secret because I felt like I was living double life. I am very protective of my parents in their process as well, I don't think I would have actually come out openly with it, I think a lot of my relationships or my interactions would have been in secret. Also, I don't know, if I stayed there maybe I would have felt like I am ring fenced there or if I'm stuck, I probably would have been suicidal I think. The fact that you know stories are spread around in a small town, you know if you go to the store and someone see's you, they say hey we actually bumped into Fatima in this mall. I can't even begin to explain how quickly it spreads, I wouldn't even take the risk of having relationship because if it breaks down or someone sees or finds out it would have put me in the lime light. Or I would have a situation where my parents receive phone calls from other community members to the effect of 'I saw your daughter with my daughter and what the hell is going on here?'. People are also so closed minded in Mafikeng, they can be quite aggressive towards homosexuals, I wouldn't want it to reach a point where I have brothers coming to me and saying 'what the hell are you doing with my sister' I would probably be suicidal.

Moving to Jo'burg was incredibly stressful I was was very overwhelmed, I was also incredibly naïve, when I came here I was just that town girl. I think the way the towns work compared to cities you realise your concept of space and time differs a lot. I find it so weird, because people are a lot more closed minded but it's also a lot more, free flowing, there are no limitations on meeting up and saying let's spend the afternoon together, it's convenient. But when you come to Jo'burg, everyone is highly driven, everyone has targets to meet, a goal to reach, always something that needs doing, a chore to complete. In Mafikeng, going to buy groceries, is like a 15-minute job and in 30 minutes you are home, but here in Jo'burg it takes 30 minutes just to get to the mall to get the groceries. The pace was the biggest thing for me to get used to, it took me the longest time, its only in the last couple of years that am I actually adapting to the space. I can already say from the onset that this isn't my space, the Jo'burg lifestyle is not my space at all, hence why it was very overwhelming, I think even the way people are, they are not chilled, everyone is so goal drive, always chasing something, there is no chill in it, the personalities aren't even chilled.

I think what I found was that people back home have a more chilled and relaxed demeanor about them, whereas here it's on a whole different level of consciousness in the two phases of my life. People in Jo'burg are more backstabbing and conniving and that's what I was not use to, that was the naive town girl in me. I was living in a family where, you didn't even actually have to stay over at friend's place, everyone was literally around the corner, you didn't need sleep overs to spend time with friends, because it was easily accessible, so when you come out to Jo'burg you are constantly around different

and unfamiliar personalities. I wouldn't say I have fully adapted, I am still learning, as I learn more about myself I learn a lot more about my surroundings, so it is still a learning process.

With regards to my preferred space, I'm in a space where I am reassessing my priorities in life, I find that if you are working in corporate you are working in a rat race. You can get so easily sucked into it that you don't have any time for your private life, or you find yourself in a position where you put your foot down. I am walking out of work after 8 hours regardless of what is left outstanding, and take the criticism of what is not done, just so you can live a more balanced life. For me what suits me, is having a balanced life, I find Jo'burg very unstructured, for example, if you want to meet friends for dinner, you have to plan a few weeks in advance and for me that is way too far in advance. The fact that you have to do that is exhausting, I am not used to it because in Mafikeng everyone is like let's do dinner tomorrow night and cool we meet, but here everyone is like oh no tomorrow night I have to do this and that, it's never ending. Everyone's life is so consumed by so many other things, in my previous job, I would almost spend about two hours travelling back and forth and every time I would come home, I would ask myself 'is it worth it?', because in a week, I have spent 10 hours on the road. I could have been doing other things, like reading a book that I wanted to read but I couldn't have that. You just realise that there just fickle things that are eating up your time which aren't really adding value to your life, it's the way the city is structured that it just absorbs and takes everything from you. Basically, for me I am just looking for a very balanced life, whether it is possible in this city I have no idea, but I am exploring my options.

One of the other small towns I visited was Newcastle, one of my friend is actually from Newcastle and I stayed there for 3 weeks on holiday, I actually enjoyed it, I think what I enjoyed the most about Newcastle was its aesthetics of the town. It was a lot cleaner, it was just very different from Mafikeng, but also the pace was slow and I enjoy that. But it was based on its cleanliness, there was a lot more attention given to the roads, the houses, and stuff, you could see that, the residential areas were quite different. I have also been to cape town, but I haven't been to Durban in a long time, the last time I was there was probably when I was a kid. Cape town I love it, I would definitely consider moving there, for me what I am looking for is the very nature centric environment, which Cape Town has in abundance and I absolutely love it there. Jo'burg, especially where I am staying, the best part of where I am staying is where I am able to see the trees, it's not even the skyline, it's the sun rise, sun set and the trees. I would be even more happy to move to Cape Town and experience the next couple of years in that city, because of the mountain, and its outdoor facilities and nature. To be honest I can't even think that far ahead, 15 or 20 years down the line, for me I believe where you go in life is where you go. You can have a fixed plan but if you don't follow your gut, you don't follow your everyday, you are never going to be where you need to be, for me 20 years from now, it's not so much of where I am

located but that I am happy. That's my destinations, it's not a physical location, I would just like to be happy, if I am in Jo'burg, and I can have that well balanced life, then good, it may be in another city or another country or even in a small town.

For me a well-balanced life is basically incorporating different aspects of my personal life, which would be my relationships, so that includes my relationship with my girlfriend, friends, work and my studies which I am currently busy with, exercising and having a portion of me time. I don't enjoy finding my head space in a space where I am constantly preplanning or planning where am I going to be tomorrow, I look for space in my mind. It's tricky living in a city and living alone as well, because, you do a 10 hour or a 12-hour day and you come home only to find you don't have any bread and milk. If you just don't want to do grocery shopping on the weekend, you don't have any food, you have to go grocery shopping, it's not ten minutes down the road, with so many people in your space it just gets very overwhelming and continuous planning.

Right now, scheduling isn't the easiest thing, I wake up early in the mornings and study, then come home and study in the evening, so that adds pressure to my time table. On a daily basis, I wake up between 4:30am and 5:30am, wake up and pray, study, have breakfast, get ready for work, get to work, work until about 5:30pm, come home, get dinner ready, then sit with my books again and before you know it, it is time to sleep. So that has been my routine for the last month and a half, and I am finding difficult to find the time, but obviously, if you are given a maximum of 24 hours you have to see how you can work around that. I sometimes have to put my foot down, because I can be a work-a-holic. So, a balanced life, is about me reflecting at the end of the week and saying I have managed to touch on all the things that I wanted to and being satisfied with that.

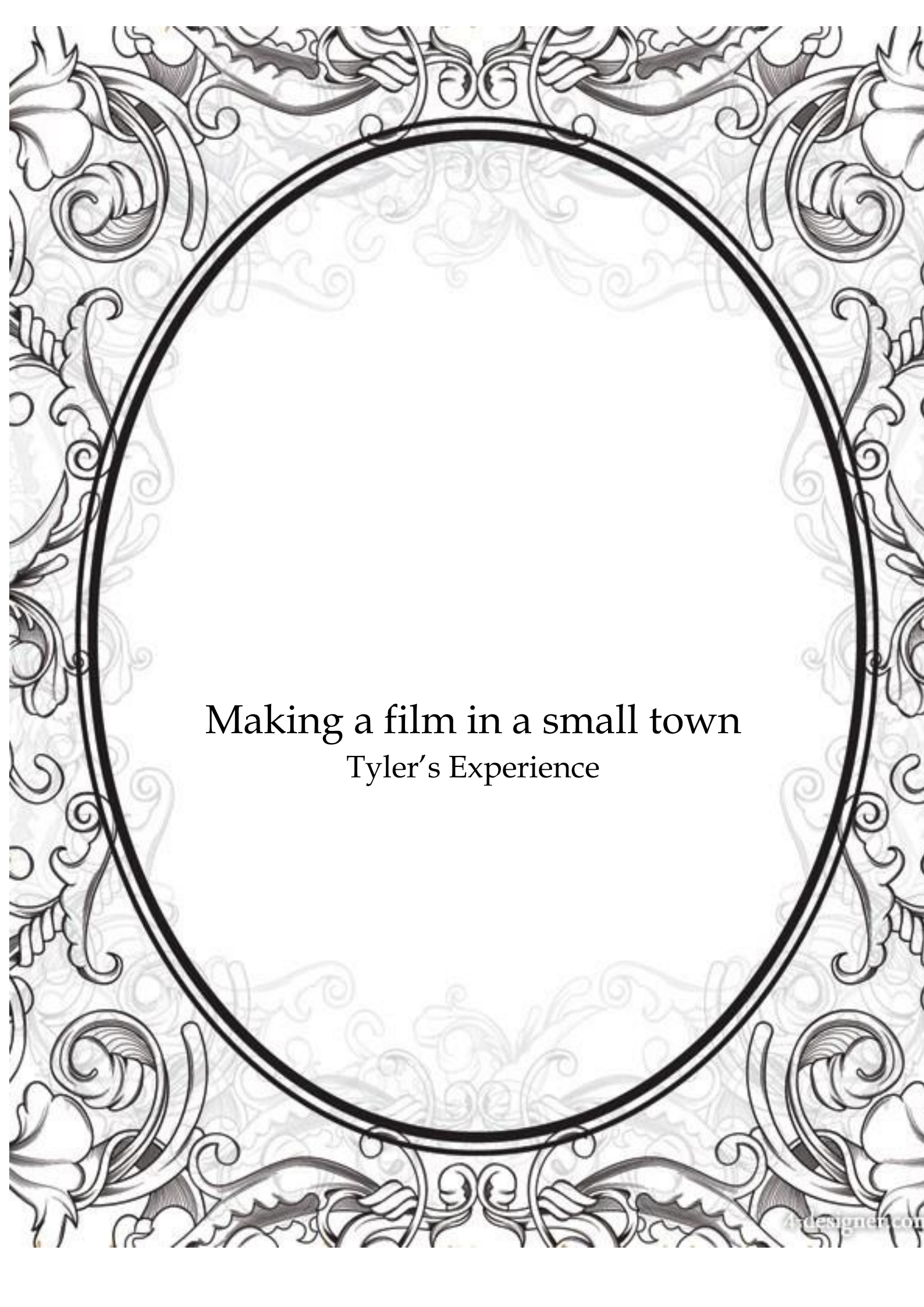
Aesthetically speaking Mafeking is a very dry town, but from the last time I was there, there seems to be a lot of business potential, it seems to be transitioning from being just a small town. Mafeking is also what I call a one Road Town, that everyone lives on or owns a business on, everyone is friendly though, but some middle and upper class indians can be closed off. Looking into the history of Mafikeng it was Botswana, and back then it was a very well-established town that was a very well-known town with a lot of people in it. When the African National Congress (ANC) came into control a huge majority of people left, many Indians left, as well as every single Jewish family that used to live there too. The surprising thing was that there used to be synagogues, just down the road there was one, people just left because they didn't see any opportunities, and I think that is changing.

I don't think all small towns are the same, it just depends, society is evolving, we are becoming a lot more open minded, not just because of who we are but also to what we are exposed to especially through media. If you look, we are seeing a cultural evolution, and small towns are a lot more culturally

driven than people in Jo'burg, but there are a lot of people that are culturally driven in Jo'burg. People are a lot more closed minded, but the exposure and that changes are definitely not moving at the pace that a city would move, but you definitely can't say that it's not moving at all. I can't agree and disagree with this argument for there is just so much debate around it.

From what I recall from about 10 years ago and from when I first moved to Jo'burg there was a lot of changes, especially when the Chinese and foreigners started penetrating that market the Chinese came and took over Jo'burg, they equally took over the towns too. It's not even just limited to Nigerians, Ethiopians or Senegalese, there's just tons of foreigners that have opened business's and shops, they then come and get their stock from Jo'burg and go back and sell it in Mafikeng. So, if you look at the ratio of local stores that have opened up compared to the marketing of it, I would find that the foreigners hold a majority of the poorer markets. The local business-owners are moving into more consulting and addresses a more middle class whereas, the South Africans are driving force behind the lower income markets.

I never ever felt part of a community anywhere, whether here or in Mafikeng, I don't think I look for one either, I think I just enjoy being wherever I am. If I look at my friendship circle as well as my brothers who are also here, I do feel like I have a sense of security. I would have that in Mafikeng, even if it's not my relationships, it would be my parent's friends. In Jo'burg I don't have that presence of my parent's friends, it's just my circle and group of people that I know that offer me that level of security.



Making a film in a small town

Tyler's Experience

Please describe what your role was as a researcher in this project?

This was a learning curve more than anything so I think my role was a documentary filmmaker but from my side I feel that this was quite a big learning experience not just for filmmaking but also to look at all the different factors of this research project. As a researcher my role to some extent was an intellectual and creative support while trying to dissect everything about this project in my mind. My role consisted of filming, recording sound, editing images we found and really just supporting Muneebah through the process. Team morale, taking one for the team was a big role for me and I didn't do it often but when I needed to I could but I wasn't particularly surprised by it because I always took the stance that if no one else was going to do it I would, this has also, been a learning experience from my side as well. Trying to do or come at this from a creative point of view on my own and not having a whole group of classmates like I usually do where we are always bouncing off ideas off one another it was really challenging to come up with things on my own.



Thinking through the project how do you feel the project went?

I think there were times that we tried to debrief to really look back on the things that we found and heard, it was interesting, not trying to fathom it in any way but trying to understand, why this happened, possible theories as to why, Chinese immigration happened and why they came to these small towns. Grappling with interesting ideas as being the outsider in these small towns because we are city kids and that for me was one of the most interesting points of view to have in this researching process. In terms of unpacking ideas from our point of view and trying to understand it from our subject's points of view it was all just dealing with the ins and outs of the research. As it was constantly us doing the research followed by interviews and then more research. Out of the whole experience the biggest thing for me was being an outsider and trying to get in where you think we had never had the idea, that it would be simple to infiltrate the towns and navigate the spaces. Like going into shops and people knowing that we are not from the town while trying to see ourselves

in their point of view and vice versa and trying to infiltrate their little circles to get information about them.

Do you remember the day we met, describe it to me?

Yes, the day we first met I was sitting with a classmate of mine in the television department and I can't remember what I was doing exactly, I can't remember if we let you in or you walked in or came to the gate. We were just sitting there and you came to speak to us, my memory is a bit sketchy. But we started talking to you and we found out that you needed people to help you with a documentary and just by chance you asked us if we could help you. We thought it was a cool idea and we could work around your schedule, we just sat and spoke about how or who would be able to help you, if it was us, and well the rest is history, yeah, I guess its sketchy.

What was your initial feelings about it all?

From my point of view, I was like, oh cool here's an opportunity for me to be a part of something outside of school as I hadn't signed up for any internships or anything outside of university. I was really excited because I had no idea what I was getting into or what the outcome was going to be. It was like a little adventure where we would see what comes out of it.

How did you feel when the project was about to begin?

I definitely got the adventure I was looking for and it is one of the biggest challenges I have faced as a filmmaker starting out because nobody explains to you the nitty gritty of actually making a film, what it takes and what it entails. We are so comfortable in this little space where everything is guided and we have guidelines but when almost everything is up to you it really puts a spotlight on how much you know, how much you see and how much you can actually do. It's was a real challenge for me I never thought it was going to be easy, I just didn't know what kind of challenges it would pose. I faced quite a few obstacles in terms of the actual filmmaking process and trying to get around what we need to be saying was the biggest thing. Like what are we trying to say, who are we speaking to, what are we saying to these people as filmmakers because that is also one of those things that I learnt though my studies. You always need to find what you are saying, there's always a reason why, sometimes it was frustrating not knowing where it was going. I understand that it was part of the documentary process as some people spent 8 years on a documentary without finding

an answer. Trying to set aside those naggings in your brain where you need to have an answer, what are you saying, where is this going, what is the end results, not knowing that was insane.

How did this documentary filming experience differ from any other experiences you have had?

I am not 100% sure because I have not been in that situation before, I have seen it when everything has been in place, pre-planned 3 months in advance where you know where you are going to be and for how long with 50 people working on it. Downscaling it completely and not knowing whether you are going to get the interview you need or whether you are going to encounter an experience that is helpful to the documentary is very different. You could spend an hour with someone and it might not be helpful, the unpredictability of filmmaking is unpredictable, it might start raining. This was completely different because you don't know if you are going to get a good reception like Vredefort, we were apprehensive to go there, once there nobody wanted to be interviewed by us and that was predictable but you're always going into a situation hoping for the best. As a whole the unpredictability of the whole situation, everything is more up in the air compared to a structured shoot for a 30 second advert. You never know until you know which is normal for documentary filmmaking.

Research can be quite unpredictable, and being overwhelmed at times, especially during the field work can happen. There was a moment when this happened to Muneebah, how did you cope?

I think I was also trying to stay calm because I know that if both team members were freaking out, no good can come of it but I was also freaking out because I was almost in the same boat as you. Like what are we doing what are we saying, do we have enough stuff, will people understand, will they get the gist of what we are trying to do here. I think more than anything now in the editing process I need to convey the message where the point of frustration of where Dr Alex can help us? can he be the one voice to see where everything can be ok and he really was, Because, when you were freaking out in the car, I was trying to be supportive, and trying to say its ok we got this it's going to be okay, but I was also thinking, oh my god (omg) what are we doing, we spent so much time, please don't let it go to waste. I think that was a dramatic moment, in terms of just not knowing if this was going to come out the way we wanted to, in terms of scrap it all and try something different, or just run with it, it was a pinnacle moment, in the process.

Now that the field work is finished and you are sitting in the editing suit, what are your feelings?

Right now, I'm in this process, where I am like this is a process, because I am always thinking. Because there is a whole realm of things involved in the process, right now I am thinking could I have done something more. What am I working with currently is the biggest challenge of how do I convey the nuances of our experience, because I think that's really going to make the film, you know, like here and there. I almost want this to be the same experience that we had. I want people to go 'oh shit okay, I see what I meant when...'. Because we don't have a voice, it is just images that we have working for us, so I'm just trying to navigate, how we get that feeling across, how we say what we want to say without actually saying it because that's what film is about, show don't tell. I think the challenge I am facing is do I have enough to show and do I have the skills to be able to take what I have to show the audience, I was saying I want this documentary to go hand in hand, not necessarily like, toe to toe, but like guide or go along those lines, like a side dish that is really good with the thesis. I think the challenge of that is, we are two completely different people and we are coming at this from completely different angles, and to have that synchronize and get together, it is a definite challenge.

What were your initial expectations before we departed, how did you mentally prepare yourself?

Look, I really had no idea what to expect, I remember you telling me about some of the places are really dodgy, but we ended up going to these really lovely guesthouses, people were so warm and nice to us. I think my initial expectation was that I was going to be uncomfortable, and to an extent it was like 'I'm completely out of my comfort zone', in the beginning we were three strangers, at that point it was me, you and Peter. I thought about how are we going to get along, I have a difficult personality, so trying to figure myself out in this journey was intense, but my assumptions of these towns, I had nothing to assume, I didn't know how small these towns were, I did not know how conservative they would be. I tried my best not to have an idea about these places, I really had no idea or expectations of these places and what we were going to find. Because a lot of the time, I try not to expect too much, because you just go and see what it is like and that is what it is. So, I think that was interesting because I had no idea, as you say the names of these towns and I was like 'oh that's a town okay, we will see what that means when we get there'. So no expectations for the towns, but just for the dynamics of how we were going to get down to business.

On a mental and emotional level, my mental preparation was getting excited, but also feeling very nervous. I didn't really emotionally prep, I just felt very, very nervous, I didn't know what to expect. I was going to be away from home, for like a week and I didn't know how that was going to turn out, so getting closer and closer to the date of leaving I was just like 'okay I'm leaving I'm going to do this, what happens, happens and we will see how it goes'. I didn't really mentally prepare, which is strange.

Are there any moments during the field work that stand out for you?

That's a difficult question, as I have little pictures of all the moments in my head, like the room in the Tuk-Tuk who didn't want us to film his face, or the dogs and in Vrede they just wanted to come inside and have fun with us. Also going back to when we saw the vredefort dome, where we tried to break in to gain access that was interesting. Oh, I shouldn't disclose that but I think that was a cool experience because that was a point where I was like yea, let's do this, let's make this documentary crazy, and do something that we wouldn't do at home. So, when we got to the dome, and we tried to get in and we couldn't it provoked a thought process which made me think about, where we are at, as a country. There are places that we build and are ready to be used or make something of the tourism for the country, like we have so much to give but we can't get our shit together, I really wanted to experience that and see what it is all about. Here we are in the one-horse town, Vredefort it's literally a one-horse town, there is this massive monument, and we can't get into it. I was like 'guys our countries countrymen trying to get it'. But it was cool, trying to see if we could open the window and slip through the gate.

Another moment is when were at the lake, when were completely alone I was comfortable with the space, but I also knew it was out last day and we needed that last interview. That's what I loved most about it, I wasn't afraid in these towns, you can go, walk in the street and no one is going to bother you. Because it is so small and nothing really happens, you know you aren't going to get jumped. People have their own stuff to deal with, it was dark and cold but I was comfortable.

A low-light was missing home the first trip and then also coming home on that first trip, I was like Yoh, we experienced something. I don't know if it was just me but I felt like I had experienced something completely out of my comfort zone, and I didn't know how to deal with coming back. It really is a culture shock where you go from nothing to coming into this over stimulating experience of Johannesburg. I remember it was like a debriefing, when I

came home and telling Gareth that we were spectacles the whole time, we were these completely odd combination of people, and everyone had something to say about us. It hit home more than anything else, that was a low light, I just sit with that feeling of being a spectacle and having everyone's eyes on you the entire time.

We were a spectacle because, I don't know if I place these experiences in the town, because I don't want to over simplify these towns as these places, the people living there, can see city people and just gawk at us, that's how I felt it was like. So, I don't know if was because they could see that we weren't towns-people, or if it was that we were this group of an Asian man, a Muslim woman and a black-coloured girl that they can't place. They didn't know how to place any of us, it was a mirror for us and for them, I don't think they interact with these kinds of dynamics very often. For them it was huh and for us it was like what, and not to say that we were an eye sore, but I felt like an eye sore, in terms of the fact that no-one understood us. We didn't have the opportunity to explain to everyone what our deal was, they had their own assumptions, for me this was the most profound part of it, that everyone makes these assumptions of you, They were making these assumptions without no other basis other than the fact that you are of a particular race and it really put a spot light on integration in these towns, People live pleasantly along-side each other but it doesn't seem like they have worked it out about race, maybe we are assuming this about them, but I feel like they haven't gotten through that and we became this target for everyone's questions.

I think we coped by all joking about it, because we knew it was going to happen, like we are going into this bar, get ready people, or we are going into ShopRite, get ready everyone. Like Peter is our surrogate dad and we are these fostered kids, as humorous as it was, it just felt like I didn't want this attention. The second time around, we were much less of a spectacle, not because they knew us, but we had dealt with that we knew what we were here to do whereas the first time it was a novel experience. Also, I think Peter's presence definitely compounded the situation, even though Peter is as much South African as we are, but the fact that he is Asian, made us go, well we are from South Africa. They don't see that, they just see the differences, I think Peter's presence was the main thing, he drew the most attention to us, and the second time around, and he wasn't there so there was less of that spectacle. I think the second time around we had tunnel vision, so I don't know if there was more or less staring. It was definitely his presence that made people do a double and triple take to try and puzzle us together and make us fit into a mould that they could have made sense of.

I also couldn't quite understand what the impact was, because the second time it wasn't that obvious, because even though people could still pick us out, for me people could say, you can see they aren't from here, but there was nothing strange about it. I think with Peter presence our racial distinctions, became so much more apparent, so people looked more, specifically to see Asian, Indian, unknown and what is this. When it was you and I. they could easily class you with me or me with you and that was okay, but with Peter it was just so obvious.

Peter definitely made things different, because he didn't mind you and I, as soon as Peter was there we had to understand it.

I think it would be interesting to go into these towns with a different combination of people. Even though you don't even see our combination here it would be less of a thing

What would you have done differently?

I think from a creative point of view, I could have been a lot more tenacious in terms of taking more chances and pushing for a different look and feel. From a research point of view, we should have gone with instinct, where we should have interviewed one or two local people. I also think just being more open to the first time around we were there, but I also know that the first time we just focused on the bare minimum. As I now I know, you had a lot of apprehensions from your own experiences on your first few rounds before we were with you.

What were your initial thoughts when you first entered these towns?

I was like, oh look a church and a grain silo, that's small towns, then you start seeing malady's and clothing stores, that you see in the city, I was like okay that's interesting, people can afford that. Saying that makes me sound so ignorant because you really do not know what to expect, and when you see chain stores, you are like okay we will get each other, but on a completely different level. There are also so many pot holes, my first impression was okay, people are going about their day, there is nothing spectacular, they are doing what they need to do, it's not amazing, but it's not like there is nothing happening. Vrede was cool, there were cars alongside the road, okay we are on the main street, you have this idea of small towns where people are sitting on a crate and there is nothing to do there. Which is a highly dramatized idea of small towns, when you actually go to a small town, there is stuff

happening and that is really comforting to know because you are in the middle of nowhere and the biggest town is like 60 or more kilometres away. You also assume that everyone knows everyone, but they don't, they are completely independent. Just subvert the ideas that you have, because you have an idea, and I guess that's your assumption and it is always nice to see our assumptions were wrong.

With some of my assumptions, the thought in back of my mind was, there has to be stuff happening in these towns as we are going to these towns so something has to be something there. But louder than that thought was the thought that these were going to be places with one horse but literally one-horse town, a cow here and there maybe, an old car and a few spar's shops. So that was my idea, then going in and finding it was really great to find these bustling Central Business Districts (CBD's). There's spots in this country that I have never seen but are actually doing okay, okay there is poverty, but obviously not a lot of integration but also not a lot of racial tension. Because I assumed that the racial tension was going to be insane and it wasn't, I know we didn't get to explore that because that is not why we were there. A great thing was finding that people that live in these towns are not in a little box, they are aware of what is going on, they are connected and they can hold their own. They may not be living my life as I do in the city but, they are living, also the idea that these people are backward and slow and not with the program, you always assume that when you don't know something about something that it is completely backward. It is just a different experience, it's not your experience, it's not less than yours, it's not deprived of anything. Like we were talking about having access to the internet and the world is at your fingertips, because I think you come from the city and you expect everything to be 'bleh' backward but you get there and see everything is working and something to be proud of. We look at the city and we are like its thriving and everything is so great here, but all we have is high ways and robots but it is like life that is empty, whereas they are doing what they need to do and they don't need any more and they want for nothing more. Like when we were speaking to beautician that was a sobering experience because she was like, I don't want to leave this place, I want for nothing more, talking to her sort of made us want to move to a small town. With simplicity there's no stress, I mean I'm sure there's stress but like normal stress, not stress that is caused by someone else, like in traffic, or the robots are out so everyone is stupid. There is one robot to worry about the rest doesn't even matter and it really puts everything in perspective and I think that is the biggest thing that I learned from this experience, that it is all relative to where you are. You can say these small towns have their

issue, but we also have our issues, everybody has their own issues, and we can't over simplify these small towns to one horse towns where nothing is happening, because these people are living their day to day lives and that's cool.

What is your definition of a small town, what was it, and what is it now

I didn't really know how to name a small town, or say what it is, anything outside of the city for me was a small town for me. A small town consisted of a Bread and Breakfast (BnB) and it's a getaway, not where people live, like when we went to curio shops (laughs) and we didn't see any of that, it's so ignorant but its eye opening. It's like Clarence where there's like these curio shops and people come for their June to December holidays for their hiking and to do all these touristy things. You are going away and its holidays, now I'm thinking, people totally live, work, have businesses and families and everything here, and they are content. With relation to cities people there is this idea that people are always trying to get out of small towns, whereas these are the small town's city people come to have a holiday. It's interesting because people stay here and they aren't trying to get away.

How did you experience the scales of different towns, having driven through like 15 towns?

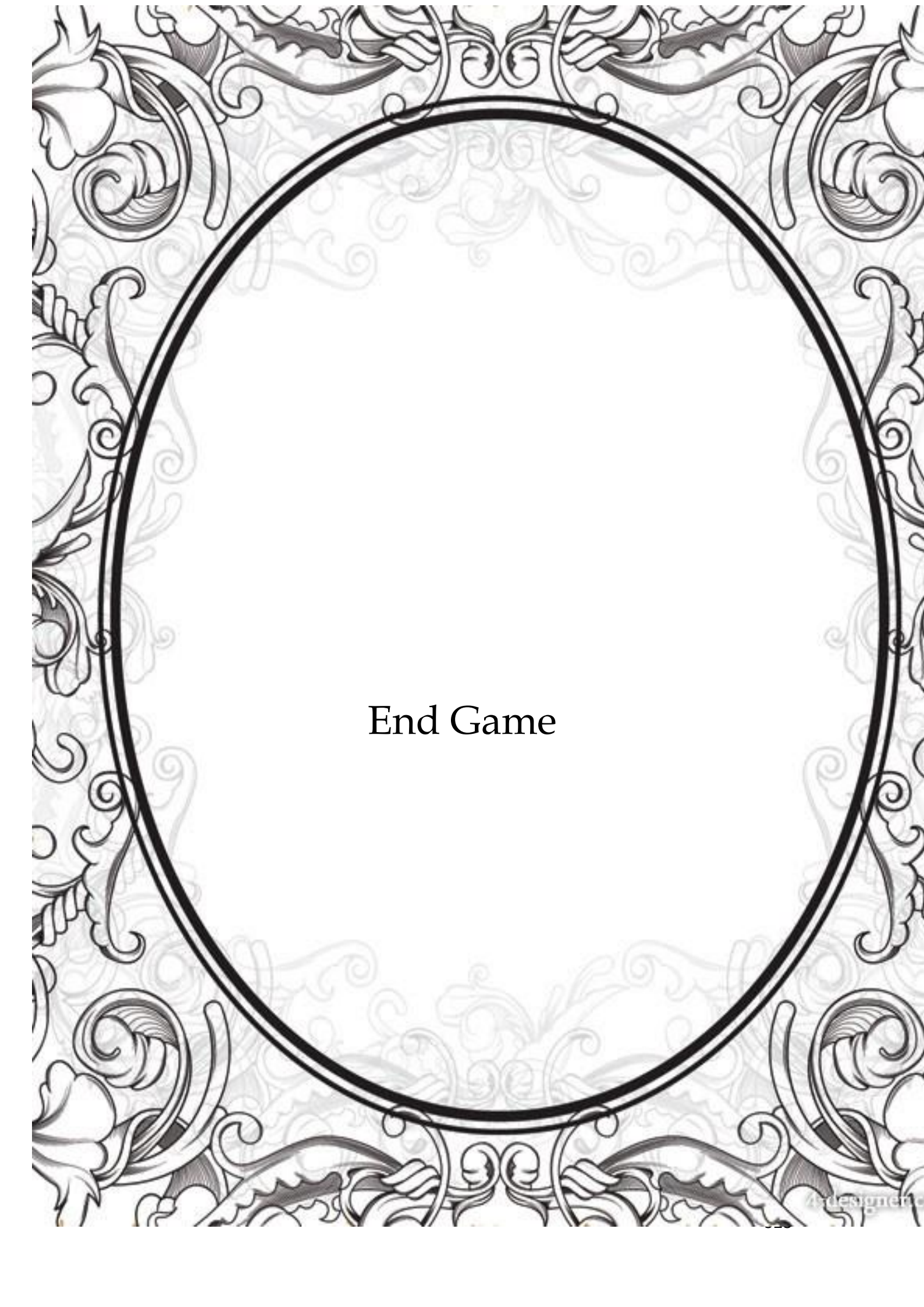
It goes without saying that each of these towns are quite a distance from each other and we were traveling on the roads, so to get there is quite a journey. Like you can't explain a small town to someone, because you might experience a small town as Parys or Klerksdorp, but we experience those places as little cities, so it is all relative. We were also struggling throughout the fieldwork to identify what a small town is by listing things, like you have a police station, post office, church, but those are all just amenities that you have. But I still don't know what characterizes a small town, because the scale of a small town is different everywhere it's small in relation from where you come from and big in relation to others like we come from a conglomerate of small towns, and that is what I learned. Like from where we are in Braamfontein and Roodeport, they each have their own CBD and it is all part of the big city Johannesburg, it's just all connected through roads and high ways. I think what makes a city is that there is easier access to all these towns, to say what is a small town, you can't define that category, and the scales are completely different. If someone asked me what a small town is, I would probably tell them it is a place with basic amenities, things like robots, aren't a given or a need, they are usually places you pass through to get to another place. It

has basically a police station, a post office, a school or two schools and a petrol station. If I could narrow it down I would say it's an area of basic amenities that meets all your needs imaginable. I don't think there is any criteria that I can adhere to that will make sense, because one small town could have 3 robots and one could just have stop streets. Then again, they could all have a police station and a post office, but one can have a prison and not others and yet they all have churches.

Final Comments

I definitely enjoyed the experience so much that I can now fathom the idea of living in a small town, before I was like oh my god (omg) what do they have there. Yet they have everything you need, whereas here we have every opportunity to spend money that you don't have. Like Isabel was saying, they don't have a Woolworths and you don't need these chain restaurants, it just puts everything in perspective. What I appreciated about the people we interviewed is that they are happy, they are content with the life they have, and they don't want anything crazy. I think it is important to want to explore life outside of your life, but if you don't need it to be happy then that's okay, but it also brings certain things into the spot light, like if you have never been given the opportunity to dream bigger than what you know, but that is also an over simplification of life. I think that was an interesting perspective to try to understand because there is so much pressure in Johannesburg to be more than what you are, just be better, do better, try harder go, go, go, and it just takes me back to that incredible night in Parys. When we looked up in the sky and we could see the stars, it was real stars, not a satellite or an airplane, like you can look up and just go, this can really just be it. You could be happy with it, you don't need to be

competing with everyone all of the time, but you can't pressure yourself into living by everyone else's standards. Johannesburg pushes you to crazy things, debt, spend money you don't have, but you are living *la vida loca* (crazy life). In these small towns you really get to sit with yourself, you can be really real, but this is my city persons experience of the small town.



End Game

As far as once-in-a-life-time journey's go, I can say this was definitely one of them. I learned a great deal from a variety of people and saw a great many interesting things. I think what strikes me most is the vast and uncaptured diversity of the different forms and types of spaces scattered across South Africa.

Amongst the many amazing moments which stand out during the varied field work sessions and site visits is the driving. I know that it is not something which I have discussed elsewhere in the book, however it is noteworthy. In general, the roads existed between these many different towns. And I say this deliberately, roads do exist between the towns, but how we define roads are not a standard feature. Often times we would find ourselves on what I have termed a *previously-tarred road*, which means there are patches of tar, but due to poor maintenance or actually non-maintenance the road has reverted to a gravel road. Another important concept regarding roads in the amount of time that was spent traveling between the different roads. In retrospect, we spend at least 60% of our time driving – which is something to consider before embarking on research of this nature.

Moreover; there are serious considerations which need to be taken into account with regard to being a women in the field. After my first round of field work which lasted two weeks, I picked up a severe bladder and kidney infection from one of the bathrooms I had used. This decommissioned me for almost three weeks as I was on various antibiotics and pain killers to fight the infection.

Whilst I like to think that most people are good people and most strangers can be trusted. Our little run in with that white VW Polo has made me extra conscious of the dangers which do in fact lurk just beyond the conscious of what could have been.

Small towns play host to a variety of people and experiences as we have seen in the narratives and experience of the people who gave their time and insights of the research. For Chinese migrant business owners, the motivation for immigrating to South Africa is clear; it is to make money. They participate very little in the everyday life of the small town, and in so many instances have created their own rhythm and everyday. If we could imagine, they operate within a bubble floating along with the rhythm of the small town but never quite interacting with it. This speaks very much to Simmel's 'The Stranger'; and as I have learned, the Macro-urbanisms of small towns.

What has also become evident in the different experiences expressed in this book is the context and positionality of the participants; with particular interest in the expats. Two out

of three of the expats expressed a strong desire to want to return to their home town; however due to her sexual orientation, Fatima felt outcast from the community and instead created her sense of place elsewhere.

As for the local residence, they too had rather different contexts and positionalities which informed the way they described their experiences.

I think overall, life in small towns are unique in that there is a particular urbanism which exists in small towns and is based on a particular rhythm. What drives that rhythm; I do not know – but without a glimmer of a doubt I do believe that there is definitely a type of urbanism which exists there. Perhaps it is a rural urbanism; a rurabanism.

Without embarking on a much further and lengthy an academic discussion, understanding that urbanism is the very ebb and flow of life in urban areas; with the emphasis being on life. Life is not contained in the urban it occurs in the urban just as it occurs in the rural; true these forms of life may vary; but more than diverge from each other; life in small towns oscillate between moments of rurality and urbanity. What is most beneficial in this book, is a clear view of life in small towns, of the rhythms, the starts and the stops. The everyday. Small towns are often ascribed a value based on their economic contribution, a lower economic contribution means a lower a value. However that value does not account for the place value it holds in many peoples identities, or to their livelihoods – perhaps even in the way they construct their present based on past experiences.

Without a doubt there is a definitive need for further research and investigation. Moreover, a need for embolden research endeavors which dare to push the boundaries.

END



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