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Masters in Research Psychology

Research Report

2016

University of Witwatersrand

Stories of home and homelessness: Young men's experiences of Jo'burg city centre.

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II. Abstract

This study paper aimed to explore phenomenon of homelessness through the narratives of young men living in Johannesburg. Current research focuses on 1) the prevalence of homelessness or 2) homelessness in relation to social problems. While the first focus serves to perpetuate the conceptualisation of homelessness as only about the absence of a house, the second focus identifies homeless people as the social problem and fails to recognise the social factors that cause and maintain this phenomenon. This study views home+less+ness as not just the lack of shelter but also as a state or experience that is not separate from the rest of the individual life. Seven young men were recruited on the basis of being currently or recently homeless, or living on the streets. The data were collected through narrative interviews and subjected to two forms' of analysis, thematic analysis and a structural analysis that maps movement in space and time. Main themes identified were related to home as elsewhere; home (lessness) and belonging in past, present; and imagined future relationships and spaces. Mapping the life histories of the participants reveals trajectories of frequent movement, including that participants may journeys 'home' to their places of origin but always once again returning to the streets of Johannesburg. This suggests that the conventional ideas of home as a safe space of belonging and homelessness as a place of loss and hopelessness, are not binary, rather these are oscillating, intertwined experiences.

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Preface

Living in the Johannesburg CBD I, like many who live and work in the city, am constantly confronted with people staying on the streets, some sleeping on the pavements, some begging at the traffic lights, pushing large self-made trolleys of recycled material and others just hanging about in groups. It is as if there is a population within the population- young men, old men, children, women with children, old women all wearing the same uniform that marks them different from the rest of the many people who crowd the streets of central Johannesburg. We see them and maybe feel sorry for them, wonder why but generally we are either afraid of or annoyed by them. I remember driving with my dad approaching a red light, there was a car in the next lane and it had stopped a few meters away from the red light, as we passed this car we realised that there was a young man maybe in his late teen or early twenties, he had a plastic bag and was on his knees at the traffic lights. My dad commented on the issue of smash and grab and explained that maybe that is why the driver of the vehicle we had passed chose to stop so far from the traffic light. As I thought about this I started to wonder what could be the other reasons. Perhaps he chose to stop so far because he did not want to be bothered by the young man on his knees. I felt that sometimes it is easier to drive away than to stop next to him and have to deal with the dilemma of recognising the need of this person but also recognising that you fear him.

Another question I ask myself, and I am sure others have too is, where are these people coming from and why are they not going back? Being at this stage in my life I do not naively ask that question, I recognise that there are social and structural forces that have led to this phenomenon and which maintain it. These are the same questions I asked my self during the recent (2015) xenophobic attacks. Recognising that the attacks were targeted at poor foreign nationals (Landau, 2010) I wondered why someone would choose to live in poverty in a foreign land, South Africa or city of Johannesburg, even when their lives are in danger. Perhaps the answer is rooted in the old saying "all roads lead to Johannesburg". This place is perceived as a city

of gold, a place of infinite opportunity (Bremer, 2000). Some take this road towards employment opportunities, while others take this road that leads them away from family conflicts and adverse city life circumstances. Never the less, whatever the reasons are for coming and staying, they are worth exploring.

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1. Origins of homelessness

Homelessness is a global phenomenon (Cross, Seager, Erasmus, Ward & O'Donovan, 2010; Olufemi, 1999) with varying estimates of prevalence based on how homelessness is defined. The disagreement in the definition and study of homelessness does little to develop understanding of homelessness as a concept, simply positing it as the inverse of home. With this narrow lenses of homelessness, simply the absence of home, many have investigated homelessness in order to answer the question of how and why people become homeless. Various causes, pathways and reasons have been documented of individual and social levels such as, unemployment, poverty, bad health, migration, natural disasters, "broken families", personal behaviour such as substance abuse, gambling and other forms of irresponsible behaviour (Cross, et. al, 2010; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006; Olufemi, 1999, 2000, 2002). These universal causes of homelessness may also be attributed to South Africa; however, there are attributes that are more prominent in South Africa, such as the main factors being severe socio economic conditions, migration, inadequate provision of housing and poverty as legacy of apartheid (Kok, Cross & Roux, 2010; Olufemi, 2000; Wentzel & Voce, 2012).

During the apartheid regime, due to the apartheid Group Areas Act different racial groups were assigned to different residential and business areas. Black people were forced to move away from the inner cities (Cross, et. al, 2010), as a result, in the new South Africa, black people often still have to travel far from the rural areas and townships in order to find employment (Albert, du Toit, Langa, Msibi, Parthab, Roberts & Thaba, 2004; Kok, Cross, Roux, 2010; Olufemi, 2000). According to Kok, Cross and Roux (2010) due to high levels of unemployment, crime and poverty and a lack of housing provision in the cities, these people may end up living on the street. Aliber, et al., (2004), conducted a study aiming to understand why people, they considered homeless, slept in

front of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) building in Pretoria. The objective of the study was to determine if they could justify building a wall around the building to close off the space from trespassers. What they found was quite interesting because it was not the expected results of the research. They assumed that the people who slept in front of the HSRC building had nowhere to go, however, 48.4% of the 'homeless' people that were interviewed by Aliber and colleagues, reported that they have a home, they have a family and what Somerville (1992) refers to as "roots" and/or an abode, but are unable to live at *home* because it is too far and expensive for them to commute to and from the inner city and possible work opportunities.

From this point of view, we see that the concept of homelessness is not simply the antonym of home, or the absence of a shelter or warmth. Research or policy based on the conceptualization of homelessness as simply the inverse of home may be problematic as Aliber and colleagues have demonstrated. This assumption may not reflect the actual experiences of homeless people.in the case of the HSRC study on homelessness, the researcher's assumptions were refuted by participants' responses that they had a home, a place to return to, but could not return at that time and so were on the street for pragmatic reasons, particularly, being close to possible work opportunities. They chose to sleep near this specific building because it was safe since it had 24hour security, including that it is opposite the police station. It may be argued that these people had nowhere to go because returning home might not be feasible. The people that slept in front of the HSRC building not only challenged the assumptions of people sleeping on the streets but also demonstrated a characteristic that is not always associated with the population: hope that their situation can still change, they could still find employment.

1.2.Homelessness in South Africa

Being at home may not be in the physical sense of having a house but could be a place where one may feel emotionally attached, where one has not just inhabited the place/ space in which one

lives but in which one has made relational connections with others in the same 'space' (Somerville, 1992). People, even the homeless, have a tendency to actively construct and attach meaning to places and spaces. However, this is not considered when talking about the homeless population. Homeless people may be seen as people who sleep "rough" (Olufemi, 1998), refering to people sleeping on the streets, and also may mean people who sleep anywhere with no concern for place. In South Africa homelessness can be defined as: "those who (i) lack real homes, (ii) live in bad housing, (iii) sleep on pavements; (iv) lack basic needs (with no access to safe water and sanitation) and (v) lack personal needs (self-determination, creativity, dignity, expression and voice)" (Olufemi, 2000, p. 224).This definition of homelessness has been widely accepted, perhaps due to it taking into consideration that shelter is not enough if it is not adequate. Aliber, et al., (2004) and Olufemi (1998, 2000) note the social and economic conditions that contribute to the growing number of homeless people in South Africa. Due to high unemployment and high poverty levels, many people travel to the city in order to find employment. Unfortunately many of them end up on the streets due to the high competition for limited employment opportunities.

Even though homeless people remain a very visible population, there is no available data from the census on the exact number of homeless people, (Cross, et al., 2010; Naidoo, 2010; Olufemi, 1998). According to the HSRC there may be over 100 000 people living in the streets of South Africa (Cross, et al., 2010), with black men in their late teens to early twenties, making up most of the people in the street. Only 12% of the 1244 respondents in the Cross, et al., (2010) study were female adults, while 7% percent were girls. The lack of reliable quantitative data is often attributed to the constant mobility of the population living on the streets and the precariousness in temporary accommodation. Olufemi (2000) reported that there are more adults who are homeless compared to children in the streets of Johannesburg and that the reasons for being homeless vary amongst children, adolescents and adults.

Amongst adults, homelessness can be associated with medical, psychological and social problems (Moyo, Ross & Patel, 2014; Pluck, Lee, Lauder, Fox, Spence & Parks, 2008), and social issues, such as divorce and domestic violence (Makiwane, Tamasane & Schneider, 2010). Amongst homeless adults there is also a higher prevalence of depression and substance abuse and medical pathologies (Chueng & Hwang, 2004). Homelessness amongst adolescents is usually related to family instability (Kidd, 2007), behavioural problems and psychopathology (Hyde, 2005; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006). Furthermore South African homeless youth are from homes where there is high prevalence of abuse (physical, sexual and/ or alcohol abuse), hostility (Meth, 2003), absent parents, criminality, etc. Studies in the United States and Australia, focusing on children and adolescents, report that the main reasons for homelessness amongst children are related to child neglect (Kidd, 2007; Park, Metraux, Broadbar, & Culhane, 2004) and domestic violence (Hyde, 2005; Zuffrey & Kerr, 2010). In South Africa, there are over 3000 children on the streets (Cross, et. al, 2010), many' of them were born or lived on the streets with their mother (Olufemi, 2000; Swick, 2008). These children are often not in school and may have lower cognitive and physical development capacity than sheltered children. Not all children on the street are 'homeless', some may still have contact within families and some are only on the street during the day and return home at night. Ward and Seager (2010, p. 85), referred to these children as "children on the street"; many of whom are most likely to end permanently on the streets.

Across the three South African provinces, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, they had studied; Cross, et al., (2010) found that there was no significant difference in the educational level of the population from different populations. They report that it is not that homeless people have not been exposed to education. However, with the level of education most of them have, it is difficult for them to enter the very competitive job market (Cross, et al., 2010). Even though homeless people living on the streets did not have any means of a stable income, less than 1 % reported that they received any form of government grant. It was reported by those living in

shelters that accessing grants is easier in shelters since the staff at the shelter acted as mediators and may assist with finding employment. On the 28th of October, 2015, the story of Dr Tobias Ntuli made front page of the IOL online newspaper; Ntuli has been living in the streets of Johannesburg for four years. What no one knew was that Ntuli has a PhD in cell biology and a history of alcohol addiction. Due to the addiction, Ntuli was unable to fulfil his duties at the University of Kwazulu Natal. As a result he was dismissed and has been unable to find employment due to living on the streets; therefore he continues to drink heavily (Nkosi, 2015).

Although his story reflects an individual's troubles, it is similar to those of homeless people generally who are stuck in this cycle of homelessness. They could be on the streets or living in shelters because of various social challenges, however being on the streets or living in a shelter gives rise to more social challenges, which may further alienate one from mainstream society and the resources.

1.3. Homelessness in Johannesburg

In the words of the late Nelson Mandela "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" (Simone, 2008, p. 61); all people should have the freedom and the opportunity to share in the resources of the land. The high levels of poverty in this country illustrate that not everyone has an opportunity to share in the country's wealth. South Africa has one of the highest inequality gaps in the world (Landau, 2010). According to Olufemi (1998), homelessness cannot only be attributed to poverty, because there are many people who are poor in South Africa but not all of them are homeless or living on the streets. Street homelessness represents the climax of these vast socio economic and political injustices that often drive people out in search of greener pastures. Homelessness can also be attributed to population mobility or rural-urban migration (Olufemi, 1998). South Africa has a high number of immigrants, particularly from other African countries, and the cities, particularly Johannesburg, have high numbers of in-migrants (those that move from one part of the country to

another in the same country) (Stats SA, 2012). South Africa has six metropolitan municipalities namely Cape Town, Ekurhuleni (East Rand), eThekwini (Durban), Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela (Port Elizabeth) and Tshwane (du Toit, 2010). These attract large crowds, in search of employment, from all over the country and neighbouring countries, with Johannesburg having the highest number of homelessness and people who are 'not at home' i.e. those that have moved from a different province or country (Simone, 2008). The city of Johannesburg offers 12 % of all national employment opportunities in South Africa, and with the influx, levels of unemployment are expected to rise, increasing the number of unemployed people within the city of Johannesburg.

According to Statistics South Africa (2012), Johannesburg has the highest population of both immigrants and in-migrants. The city of Johannesburg is a city of destination for both South Africans and non-South Africans, as it represents hope for many from within and outside the borders of South Africa (Simone, 2008). The statistics reflected here are unique to the post-apartheid South Africa. For many years, during the apartheid regime, black South Africans were deprived of many rights, rights that every citizen should have access to such as the right to equal opportunities. South Africa did not belong to everyone who was in it, and black people were only allocated a small portion of the land. This allocation determined what claims to citizenship the people could have (Landau, 2010). Black citizens were highly monitored in terms of movement and work. The Group Areas acts and the Pass laws were the tools used to monitor movement (Posel, 2004). Many had to flee the country into other parts of the world in exile, while those that remained were also displaced. Displacements took the form of the Group Areas Act, which forced many people to move away from their homes to places that government had pushed them into. In addition many had to migrate from their homes and families, to live in temporary accommodations in what was what was known as white areas where they worked for white families (Aliber, 2003). The idea of 'home' was confined to their allocated home lands, i.e. Transkei or Kwazulu Natal, the rest of the country was a place of exile; through employment it was not home. South Africa's past speaks

to a national and politicized idea of home and belonging; it allows one to consider the complexities of being at home and belonging at a societal level. It also speaks to having a home in the sense of place but not being able to access it in terms of belonging. These structural conditions speak to home, homelessness or not being at home at a macro level. But these macro level structural notions of home and belonging play themselves out at an individual level and this project will consider these concepts in the experiences and through the narratives of homeless young men living in Johannesburg CBD.

Movement within the country was strongly monitored (Posel, 2004) and the end of the apartheid regime did not only see the end of restricted movement within the country, it also made South Africa more accessible to the poorer neighbouring countries (Landau, 2010). Since 1994, South Africa has had a high influx of work seekers from other countries. Those that travel to Johannesburg, South Africa, compete for labour and land but not everyone competes for these on equal grounds (Makiwane, Tamasane &Schneider, 2010), and not everyone manages to find their place or is welcome to call this space 'home'.

Although South Africa is perceived to promise a better life for those coming into the country, the realities of many South African have not changed since the new government came to power. One of the attempts to alleviate poverty has been the distribution of social grants, and although these grants have benefitted many (Cross & Seager, 2010), there remains many South Africans, particularly those that still live in rural areas, who are living below the poverty line. This is due to the high lack of opportunity for employment. A sad and constant reflection of poverty in the country is the number of people on the streets of the city centre.

Many of those that are amongst the homeless living on the streets are foreign nationals, from our neighbouring countries. Many of whom have had to leave their country for various reasons, such as political violence, unemployment and other socioeconomic factors (Handmaker & Parsley,

2001). The 2015 xenophobic violence in South Africa repeats earlier 2008 episodes xenophobic violence, such as the target of foreign nationals living amongst poor communities and not those that may live in more affluent communities (Gelb, 2008). This violence brings to life the words of Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1990, p.103), describing the post-independence Ivorian attacks: *"*These foreigners are called on to leave; their shops are burned, their street stalls are wrecked, some are lynched; consequently, the [Ivorian] government orders them to leave, thereby satisfying the demands of the nationals". Poor South Africans attribute the lack of opportunities to the high volume of foreign nationals in the country. What they perhaps fail to recognise is the structural force at hand. What Fanon observed in post independent Ivory coast, where only a few benefited from the Europeans leaving while the rest of the people fought amongst each other for the little that's left behind. The main victims were the Africans from other countries who were brutally attacked and forced out of the country. Yuval-Davis in the *Politics of Belonging (*2006), states that belonging tends to be 'politicised' when it is threatened in some way. During the South African xenophobic attacks, what was threatened or perceived to be threatened? What are the forces that make some people (who are non- South African) allowed in this space and not others?

There have been many attempts to explain the causes of the attacks in South Africa by both activist and academic literatures. When the 2008 xenophobic attacks began, the South African government denied the attacks, and then blamed it on criminal behaviour (Landau, 2010). Other explanations focused on the culture of violence within South Africa which is rooted in the country's violent history. Some have suggested negrophobia (fear of people from north of Afria) however; Landau (2010) rejects this explanation, stating that only some Africans were attacked, citizens from Lesotho and Swaziland were not attached. These attacks are not simply a result of social challenges like service delivery or poverty or simply an "inability to tolerate and accommodate differences" as suggested by Handmaker and Parsley (2001) but rather indicate contestations about belonging and inequality. Like in the Ivory Coast, the fall of apartheid has seen

the rising of a different inequality. While only a few elite have managed to benefit from policies such as Black Economic Empowerment, many black South Africans remain poor (Aliber, 2003), left to wrestle over the little that is left (Neocosmos, 2008). Once again it is the poor foreigners who bear the scorn of the nationals. It seems as though the xenophobic attacks were an act of anger towards those that are perceived to have, but do not deserve to have. South Africans living in poor communities perceive the non-South Africans living amongst them to have more resources; this perpetuates feelings of anger and resentment towards them (Gelb, 2008). The act of violence against those that are perceived to not belong, imitate the previous government's violence towards black South Africans. The apartheid government perceived black South Africans as a threat to the privileges and the wellbeing of white citizens (Landau, 2010). By enforcing the mobility regulations, government could monitor and 'protect" white South Africans. In the new south Africa, foreign nationals are often treated with suspicion; people freely moving within the country are often considered a danger to South Africans, particularly poor South Africans.

1.4. Homelessness and not being at home: the plight of foreign nationals in South Africa

Homeless people may try to earn a bit of money to meet their daily needs. They may end up doing jobs such as washing car windows at the traffic lights, pushing trolleys for customers at shopping centres or guarding cars (Simone, 2008); this is particularly the case amongst adult males. Young homeless females may resort to prostitution (Ndlovu, 2013; Olufemi, 2000). On the other hand, poor non-South Africans, living in South Africa, may feel that they are not free to have the opportunity to use the talents and education they bring with them because of fear of being accused of 'stealing' opportunities from South Africans (Gelb, 2008) or they may feel like they are not given the opportunity because they do not belong in this country (Simone, 2008).This is a waste of resources, especially considering that South Africa has a lack of skilled people. Yuval-Davis defines the politics of belonging, in the words of Jon Crowley as "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" (2006, p. 204). These are political boundaries that separate the population into *them*

and *us*, they determine who is in or belongs and who is out or does not belong. Often those that belong are those perceived to may give something, even if they do not, but more importantly those that belong are those that do not take anything away from those who are entitled to. Being at home means having an opportunity to access resources (Somerville, 1992). In a context like South Africa, where there are very high inequalities and very few opportunities, to view other nationals as 'stealing' opportunities from South Africans, confirms that some belong and others do not.

1.5. Social response and government action

There has been an increase in studies of homelessness by different disciplines (Easthope, 2010; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006; Olufemi, 1998, 2000; Tipple & Speak, 2005; Somerville, 1992), with varying definitions of homelessness. Cross, et al., (2010, p. 7) speak of true homelessness, which is the "condition of routinely sleeping on the streets without regular excess to shelter" while there in an emphasis by institutions such as the United Nations to include lack of adequate shelter (including informal settlements) as a form of homelessness. While others recognise those that are in danger of becoming homeless, those living in shelters, who may end up living on the streets once they no longer qualify to stay in shelters. Those at risk may also include foreign nationals. Some definitions, like the above, emphasise the physical absence of house; Olufemi (1999), reiterates this notion as he defines the homeless can be people who do not have a permanent accommodation of their own to those who are living in shelters and, at the most extreme end, homeless people are those that are "sleeping rough". Some definitions focus on the social and psychological implications of homelessness. "Homelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterised by the absence or weakening of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures" (Caplow, 1968 cited du Toit, 2010, p.112). Although this definition takes into consideration the complexities of homelessness that go beyond the lack of shelter, it does not look at the holistic the experience of homelessness, including the everyday challenges that come with lack of adequate shelter.

These definitions speak of a general lack of or absence of *home* and do not attempt to understand the complexities of homelessness but serve to support or are "reflecting different purposes, values, ideologies and political agendas" of researchers and policy makers (Makiwane, Tamasane & Schneider, 2010, p. 40). These definitions serve to set the agenda for the way forward in dealing with the "problem" of homelessness. Homelessness is continually spoken of as a growing problem that needs to be addressed (Horsell, 2006). Homelessness brings about social anxiety not only on the general public level but also at government level. "Homelessness on the streets in South Africa is a slow-moving tragedy that arouses anxiety in government and civil society...." (Cross, et al., 2010, p. 5) This statement reflects the general response to the "problem of homelessness" not only in South Africa but globally. While the general public may feel that homeless people or people begging on the street are a nuisance and potentially criminal (particularly in South Africa), government is concerned about how the existence of such a population poses a threat to the economic development of the places (often city centres). This is evident from various government interventions to *clean up the city*, before the 2010 world cup (Naidoo, 2006)

Recent research into homelessness in South Africa focuses on the statistical prevalence of homelessness in South Africa, (Aliber, et al., 2004, Cross, et al., 2010; du Toit, 2005; Naidoo, 2010; Olufemi, 1998) attempts to recognise that it is more than a loss of physical shelter and tends to describes the psychosocial status of homeless people, exploring problems such as crime, mental health problems and substance abuse amongst homeless people (Lucas & Dyrenforth, 2006) often losing the individual in the static . Homeless people tend to be recognised only as a static of social problem and not people in our societies.

"Besides the consequences this severe poverty has for the nation's human rights undertakings, there is a tension between the national priorities of attracting investment in the cities on the one hand and achieving poverty reduction on the other" (City of Johannesburg, 2004 cited in

Cross, et al., 2010). In metropolitan cities like Johannesburg, the visibly large population of homeless people in the streets is seen to have a negative impact on potential investors. Policy makers have to juggle the image of a "poverty- free central business districts" (Cross, et al., 2010, p. 6) and the needs and rights of the poor who actually live in these business districts, perhaps to escape the realities of worse poverty at 'home'. Municipalities may develop and implement policies to drive away the homeless as undesired populations in the inner cities, in order to defend the image of the city as middle class and prosperous. According du Toit (2005) it is this clash that has made it difficult for the South African government to develop and implement an effective homelessness policy, thus perpetuating the 'homelessness problem'.

There is little evidence or research on the government's role in the eradication of homelessness within South Africa (Cross, et al., 2010; du Toit, 2010), even though housing, security and protection of human dignity are basic human rights. According to Section 26(1) of the South African constitution everyone shall have the right of access to *adequate* housing. The state should take responsibility, within its reasonable means to achieve the realisation of this right for all its citizens (Huchzermeyer, 2001). Much of government funds spent on the homeless is towards improving emergency shelters, which have had benefits in many cities. However, providing access to permanent housing through housing subsidies or affordable accommodation has not been prioritised for the street homeless (Cross & Seager, 2010). It is important to note that the interventions that are mentioned in Cross and Seager were towards the 2010 Wold Cup drives to 'clean' the cities, and post the world cup less funding has gone towards the 'problem of homelessness' in the cities.

The problem of homelessness concerns two government sectors, namely: the Department of Housing (now Department of Human Settlements) (Cross & Seager, 2010), responsible for addressing the problem of shelter, and the Department Of Social Welfare, responsible for addressing poverty (Naidoo, 2010). Within the two sectors it is not clear which is responsible for

what and there is a lack of policy or action plan for the eradication of homelessness. The priority for social spending on homelessness is unclear, if it is towards prevention of homelessness or remediation (Cross & Seager, 2010). Three out the four municipalities (Johannesburg, eThekwini, Cape Town and Tshwane) in du Toit's (2010) study viewed homelessness as a "problem of dependency" and in response the municipalities focused on developing a vast range of interventions and responding to public complaints, often responding only at policy level and not implementing of any of the intervention strategies. One of the interventions on paper is government's aim to provide low cost houses for the poor (Olufemi, 1998, 2000, Tipple & Speak, 2006). This is aimed at alleviating the effects of poverty, which contribute to the problem of homelessness. But there is an enormous backlog in such provisions and housing (Huchzermeyer, 2001; Marais & Cloete, 2014; Todes, 2012). A second issue with the provision of houses is that the measures re-inscribe the apartheid architecture of space. Housing for the poor are often built in areas that are far from possible employment opportunities, reinforcing poverty and inequality.

The Housing Act 107 of 1997 was developed as a system to provide housing for those previously disadvantaged. Since 1994, it has been the government's priority to alleviate the inequalities in housing that were institutionalised by the apartheid government, like providing proper sanitation and providing adequate accommodation to the South African citizens (Cross & Seager, 2010). Implementation has however been too slow and extended to those who are inadequately housed, i.e. living in informal settlements; however, there is very little hope that it will be extended to the masses that are completely without shelter. According to the 20 Year Review "in 1994, the housing backlog in South Africa was estimated to be at 1.2 million houses. To date "approximately 12.5 million individuals have been aided by the state and provided with better quality accommodation". It has been contested that although government has provided housing, the quality and location of the houses are not advantageous to those relocated. One of the main challenges with the houses provided by government it that the houses are often built in areas

far from the city and where opportunities for employment are limited. In this people still have to travel far to work, should they qualify for a house. Despite this, the provision of affordable housing can lover the risk of people becoming homeless and also reduce the cost of homelessness on the state. Gaetz's (2012) paper *The real cost of homelessness,* focuses not only on the causes of homelessness but also the cost of homelessness. The paper highlight that it cost tax payers more money to take care of the homeless while they are on the streets than it would to provide shelter for the homeless. Demonstrating that while homeless people are on the streets they are more likely to be hospitalised or locked up, costs that are covered from the tax payers' pockets. The study was done in Canada; there is no similar evidence of such a study in South Africa. Perhaps the findings would be different in the South African context, because homeless people do not regularly access government services (Wentzel & Voce, 2012). The view of homelessness as simply lack of housing or shelter, derived from looking at it through the lenses of poverty has masked other factors that have contributed to and maintain the growing phenomenon of homelessness, such as the role of population mobility which is evident in some cities more than others (Kok, Cross, Roux, 2010).

In South Africa, the street homeless are often from rural areas or from other countries, i.e. active migrants, the place they are currently in is often not the first place they have moved (Landau, 2006). Homeless migrants are often hesitant to approach government institutions such as hospitals and home affairs for assistance, out of fear of rejection or deportation (Wise & Phillips, 2013). Homeless people and migrants have reported not accessing health care due to not having the proper documentation such as I.D book, as required at public health care facilities (Olufemi, 2000). There have been homeless individuals who have attempted to get medical assistant at local clinics but go back to the streets or shelters unassisted (Wentzel & Voce, 2012). Homelessness does not only affect homeless individuals but the society too. Their social identity is ascribed by virtue of them living in refugee camps, shelters or on the streets, which may be associated with narrowly negative ascriptions such as the idea that homeless people are involved in substance abuse and are criminals,

lazy, irresponsible, delinquents, prostitutes, mentally ill, etc. (Boydell, Goering, Morell-Bellai, 2000; Snow & Anderson, 1897; Tipple & Speak, 2006). "The experience of 'homelessness' transforms individuals to homeless people" (Parsell, 2011, p. 442), turns neighbours into foreigners. This positioning of homeless people is universal and is not limited to those living on the streets, generally extended to those newly migrant. Those living in foreign countries may feel the need to negotiate their identity or live according to what the locals think about them (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). However, people are, of course, always more than these labels, they have complex and unique personal histories entailing familial and other meaningful relationships and could have occupied other kinds of identity positions such as that of, a trusted neighbour, a parent, scholar or breadwinner.

Torck (2001) conducted a discourse study to investigate the claims, to make society more aware of the issues of homelessness, made by four different newspaper projects (which he refers to as "street newspapers") from United States and Europe (*L'Itinêrant, Z-magazine, The Big Issue*, *streets Sheet*). He investigated the role they play in what people know and assume about homeless people living in their societies. Torck noted that the interaction between the street seller and the buyer is often very brief, with expressions of a "mixture of desire and the refusal of involvement with the seller that transpires from a fleeting look at him or her…" (Torck, 2001, p. 372). He also notes that not everyone who buys the newspaper is interested in the content; some may pay for the newspaper but not take it. In this way, the street newspapers do not deliver on what they claim, i.e. making issues affecting homeless people known to the general public, giving voice to homeless people and to make known the stories about homelessness that are not often covered by media. A second claim made by these newspapers is they are supposedly a way for the homeless to regain their independence and self-respect. Torck (2001) notes that although homeless people were able to earn an income through the selling of newspapers, however he noted that the element of self-respect would need to be further investigated as it was not clear.

South Africa has a similar paper *Homelessness Talk: street newspaper*. Homeless Talk street newspaper is a registered NPO which focuses on positive stories that are isolated from the main stream media to balance media reporting. It is sold at street intersections of Johannesburg and surrounding areas (The Homeless Talk: street newspaper February, 2015). The newspaper is a monthly publication aiming to reduce street begging, by giving the homeless an opportunity to make a sustainable living, amongst other aims. The homeless people in Torck's (2001) study and those that sell the *Homelessness Talk: Street newspapers,* in Johannesburg, have taken the initiative to find a means of income.

Although we see homeless people all around us, they remain the most faceless and voiceless members of society (Tripathi, 2014). Homeless people are still seen as criminals, mentally ill, helpless and an all-round burden to the society (Boydell, Goering, Morell-Bellai, 2000; Snow & Anderson, 1897; Tipple & Speak, 2006). This makes it even harder for them to find work in the labour market, even if they are able to do the work. Ndlovu (2013) interviewed women from Hillbrow to find out how they became sex workers. The women reported that they initially came to Johannesburg to find employment but where initiated into prostitution since they were unable to find other alternative employment. Some of the women reported that they had lived on the streets and sex work has provided a way off the streets for some of them but not all. Women are much more vulnerable on the streets; they are often victims of physical and sexual abuse (Olufemi, 2000; Tipple & Speak, 2005). The homeless person is infantilised, depending on another (who is kind enough) for meeting their basic needs. It seems in South Africa, the homeless find refuge and more help from non- government organisations (NGO's), such as 'Homeless Talk', faith based organisations and community organisations (Sanchez, 2010; Ward & Seager, 2010) as well as government institutions. Interventions by government for homeless are targeted towards the benefit of society instead of meeting the needs of homeless individuals (Rayburn & Corzine, 2010). NGOs like *I was shot in*

Jo'burg, Second chances and *Homeless talk newspaper* aim to give individuals back their sense of dignity and an opportunity to get back in to mainstream society.

The aim of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of home, homelessness and belonging through how currently and previously homeless young men construct, reconstruct and recollect their experiences of living in Johannesburg's city centre. There are two main objectives to this end, firstly to analyse narratives of home and homelessness in relation to belonging, identity across different temporal zones as well as social settings. . Secondly to (re)present the narratives of previously and currently homeless young men by mapping out the trajectory of their life stories from "home" to "homelessness" The construction of a narrative pulls together the fragmented experience of the lived life into a coherent, linear whole (Lovell, 1997) This study attempts to not present a collective narrative of homelessness but tries to give each participant a voice in the analysis by not only exploring the similarities in their stories but also what made each narrative a personal and unique one. These individual narratives offer a way to tap into accounts belonging, homelessness and being at home.

Chapter two: Theoretical Framework

Human beings are social beings constantly forming relationships with others. While we may consider every living creature to have a natural habitat we attribute the term 'home' to human dwelling. This is because humans do not only require a suitable environment to live in but also respond to others within that habitat. When this place is nurturing rather than natural (just related by blood) environment then one may call it home. Spaces become places of belonging and of forming relationships, like within a family or being a citizen of a country. In this sense home can be both private and public, all relating to where one feels like they belong. It is a space where one is liberated and is able to share in what the space provides.

2.1. Home and Homelessness

According to the Oxford Advance Learner's Online Dictionary (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com) and the Cambridge Online Dictionary (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/home), there are multiple definitions of home. The definitions include but not limited to: "(i) house, when referring to an economic value of a physical structure one lives in, (ii) Home can also refer to the type of family you come from, (iii) it can also be a place where people/ animals live and are cared for by people who are not their relatives or owners" (Cambridge Online Dictionaries), (iv) Home can be a place of origin or where one belongs, like a country. From the same dictionaries word homeless is simply defined as "without a home". Perhaps one cannot expect to find a phenomenological sense of home and homelessness in such dictionaries; however this trend of presenting homelessness as simply the inverse of home is also evident in academic literature. In academic literature many studies have been dedicated to understanding and explaining the on the concept of "home" (Annison, 2000; Cristoforetti, Gennai & Rodeschini, 2011; Easthope, 2010; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006; Sixsmith, 1986, Somerville, 1992). The common thread being that home is related to "house, family, haven, self, and journeying" a place of origin and final destination (Mallet, 2004, p. 65). The concept of

home is structured and fluid, it transcends, from external spaces like houses, buildings, neighbourhoods and / country representing structure and stability but change from time to time and in places within the individual like memory and imagination (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006).

> *"Home is a concept, not a place; it is a state of mind where self-definition starts. It is origins — the mix of time and place and smell and weather wherein one first realizes one is an original, perhaps like others, especially those one loves, but discrete, distinct, not to be copied. Home […] remains in the mind as a place where reunion, if it were ever to occur, would happen […]. It is about restoration of the right relations among things and going home is where the restoration occurs, because that is where it matters most," (Giamatti cited in Marchetti-Mercer, 2006, p. 192).*

Giamatti makes a bold statement that home is not a place, despite the fact that feelings are associated with a place; he states that home is a 'concept' or a 'state of mind'. Giamatti speaks about self-definition, this refers to becoming a distinct individual, being one's self through the collective experience of , "time, space and smell and weather…" in the physical world. It is possible that the differences in experiences can lead to friction resulting ultimately to a collapse in the family unit. There is a need for restoration and reconciliation of the right relations. One may then ask what is it about these relations that make them the "right relations? What if these relations cannot be restored? Will there still be home without the right relations"? Added to that one can ask what makes some spaces home and not all spaces? What makes some homes better than others? And if home is a concept within an individual how then can one think of homelessness?

Somerville (1992) identified six broad signifiers of home: "shelter, hearth, privacy, roots, and abode and possibly paradise (1992, p. 532). The first three are related to home as a physical construct, the latter three are related to home as related to emotional attachment. The term *shelter* refers to the physical structure of home, hearth refers to the warmth that 'home' provides to the body and metaphorically referring to the heart of the home which is related to the emotional and psychological security of being at home (Somerville, 1992). *Privacy* is another term that may have

a dual meaning; on the one hand it is related to power and ownership of territory (Somerville, 1992) and on the other hand it can relate to the high walls and doors that one has around their home keeping others out of their private space. Home as *roots* signifies one's sense of identity (Somerville, 1992). One relates to place of origin in the sense of giving one citizenship, kinship or relatedness. *Abode* speaks to the changeability of the idea of home. As one moves through this journey of life one may call many places 'home': the home one grows up in, the home one lives in in one's adult life, or possibly a home away from home, e.g. holiday homes. Home is not limited to one place. The term *paradise* possibly captures this idea of home not being fixed to one place but rather the place where one has their happiest memories and may feel complete. According to Somerville (1992) paradise refers to the ideal home, which can be very different (and in most cases is) to the everyday life at home. It is the idea that home can be an ultimate destination. It is clear that, although commonly understood, the concept of "home" remains complex. There is great effort to explain the complexities of home, but homelessness is often defined as simply not having a 'home', which is often understood as not having a house. Unlike the concept of home there are no idioms or examples provided for homelessness in dictionaries, and its complexity is not recognised. The academic literature on homelessness focuses on the prevalence of homelessness as a social phenomenon (e.g. Aliber e, al, 2004; Moyo, Ross & Patel, 2013; Olufemi, 2002) with little attention afforded to understanding homelessness as a concept or experience, resulting in the lack of theorisation of the concept of homelessness.

2.2. Rethinking homelessness

Homelessness speaks to a wide range of deprivations (Somerville, 2013). It relates to far more than a lack of shelter or abode and includes a "physiological, emotional, territorial, ontological and spiritual deprivation, (Somerville, 2013, p. 384), and in order to understand home and homelessness it is important to engage with these various dimensions. The concepts of home and homelessness are not binary and often are intertwined. Recognising that homelessness is multi-

dimensional means understanding that one can experience homelessness in various ways; it is even possible that homelessness is the solution when people no longer feel at home. For example many abused women and children may leave home, because when home is no longer a place where one can feel at home "homelessness may very well be the solution" (Thomas & Dittmer, 1995 cited in Somerville 2013, p. 384).

Although people may become instantly homeless due to natural disasters (Kelly & Granich, 2014), often the process is progressive rather than an instant (Goodman, Saxe & Harvey, 1991). Homelessness as a state can occur on a continuum, varying from those who are at risk of becoming homeless, who do not have a place of their own but are living with relatives or friends, to those living in shelters and who live on the streets or in public spaces. It is this slow process, as life 'falls apart' that could be a form of psychological trauma. Most people living on the streets have spent time living with relatives or friends and may have had to give up some roles as employees and/ or providers. People living on the streets are seen as the lowest in social order (Snow & Anderson, 1987), this is because those that are living in shelters, shacks and other forms of temporary accommodation may still have access to regular work, relatives and other social resources (Cross, et. al, 2010). These factors have an impact on the individual's dignity and self-worth (Goodman, Saxe & Harvey, 1991). These difficulties accompanied with helplessness, and lack of connection to society can lead to an increased sense of loss, distress and hopelessness (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Tipple & Speak, 2008). These nonphysical challenges often go unrecognised. In addition to these social challenges, the voices of homeless people or those who have been homeless at some points in their lives are often not heard in academic literature, and therefore very little is understood about the experiences of homeless people from their own perspective (Osborne, 2002; Tipple & Speak, 2005), resulting in interventions that fail to meet the holistic needs of the 'homeless'.

Although Somerville provides a good framework for the understanding of home, conceptualising homelessness as simply the inverse of "home" (in Somerville's 1992 terms) is limiting. One could ask, based on Somerville's signifiers of home, how then would one be seen as homeless? Would it be if one lacks one of the signifiers of home or if he/ she lack all six? Perhaps it can be understood that these signifiers are indications for home and the absence of these signifiers might result in feeling less at home.

Homelessness is more than just a lack of shelter, like home it is also a physical, social and psychological phenomenon (Olufemi, 2000). Physically it speaks to not having a shelter, but may also be related to not having adequate shelter. Homelessness is social in that it determines the homeless person's place in society. Kawash, cited in May (2000) put it this way "the homeless are in constant motion not because they are going somewhere; because they have nowhere to go.... homelessness is not simply about being without a home, it is more generally without place" (May, 2000, p.737). This sense of not having a place can be related to not having a place in one's family or even society at large, not belonging (Robinson, 2002). Homelessness is psychological relating to emotions or the individual's state of mind. The experience of being separated from one's friends and family could cause emotional distress and other psychological disorders.

Studies have found that certain mental disorders such as depression, substance abuse and schizophrenia are more prevalent amongst homelessness people (Pluck, et al., 2008; Rhode, Noell, Ochs & Seeley, 2001; Tipple & Speak, 2006). Moyo, Ross and Patel, (2013), explored these claims, in their study based in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, and concluded that there is a strong relationship between poor mental health and homelessness. Although many of the participants reported to have a history of mental disorder, the cause and effect relationship cannot be determined. This is because homelessness is not only associated with various psychopathologies such as depression and trauma, amongst homeless individuals who did not report to have a history of mental illness (Goodman, Saxe & Harvey, 1991). The effects of being cast out from society are

not exclusive to people living on the street but may also be applicable to those that are living in shelters or even in foreign countries (Tipple and Speak, 2006).

2.3. Belonging

Belonging, like homelessness, is also, "ill-theorised, considered self-explanatory, understood in relation to other notions such as identity and citizenship" (Antonsich, 2010, p.3). "Belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling at home..." (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.197) but at times it may be the families or society that people come from that can make people feel like they do not belong. In a typical household there are people that are biologically related and by virtue of being related, one is considered a part of that household. This could refer to the self-identification or identification by others in a stable way (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Being at home or returning home speaks to belonging, where one is recognised as being part of the greater whole. Homeless people (living on the streets or shelters) may not have this sense of belonging to any permanent social unit of belonging.

The word 'home' as described in the literature (Antonsich, 2010; Cristoforetti, Gennai & Rodeschini, 2011), is a place that is more than just space, it is related to one's sense of identity. People construct their identity by relating to where they come from (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006; Snow & Anderson, 1987). Becoming an individual is about relating to and finding self within a family, kinship, class or even a national place. Homelessness automatically excludes one from being part of society and placing one in a particular group, a group of those who do not belong. It positions one who does not have home in the traditional sense as deviant from what is socially acceptable. The term 'homeless' has the ability to create an identity (Horsell, 2006; Snow & Adam, 1987), to be homeless becomes the person and not the experience or a state of existance.

It is hardly questioned what the less in home + less + ness. What else is lost when one loses a shelter? Home + less + ness, speaks to a state / circumstance or situation that results from not

having a home. Beyond shelter, homelessness renders one to have access to limited spaces and resources, and may lead to social exclusion (Horsell, 2006). Social identity is imputed on the bases of physical appearance; physical location and behaviour. There is a tendency to blame poor people or even homeless people for their situation (Phelan, Link, Moore & Stueve, 1997). Keating (2009) argues that no one would willingly give up the comforts of their home, but people may wish to escape 'bad homes' and interventions for the homeless should recognise this possibility. Homelessness is not something located within the individual like negative thinking but rather the reasons for homelessness are more external.

It is possible for a homeless person to internalise this identity of *a homeless person*, this transformation would be what Bourdieu (cited in Grenfell, 2008) refers to as embodiment of habitus (Grenfell, 2008). According to Tripathi (2014, p. 35) habitus "marks the site of socially inscribed subjectivity which defines a person's sense of his/her place in the world". Homeless people, those living in shelters or even those that are living in foreign countries who may not be considered homeless buy dominant definition of being without accommodation (Naidoo, 2010; Tipple & Speak, 2006) may construct their identity based on where they are, where they come from or where they see themselves going. To view homelessness as a common group experience amongst all homeless people masks important differences about their identity and the individual experience of homelessness (Zufferey & Kerr, 2004).

The experience of homelessness differs from person to person, while others may adjust to homelessness quickly (Pluck *et al.*, 2008), others may find this transition to be a very traumatic one (Goodman, Saxe & Harvey, 1991). There are many factors that contribute to adjustments. One of the factors is feeling accepted or belonging in the new space. Where one is allowed to call a place home is also determined by what one can contribute to that space as we see in the case of the xenophobic attacks (Gelp, 2008). Homeless people are not regarded as contributing members of society, even though we see them doing various activities that assist the community like recycling.

The poor are often less powerful are usually scapegoats for social and economic challenges (Handmaker & Parsley, 2001).

2.4.Narrated identities

Narrative psychology "proposes that narrative provides us with a conceptual framework for thinking about human life as temporal and subjectivity as made and remade in the recollection of the past from the standpoint of the present, with an interest in the future" (Crites, 1986). From this perspective, home (and homelessness) and identity as a 'homeless person' is temporally constructed, in recollection of the past and in imagining the future.

Fay (1996), states that the construction of identities is formed through social and cultural forces. The individual does not exist in a private world but each self is a self because s/he is part of a community of other selves that build up a public social world (Fay, 1996). Becoming a person is in part the process of acquiring norms and ideals and defining one's role in a pattern of social relations (Fay, 1996). These norms and ideals may be acquired through socialization and interactions with others throughout one's life. One of the ways people are socialised is through stories. The stories may be for amusement or educational, they change from culture to culture and serve social and psychological functions. They may be used to teach valuable life lessons or to share information about culture or family history. These stories are told to us and some we create even from a young age. Personal narratives are understood as expressing identity and may also express relational connections through shared stories (Brown, 2006). We share and have variations of the grand narrative of the human race.

"Narrative and self are inseparable in that narrative is simultaneously born out of experience and gives shape to experience" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 19). People live in stories, stories of what used to be and stories of what could be. A story is not only limited to presentation of an individual, the way narratives are constructed reveals how we position our self within a social and cultural

context. These stories may not be explicitly about belonging to a group but will always entail how the individual views him/her self in relation to others, which implicitly are about belonging or not belonging to particular groups. Life stories are often shared to invite the audience into the life of the teller. Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 202) puts it as "identities are narratives", stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not). People often express who they are through the sharing of stories. What they do or where they live, the places they have visited and the things they have done or things that have happened to them.

People express a performance of identity in how they position themselves in the narrative. They may take various roles, in some scenes portraying agency and in others a passive role (William & Stickley, 2011) According to Erikson when people reach the adolescent stage, they will experience an identity versus role confusion stage; this is the crisis of identity stage (Marcia, 2002). At this stage the individual will start to question their identity and their role relationships with others. It is at this stage that one may develop new self-narratives; these may be different from the collective narrative that one internalized while growing up. Erikson states if this crisis is not successfully completed it will result in challenges in adult relationships. It is important to note that Erikson proposed linear development, arranged in stages with the crisis representing the optimum time for that particular function to occur. Based on Erikson's theory it can be expected that youth may have more conflicts with the family and friends (Slesnick, Bartle-Haring, Dashora, Kang & Aukward, 2008) and in some cases, this crisis may lead to young people leaving the family home, and (possibly only temporary) homelessness. In their study (Slesnick, *et al*., 2008) found that homeless youth in their study had left home due to family conflicts, feelings of not being understood or accepted by the family

Although McAdams (2006) acknowledges the importance of adolescence in the development of personal narratives of identity, he argues that the process of narrating the self is ongoing. According to McAdams "Psychologically speaking, life stories serve to reconstruct the past and

imagine the future in ways aimed at providing life with some measure of unity, purpose, and meaning" (McAdams, 2006, p.86). In this way identity "narratives can shift and change, be contested and multiple. They can "relate to the past, to a myth of origin, they can be aimed at explaining the present and, probably above all, they function as projection of a future trajectory" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202).

This idea of renegotiating identity or constructing a new one, allows one to keep in touch with one's past or to break ties with it. A new identity can facilitate the forming of new relationships and imagining a different future. Even though people are individuals with unique narratives, their selves are created as a result of being in relationship with others. Not all these stories are about belonging to a group. They can be about an individual's experience, but even so, such stories often relate, directly or indirectly to perceptions of what it means to be part of a collective.

Although identity is incorporated in work focused on homelessness, this work promotes a more uniform identity of homeless people instead of understanding the individual identities of the homeless. Identity is not a uniform process nor is it based on an isolated phase of the individual's life. People constantly construct their identity and portray it differently in different settings (Lawler, 2008). In this sense, it cannot be expected that the state of homelessness is the only reference point for people living on the street. "Homelessness should be considered a process, whereby people pass through various phases before they develop identities as homeless people" (MacKenzie & Chamberlin, 2003 cited in Porsell, 2011, p.444). Identities are performative in that we do not act the same way in all contexts. Different contexts call us into different subject positions. In the same way stories are performative because life stories are constructed in order to express who we are and who we are not in different contexts. Life narratives do not only tell the audience who the narrator is but this performance indicates to the audience who the narrator is in that context and interaction.

Chapter three: Methodology

3.1. The narrative approach

This is a qualitative research design study, which according to Marriam (2002), aims to understand the experiences of individuals and to attach meaning to these experiences through analysis and interpretation. This study used an experience-centred narrative approach to provide an in depth interpretive understanding of the research participants' experience with (home) lessness and belonging. The experience centred approach states that narratives should be studied as "stories of experience rather than as descriptions of events" (Squire, 2013, p. 40), as "windows to people's experiences" (Bamberg, 1997, p. 335). The experience centred approach assumes that narratives are "(i) sequential and meaningful" (Squire, 2013, p. 41), i.e. experience centred narratives move across temporal sequences and are an expression of what is significant to the narrator; (ii) "experience centred" (abid.) narratives are a way of making sense (of one's experiences), however, this is not only something humans do but it is this that makes us human. (iii) "experience centred narratives are reconstruction of events in different times and spaces" (abid). This act of reconstruction is not only the work of the teller but narratives are co-constructed by the teller and the hearer (Squire, 2008). In short, narrative enquiry is interested in how the interviewee describes and interprets his/her experiences. This approach allows the teller to freely construct their life story and reconstruct their experiences as they remember them (Feher, 2011; Squire, 2005; Squire, 2013). An enquiry into life stories should note how the narrator uses language to communicate meaning, and look at who the stories are constructed for and to what purpose or end (Riessman, 2008).

The narrative approach poses many challenges, such as researcher influence and the reliability of the participants' stories (Hunter, 2010). The first challenge is not unique to narrative research but every research is researcher influenced at a theoretical and subjective level (Atkins,

1998). Research may be driven by theory which provides the lenses through which data are analysed, but it is also through the subjective experience of the researcher that meaning is derived. The second challenge is omitted by the aims of narrative research. Narrative research is not concerned with proving the accuracy of the narrative but instead attention is on how the individual may choose to deliver the narrative. The one telling the story is not reporting on the experience itself but the subjective interpretation of the experience (Riesman, 2008). In this case, memory does not reflect experience but reconstructs it. "A personal story is essentially an expression of his or her self-understanding. There is no stronger, clearer statement of how the person sees and understands his or her own life" (Atkins, 1998, p. 65).

This study has used a narrative enquiry approach. Stories typically have a sequence; this sequence is not always that of the lived life. Peacock and Holland (1993) emphasise that life stories are not life histories; while the latter implies that the story is accurate and 'true' the former is not concerned if the events occurred. Life stories are about how the individual reports to have experienced his/ her life. According to McAdams (2006) life stories are more than just facts of events that occurred but also can tell us about what is happening now in the narrator's life. Often people who have been marginalised, "whose lives do not typically conform to the cultural context can generate identities that provide them with a measure of self-worth and dignity" (Snow & Anderson, 1987, p. 1338) through the sharing of their life stories. The sharing of a life story is a performance uniquely crafted for the audience in mind. In the immediate sense, the researcher, but often an audience that is beyond the interview session. This audience determines what kind of narrative is constructed. This may lead to embellishment, exaggeration, or omission in the narrative. However, narrative enquiry takes into consideration that stories that people tell may be intentionally altered by the narrator to present themselves in a particular light by "embellishing" the information they share, by "exaggerating their past and present experiences" (Snow & Anderson, 1987, p. 1359).

3.2. Participants

Seven young men between the ages of 21- 29 participated in this study (see Table 1 below). Purposive sampling was used for the selection of participants. Or in the words of Squire, (2013, p. 54) participants were "sampled theoretically, often on an opportunistic and network basis, with little randomization". These young men moved from being at 'home', to living on the streets and subsequently found 'new homes' be it in in new spaces (streets or shelters) or relationships and connections. All participants were African men, five were South African born, and one was from Zimbabwe and the other from Mozambique. None of the young men were born in Johannesburg but now reside in the city. All participants were recruited on the basis of being homeless or recently homeless or are now living in a shelter or a homeless network. This included but not limited to those who have lived or are currently staying on the streets. Homelessness as defined above included those who lived in shelters and separated from family.

The young men were recruited at two sites, namely an NGO called "I was shot in Jo'burg" in Maboneng and the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Braamfontein. The two groups will be referred to as group one from "I was shot in Jo'burg" and group two from Holy Trinity Catholic Church for the remainder of this thesis. This distinction is to clarify the recruitment process. For group one, I visited the studio, where the young men worked, twice before inviting any of the young men to participate in the study. On my first visit I met the founder of the project. I told him about the research project and obtained permission from him to recruit participants and to conduct the interviews at the studio. He was very welcoming and gave me the go ahead, he introduced me to one of the young men who I could invite to take part in the study, but he was otherwise engaged at our first encounter. He said he would inform the rest of the team that I would like to meet them. He gave me a date for the meeting. I visited the studio a second time where I spoke to the young men

and invited them to participate; many seemed interested so I set appointments for the following two weeks during the month of August 2016.

Name*	Age	Birth place[2]	Lang	Family information	Education	Recruited at	Left original home/ came to Johannesburg	Current home/ living
Sipho	22	MP	Zulu	Mother passed away Father unknown No connection to extended family in MP or siblings	Grade 10	I was shot in Jo'burg	When in primary school Age and year not specified.	Alone in a Flat in Johannesburg
Chris	23	JHB/ PE	Zulu	Mom passed away Aunt in Soweto but no contact	Metric	I was shot in Jo'burg	His mother took him to the shelter when he was when he was still in primary school. Age and year not specified	Alone in a Flat in Johannesburg
Tebogo	25	FS	Sotho	Mom passed away Family in Sebokeng but relationship not good	Grade 11	I was shot in Jo'burg	Age and year not specified	In a flat in Johannesburg
Robert	23	MP	Zulu	Mom passed away Has relatives in MP	Matric	I was shot in Jo'burg	Left home when he was 13 years old	In a flat in Johannesburg
Anthony	24	ZIM	English	Brothers in Zim Both parents passed away	N/A	Trinity Catholic Church	Came to South Africa in 2010	Abandoned building in Johannesburg and CBD
Michael	21	MZ	English	Brothers in Mozambique Both parents passed away	Primary school	Trinity Catholic Church	Came to South Africa when he was 15 years in 2009	Abandoned building in Johannesburg CBD
Nelly[1]	29	QTN	Xhosa	Mother lives in Queenstown with younger siblings	Tertiary drop out	Trinity Catholic Church	Left home in 2010	Newtown Park

Table 1: Participant Information

I chose to work with these particular young men from the studio because their narratives seemed to be unique and interesting. The trajectory of being at home and then homeless and then finding a new home in the children's shelter where they were recruited to be part of the I was short in Jo'burg project. Their life stories speak to the possibility of escaping life on the street, which is not a common occurrence amongst young homeless people in South Africa. I thought perhaps their experiences, even though recollected, would be reflective of the experiences of those that are still on the streets, from a perspective that was both from the inside and outside, close and distanced, appropriately subjected to reworking (by the teller and audience) in narrative.

The second group were men who currently live on the streets. To recruit this group, I joined the Monday evening bible study and soup sessions. In the first week, I met the facilitators of the bible study and asked if I could join them for a few weeks in order to get participants for my study. After getting permission and being with the group for four weeks I knew who the regulars were. I approached each person individually to invite them. With this group I had to set one appointment per week. It did not work to schedule appointments for the weeks ahead as the participants expressed that they were not sure if they would be around in the weeks to come, reflecting the instability and unpredictability of life on the streets.

The two recruitment sites were selected on the basis of their involvement with work with the "homeless" population. The spaces allowed me to interact with the young men in a place that was familiar and convenient for them and safe for me as a researcher. *I was shot in Jo'burg* project was started in 2009, to assist street (homeless) children. The project teaches young boys the art of photography, enabling them to create job opportunities for themselves. The Holy Trinity Church is based in Braamfontein, next to the University of the Witwatersrand Main campus. The church hosts various activities during the week; however their biggest community involvement is their soup

kitchen innitiativewhich runs every week day at 11 am and every Monday evening at 6pm after an hour of "*Come Home"* bible discussion sessions. The words "Come home" have a double meaning. The bible study was called Come home because it is a ministry especially dedicated to the homeless, with the church offering a place where the homeless are at home and welcome. On another level, 'coming home' in the Christian sense denotes salvation, the reassurance of a home in the afterlife.

3.3. Data collection location

The interviews were conducted at multiple places. Group one interviews were conducted at the 'I was shot in Jo'burg studios, which is where all the young men in group one work. The young men spend most of their time at the studio since they work Tuesday to Sunday. The studios are based at Arts on Main in Maboneng which is in the Johannesburg city centre, and easily accessible to me and convenient for the participants. They were not required to use any of their resources (finances and time to travel) in order to participate in the study. All interviews were conducted at the participants' work stations at the studio during working time with the permission of their manager. The young men work in the studio where pictures and other products are sold. The studio acts as an exhibition and a factory, where the 'I was made in Jo'burg' products are made. The tasks are divided according to individual skill. Each person has his own work station where each person can work on an individual project. During this time, they mostly told their stories without any distractions but at times some would start to move or fiddle with the material (rulers, painting brushes, glue, etc.) that were lying on their work table. Some of this fiddling was work related and sometimes it was idle. There was no set place for interviews with the participants from the second group. The first interview was the only one conducted at the Holy Trinity Church. Although the church did avail their premises, there was much distraction with all the other activities that take

place there during week days. The second interview was conducted at a fast food place and the last one was conducted at Newtown Park.

3.4. Data collection

Data were collected through unstructured narrative interviews (See Appendix one). Narrative interviews are conducted to document the experiences and understanding of participants in order to attempt to make meaning of an experiential phenomenon through analysis (Josselson, 2013). "The goal in narrative interviewing is to generate accounts rather that brief answers or general statement" (Riessman, 2008, p.23), resulting in detailed accounts of experience rather than eliciting brief answers that do not give much data.

The interviews were conducted over a period of three months. Each participant was interviewed once. Participant's narratives ranged from 20 minutes to 2.5 hours. The purpose of the interview was to create a conversation that encourages the telling of a story (Josselson, 2013). Participants were encouraged to share what they considered relevant to their life stories, hence some shared much and some only highlighted what they felt comfortable sharing.

All the interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participant. The interviews were conducted in English but participants were informed that they could express themselves in English, IsiZulu, or Sesotho as these are languages I am fluent in. Group one participants used both English and isiZulu and Group two participants only spoke English. The interviews were transcribed in the original languages and those that needed to be translated were translated into English. An interpreter was not used during the interviews as I am fluent in the languages that the participant used to express themselves- isiZulu, seSotho and English. A translator was needed only

for transcribing and translation of the vernacular interview. This is because although I can understand the language, I am not fluent in writing in the vernacular language.

3.5. Data analysis

Contemporary constructionist methods have been criticized for losing the respondent in analysis. Atkins (1998) states that analysis needs to be rescued from contemporary research methods. He suggests that narrative analysis maybe the solution as it provides insights into personal experience rather than just presenting the researcher's "expert" opinion on the matter. This study used the narrative enquiry method. Narrative inquiry is concerned not only with the content but also with the form of the story (Riessman, 2008). That is, how the story is constructed and what the structure of the narrative reveals about the narrator's meaning making of the experience? The process of analysis is not a linear process; it requires one to move backward and forward within the guidelines in order to fully capture the richness of the data. Narratives are also not presented in a linear way, "the way a personal narrative is recounted at any point in one's life represents the most internally consistent interpretation of the way the past, the experienced presence and the anticipated future is presently understood by that person" (Cohler, cited in Atkins, 1998, p.60). It is therefore the role of the researcher to impose structure through analysis. This was done in two phases. The first aimed at exploring the content of the narrative and the second the structure of the narrative.

In the first phase, data were analysed through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Narrative thematic analysis focuses on specific content within the narrative (Atkins, 1998, Riessman, 2008) and how this content is structured in the development of the narrative. The

objective of the first analysis was to explore the trajectories of their life stories, tracing their experiences of home and belonging in old and new spaces and relationships. This means going beyond reporting on what was said but also how and why it was said. Thematic analysis can be used to explore "the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and in turn the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings…" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 81). I have used the six step guideline for analysis suggested by Braun and Cark (2006). The first step is getting to know the data. This involved listening to the audio recording and reading the transcripts several times. The second step was to generate the initial codes and code all chunks of data. Thirdly; the codes were grouped into broad themes temporally linked to their pasts, presents or future. The next two steps involved reviewing and then defining and naming the themes. The sixth and final step was to construct a structured report on these themes as presented in chapter four of this thesis. Dissemination of results will also take place in other platforms such as conferences, or papers for publishing.

The second phase of the analysis focused on the participants' construction of their narratives, particularly their movements through time and space in their lives and while narrating their stories. In order to represent these temporal and spatial shifts, I elected to use visual methods, mapping the worlds of home and homelessness. Visual methods of data collection are increasingly popular (for example, Bray, et.al, 2010 used children's maps of their neighbourhoods, and Langa, 2010 used photographs to collect narrative data). These visual data are then analysed, deconstructed to reveal not so obvious discourses. Visual representations allow for further analysis of development and transformation of character in the implicit storytelling (Hunter, 2009). However, visual representation of verbal data is less common as an analytic technique. Exceptions include: 1) Gergen and Gergen's (1988) graphic presentation of narrative trajectories as progressive, regressive or stable; 2) Selohilwe's (2010) adaptation of these narrative lines in the stories of school leavers; 3) Haley's (2010) family river diagrams; and 4) Licardo's (2015) graphic representations of told

stories and lived lives. In this study, the narratives of three of the seven young men's narratives will be in the second phase of the analysis and are represented through maps in order to trace out the trajectory of their life stories across temporal and spatial zones. The maps illustrate the movement from place, the connections to these places and the people who live there that are maintained despite moving to new places, and developments of new connections in new spaces. Table 2 below presents visual keys for representing the significance of particular places and relationships from the point of view of participants' narratives.

1. Large blue rectangles	Main places moved in between
2. Smaller blue squares	Areas related to the main place
3. Red ovals	Significant/positive/ close relationships
4. Light green ovals	Blood relative but not very close or significant
5. Dark green ovals	People met along the way but not significant
6. Numbered arrows	Depiction of movement

Table 2: Structural Analysis Key

3.6. Role of the researcher

King cited in Clandin in (2006, p. 44) wrote "…once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world. So you have to be careful with the stories that you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told."

As a researcher my responsibility is not just in how I report the stories I have heard but also to listen to the stories that I am told even, especially those that are not said with words. These stories are not only told by the narrator but are told with me as a co-constructer. The general rule of conversation is not to bore the listener with a long story, since people generally do not have time to listen to someone talk about anything, let alone their life story. Riesman, (2000) reported that she noticed that during her interviews people would be very apologetic for answering questions with

lengthy answers. This rule of conversation posed a challenge in the interviews, I had to constantly probe my participants which at times felt directive, as if I was constructing their narratives and not them sharing freely. I realised that people do not talk about life events in chronological order. Most of the time my participants spoke about events leaving huge time gaps in their narratives between events. This is not unusual, because even though stories are made up of related events, these are not necessarily portrayed in the sequence of action (Nicolopoulou & Richner, 2007).

As a listener I had questions and at times got lost in the narrative and required clarification. When I asked a question, my question moved the narrative to that time period, indicating my influence in how the narrative developed. Even though as a researcher I was in the same age and racial category as the young men, I was aware that my identity as a female postgraduate student put me in the session as not only a researcher but a companion someone they can tell their story to. Although there was a shared identity of being black and in the same age category, I could not relate to having lived away from 'family and independent from a young age. I was also seen as a researcher interested in a particular story, and not just for my interest but for an imagined audience which I represented. There is the immediate audience of the listener and the imagined audience (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). In research, the imagined audience could be who the researcher is perceived to represent, like the university or an organisation that could provide could assist is by providing shelter, food or more opportunities for those that were not on the streets. If life is a story, we are constantly telling it, and because we tell it to a different audience all the, time it may change from one context to the next (Snow & Anderson, 1987).

3.9. Ethical considerations

This study has adhered to all ethical considerations that are stipulated by the University of the Witwatersrand. Ethical clearance number: MPSYC/15/013 IH. The participants were given an information sheet (Appendix two) that explains the purpose of the study. This information was also

verbally explained to each participant in a language that is understood by the participant. Participation in the study was completely voluntary with the option to withdraw from the study at the end of the study. All the people I approached to participate agreed, however some, especially from the group two participants, did not show up on the day of the interview. Each participant signed an informed consent form, one for participating in the study (Appendix three) and the other consenting to being audio recorded (Appendix four). Anonymity has been maintained by the use of pseudonyms.

Chapter four: Thematic analysis and discussion

This phase of the analysis and discussion focuses on the content of the narratives. Themes across the narratives were explored in order to understand how the young men talk about home, homelessness and belonging. The themes are arranged according to temporal zones. Narratives often take the sequential order of the lived life. The ordering of themes in this way gives a sense of movement across the trajectory of life stories. Sub-themes identified narratives of the past under the broader theme of 'Being at home and belonging in previous places and relationships' are: 1) geographic origin, 2) "ngwakabani?" (Whose am I?): Ancestry and belonging/alienation and 3) the burden of care. In the narratives about the journey and the transition to Johannesburg under the broader theme of 'Being at home and belonging in new relationships themes identified are: 1) Breaking ties with the past, relationships and places. 2) Finding new families. Themes identified in narratives of the present life under the broader theme of 'Being at home and belonging in new spaces are: 1) Imagined life in Johannesburg, and 2) Lived lives in Johannesburg, the good, the bad and the ugly. The final themes 1) family and 2) achievements are explored in relation to future lives 'Being at home and belonging in the imagined future'.

4.1 Being at home and belonging in previous places and relationships

4.1.1. Geographic origins

People who belong to a particular location will often be attributed similar characteristics. We often hear of things like "people from this country are very friendly" or "this nation is a very aggressive nation". Narratives of place or natural community form part of personal narratives. It is inevitable that when one talks about 'home', one will refer to a particular location. This could be a place of birth, where one grew up or where settled. The acknowledgement of a place as home "includes and completes a person's self-image and sense of identity, understood as expression, identification, belonging, power and appropriation" (Cristoforetti, Gennai, & Rodeschini, 2011).

To incorporate the narrative of that place into one's personal narrative expresses ones self-identification with the place and perhaps, belonging. The fluidity of the concept of home or being at home allows one to maintain connection with previous "homes' as well as to form new ones as one moves along the journey of life. The young men all began their narratives by mentioning where they were born or where they lived. Even those who began their narrative by mentioning an event or where they are now would stop and ask to start again by sharing where they come from. In the opening lines of the narratives below, we see people locating themselves in relation to place of origin.

Chris: mmm) mina I'm from… ok my mother is from P.E but I was born here.

Michael: Ok ehm eh (.) first I will start where I come from. I come from Mozambique, ehm, I was, I was born eh in Mozambique the cold Beda, so it's not Maputo so

Nelly: my name is Nelly. I'm from the Eastern Cape, I'm a Xhosa

One's geographical origins speak to a lot of aspects related to race, culture, and identity. This Somerville (1992) referred to as '*rootedness'*. This relates to where one comes from or the teaching and experiences (related to family) that one identifies as being influential. Chris mentions that his mother is from Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape; however he was born here in Johannesburg. This tells us that he is aware of his maternal origins and that although he was born in Johannesburg; he none the less recognises hid families' roots and has a sense of the family as migrant to Johannesburg. Nelly shares where he comes from and that he is Xhosa. Nelly self identifies with the location and also the culture of that place. Yuval-Davis (2006) states that "belonging can be an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way" (2006, p. 199). This may be related to those that one is biologically related or those that one shares with activities/ cultural backgrounds or geographic location. Nelly self identifies himself as a Xhosa person from the Eastern Cape. Identification by others may be in the form of stereotypes that we have about other people or nations. Michael's introduction speaks to stereotypes that being from a

particular place makes you a type of person. Michael starts his story by sharing where he comes from but also clarifies that it's not. It is possible that he is trying to distance himself from what is stereotypically known about people who are from Maputo or it denotes that he is trying to highlight that it is not everyone from Mozambique is from Maputo. Although these stereotypes may be incorrect, people may claim them for themselves, incorporating them when sharing their life stories. Similarly to come from somewhere and to stay somewhere does not imply the same thing. While both places may be significant to the individual the former speaks more to rootedness while the latter implies temporality for example: Sipho begins his narrative by mentioning where he stayed with his mother and that his father had passed away.

> *Sipho: ok (giggles) eh; let me start at the back. Ehh actually mina my sister I was staying in Natal Spruit with my mom. My father passed away*

Sipho does not mention where he comes from; he says that he used to stay at Natal Spruit. This kind of introduction is different from that offered by the other young men. The concept of "staying at" may express settlement, but it does not express connection with the place. When people talk about where they come from they speak about their origins. 'Home' as a place where people come from reflects stability, but when people speak of a place where they stay it speaks to the temporary nature of that space. There is a difference between saying someone is 'from the streets' and that someone stays on the streets. The former speaks of identifying an individual with that space, including the culture of that place for example, the assumption that people staying on the streets or shelters are lazy (Keating, 2009), or that they are criminals (Lucas & Dyrenforth, 2006). The notion of 'staying at' also denotes a temporary relationship to a place while coming from suggests or indicates a more active relationship with individuals and a space (Manzo, 2003), even if the person has never been to that place like in Chris's case. As such, it is significant to note how the young men speak about the different places where they have stayed in contrast to where they originate.

4.1.2. "ngwakabani?": Ancestry and belonging/alienation

The phrase "ngwakabani" is a loaded phrase that cannot easily be translated into English, Literally translated as "whose am I?" or from which people am I from?" It speaks to ancestral connections, kinship and belonging. It is related to one's surname and paternal connections. It is not just about coming from but also about belonging to. In this context, where it is asked as a question it reflects one's uncertainty about origins and feelings of being lost or not having an identity or not belonging anywhere. This feeling of not belonging is very significant in the context where one is already excluded from the larger society to not belong to any people further alienates one.

> *Sipho: my staying at the shelter, I stayed a very long time at the shelter (giggles) eish because I did not know where could go my sister… actually I did not the family , who is my family…where I come from? Who am I from? Where? Yabo' (you see) as a person you want to know where you come from you know, at least ngi yazazi ngiwumhlobo bani [I know which tribe I am from] where you come from, where you going, you see my sister I know ngwakaban. [Who I am from], Yabo'.Wa… In that time I did not know who I am? Who am I, from where? Who I am coming from? Where do I live? Who is my family? Yabo, I was thinking I am no I was thinking I am alone in this world. To the point where I ask myself that why mara, God would even do something like this?*

In the above extract Sipho talks about growing up in a children's shelter, he had to leave his house in Natal Spruit because his mother was unable to take care of him. He says he stayed at the shelter for a very long time and while there he started to question who he was because he did not know his family or where he came from. This could also refer to what he mentioned when he introduced himself that although he was staying in Natal Spruit, he did not know where he was from. He mentions that he did not know where he was going because he did not know where he comes from his identity. In patriarchal societies children's identities are linked to their fathers. Children born out of wedlock or whose paternity is unknown are often subjected to shame and

ridicule (Nduna & Jewkes, 2010). This is even worse for boys as they are expected to carry the father's surname in order to continue the family name. In African society, there are rituals that mark adulthood, such as a young man going through a traditional ceremony. These initiations are rooted in what it means to be a man and particularly to be a man in that family, lineage or culture. When a young man is denied these opportunities, this may have a negative effect on his masculinity. In the extract below we see that sometimes children who never knew their parents try to find their fathers.

> *Nelly: I came here to look for my father… the reason I decided to see my father was that... I had to... I did not want the family to call... amaXhosa they use to say ungumcakwe (you are a bastard/ an illegitimate child)… if you do not have a father, so I did not want the people back there to call me those names because they were calling me, calling me those names while I grew up, that I do not have a father, what, what. Who's my father"? And when I see other kids are playing at school all those things. They used to talk about their fathers but me I couldn't talk.*

Nelly says that he came to Johannesburg to look for his father. Even though he identifies with the Eastern Cape and the Xhosa culture, there was a need for him to find his father. His reasons for wanting to find his father were rooted in his desire to avoid negative experiences he went through while growing up. This kind of ridicule that Nelly was subjected to is not unique to the Xhosa people; it is common for children to be subjected to very harsh treatment because they were born out of wedlock, and in the African context when children do not use their father's surname (Nduna & Jewkes, 2010) this signifies that the child has no connection with the father's ancestral connections.

It is the norm in many cultures that children take their fathers' surnames (Smith, Khunou & Nathane-Taulela, 2014). The use of the fathers surname is significant for identity particularly for boys as they are expected to pass the family name and identity. The paternal surname signifies cultural identity and heritage (Smith, Khunou & Nathane-Taulela, 2014). Although it is not

uncommon for children to take their mothers surname when the parents are not married, however this is not favourable and the child may be subjected to other derogatory names such as Nelly experienced. Young people may start to believe this and question their own identity. Nelly questions his identity through his sexual orientation and making reference to his father's absence.

> *Nelly: because I had a problem, really my father is... he does not give me nice time like to be with him and have... maybe I shouldn't have been gay...If ever he was around. Because now I was raised by a single parent and now I was watching my mother, everything I was watching my mother, what she is doing and I felt so impressed and everything. That the way she do things... maybe if she was there as the father, maybe he would say "hey, do not so that" maybe I'm thinking, I do not know...To the people, maybe. I haven't met somebody that who is gay that was raised with a father. I do not know how it is to be raised with a father*

In an African context the father plays a very significant role, introducing the child to their culture and traditional practices. When this is not the case young people, especially boys may blame certain circumstances and their behaviours on their fathers' absence (Nduna & Jewkes, 2010). Nelly questions whether his sexuality is related to his father's absence. He says maybe if his father was around he would have had a male figure to look up to or maybe his father would have told him "not to that", "copying" everything that his mother was doing. This kind of thinking expressed by Nelly, that the absence of a father or male figure contributes to homosexuality, is common, but incorrect assumption about homosexuality, that homosexual men were raised by single mother. It also expresses a gendering of parental roles "mothers are associated with caring and nurturing, while fathers are valued for providing and administering discipline" (Jabeena & Karkura, cited in Smith, Khunou & Nathane-Taulela, 2014, p. 434). These roles may also be extended to the extended family. Female relatives may be required to take on the role of the absent mother like taking care of younger children (Schatz, 2007) while male relatives may be expected to provide financial aid and other father roles in the children's life (Richter, 2006).

Within traditional African cultures where the father played such a significant role in the identity of the child, fathers became strangers that were only known as financial providers. Politically, it was in the interest of the apartheid government to weaken the black family unit by introducing migrant labour laws which forced to the family unit to split up and diminishing the role of fathers in child rearing practices. As a result paternal absence is so prevalent among black South Africans there is a need for qualitative research (Smith, Khunou & Nathane-Taulela, 2014) that does not only problematize the absence but aims to explain the underlying structures that maintain and perpetuate this phenomenon. Problematizing paternal absence is rooted in the western idea of nuclear family, which is actually not the norm within a South African context (Porsel & Devey, 2006). This desire to find one's father may also be influenced by the assumption that life would have been better, specifically from a financial standpoint (Bray, et *al.*, 2010).

4.1.3. The burden of care

Child rearing remains a gendered practice. The presence of the father or male figure in the home is valued more and considered more important while the presence of a mother is considered normal and expected. By extension female relatives are expected to naturally care for orphaned children or in cases where the mother is not able to (Bray, et *al.*, 2010). A common note in the young men's narratives is the loss of a primary care giver, the mother (except Nelly whose mother is still alive), that resulted in them losing connections with their extended family. It seems that the African saying "it takes a village to raise a child" did not apply in these young men's narratives. It seems that with the economic conditions we now live in it cannot be assumed that children will be taken care of by the extended family should their parents or primary care givers pass away (Case, Paxson, & Ableidinge, 2004). The reality is that the extended family may not have the capacity to foster the children (Edmonds, 2005). These orphaned children may be seen as burdens and it seems that children may feel that they are not wanted. This feeling or idea of being a burden was also experienced by the young men, while they lived with their relatives. Many (including Nelly, who

lived with his mother) felt that they were a burden and living in the streets or at the shelter was a better option.

Nelly: ….Then after being sick, eating the treatment, take treatment and then I was fine. Then I came, I decided to came back to Jo'burg and then I lied to my mother "no I'm gonna be staying at my friend" but I knew that I was going straight to the street cos I knew, I know I can see how my mother suffers and I'm the older one at my home. I had to make some living

Anthony: you know life was… was better before when my parents were alive…

I: hmmm

Anthony: like I was with my father and my mother, I was going to school, everything was alright. But when my parents passed away, everything starts to turn upside down... I start staying with my brother then I see ey things are tough. So let me leave my brother and go back to South Africa and find something for me

Sipho: you see my sister, I have learned many things in the streets and when I saw my sister has two children and my brother also has two children, I couldn't expect them to take care of me too. This was above their capacity. So I had to leave come back here and stand on my own

Nelly lived with his mother in the Eastern Cape but being the first child he felt the need to leave his home since his mother was struggling to take care of the household. Once he had recovered from his illness he chose to go back to the streets. Anthony talks about life being better while his parents were still alive. Their death meant that there was no one to pay for his school fees. He stayed with his brother for a while but left because he felt he was a burden to him. Sipho found his brother and sister after a few years living at the shelter and in the streets. However he felt that living with them would be a burden to them considering that they had children of their own. Therefore he chose to return to Jo'burg to stay at the children's shelter.

Chis: my mom from P.E ai ja ehm (.) basically she got sick and then I was attending school this side. (.) She is the one who introduces to the socio social workers. She told them that ok "please look after my boy for me"...cos even my mother the family she knew it even her sister

even to make a decision that she went to talk to social workers that... when she took me there "why do not you allow me to stay with, with aunty then" her sister... she said "hai, this one loves a short while for when you with her after sometime" so she had her own reason they grew up together obviously.

Chris's mother made arrangements for him to stay at a children's home. She realised the burden that she would be causing to her relatives should she die and leave her child with them. The loss of a primary care giver or in this context the mother rendered the boys in unfavourable positions. Many children in South Africa's streets have grown in the streets s with their mother (Olufemi, 2000), have run away from home due to child neglect or are orphaned (RAPCAN, 2011). For these young men it was the death of their primary care givers that lead to them becoming 'homeless'. The financial burden may even fall on the elder children when parents pass away.

Tebogo: it was 2007, my mom passed away and I had to try, for to have something for us to eat, me and my brother's child. So I came this to sell cigarettes, then I ended up adopting this lifestyle.

Tebogo says although his mother passed away when he was still young and in school at that time, he had to find a way for him and his brother's child to survive. Tebogo's experience reflects the realities of many South African youngsters who are left to take care of their younger siblings when the parents are no longer able to (Bray, et *al.*, 2010). Ennew (2003) explains that the reality of the African child is very different from the global construction of a child. She adds that while it is ideal to protect the child and to prolong childhood as long as possible there are many factors within the African context that do not allow for this to occur. Fostering and taking care of relative's children may be beneficial to both the children and the adult but in recent times the challenges, particularly financial restrains, outweigh the benefits (Ennew, 2003). In Tebogo's case, like the other young men it means that the extended family could not take care of them forcing them to 'grow up' taking on responsibilities that are typically considered adult responsibilities like providing for the family..

4.1.4. Alienation/ not belonging

The experiences of the young men further demonstrate different aspects of being at home and being homeless. Home is also related to where one can feel that they can express their 'true self' to have the freedom to be who they want to be, a place where one's physical and psychosocial needs are met (Tipple & Speak, 2005). When home is not how it should be, a place that provides stability and encouragement, it is possible for people to talk about 'not being at home'. To be at home also requires one to feel accepted and to be who they really are without fear of judgement or rejection (Somerville, 2010).This can be translated to warmth as a signifier of home. When these are not present in a home, perhaps it can lead to feeling less at home even while at home. Home is where you are taken care of especially in the case of these young men who were still minors (under the age of 18) when they chose to leave their 'homes' to come to Johannesburg.

> *Sipho: Ehhh, we stayed at Spruit. My mom lost her job, and now she was no longer working, me too she could not do anything because I had to help out here at home. Ahh I stayed with my mom, I then left school actually, I left it in grade (.) six...I also tried; I help my ma… my mom like her life she had given herself to alcohol because its stress this side and other things because since she left alc… she dra… she used to drink. And when she drank (.) mmm she got into an accident and went to hospital…When she went to hospital, I stayed in the house; I was left staying in the house actually. The one of my friends arrived because I could see I was going to be able to live like until… because I wasn't in school any more...You see one of my friends came and said "m'fethu" I said to him… he said to me "m'fethu[brother/friend]) there is a place called a shelter… Twilight Children there is a place called shelter, Twilight children. You can learn there, you see and do everything and be ohk, that's what you want". I said "yes". 'Cos, now I also wanted school, and now I cannot stay here looking after my mom and I'm stuck in I'm not going to school. My mom said… my friend said "actually we need to ask your mom first before we go there to shelter" I said "ohk" he said " ah…" and I lied to him and said "I will go and ask my mom" but I did not go and ask her (giggles)...And I went back to him and told him I said "my mom agreed that no I can I go with you" Ohk we left. We went to live there at shelter,*

The above except is about a young man's decision that led him to leaving his mother. There are a few things I will highlight from his narrative. Firstly as a child he was required to drop out of school in order to help his mother who was unable to take care of the house. This is a very common thing in South Africa where children would leave school in order to assist at home (Edmond, 2005). Secondly, his example highlights the realities of child headed households. Sipho says that at some stage he says that he was living alone when his mother was in his hospital. The myth of the nuclear family does not accommodate other types of families (Burman, 2008). By stigmatising and pathologising other types of families, such as single parent families or child headed families has contributed to making these families even more vulnerable (Bray, et al., 2010). However this does not make child headed households a phenomenon to be celebrated, rather it emphasises a need to recognise the social factors that lead and sustain this phenomenon. One of the main cause of child headed households in Sub-Saharan Africa is death, usually HIV and AIDs related (Bray, et al., 2010). The other courses are related to parents having to work living away from their children.

The third issue I will highlight is him not him having a 'normal childhood' like going to school and being taken care of by his mother. It seems that he realised that his situation is different from other children "*cos, now I also wanted school and now I cannot stay here looking after my mom"*. He could not stay in the situation he was living in and that he wanted to go back to school, but could not do anything about it, he was "stuck". When his friend told him about the children's shelter he recognised this as an opportunity to be a 'child', to be taken care of and possibly to go back to school. Sipho was able to go to a children's shelter without his mother's consent; this highlights the issue of lack of parental supervision, and child neglect. The situation that he was living in while 'at home' with his mother, in their house, also suggests that psychological needs were not met. He needed to be a child and to be taken care of, but instead he found himself taking care of his mother even to the point of having to leave school. Sipho left to find a new home,

where he could be a child. While it is important for young people to be recognised as children, who need to be taken care of some may feel the need to be recognised as matured young adults:

> *Robert: so we left, we came here e Jozi, we came here e Jozi then we like stayed (.) four days in the street. Ok for mina (me) it wasn't frightening it wasn't scary it wasn't... (.) It wasn't like uncomfortable because it was a space whereby like I feel (.) I feel free…There's nothing you can tell me I feel matured. I feel like I am a grown man cos I was always high... I was drunk doing what I want.*

When this is recognised could result I youth seeking alternative measures for expressing this. Robert talks about himself and his two friends deciding to leave their homes and come to the city of Johannesburg. Most adolescents living in the streets of the city centres come from nearby townships; home is often not as far as with many adults, who might have travelled from other parts of the country to the city (Cross & Seager, 2010). Many may return home soon after a few days or weeks but many choose to stay because street life offers a sense of freedom and independence that is not possible at home. Robert says when they were on the streets they felt mature and had the freedom to do what they wanted to do such as drinking and getting high. According to Martinez (2010), boys in his study shared that the streets gave them a sense of freedom and this freedom is important at this point of their lives. This need becomes more important than a shelter or relationships.

This need to express their 'maturity' is very common and important to many adolescent boys (Bray, et al., 2010). This is often referred to as "acting out" or being rebellious (Hyde, 2005). Adolescence is a liminal stage; the young person is not considered a child anymore and yet not an adult. The young men may have had to question this identity. Bray, et al., (2010) describe how young men from the poor South African communities of Masiphumelele and Ocean View often validate their masculinity by getting involved in violent behaviour. In the case of Robert and his

friends they did this by drinking alcohol and stealing car parts and subsequently deciding to leave their homes.

Michael: ehm, you know ehm I call the age, age of people. If you live with people until a certain age, you know their ideas change right, and also my ideas change

I: hmmm

Michael: but my ideas change to new things like I'm still young and they still old

(Both giggle)

Michael: so ja I think and you know like its say magogos [grannies], magogo people (giggles) like they feel like we need to keep you like until now. We old, so you won't go in that way so we still need to keep you... and I'm still so young and I need to see new things...so that's, that's the thing I saw, no they can't do that...So I have to go away and see the new things they can't see new things no more they just see the old stuff and the present that's all...So I wanna see the future like I wanna go there

The above except reflects the frustration that come with the generation gap between adolescent and adults. Michael talks about how the "magogos" in the family he was living with did not have the same perspective on things like he did. In many developing countries children may be left with the grandparents while parents work in the city (Brey et al, 2010). This was also the case in Michael's adopted family. In the text above he is talking about a family that he stayed with when he first came to South Africa, they treated him like their child and would advise him what he should and should not do but this frustrated Michael as he felt the family could not see life the way he saw it, they did not see the bigger picture he was looking at. Hence he had to leave that family and find others who will understand him, others he can belong to. In the same token being understood not only relates to how one sees life but how one chooses to live life. It speaks to being accepted too. As a young gay man, Nelly said that he was not able to live freely and openly when he was in the Eastern Cape.

Nelly: And seeing myself the way that I grew up and seeing my sexuality, I told myself that I had to fly to Jo'burg in hidance because by that time homosexuality was a taboo. So I decided to fly to Jo'burg to let go of myself and also to look for something for a living.

Nelly: and my mother did not approve this; even know my mother did not approve it. I remember it was last year I said "I'm coming there December time. Hayi man, I'm feeling bored I want to come there. You do not have any funds that you can help me with" then she said "you must stop with this thing of your make ups and all that when you come here"... I said no mom I know what is the rural area, when did I put makes up there...

Perhaps the above statement that he had to come to Johannesburg in "hidance" could mean that he could not express to reveal to his family at that time that he was homosexual since it was a "taboo". It suggests that he came to Johannesburg to find his father; he also came to find himself and be free to be. Nelly says that he came to Johannesburg to "let go of himself", contrary who he pretended to be in Eastern Cape. He also states that his mother, although they had a good relationship, did not approve of his sexuality, especially him wearing makeup. In a way rejecting who he was.

While Sipho may have wanted the opportunity to be like other children, to go to school, some of the young men left 'home' because they refused to be seen as children. They felt that they needed to be recognised as mature even though they were still at a young age. This speaks to the idea that home is being subjectively experienced and that there are conditions within the home environment that may not allow for one to be who they feel they need to be at a particular point in life (Cross & Seager, 2010). For Sipho, Tebogo and Anthony they wanted to be children, or maybe to have fewer responsibilities and to be cared for, while Robert and Michael they wanted to be recognised for their maturity and desired this independence, and thus they chose to leave home.

What is common for all of them is that home was experienced with great difficulty from a socio-economic point of view.

4.2. Being at home and belonging in new relationships

This section will cover how the young men moved from their homes of origins into new relationships and spaces. When people lose connection with their families of origin or familial connections, they will try to form relationships with those around them for "comfort, protection, support and resources" (Lucas & Dryenforth, 2006 p. 344).This is the case of who people become homeless or those that move to a new place like a different province or country. I will first discuss the aspect of forming new relationships, how these relationships are formed and how they develop as the young men continued on their journey and how this relates to belonging and being at home. Secondly I will look at how these young men talk about belonging or finding a place in the new spaces. I will discuss both aspecst in terms of their connections to their past relationships and spaces.

4.2.1. Braking ties with past relationships

Perhaps for one who is on the move, it is easier with less baggage. Not only did the young men not keep in touch with the people they met along their way, they also did not maintain relationships with the people they left behind. Although these relationships were weak at the time that the young men left home, the connections weaken further over time, especially if there was no contact in the first year of being separated (Milburn, Rotheram-Borus, Batterham, Brumback, Rosenthal, & Mallet, 2005). When one is disconnected from the family unit or society not only does the family not know what has happened to that person but the person also does not know what is happening in the lives of those left behind. As mentioned above, Chris, Robert and Sipho left their homes while their mothers were still alive. Although their mothers were sick at the time, they

only found out about their deaths after many years and none of them had the opportunity to go to their mothers' funerals.

Sipho: Mmm 2011 when I went to visit my mom they told me she is no more.

Robert: When I went to visit at home I was told that she passed away and so I did not manage to go to the funeral and all.

Chris: at that time she is so sick... her sister took her home (.) and (.) she got sick at that time and she died mara I did not know at that cos I was at the shelter already.

Even though they were at the children's shelter (which may be considered a stable place for children) no one came to find them, nor did they visit their homes during the festive seasons or school holidays. This meant that not only were they separated by distance, they become distant in that the young men did not know what was happening back home. It is unfortunate that the young men lost their connection with their family at a young age and no one tried to find them or to make contact with them. There is a possibility that the young men's family were unable to keep in touch with them because they did not know where to look for them because homeless people are generally very mobile (Olufemi. 2000). Families may have an idea where the family member is but often feel that to look for them would require a lot effort.

I: hmm, ok, so do they know that you are in South Africa?

Michael: yea! They do. They know that I am here ja

I: do they know where you living

Michael: no they do not know (laughs)... completely it's like I'm invisible

Similarly, the two participants who are non-south African also do not have much contact with family members who are back at home. Michael's family knows he exist but they do not acknowledge him by keeping in touch or enquiring about his where about. They do not know where he is living in South Africa. For the two young men, their families are aware that they are in South

Africa, they assume that some of their families may know that they are living on the streets and since they are not in contact with them, they do know what is happening back home. This feeling of not being, "invisible" suggest that Michael felt that he was insignificant. It can be suggested that this may be the reason why homeless people may not return to their families. These feelings of abandonment are solidified when homeless people go through trouble such as being in hospital and being arrested. Nelly and Albert both mentioned that when they were in trouble (in prison), their families did not visit them. The young men did not expected their families to visit since they family back home could not know what was happening in their lives.

> *Nelly: because as you live there (in prison), being gay, you start to, to experience some ... a lot of pain most of the time. So that is what I was trying to camouflage for myself because I did not have any visitors.*
>
> *Albert: and if you get in prison sometimes there's no one maybe like a relative who can come and visit and see you in prison…*

Homelessness is about being alone and challenges may act as a reminder of this. When some of the young men were living in shelters, they were reminded of this (being alone) during the school holidays and the festive season. During this time the other children would go 'home' for the holidays while they remained at the shelter.

> *Sipho: Every time when people went home, I just stayed, I do not go anywhere, I stayed here I spent the entire December here.*
>
> *Chris: especially the time when I was young when I was about 14, I was alone. I was always… there was no one who helped me like even during December, during December something that was noticed by the social workers. During December I do not go home I am at the shelter.*

Chris, although he lived in a children's shelter which he described as crowded at one stage in the interview, says he was alone. Perhaps he felt alone even in this crowded space, because he was no longer in touch or connected with his extended family. For the young men who lived at the

children's shelter (all the young men lived at the same shelter but not at the same time) there was an opportunity to reconnect with their families through home visits, but this opportunity was not used for various reasons.

Generally, homeless people will move around a lot, making it difficult for loved one to trace their where abouts should they desire to find them. Children may almost get lost within the children's shelter system. As noted in the previous section, children can enter this system without adult supervision, and often move from one shelter to the next.

> *Chris: they let me crash over a few days, and then my friends from Twilight told me ok that social work, that one is there anymore, it's a new one so I went back again. I went back I told it, the social worker I did not… I did not tell it I stayed at Jafta. I told it I used to stay at Mother Johnson; I brought my files from Mother Johnson and said "ok, you can stay here" by that time I had no scandal at Mother Johnson.*
>
> *Michael: I stayed with my brother and then he got married… Ja and I've been living with the Australian family for one year and a half…So in each, each, each province I have to work to find money to go to another province and it was just like that … I was in Roodepoort I have, I've been having some family there that helped me a lot… I used to stay under the bridge… I stayed at Methodist church for a while…. I live in those apartments where the owner left you knows they have no electricity or anything….*

Chris reflects on his movement from one shelter to the next. His first attempt to move to Twilight was unsuccessful due to the social worker at that time discovering that he was expelled from his previous shelter for allegedly stealing a phone. He moved to another shelter before going back to Twilight when there was a new social worker. Twilight shelter was better for him because it was people his age who were accommodated there.

Michael mentions that he moved around a lot in his life, he moved from different places in his life. He moved amongst different family relatives, then in different provinces, to even moving to another country. Like Michael the other young men have also moved from spots to spots. This

movement represents loss of stability that comes with being at home. Stability can be represented by being in a particular place for a long period of time or maintaining relationships with others, often with whom one shares space (Milburn, et al, 2005). Stability in this sense fosters belonging; it creates cohesion between one's past, present and future. The absence of stability in previous relationships, as represented by the narratives of the young men, is also seen in the new relationships and connections that they had established as they transitioned from 'home' to 'homelessness'.

4.2.2. Finding new 'families'

Michael: so when you wanna go out, wow I'm alone here, because everybody has the same name. You know I have the same name… so when you have your name alone you try to give another one, wow that's my name, you'll be my family

Life away from family and relatives requires one to look for alternative connections. These connections are significant for survival, safety and emotional stability (Parsell, 2010). In the above statement Michael mentions that he realised that while others belonged to groups, have the same name, he was alone. He acknowledged that throughout life he has always been different from his peers and the people he has met along his way and this has often led to him being an outsider. It is possible that when he refers to finding someone who has his name, or he can give his name then he can maybe say that person is his 'family'.

Giamatti speaks about the 'right relation' (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006), although he is referring to family in the traditional sense. It seems that 'right relations' can be created. Traditionally, one is related to others who share a surname, even if they are not part of the immediate family. Traditional African family units do not only consist of parents and children. Traditionally people would live with extended families (Cluver, Gardner, & Operario, 2007), which meant the responsibility of caring for children and the elderly was shared and meaning that the loss of primary caregiver or parent did not mean children were left in a vulnerable position. A common thread in the narratives

of the young men is that they created relationships with others who were in their situations and related in some way, due to similar backgrounds, experiences or interests. This supports Fay (1996) that belonging is about relatedness and knowing that one is related in this way. The similarities were based on shared interests, place of origin, language and even sexual orientation.

> *Tebogo: when I got there I found this other guy called Moeketsi, he was from Qwaqwa, so we could communicate in Sesotho, because I wasn't used to isiZulu yet. We got along because we could communicate in Sesotho and we are both from there.*
>
> *Michael: I'm staying with my friend, from the same country... So we started be friends we start make business…*

The new relationships were formed based on similarities like the relationship that Tebogo formed with Moeketsi and Michael's relationship with his friends was formed because they were of the same nationality. Even though these relationships served a particular function like communication between Tebogo and Moeketsi or business related for Michael and his friend, the connection was recognised on basis of shared place of origin, which shows that even though the young men are in new places they still recognise the connection with places back 'home'. Connections may also be established on the basis of shared interest like Chris did. His ability to play soccer allowed him to find a group he could belong to when he arrived at the children's shelter.

> *Chris: … cos I could play soccer I saw then playing soccer so think it was one way for me get to know them plus I wasn't used to older people, ah we played soccer and then I met with Omar, and Anees since we are on the same team, started becoming friends*

Unfortunately, it seemed as though the young men only recognised these relationships for their functionality at that time, because like the relationships back home, none of them were still connected to the people whom they had formed relationships along the way. This is evident in the three examples above and also in the examples below.

I: ok, ehm how did you meet your friend Shanney.

Nelly: uSammy I met him, I used to see him at Park station but he was that kind of an ice queen actually

I: (giggles)

Nelly: (giggles) she was an ice queen, cos we did not talk to each other and I saw that ohk he is on my condition also. One day when I was having coffee, it was during the evening, and then we started to talk to each other. Cos he went there to shower sometimes, when he got the money. Then we started to be friends, and then I started to ask where is he sleeping. Then we started to be friends, coming here to the park to have a small chat then we have a smoke and then we go, and then to a point that we know each other's status. When it our time to eat our medication, we eat our medication together, we remind each other.

Nelly and Sammy became friends when Nelly realised that they frequented the same places, like Park station. He then realised that Sammy was on his "condition". Like Nelly, Sammy had a very feminine appearance. Once their companionship was formed it was sustained by the supportive nature of their relationship. The pair reminded each other to take their ARVs. Their relationship, unlike the examples above was not just practical (taking medication, finding food or for protection) it was based on companionship and shared experiences of being not just homeless but, to be a homosexual and homeless. Nelly later discovered that they had more in common; they were both from the Eastern Cape.

At the time of the interview they were still friends. Sammy was making arrangements to go back to the Eastern Cape. When Nelly spoke about this, he did not seem to be concerned about his friend going back home or worried about being alone, or keeping in touch with his friend, whom he has spent over a year with. This section speaks to the idea of connection and finding alternative 'families and connections'. Some of these relationships were significant at the point where they were functional, but dissolved with time. This is not because the young men were not able to sustain relationships but based on the nature of the relationships that the young men had back at

home. All the young men had not kept in touch with the people back at home. Therefore the idea of permanent relationships has never been a reality in the young men's lives. People who stay on the street form very weak relationships (Padgett, Henwood, Abrams & Drake, 2008). Those that have spent long periods in shelters tend to form familial structures, like creating a bond with a younger person, or young people turning to older people for protection and provision. This was only evident in Tebogo's case; he said that he was taken in by older men who had been on the streets for a long time. Some of the young men reported that the house mothers at the shelter were kind fulfilling the role of a parent.

Some of the clusters that may exist are amongst people who speak the same language or are from areas that are geographically close to each other, identifying with the place that they come from. There is a similar pattern amongst migrants, were one might find that in a particular town or part of the city there is a large population of people who are from a particular country (Landau, 2010). There are at least two important why this occurs, amongst others; firstly it speaks to familiarity and belonging. Secondly other issues like protection and sharing of social resources lead to a many foreign nationals often living in close proximity to each other in foreign lands (Landau, 2010). Homes, communities, and citizenship relate to belonging as they are about having meaningful relationships with the people in that space. Although, the young men had formed connections with others, their narratives had a general theme of loneliness. When compared to the general population, they report to experience loneliness more (Rokach, 2005). Loneliness, like other emotional distress, confirms that homelessness also consist of a psychological dimension.

4.3. Being at home and belonging in new spaces

Nelly: …Park Station, it's only the place for the people that can just... that are going, taking a journey not for staying …

I begin this section with a quote from Nelly, although taken out of context; it provides a way to introduce this section. This quote speaks about two types of people in the city, those who belong and those who do not. This section will discuss the young men's experiences of transitioning to the city of Johannesburg. For all the young men, Park Station, a railway station at the edge of the city centre, played a vital role in their time in Johannesburg; it is significant because it was the first place they arrived at, and functional because they often went to Park Station for a shower, part time work, food, and a place to sleep on rainy or cold days or to socialise. Whatever the reason was, often the visit was brief, as security guards would chase them away. There was always an awareness, as expressed by Nelly, that the space is a not for people like them. The feeling of not belonging or being at home is not just limited to life at a previous home. These feelings are carried even in the city centre, even though the young men spent most of the time in the city centre and may know this space better than most people. They are often reminded that they are not welcome in it. For example, how most of them relate to Park station is symbolic of the precariousness of life in Johannesburg. It seems that all the young men had imagined Johannesburg, (be it in the streets or the children's shelter) to be a place where they could live a better life, perhaps even welcomed and full of opportunity but for most of them they were met by rejection when they arrived. Gieryn (cited in Easthope, 2010, p. 129) says "places are doubly constructed; most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined". This fluidity of the concept of home makes it possible for people to construct and reconstruct their homes in different places.In this next section I will discuss how the young men imagined, built or carved homes in this new place.

4.3.1. Imagined life in Johannesburg

Anthony: eh, what actually happened is, when I come here I was not thinking I'd stay here much longer time like the time I've stayed here in Jo'burg

I: hmm

Anthony: I was thinking I will come for a short time, I will stay for a short period and I go back to Zim.But when I come, I see ai things they are not moving, the way which I was expecting.

I: hmm (.) what were you expecting?

Anthony: eh I was expecting that maybe I can get a nice job, then I can work, when I earn some money or something little I can go back to Zim and start a small business.

Michael: So there was a guy who told me ehm that South Africa "because you speak English you can live a better life there. Cos the country is richer then here". So that's, that's the vision…

Michael: the guy told me like after the guy told me in South Africa if you have any kind of dreams you can achieve there. It's like small America

The above comments represent common views about South Africa, more specifically Johannesburg, by young people like Anthony (Zimbabwe) and Michael (Mozambique) from neighbouring countries. Besides the fact that Johannesburg, the city of gold, is estimated to have a population of over 3 million and even though it has a high unemployment rate, particularly youth unemployment (The 20 year Review: South Africa, 2014), it is still considered one of the most preferred destinations by work seekers and traders from within South Africa and neighbouring countries. It is a place that symbolises hope, where ambitions are most likely to be manifested (Landau, 2006). Most non South Africans report that they did not intend to stay for long periods of time, but due to circumstances, like not finding a job or having money to return home, they have remained in the country (Landau, 2006). This is expressed by Anthony, who intended to stay for a little while, then go back home. Landau (2006) explains that when people move to a new country they may resist "transplantation" (p. 127). By this he means although they want to be accepted they do not want to take on the culture of that new country, they may still maintain their identity from back home.

Amongst the South African participants, they all (except for Chris) chose to leave their homes due to negative circumstances and imagined a better life away from 'home' in Johannesburg. For Robert, it was the freedom of being independent, 'grown-up'. Sipho says that some young people that he met on the streets, preferred to be there. They felt free and independent on the streets. This is the same sentiments that Tebogo had, that although he had the opportunity to go back to Free State he decided that he is not going back, he has to try something in Johannesburg. Johannesburg presented opportunities that perhaps he could not have back home.

Sipho: you see my sister, some of them feel that is better they stay here, cos they say they do not want to feel locked up, they want to be free... they are too used to the street life...

Tebogo: I told myself I won't go back, its best I try something here.

When young people are on the streets they are forced to be mature faster than their peers (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003).However from the narratives of these young men, it seems they believed that they were already 'grown-up'. While they were at 'home' with their families they had many responsibilities, for example, Sipho had to take care of his mother, Tebogo, his grandparents and nephew. It is not uncommon for young people to escape to the streets when the home conditions are unfavourable (Martijn & Sharpe, 2006, Whitbeck, Hoyt & Ackley, 1997). In these circumstances, the streets appear to be safer, warmer and better than their homes or families, perhaps for some, the streets seem are freedom from the responsibilities that they might have at home. While adolescence is a stage of transitioning from childhood, young people who are separated from their family are expected to mature faster than their peers. More and more youths work, some recreationally (Bray, et al., 2010) but many work because they have to in order to help out at home or in some cases, they have to work to maintain the household, like the young men in the example above. Western notion of normal childhood or adolescents was not the reality of the young men.

4.3.2. Real life in Johannesburg: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Home is considered to be the source of protection and guidance into 'normal' development (Burman, 2008). In particular, it is believed that children need to be protected from harsh realities of life. It is assumed that the home environment is responsible for raising children and adolescents into morally upright citizens and, therefore, the state/ society will not intervene until there is a perceived major breakdown in the family unit (Burman, 2008). There are multiple problems with this kind of intervention strategy: 1) Often intervention is carried out when it's too late, and 2) The problem is often perceived to be that the home in question does not fit the heteronormative idea of a nuclear family. This contributes to the notion that the problem is single parent households; children should be at home with both parents, even if the situation is not conducive to the development of the child. Thus leaving many children in such circumstances to either deal with the conditions at 'home' or to find alternative refuge. Young people tend to turn to the streets in order to escape. The difficulties of street life have been widely investigated and reported (Aliber, et al, 2004; Naidoo, 2010; Olufemi, 1999, 2000; Tipple and Speak, 2005) and these conditions are not considered beneficial for children. Young people and children are considered most vulnerable in the streets. This section will report on the good, the bad and the ugly of street life. While the narratives of the young men confirmed the challenges and negative experiences (The bad) that are well documented regarding life on the streets, their stories also provided an alternative discourse of life on the street, particularly homeless young men (The good). The narratives of the young men also indicated that there are many challenges that people living on the streets face. This are challenges that are not related to being on the streets but render them homeless (no place in the city). The ugliness of life in the streets of Johannesburg is indicated by the continues violation of their rights by police officers and disregard of their humanity by the general public through acts of violence and victimization.

4.3.2.1. The bad

This section covers the young men's 'bad' experiences in relation to living in the streets or in children's shelters. Homelessness is marked by a general lack (Somerville, 2013). The lack of shelter also translates to lack of security, privacy, warmth, food and access to sanitation. Even though it goes beyond shelter, the 'bad' experiences focus on not having shelter or permanent accommodation, including lack of food, blankets, toiletries, etc.

4.3.2.1.1. Lack

Nelly: hmm to be here in the streets sometimes it becomes tough because the blankets sometimes you do not get it, you hide your blankets and they are gone.

Nelly: … Because it's gonna be rains. And when it's raining we find our blankets wet and you can't sleep with the wet blankets, you can't sleep with that blankets and sometimes, you shifting

Tebogo: there was this day, yo I tried everything I knew, and tried hustling but things did not come together. I was so hungry. I went to the church to ask for something to eat but they chased me away, they thought I wanted money for drugs. As I was about to walk away, I collapsed because I was so hungry. They then helped bought me bananas and a plate of food.

Nelly: Sometimes you hungry and they are no... There is no food to get.

The young men who were on the streets were more concerned about basic needs such as food, shelter and staying warm during cold nights whereas the young men who were at the children's shelter where these basics are provided expressed that sometimes they did not feel at home because they felt that the house mothers and/ or social workers did not treat them fairly. The young men who lived in shelters also mentioned concerns about privacy and the safety of their belongings like toiletries and clothing.

Robert: eh my life eTwilight, eh my life eTwilight it was quite interesting because (.) there… ok when I first went there I saw a lot of children you see now they will stab eish what, what actually it happened it was safe as there is always a guard at night and day and ja we have comfort. At when it's eating time they call you, in the morning… like we spoiled

Sipho: you know my sister there at the shelter there will always be favourites. You won't always be treated the same

Chris: actually me and the social worker had a disagreement and she asked me to leave

I: (.) why did you need money at Jafta?

Chris: Hmm because sometimes like roll-ons they would give you neh, but then (.) you know the older young men they would steal if they stole yours you do not have anything anymore even your clothes they were not safe so you needed (.) you needed money to make sure that you get whatever you want.

Although basic needs of shelter and food are provided in the children's shelters, the lack shifts from being physical to psychosocial such as privacy and fair treatment. The concepts of privacy, safety and security are often associated with the meaning of home (Cristoforetti, Gennai, & Rodeschini, 2011). Therefore, the experiences of the young men who lived in shelters as children confirm that to be homeless is not only about not having a place to sleep but also a psychological experience relating to feeling of safety and protection. To consider homelessness only as street homelessness overlooks the challenges faced by others who, by a wider definition, can also be considered homeless such as children staying in shelters. Growing up in a children's shelter was a different experience for the young men; for some, the experience was not just a negative lack, the shelter was experienced as a hostile place where they feared being bullied by other children and where sometimes they were mistreated by the staff.

This section confirms what is reported about 'homelessness', particularly the 'bad' experiences associated with homelessness (Cross, et al., 2010; Crush, 2001; Olufemi, 1998, 2000, 2001). Studies on homelessness reported on the significance of basic needs and the hostility of street life. Perhaps these previous studies have considered challenges in terms of street homelessness and not challenges in shelters because the consequences associated with living on the street have more direct impact on society at large.

Considering the hostility of life on the streets, some young even considered committing crime in order to get arrested. Prisons provide shelter and food but are notorious for being dangerous and hostile environments in the streets. The comments below reflect the importance of these needs so much so the young men have considered committing a crime so that they can be sent to prison. The irony about poverty in South Africa is that, people who have committed crimes and are sentenced to jail time, may live a better life than poor, law-abiding citizens. Being in this kind of environment, one might even consider committing crime for the 'benefits of jail. Some of the young men in this study had committed crime, others have at least thought about it

Nelly: prison life I do not want to go, I there. But sometimes when it was cold winter time, I wanted to commit crime, but for the sake of going there. To have a place to sleep at least because I was having my own cell, having food, so there was nothing... I was a little bit fat.

Anthony: when I compare the prison and the streets (loughs) it depends on your brains cause inside the prison, there is some people who say prison is better than the streets because in person maybe these days, there is warm water watch television there, there is food there but in the streets there's no… you have to find for water you have to find for food. You have to work sometimes to get money. But if you are in prison you will be just relaxing somewhere, terrorising other people in prison.

4.3.2.1.2. Crime

Some young people are initiated into groups by being pushed to commit crime (Martinez, 2010).Yoder, Whitbeck and Hoyt, 2003 investigated the prevalence of gang membership amongst homeless youth in the Midwestern states in America and found that there was high prevalence of involvement or membership in gangs. In South Africa this is not exclusive to homeless youth, gangsterism, violence and criminal behaviour has also been associated with youth from poor communities and prisons where the initiations into these often involve illegal activities (Milburn, et al, 2005). However, focusing on the prevalence's of gangster membership amongst youth does not answer the question of why these youth gets involved? Life on the streets can be harsh, particularly

for a young person alone. The cause is not only the hostility of street life; it is also related to the social response to homelessness and homeless people. The perception of groups on the street as gang groups may be fuelled by the general view of young people on the streets as criminals. While it may not be uncommon for homeless youths to engage in theft, asking for money, prostitution and survival sex (Kidd, 2007), exposing themselves to more dangers like sexually transmitted diseases, sexual violence (Swart-Kruger & Ritchter, 1997), and injury, it is clear from the narratives of the young men that there is far more to them then these stereotypes.

> *Nelly: I only smoke zol (marijuana) sometimes when I'm going to sleep, Zol only and now because of... I do not want to think too much*
>
> *Sipho: … you become family. You can protect each other. Mara, sometimes it becomes too dangerous because you all smoke your things and when you are high you fight each other, hurt each other.*

Desperation and need can lead to abuse and victimization. Often we hear of young women falling victim to human trafficking and forced sex work out of desperation (Ndlovu, 2013). The promise of employment in these times is something that many fall for, Anthony tells of this happening to him.

> *Anthony: eish it's like one day we were sleeping in the street then they came some people from Somalia, do you know is it Somalia or Ethiopia*
>
> *I: hmm*
>
> *Anthony: and they said "guys, do you want work?" we said "yes we want work". Then they said lets go and offload. We get inside there it's like in the combi, V.W. we get inside the combi, go to the market; it was at night about 12 midnight. When we arrived there at place we get inside we start offloading. When we offloading, I see ahh they've been… I can say like what, they've caught all the security guards there at the premises, they've tied them and all these Ethiopian young men they were holding guns they were all armed you see… Is like you have been taken to job but if you arrive there you see now I am being forced to being in a crime*

I: hmm

Anthony: we loaded the stuff, the young men they refused to pay us; they leave us inside the warehouse, they run away with their cars. They ey us we have to be out of that ware house so that we do not have to be in any danger. Walking back to town with no money is very tough. You see this is some of the stories

It seemed that sometimes even when the young men would try to do something to get money; they were still exposed to victimization or abuse. Homeless people are in danger of being victimised by the general public and also by the police. There have been reports in the media about police brutality towards people who are on the streets in South Africa and internationally (Donne, 2007). It is easy to victimise people who live on the streets because they are considered alone and not belonging. The young men also expressed this feeling of being alone and unprotected even though they lived in groups.

4.3.2.2. The ugly

While we know that they may be involved in criminal activities, bad things also happen to homeless people, for example, Anthony above, who was tricked into committing a crime. It expresses the 'ugliness' of homelessness. This section covers what is generally assumed about homeless young men and what other people did to them because they were homeless. On the streets young people do not have to protect themselves from each other but also from society. Some of the 'ugliness' is based on the general view of homeless young men, that 1) they cannot be trusted; 2) They are people who deserve less respect and consideration; 3) they need to be kept away from the general public; and 4) shame and stigma associated with homelessness.

4.3.2.2.1. Always the suspect

Anthony tells of feeling that people on the street are considered criminals and that being on the street puts one in a position where one is 'always the suspect'.

Anthony: Cops, they will just be believing that people in the streets, they rob people they assault, they commit crime. But it's not everyone who lives in the streets who commit crimes… eish it's very tough, but eish, but me, I'm not having the brain, to rob people or to assault the people, no. We just moving like, like other some other people, but if you staying in the streets you move at night and it can be dangerous. You can end up in jail just because you stay in the streets. Because some people they will be robbed at another corner and you sleep at the corner, then cops come, find you sleeping there in the corner.

Anthony reaffirms what was discussed in the previous sections that while some young men will make an effort to distance themselves from the negative attributes associated with homelessness like criminality (Kidd & Davidson, 2007), this is not easy and entails struggling against social stereotypes. Being the suspect also indicates that the spaces the homeless are not safe. It indicates there is some danger that they are suspected to be perpetrators instead of the victims of these crimes, violence or danger. The homeless are often forced to move not for their own security but for that of others.

4.3.2.2.2. Violence and Danger

Although children are generally considered vulnerable and need to be protected, children on the streets are considered delinquents and rebellious, and instead of being protected they are generally feared and sometimes even mistreated.

Chris: …so, June, I was staying on the streets and also writing exams so, ey life on the streets ai, it's not like life here [referring to the shelter]). You exposed to things then you see a lot of things.

Sipho: Some people go missing in the streets; some get killed for their parts, things like that

Chris: Anyone can do, anyone can do whatever they want to do to you. When they want to beat you up when you are asleep they will beat you up, when they want to throw food at you they will throw it at you, you have no power, you are alone…. Because it sometimes happens when we are sleeping and in Yeoville there's too many clubs, obvious people we saw them

fighting, some shooting each other, some would wake you up kick you so, so it wasn't easy yo.

It seems that the type of violence that people on the streets faces is not only amongst themselves but also violence against them inflicted on them by the general population. For example, Sipho mentions that some people are killed for their body parts, suggesting the vulnerability of the homeless in the black market where human body parts are used for rituals. This type of violence dehumanises the individual, the homeless become objects of violence. Chris expresses this by saying that "anyone can do anything they want to do to you", reducing homeless people to less than human, as objects to be used or mistreated by others. The life of a person on the street seems to be less valuable then the life of a person in general society. This then also translates to why we fear them because we fail to recognise their humanity.

It seems as though even "acts of kindness" like being given something to eat, is done in a way that does not recognises their humanity. Chris says that people would throw food at him instead of giving it to him, treating him like an animal.

4.3.2.2.3. Defensive architecture

It seems that what society has done to these young men is worse then what they admit to have done to society. Even though it is well documented that the streets are a very harsh environment, there is a general attempt to keep homeless people away from public view (Cross, et al, 2010). The young men reported that they were only allowed to go to some places in the city, such as churches, soup kitchens and parks. The young men reported they would be chased away at places like the train station.

Anthony: That day I went to park station I wanted to sleep there but the security chased me there at the park station…

In some countries, the presence of homeless people is managed by what is referred to as "defensive architecture" (Andrea, 2015), that is the construction of public spaces in such a way that homeless people are unable to occupy it. An article in *the guardian, an online newspaper,* documented the use of "anti-homeless spikes" in the inner cities of London (see Appendix five). These spikes were inserted to discourage homeless people from sleeping on the side of the road or outside public spaces. Although we do not see this kind of architecture in south Africa, except for a few signs such as "no hawkers" or " no soliciting" in public spaces. Many spaces are guarded by security who has been instructed to chase away homeless people. As expressed by the example above, the young men reported that on wet or cold days they had nowhere to go and would try to go to warm places like train stations only to be asked to move sometimes with the use of force. While spikes and security guards may be successful in hiding the prevalence of homelessness, they do not reduce the phenomena of homelessness. Instead they further highlight the ugliness of society. These spaces not accessible to the homeless are to some extend not accessible to the poor. The protection of these spaces such as malls implies that the poor and homeless are desperate and dangerous and may be an inconvenience or harm those that these spaces are created for.

4.3.2.2.4. Shame

Being homeless, or without shelter, or having to resort to begging and constantly being reminded that one does not belong, can have a negative effect on a person's sense of dignity, altering how one sees himself or herself (Snow & Anderson, 1987). The young men spoke about how being homeless or living in a shelter made them feel ashamed.

> *Sipho: you know when you stay in a shelter you must accept everything that is happening. Sometimes you go to school with a torn shoe… some people would judge you; no we do not associate with children from the shelter. And you had to prove them wrong, do well in school….*
>
> *Nelly: We would go at night to get food because in the day someone might see you*

This idea of shame speaks to the young men's social sensitivity, recognising that they are part of the society even if only as an object of judgement. It also speaks to dignity and the willingness to compromise it in order to survive. The young men who stayed at the shelter expressed that they were ashamed of being the "children from the shelter" in the school they attended. There were children from other children's shelters and some who lived at 'home'. As a child living in a shelter there were many things that they felt embarrassed about such as, staying at a particular children's shelter, not having the proper school uniform or using the transport from the children's shelter. Children who grow up in unstable homes may be stigmatised and labelled as different by other children and teachers and for many children this may lead to feelings of low self-esteem (Kidd, 2007). The young men expressed that they felt judged and stigmatised for living in a children's shelter. The stereotypes against children living in shelters is that they have been abused, or abended by their own families.

Another aspect of shame is related to being abandoned by one's family. The family unit is expected to take care of its young. Living in a children's shelter may be experienced by the child as being abandoned or not wanted by his family. The two non- South African participants were asked if they would consider living this kind of life back home. They responded that it is better to be homeless where no one knows you then to be homeless when your family is nearby. The stigma associated with homelessness is not only directed at the individual but it also questions the type of home that the individual comes from. Being far from home makes one anonymous somehow minimizing the feeling of shame.

4.3.2.3. The good

Johannesburg did not turn out to be the "city of gold" they anticipated when coming to the city, there are nonetheless 'good' experiences on the streets that contradict what people assume about the lives of people who are homeless and all that people have done to them. It also represents the events or activities that made life better for the young men where they were. The 'good' is

presented with caution in this section, taking into consideration that people may present themselves in a more favourable way. This could be in how the young men found meaning even the bad circumstances of street life as way of surviving and maintaining their dignity.

4.3.2.3.1. Keeping clean

Being homeless stripped the young men of their dignity. Ennew (2003) begins her paper with an illustration of this shame often experienced by young people on the street. This shame is associated with being dirty or begging in the street. Being dirty is the embodiment or representation of the identity that is ascribed to homeless people (Parsell, 2011). Keeping clean is an act of rejecting the stigmatised identity ascribed to people living of the street and restoring one's sense of dignity and the participants spoke of their efforts at personal hygiene.

Chris : …when you wanted to bath you would go to Park Station which is R5, even to wash your clothes if you do ehmja, so it was up to you nawe how you want to behave yourself.

Sipho: it depends on you how you want to be clean and keep clean

Nelly: but the way that I bath sometimes it's amazing
(Both giggle)
Nelly: I use an apple box, you see the apple box?
I: which box?
Nelly: the box of apple, I took it, I just put a plastic then I put water, of which I had to go to the drains to get water and you have to do... the whole process had to be done in the night
I: ohk
Nelly: I put the water there inside then I bath, the n after bathing then I'm done. You can spend maybe two days. After two days you can go and bath also.

The young men in this study expressed that even though they had challenges, keeping clean was an important aspect of how they wanted to present themselves. This was not an anticipated

theme and is significant because it speaks about how the young men viewed themselves and others on the street. Research on homeless youth has centred around various dangers they are exposed to on the streets, such as health issues (Raoult, Foucault, Brouqui, 2001; Rohde, Noell, Ochs & Seeley, 2001) substance abuse and criminal activities (Randall & Brown, 2002). Kid and Davidson (2007) reported on the experiences of youths who had recently become homeless, the youths spoke about the transition from home to homelessness. They mentioned that this transition occurred internally, they began to see themselves as street children, being part of the culture of the streets. And although they tried to resist these changes through external activities such as distancing themselves from gang groups, substances and criminal behaviour. Homeless youth who have been on the streets for longer period tend to adapt to a "homeless identity" (Zuffry & Kerr, 2010, p. 437), and embody this identity.

It is possible that, since some of the young men in this study lived on the streets for a short while, after they were separated from their families or being expelled from the children's home, it seemed necessary for them to distinguish themselves from others who have spent longer periods on the streets. For the other young men who have been on the streets for long periods of time, like Nelly, keeping clean is important because he has to interact with other people when he is selling goods. Homeless youth, who have not spent long periods on the streets may consider view their time on the street as temporary and may want to maintain a connection with society by keeping clean, and maintaining positive interactions with society (Osborne, 2002).

4.3.2.3.2. Positive means of survival.

Living in shelters or on the streets, there are limited resources and one has to sometimes 'hustle' to get what one needs. Homeless youths, particularly boys, are stereotypically known for doing unskilled work and/or committing crime in order to survive. The young men in this study all

expressed their attempts to avoid crime and how they used what they had to generate money or to survive. The young men rejected the stereotypical labels of dirty, lazy, antisocial substance users, who commit crimes. Instead they emphasised that they involved themselves in various activities to get money rather than robbing people.

Tebogo: I used to help park cars… there was this man Tshepo, I used to wash his car because I used to wash cars…

Chris: and go to Rosebank isn't it there ngamla [white or rich people] are there… so the whole day go there put my plate and pose they put in money that's where I do my gumboots dance I was good at that… So I am ready... this helped me it help me it showed me that hai even if I stayed on the I'm not ready I am not into it that much there are other ways that I can make money…

Nelly: Sometimes like where I used to sell these ball pens there is Bedford view the way they treat me. They look at me, people they look at me with a pass… even R2 do you know I used to go to East gate [shopping centre] to sell pens and come back with feets [walking], going back with my own feets, coming back with feets, no support…

Nelly: Now I do this sewing thing, yeah, that is how I survive

In the context of unemployment in South Africa, it seems it's easier to give money and walk away then to employ someone from the streets (Torck, 2001). Many homeless people resort to begging even though they may have the ability to work (Olufemi, 1998). All participants reported instead of resorting to begging they used their skills such as selling goods, sewing, manual and skilled labour. When it comes to survival, doing what's right is not always easy especially if the outcome is not as favourable as other means of survival. The young men in this study emphasised their positive survival efforts but contradictions could be found in their narratives. For example Nelly expressed that he used to sell pens and now sells the recycle bags, to make extra cash. Other expressed using tricks to get assistance from passer buys. When the young men spoke about stealing or other misdemeanours it was often reported as what other young people do and that

although considered they did not get involve. Those that did commit crime, even serious crimes like house breaking reported as something that they regret from the past and provided justification for why they did it mainly the need for food as expressed by Sipho in the comment below:

Sipho: You see, you try anything so that you can have something to eat before you sleep yabo, or try something to get money and in order to get that money, there is no chance, you have to rob someone or beg for it on the streets or what else can you do? You will break into someone's house, yeah, eish, those are things I used to do.

4.3.2.3.3. Positive relationships

Forming new networks or family structures in the streets is important not only for survival and safety but also for psychological wellbeing (Rayburn & Corzine, 2010). These "families" may be and often are, made up of people who are not biologically related. Homeless people form relationships with those around them, although these relationships are not always positive (in the form of brothels and gangs). These relationships may provide resources such as belonging, food, security, support and shelter (Lucas & Dyrenforth, 2006).

Sipho: I'll tell you one thing my sister, in the streets you become family. Yabo, you become family you all who are staying in the street. You can protect each other. Mara, sometimes it becomes too dangerous because you all smoke your things and when you are high you fight each other, hurt each other.

Tebogo: when I was on the streets I stayed with amajita [friends] a, but I was always disciplined even from childhood. So even when I was on the street I used discipline that thing like drugs are not good I must just focus on getting what I want. Like if I can get someone to help me, someone to help me someone to help me…

Robert:ja at the moment ja there are only few ja the guys who are working her at the studio ja

These positive relationships were not only limited to the streets, suggesting that they were not only for survival but also companionship. The young men working at the studio mentioned the

people they worked with as being important to them. Some of the relationships were formed when they lived at the children's shelter.

> *Chris: obvious like I knew ohk (.) I'm gonna have to make myself… I have to find friends to live with, that I will trust cos soccer I use to like and that I do not end up smoking glue or just giving up.*

At the shelter there were a number of reasons that one could get in trouble and the young men expressed that in order to stay out of trouble, one needed to acquaint oneself with the right groups.

> *Robert: ahheh mm when we arrived we did not meet anyone nah we never met anyone… because we like if, if you, like we were three of us so most of the young men they go in ones twos you see things like that. Us we were three, so it was a strong ja strong defence mechanism if I may say. But ja, we… azange [did not]… we had we had… I do not know, mina [me] I feel like maybe we were fortunate they did not try to take any chance with us, they did not do anything*

Although positive relationships exist among homeless young men, these relationships seem to be based mainly on a need for protection. Robert speaks about the time he and his friends arrived in Johannesburg. He says that they were safe because they were three, unlike other young people who end up on the streets alone. He recognises that it was their numbers that kept them safe. Often adolescents leave home to protect themselves from emotional and physical harm within the home environment (Hyde, 2005; Whitebeck, Hoyt, Ackley, 1997); however, this exposes them to further dangers and the risk of prolonged homelessness and poverty (Whitebeck, Hoyt, Ackley, 1997). The streets may be a very violent and hostile environment that requires one to make friends quickly and this is evident in Tebogo's account and those of the other young men.

Homeless children, particularly those that are recently homeless, or are alone, are more vulnerable to victimization and abuse (Whitebeck, Hoyt, Ackley, 1997). The young men expressed

an awareness of this danger and for some the networks they formed with others were to protect themselves from street life. Schiffrin (1996), states that because people live in social contexts, when these change such as when where young men leave their family homes, or move to a new country, one's perception of identity also changes. One begins to see the self in relation to new others. It is evident from the young men's comments above that although these networks were considered beneficial, they felt that youth who have been on the streets longer adapt to street life by being part of groups; the participants all expressed the desire to maintain an individual identity, perhaps an identity from their previous lives. The significance of this was not explicitly stated but it may be due to hopes of someday returning to their home, and resuming their lives as the people they used to be.

Despite what is assumed about youth living on the street, some of which the young men confirmed to be true, these young men showed that they are more than just criminals or victims. They are not people who confirm the stereotypical labels; they show that they are concerned about having a better life, forming positive connections and using their skills to survive. From this it can be suggested that homelessness is not always about hopelessness or living a passive lives, the young men expressed a sense of agency and hope for the future.

4.4. Being at home and belonging in the future

In this section I will discuss the young men's thoughts about home and belonging in the future. This could be returning to their original homes or where they imagine their homes to be in the future.

4.4.1. Returning home

Most of the young men left their families on bad terms, the relationships were much damaged at the time of the departure and to return home would entail fixing the relationships. Thoughts of

returning home are emotionally loaded and still shape why the young men are where they are today. The young men expressed an awareness of the brokenness of original family relationships. Some had a desire to restore these relationships and some have attempted to do so but failed. A common theme in their narratives is that when they imagine home in the future it is with new families or in new places, not with the people in their past or current lives.

> *Sipho: I want to have my own family I wasn't them to be proud of me, to do for them what was never done for me. Even though I had challenges I do not want my family to go through the same things for his children to have a father they can be proud of him.*
>
> *Robert: Jait is cos now the only thing is growing you like own a bigger space a house, having my own ride and no[with], Mrs. on the side and junior this side, yeah that would be comfortable for me ja.*

For the young men, a better future or good home is represented by the image of a nuclear family. They speak about having wives and children in the future. Although these are positive family networks, this imagined future of a nuclear family, is not represented in their lives now, nor has been in their past families. The idea of a nuclear family is very influential in what is considered a normal or a good home (Russell, 2003; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999; Ziel, 2001), so much so, that the young men who have never lived in nuclear families, project these families in their future. Some of the young men expressed that they felt like they were burdens to their family members and hence they left the family to start a life on their own. The comments below expressed by Anthony reveal that even though some of the young men would have liked to return home, this is only possible if they can bring something to the family, produce something they have achieved or return home when they no longer need to depend on the family.

> *Anthony : eish you know eish to go back home, you know where I come from sisi eh maybe I can say to stay with somebody is like what caused me not to go back to Zim is, I know if I go back to Zim, where I'm going to stay*
>
> *I: hmm*

Anthony: Because my brother is the one who was nearer to me than everyone else, so he was the one who was my hope that maybe my brother will raise me up, stay with me. But what I see my brother was thinking about his wife. Maybe it's me who is wrong but hai, I'm not wrong I decided I'm leaving at my own, suffering at my own is better than being with someone who is making me sometimes… see many of the times always crying thinking about many things is not alright cos in the streets I'm living does not mean ill just stay in the streets. One day god will bless I'll leave start something which can change my life

Anthony: so I can't go back to Zim but maybe I'll find job and my life will change and I can go back to Zim and I'll start to live my own life that's what I am hoping for my life that maybe in the future I will have to change my life for myself (.) so that one day, I do not know maybe.

Anthony seems unsure about going back home. Even though he has nowhere to stay here, he questions where he would stay if he went back home because he cannot stay with his brother and his family. It is evident from this above excerpt that Anthony has given this idea a lot of thought, but like he talks about it here, he has thought about all that has happened between him and his brother. He feels that his brother should be the one who takes care of him. He also suggests that he could have been wrong but quickly returns to the conclusion that his brother has hurt him and as a result he cannot go home. He then adds that maybe if his life situation changes, if he gets a job and can afford to take care of himself maybe he will go back to Zimbabwe. This idea of being able to give back speaks to a need to be accepted. Like Anthony, for many of the young men interviewed the decision to leave home is marked by hurt and disappointment. Tebogo says he only goes home because of the relationship he has with his grandfather but does not believe he will still go there should his grandfather pass away. He has no intentions to return home even though that is the place he lived with his mother and all his relatives are there.

Tebogo: I go there sometimes but when mkhulu [granddad] passes away I do not think I will go there anymore

Sometimes going back home does not seem like a possibility. This is often due to the nature of the relationships back home; when they are so broken one may feel that the only option is to start all over again.

I: do you have plans to go back to Mozambique?

Michael: wow! Wow, wow that's the diff, difficult questions and everybody does, everybody does this question. I can tell you the most time when I do to myself also ehm the answer is not mine to go back…So if I do not go home, I'm gonna use her [Johannesburg], I'm gonna pay back her[Johannesburg]. Cos I'm not gonna go nowhere. So she, she [Johannesburg] won't feel bad about me. Because you can't feel bad if the man is keep be there. She [Johannesburg] keeps you warm and you warm her also… no, she [Johannesburg] won't be a prostitute if I be with her but if I will she will because another guy is gonna do the same thing'

Michael felt that the decision to go home was not his; at first it seems like his lacks agency regarding the decision whether to stay in Johannesburg or return to Mozambique. Michael gives a beautiful analogy of Johannesburg. He likens the city to a prostitute with whom you do not stay, you get what you want and leave. Likewise, many people who come to Johannesburg to find employment or other opportunities come and once they have achieved what they needed to, they always leave. So for him he chooses to stay. He has no plans to return to Mozambique, even though Johannesburg has not offered him much. Perhaps it has given him more than what Mozambique has given him. He says that should he return home, he would have to face the same challenges he left back home. Johannesburg offers him new challenges but also offers him opportunities that he might have not have had back home. He acknowledges the fact that he is here illegally and that there is a chance that he could be sent back to Mozambique and there is nothing he can do about that. But his choice is to stay here and make this place home. At the end he expresses his agency in choosing o stay but recognises that this choice has limitations.

4.5. Conclusion

The thematic analysis focused on the content of the narratives in order to explore themes across the narratives. Four themes were identified under ‘narratives of belonging and home in the past places and relationships.

Four themes were identified under the narratives of the belonging and home in the past. These first two themes confirm what we understand about the concept of ‘home’. Firstly home is related to a place; secondly it is related to people. The third theme shows that being related to people does not mean that you belong to them or that they will take care of you. The young men expressed feelings of being abandoned by these original families and that they felt alone most of the time.

In narratives about the journey and the transition to Johannesburg, two main themes are related to relationships and spaces. Sub themes about relationships were related to the young men’s attempts to break ties with their past identities in order to create new identities and construct new connections. Subthemes for the theme space are related to the young men’s attempts to negotiate their identity in the new space of homelessness. Firstly Johannesburg did not turn out as expected. The lived life in Johannesburg turned out to be different from what was imagined. The sub theme real life in Johannesburg can be summarised by this phrase the good the bad and the ugly. The good represents what is not usually considered when spoken about homeless young men, the bad confirms what is known and the ugly highlights that homeless people are not always the perpetrators sometime what society has done to these young men and other homeless people is worse then what they are feared to be capable of.

In narratives of the future we see that although most of the young men identified with a place of origin and a family in their narratives of belonging in past places and relationships. These places

and families did not feature in their narratives of the future. Instead, for most, the imagined future consisted of new families in new places.

The findings suggest that home is a fluid concept. Homes can be constructed and reimagined again and again. Homelessness is not just about being a person staying on the streets. It is about staying on the streets alone and may even be staying in a house with a family and yet not feel like you belong or are accepted. Home and homelessness are always binary, one may experience homelessness while at home and one may find home in places that are not considered to be home. Themes in the narratives of these young men suggest that homelessness is about having lived a certain type of life characterised by these intertwines experiences of home and homelessness. The trajectory of homelessness is not only negative moving forward but seems to be one that is consistent with the life from the past (Milburn, et al, 2005). We see that even prior to living on the streets, life for these young men was challenging. Most of them had lost a primary caregiver; there were dysfunctions in the family unit, rejection, isolation and the absence of a 'normal childhood'.

Chapter five: Structural analysis and discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will present a structural analysis of three life stories in terms of two aspects: First, I will analyse the trajectories of movement between places. Second, I will focus on the relationships in the different spaces within the narrative develop. The multiple movements, particularly back and forth between different places called 'home' suggest shifts and changes in the identity of the narrator in experiences of belonging or alienation that these places offer. A critical aspect of this belonging and alienation is shaped by relationships. Themes identified in the thematic analysis were all related to place and relationships, therefore the structural analysis will focus on the relational dimension of the narrator's story in the different places over time.

The three narratives selected for this structural analysis, represent how home and homelessness can intertwine and that one place ('home') is not necessarily better than the other ('homelessness'). The lives of these three young men represent the general movement of people from 'home' to 'homelessness'. While living with 'family' in stable accommodation is perceived to be better for individuals and societies, sometimes what happens behind closed doors can be more stressful than being alone or without shelter. However, life away from home, away from the difficulties of family, may also not necessarily guarantee a better life. The stories of these young men demonstrate the oscillation of life and demonstrated in the articulation of their narrative. The narratives of the other young men also demonstrated this pattern but not as explicitly as these narratives of young men who returned home only to leave these homes of origin a second or even third time to return to the streets.

The first step in the analysis of the three selected stories was to represent both movement and relationships in a visual map of the life as told in the narrative interview. Visual representation of data enables the researcher to engage with the data for better understanding (Kim, 2015) and to

present analysis that would not be easily demonstrated by text or through discussion. The numbered arrows depict the movement between places in chronological sequence. Each map consists of a representation of places (rectangles) and relationships (ovals). The colour and size of these shapes convey further meaning. Significant primary places are larger and light blue, whereas less significant places are represented by smaller dark blue rectangles. The red ovals represent significant/positive/ close relationship. The light green ovals represent blood relatives but who are not significant or close figures in the narrative. The dark green ovals represent people met along the way who are mentioned in the story but seem to have no significant relationship. Each story is titled to represent the narrative thread that seems to organise the participant's account of his life story.

5.2. Tebogo: <u>The strangers I know</u>

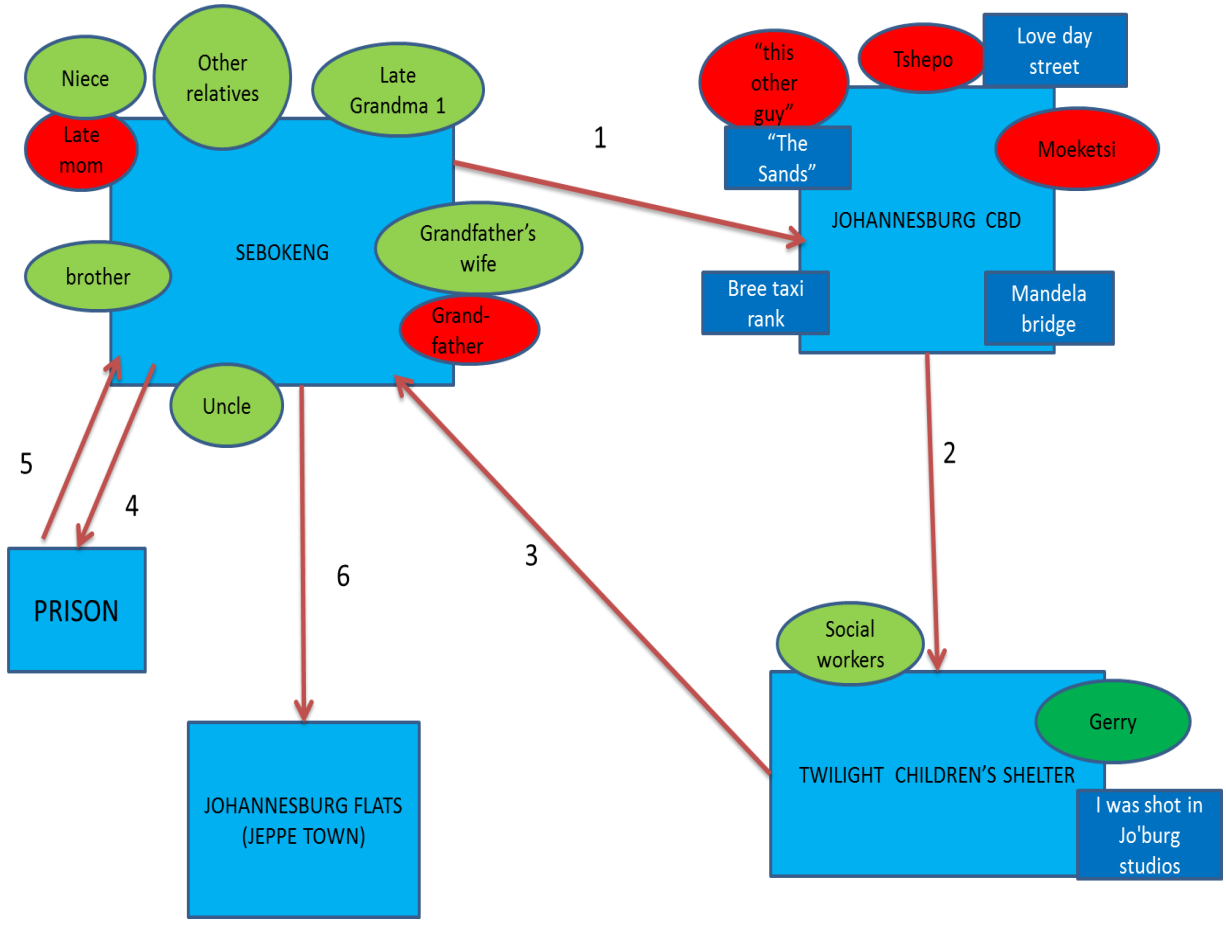


Figure 1: Tebogo's Life Map

Tebogo mentions four main places in his narrative; Sebokeng, Johannesburg CBD, Twilight Children's Shelter, Prison and the place where he stays now the flats in Jeppe Town, Johannesburg. The above map shows that he moved from Sebokeng to live in the streets of Johannesburg CBD (Arrow 1). Tebogo moved to the CBD in 2007, one year after his mother's passing. Tebogo then moved from the streets to live at Twilight Children's Shelter in 2008 (Arrow 2). In 2010 Tebogo was expelled from the children's shelter for absconding. He then moved back to Sebokeng to now live in his grandfather's house (Arrow 3). While in Sebokeng, Tebogo committed a crime and was sentenced to prison for a year (2013-2014) (Arrow 4). He went back to Sebokeng after his release from prison (Arrow 5) only to leave again and return to Johannesburg (Arrow 6). We see that the majority of the relationships in Tebogo's narrative are not positive or significant as represented by the green ovals. In particular, it is noteworthy that the only positive relationships (red ovals) he speaks of in his home place of Sebokeng are with his mother (now deceased) and grandfather and all other positive relationships are on the streets of Johannesburg.

Tebogo's story is of a young man who, although having family that lives physically close to each other, they were emotionally distant and he felt that he did not really have any social support, especially after the passing of his mother. He begins his narrative by mentioning he used to live in Sebokeng with his mother and niece. He makes reference to his brother, uncle, cousins, two grandmothers and a grandfather who all live somewhere in Sebokeng, relatively close to each other but not in the same house. It can be suggested that Sebokeng is Tebogo's place of origin but not really his 'home'. From his map, we see that he has moved to and from Sebokeng multiple times. This movement is consistent with what is commonly understood about 'home' as not only a place where one comes from but also the place where one can return to (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). However, the repeated leaving of this place, coupled with the primarily negative (or at least insignificant) relationships that he speaks of there, destabilises this notion of home.

I have titled his narrative the 'the strangers I know' because, although he has family back 'home', he comments on his relationship with his family now (at the time of the interview) as: "*Ah, is not good, it's not right, it's just bad because family won't treat you well…"* Before he moved to Johannesburg he lived with his extended family (represented by the light green ovals) but they did not treat him well. The only significant relationships he had at home are with his mother and grandfather. The rest of the family are not very important to him. Apart from reporting that he was expected to take care of his brother's child, his grandfather and help out with the other children, we know nothing about his family.

Tebogo says that he only spent a year on the streets but his narrative has more details about this period than any other period in his life. From his map we see that Tebogo not only provided details about his experiences in these places, he also provides details about the people he was close to while living on the streets. He described the different places he moved around while in Johannesburg and the people with whom he interacted, how he found a place to sleep, the specific places where he met the people he stayed with (Bree taxi rank), where he used to bath (under Mandela Bridge) and wash his clothes, how he made money, etc. When he spoke about the people (represented by the red ovals) on the streets, he mentioned them by names and what each person liked to spend their days doing, e.g. that Tshepo used to work at Loveday Street and "this other guy" used to buy his drugs at a place called "The Sands". By contrast, when he spoke about his family, none of their names were mentioned or where in Sebokeng they lived or any personal defining details.

The first person he introduces is the young man whom he referred to as "this other guy" he met on his first day on the street. This relationship is considered significant because, although we do not know his name, Tebogo tells us about the type of person he is, what he liked to do *"eh he used to take drugs, he would sit and smoke his thing, but I was not into that",* and how he used survive *"he allowed me to wash cars with him"* and "*he used to send me to ask for bottles from the*

ladies who sell at the rank because he had stolen from them before". This nameless character helped Tebogo by taking him under his wing, gave him a place to sleep and initiating him into street life. The next young man he became close to was Moeketsi. He said that they became close because they both spoke Sotho and, being new in Jo'burg, he was not fluent in speaking Zulu which is the predominant language spoken on the streets. It is possible that Tebogo spoke in greater detail about this period in his life because he understood that the research was about the experience of homelessness. But this could also suggest distance between him and his biological family and closeness with the people he used to live with on the streets. The people he lived with, or interacted with, all seemed to help him in some way or the other. It was Tshepo, the man whose car he [Tebogo] often washed, who decided to arrange with the Metro police to take him and the other younger boys off the streets and took them to the children's shelter, Twilight Children's shelter (Arrow 2).

Tebogo did not talk much about life at Twilight. It may seem that a children's shelter would represent a second chance of being at home and being taken care of. He says: *"I can say that is where my life started, because I could go back to school, I went back to elokshini [Seboken], because I wasn't going back there anymore. Because ey when I was this side [Johannesburg streets] I used to go there. I broke the law and the police were looking for me. So when I went to Twilight the social workers helped me to go back and correct my mistakes, apologise to the people I hurt so this thing can go away."*

Tebogo introduces us to the Social Worker, even though referred to as "the social worker/ mam social worker"; it is evident that this is not one person. The social worker, although we do not know her/his name, is presented as a person that can be good (when they helped him go back home and make amends with his grandfather who remains a positive significant person in his life) and bad (because they evicted him from the shelter). However, he acknowledges that his behaviour, being violent, a bully, and drinking alcohol led to his led to his expulsion from the shelter.

After moving back to Sebokeng (Arrow 3), he left the "I was shot on Jo'burg" project. It is possible that Tebogo was able to move back home after his expulsion because of the social workers mediation. Social workers can facilitate the removal of a child from an abusive home environment but may also facilitate the repairing of the relationship between the child and the family (Sambo, 2014).While at home, it appears that the responsibilities he had left then were still there and no one was assisting him. Tebogo's experience is consistent with what is often reported about homeless youth. Many come from dysfunctional families (Martijn & Sharpe, 2006) and have a history of breaking the law (Kidd, 2007). Tebogo broke the law and he was arrested and sentenced to one year (Arrow 4). He did not want to discuss the details of his arrest but we know that this was not his first conflict with the law, as he earlier mentioned that the social workers helped him get the cases against him dropped. He mentioned that his grandmother passed away soon after his release from (Arrow 5) jail and that he is still trying to get his job back at the studio. He feels that the project manager (Gerry) finds it difficult to trust him because of what he knows about him.

What makes the relationships that Tebogo had with the people he lived with on the street significant, is that he felt cared for in this 'new family'. By contrast at 'home' he felt alone, neglected and he did not feel supported: where his father was absent, his grandfather was married to a woman who "hated him" and his older brother did not care about him. On the streets, he found many older, experienced young men who took him under their care and would make sure he was safe and not doing drugs or crime. Of all the participants, Tebogo was the only one who did not express any desire to have known his father or his father's side of the family. Perhaps this is because there have always been male figures in his life, particularly his paternal grandfather who remains an anchor point for him. The men he met while he lived on the street represented a caring and nurturing male figures and these substitute 'fathers' fulfilled a role that his biological father and male relatives failed to meet excluding his grandfather. Just like male relatives are expected to provide financial aid and guidance (Richter, 2006), his substitute fathers gave him shelter, taught

him about street life and assisted financially. The role of a father is associated with identity and belonging (Padi, Nduna, Khunou & Kholopane, 2014) and this is evident in the child taking on the father's surname (Nduna & Jewkes, 2010). As a young man, new on the streets, having left an uncaring home, the care he got from his substitute 'fathers' helped make the transition easier for him and these relationships continue to feature positively in his life story.

Tebogo now lives in Johannesburg again, after going back 'home' more than once (Arrows 3 and 5). According to Somerville (1997, p. 321) home represents "familiarity". When life is interrupted like being kicked out of the shelter or having no place to go to, one may decide to return 'home' where one belongs. Unfortunately returning home also reminds one of the reason why one left in the first place, as we see with Tebogo. Young people on the streets may not be too far from their family home and they may move on and off the streets a few times (Pergamit, 2010) like Tebogo did, before they settle of a life on their own or finding an alternative family or home.

For Tebogo the idea of home is not a place but about relationships. Home as a place of origin and the relationships there have only hurt him. The significant relationships he identified in his story are paradoxically in the place of 'homelessness", on the streets. Unfortunately, these individuals, although they were important at one point remain strangers, these relationship only lasted for that period in time. Although Tebogo speaks of them fondly, he does not mention being in touch with them now or intensions of ever getting hold of them in the future. People living on the streets may develop relationships with one other on the street; but although these may be reported as important they are often not sustained (Lucas & Dryenforth, 2006). Connections and networks are forged for immediate security and companionship and may not continue when people move on, suggesting limitations to the notion of substitute families.

5.3. Nelly: A journey of self-discovery

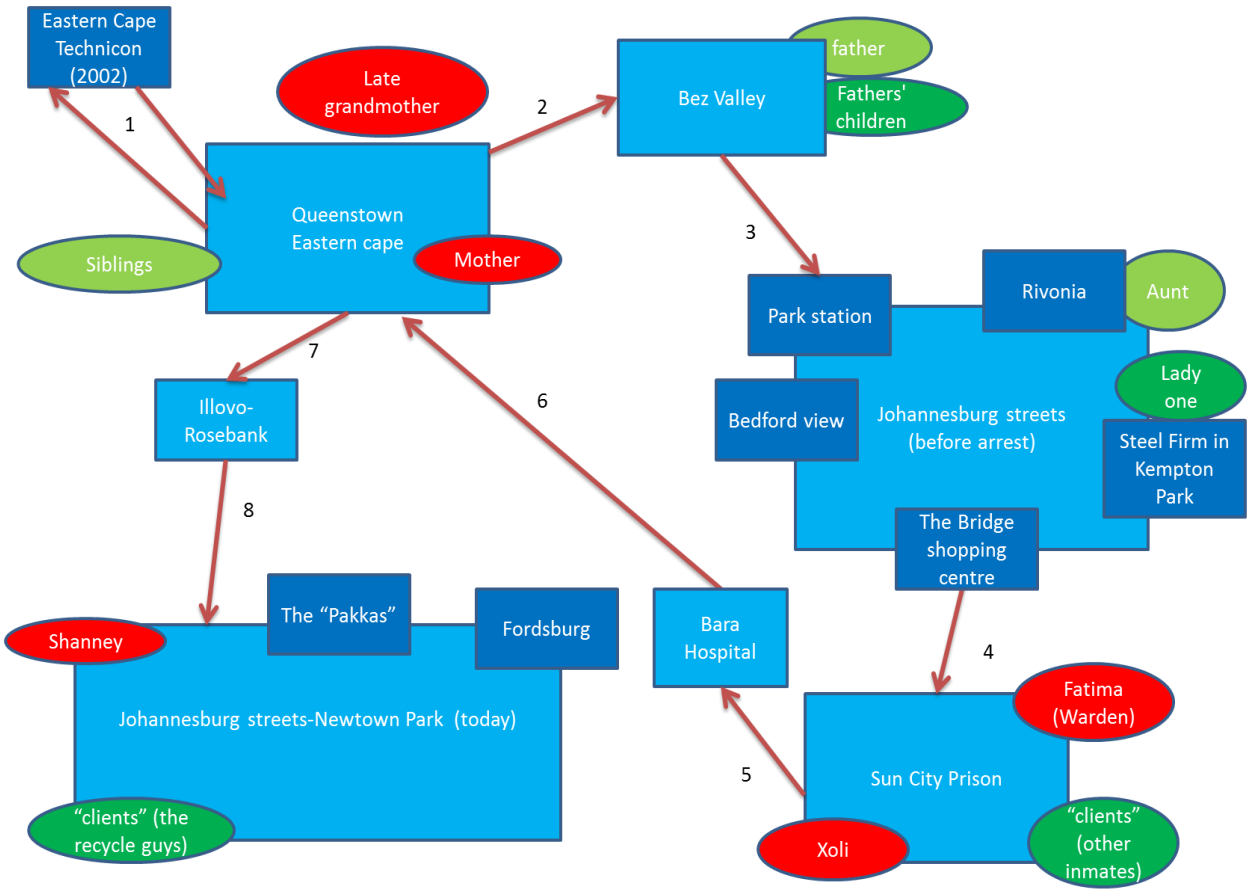


Figure 2: Nelly's life map

Nelly was born in the Eastern Cape. He went to study at Eastern Cape Technicon in 2003 where he dropped out in his first year in Public administration. He then moved to Johannesburg in 2010 to look for his father (Arrow 2). He found his father who was living in Bez Valley; he lived with him and his new family before moving to Johannesburg CBD where he stayed in the streets (Arrow 3). Nelly identifies a number of places he associated with his stay in Johannesburg. He used to sell pens at Bedford view and worked at Kempton Park. Although he does not mention whether he had been to Rivonia or not, he mentions that his Aunt who is a domestic worker worked and stayed there. Nelly said that he was caught shoplifting at the Bridge shopping centre and was arrested in Johannesburg CBD and sentenced to Sun City Prison (Arrow 4). While he was in prison he got sick and was taken to Bara Hospital (Arrow 5) where he spent the last three months of

his sentence. He then moved back to the Eastern Cape to recover (Arrow 6) but did not stay for too long. Nelly says that he moved back to Johannesburg and lived in Illovo for a few months. He said that life in Rosebank was too expensive and so he decided to move to Jo'burg town (Arrow 7) where he is currently staying in Newtown Park.

Nelly was raised by his mother and grandmother and reports that he has a very good relationship with his mother and grandmother. He said that he has always been impressed with his mother especially how she raised him and all her efforts trying to ensure that he had everything he needed. *"Woo, I used to live nice. I remember those times…I used to live a very nice life. My mother I'm not from a well off family but my mother used to strive for me to get things. I used to get things very fast and… I grew up like a normal chid having things, I did not experience hardship, I didn't know that at the end of the day I will be facing this"*. It was his mother's desire to provide him with a tertiary education *"So when I grew up there, there was a point whereby my mother in the mean time she had this eh this idea of taking me to tertiary"*

Nelly said that his mother has been disabled from the time he was born; therefore he had a lot of responsibilities in the house, including working in his mother's tavern. He said when he was working at the tavern he realised that he was attracted to the men that drank there and that is when he began to engage with men: *"That's where my naughtiness started to look, to start to be a… to be gay. I do not know where it comes from… I used to be naughty, to look at the guys there when they come buy, coming in and out, going up and down and then I started to have boys. Then there that's when it started but I was hiding it from my mom."*

Nelly said he kept this from his mother, until he went to Eastern Cape Technickon (Arrow 1). This is when he started to explore and express his 'true' self. This was not easy because he could not look like the other students and he wanted to look like other students *"…so I dint want that thing I wanted myself like to, to be update, though I'm doing my course to be clean and nice and*

fashionable. Because I used to see abanye abantwana [other children] how they dress." He felt that the pressure was too much for him because he lacked many things such as food, clothing and stationery and this led to him dropping out from tertiary and moving back home. Like moving to a big city requires adjustment and adaptation, many students may feel out of place in big institutions such as university. For Nelly being in university, away from rural Eastern Cape where homosexuality is considered "taboo", meant an opportunity to finally express who he is and the inability to do this by dressing the way he wished to "like other children" made him frustrated to the point of where he decided to drop out of Technicon.

While back at home, Nelly felt that he could not be his authentic self as a gay man. Nelly decided to move to Johannesburg to look for his father. It seems that Nelly's desire to find his father was motivated by the experiences he had as a child being ridiculed for not having his father around- not having an identity. He also felt that he needed to find his father because he questioned his sexual orientation; maybe he was gay because his father was not around. It was once erroneously accepted that homosexuality is influenced by parental factors such as the absence of a father figure or an over bearing mother (Apperson & McAdoo, 1968; Snortum, Gillespie, Marshall, & Mclaughlin, 1969; West, 1959). Nelly also felt that his father's presence would have made his life easier. He wouldn't have been ridiculed as a child and he would not have to deal with being gay.

When Nelly came to Johannesburg he found his father, but did not stay for too long with him and his other family. Nelly mentions this very early in his narrative and from then on hardly speaks about his father or the relationship they have now. This could suggest that although finding his father was important to him, coming to Johannesburg was much more about finding himself, particularly as a gay man.

When Nelly moved out of his father's house in Bez Valley (Arrow 3), he came to the Johannesburg CBD, where he started staying on the street. While staying there he was selling pens at the traffic lights in Bedford view and life was challenging because he would be insulted by some people. It was here that someone saw him and offered to take him to work at a Steel firm in Kempton Park. He enjoyed working at the firm because he was now able to 'spoil' himself and to dress himself the way he felt expressed his personality and identify as a gay man. But he also hated working at the firm because he had to 'man-up' and leave his diva personality.

> *Nelly: Because sometimes you had to put the queen side aside and then you focus yourself, and said you know I'm not going to be a diva now I'm gonna be just me. I'm not going to do all this... I had to try to be a man. Imagine being at the firm being gay at the firm you can't even put... to do your makeup stuff because most of the time.*

Eventually the contract came to an end and he was back where he started, and worse off. One day he was caught shoplifting and was arrested and sentenced to a year at Sun City prison (Arrow 4). One may consider prison to be a very hostile place, but for Nelly, being openly gay gave him many privileges while in prison. He was treated like a queen and was good friends with one of the wardens, Fatima, and very close to one of the inmates, Xoli. Xoli initiated his entry into sex work in jail and trained him to take over because Xoli's sentence was soon coming to an end. Nelly says he enjoyed all the attention he got, but it was overwhelming at times.

It is not uncommon for sex to be used for survival in prison (Gear, 2007; Niehaus, 2002). Nelly acknowledged this and says that you need to do this to survive, especially if you are gay and cannot protect yourself. Sex work was also a camouflage to hide that he had no one visiting him. Close to the end of his sentence he got sick and was transferred to Bara hospital (Arrow 5). Nelly had stopped taking his ARVs because he did not want his "customers" to know he was HIV positive. After his release from Bara hospital he went back home to the Eastern Cape to recover (Arrow 6). By then news of his arrest had travelled through his aunt who was living in Rivonia.

People were more concerned about the details of his arrest then his failing health. Being at home is about being accepted and taken care of even when you are at your worse/ weakest. However, Nelly did not experience this at home and he could not wait to get better so he could go back to Johannesburg and get back to his true self, without being concerned about his mother taking care of him, or people telling him he can't find a job in the city because he is cursed for being gay.

> *Nelly: cos I knew, I know I can see how my mother suffers and I'm the older one at my home. I had to make some living cos the other people are going to laugh at me saying "Ja, he is cursed because he does not get a job because he is gay what what" so I was avoiding all these jara jara things. So I decided myself to come here and do it for myself. I tried to be a prosticute [prostitute] out here, you know at Ilovo in Rosebank*

When Nelly came to Rosebank (Arrow 7) he continued with the sex work he had started in prison. Because of the lifestyle he lived there, he could not stay there for a long period. He got into drugs and a flamboyant life style which he could not keep up with. Eventually he decided to leave and make his way back to the Johannesburg city centre. This time he moved to Newtown (Arrow 8), where he is currently living at the park with his friend Sammy. Sammy is also gay and from the Eastern Cape.

It seems although Nelly is aware of his sexuality, it has been the source of many internal conflicts e.g. Nelly says that his Christian beliefs are important to him but he is aware that this conflicts with his identity as a homosexual man. It seems that his feelings about being gay are challenged by the fact that he goes to the "pakkas" (soup kitchens) which are mainly at churches.

> *Nelly: …being on the streets, being gay and not having anyone to fight for you is so tough. Cos sometimes I used to meet with the guys they call me names sometimes at the pakkas, where they dish us food. When they see you in the line, when they spotted me that I'm gay, like yesterday I had a problem with a guy who was busy with me. He says that gays are the people who's supposed to be burned. He was talking all the swearing words but I couldn't talk because I was scared that I was going to go outside and then this guy was going to meet me…*

He says that the church people do not comment about his sexual orientation, but the other homeless people insult him and threaten to beat him up because they can tell that he is gay because of how he dresses and conducts himself. While religion appears to reject any form of homosexuality, in a way he feels that this God he wants to be close to rejects him. It has been reported that many religious believers have struggled with their homosexuality (Thumma, 1991; Yip, 1997). Yip reports on the attempts of gay Christian men to reject the stigmatizing labels by the church. He reports that the man rejected the stigma by redefining what it means to be a Christian as a gay man. Nelly has contested these labels even though he did not report feeling rejected at the church but rather that the conflict was personal. A conflict between being his authentic self and pleasing God, whom he understands as disapproving of homosexuality.

> *Nelly: I feel so embarrassed and hated myself as a gay and said but why there was a point whereby I start to think maybe God... if ever I approach the spiritual world it would be fine, but I find it hard for me to change. Yeah, the outside I changed, I managed to change the outside. But the inner side of me, the feeling when I see a guy maybe, sometimes it happens I will be honest. It happens maybe you see the guy is looking well, and you are charmed by this person and you say "oh this guy" but I told myself, I am not going for it. I'm just going to please God.*

As Nelly tries to articulate his true identity, the other tensions and conflicts in his life become evident. Firstly it is not only the fact that he as the first born, particularly first male. He is expected to take care of his elderly mother and his younger siblings. The second conflict is talking about how he wants to make money. Sometimes he spoke about his talent for making bags and how this is going to help him leave the sex work. However, he also said that once he makes enough money, he will look like other gay men "stylish and up to date" then he can attract better clients.

> *Nelly: and then nje ngoba ubona la [as you can see here] I'm starting a new hairstyle because also, does not stop there the business that I'm doing on the street. Like ukugosha loku [this prostitution]*

Later he says, "…*But now I just hold myself on this thing of prostituting cos I do not want it. I'm just... that is why I decided; you know what let me just be dirty and not have the soap…Because this is December time, I need to look fresh and nice. I do not like to look like this. That is why I decided to do this (points to his hair) to change the look not to look dirty*

The contradictions in his narrative reflect the nature of life on the streets. Many young people who are homeless may speak about wanting a better life, like being with loved a one or having a job but the choice is not always possible to actualize.

Nelly talks about a future here in Johannesburg and hopes to one day open up his own boutique if someone would help him. Because of the relationship Nelly has with his mother, he will stay connected to his life back home, even if he does not move back. The culture in his rural home place will never allow him to be a "*wild girl, Noqatico*" [loose woman]. There are too many expectations of him as a man and a first born. The positive or significant relationships (red ovals) expressed in Nelly's narratives are with people who accepted him and in some cases celebrated his homosexuality. His mother although at times did not support it, Nelly said she was a good mother; both his mother and grandmother were good to him. When he went to prison, Xoli took him and trained him to be one of the "ruling queens" in prison. Fatima the warden brought him make up and earings. For Nelly it seems that only when he was arrested that he felt truly liberated. When he was in prison he got the attention, he made friends, and he was fully gay without fear of being insulted or harmed like he is in the streets. For this reason staying here in Johannesburg is a better alternative, even though sometimes he is targeted and mistreated on the streets. In Johannesburg he can be 'herself' and imagines that his designer items "Noqatiko collecetions" will be an expression of this.

Nelly: Noqatiko, is a wild girl, she likes wild things, like she goes to parties, she goes… she likes fashion; she likes everything that is wild, so that's why I called my brand… all these things that I'm designing, Noqatiko is a girl who likes, she… is a Xhosa name so Noqatiko is a girl who likes, she… is a Xhosa name... because I'm a wild girl. I'm from very far, I'm from

jail, I'm from sickness, I'm from the street. I will be saying that, telling my story when I'm big.

Nelly's narrative represents a journey of self-discovery. It is marked by tensions between multiple identities, a religious person, a gay man, a wild girl, a designer and a sex worker. Bauman, (1996, p. 19) says that "one thinks of identity whenever one is not sure where one belongs". Although he seems more comfortable and free in Johannesburg, he even sees his future located in Johannesburg; perhaps for Nelly he cannot belong anywhere because although he seems sure of whom he is, there are still unsettled conflicts that are yet to be settled. He is trying to resolve them by moving towards his authentic self, which he seems to imagine in the future.

5.4. Michael: <u>The Pilgrim (in search of the American dream)</u>

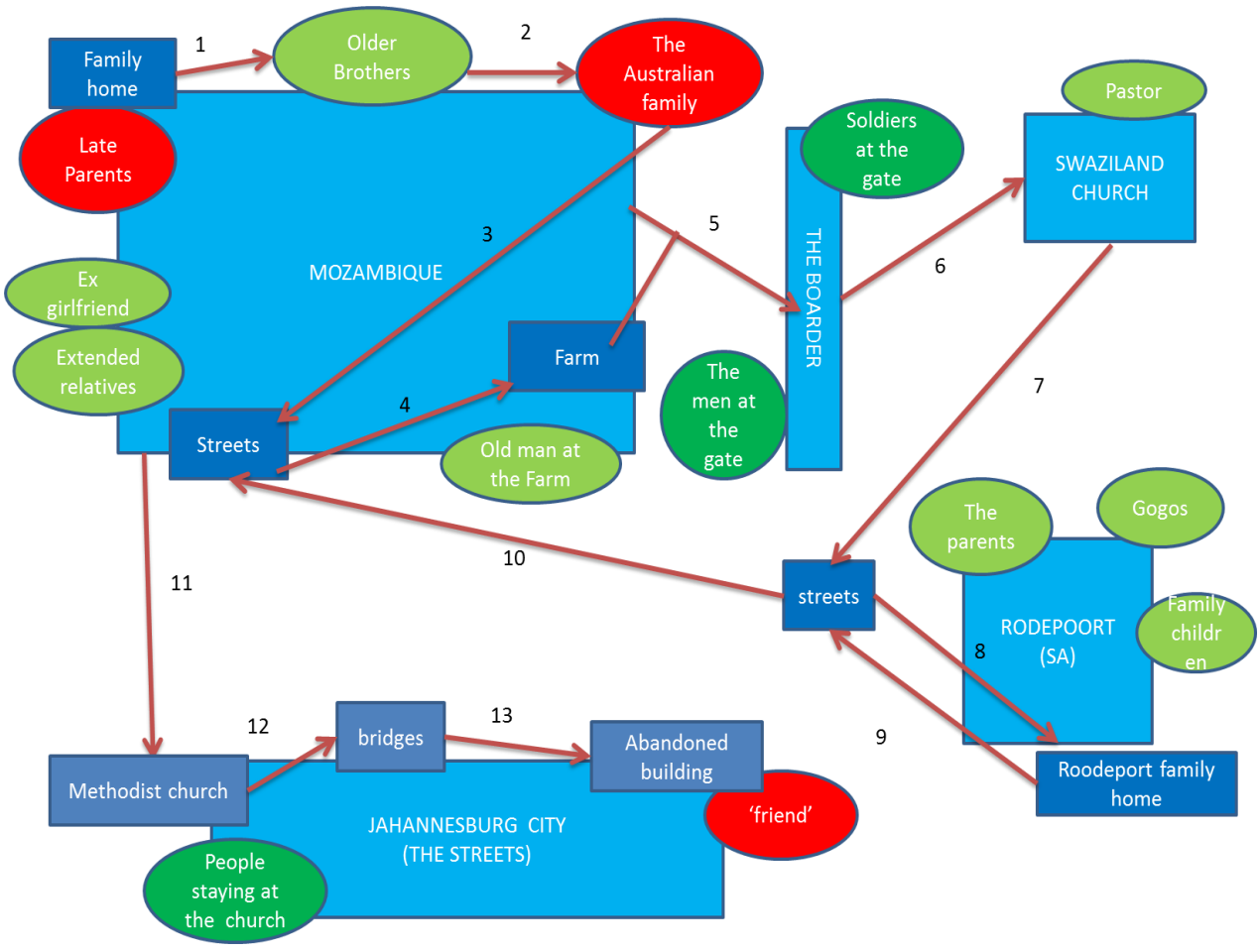


Figure 3: Michael's Life Map

I have titled Michael's narrative 'The Pilgrim'; this is because it tells the story of a man in pursuit of something great. His narrative and expressed by his life indicates that he has always been on the move in journey of something. This journey is both physical and figurative. Physically, Michael had to move from place to place, covering large distance, from Mozambique to Johannesburg because he had no place to stay, figuratively because he was in search of something even though he does not know yet what this something is. He knows it is something great and represented by the "American dream" for him. Not only is his story is filled with many places, it is also filled multiple connections (represented by the red and green ovals). The Red ovals represent positive/ significant relationships. The light green represents people he once had a relationship with but now the relationships are weak, for example his brothers, extended relatives and his ex-girlfriend. Because Michael spoke well of most of the people in his narrative, they are also coded light green. These people all seemed relevant in some way, even though the connections were not maintained. The dark green ovals are people mentioned in the narrative but were not significant connections. Although the men at the border gate and the soldier were helpful in his journey they were not considered important.

He begins his narrative with life in Mozambique, where his journey began when his parents died. This set in motion his movement from place to place. Before he ended up living on the streets in Mozambique, he stayed with his older brothers in their homes (Arrow1). Michael says that his relationship with his brothers was strained when his bothers got married and failed to take care of him as he was the youngest. This caused a strain in their relationship; even to this day, he does not communicate with his brothers at all. *"… it's like I'm invisible (laughs)…: it's like I exist but they do not know where I am …"* His relationship with his brothers is currently non-existent because even though they are blood related they have no relationship.

Being married, means that his brothers now had new responsibilities and taking care of him would have been strenuous owing to the socio economic status. And since no one else in the

extended family could take care of him, they allowed him to be fostered by a Missionary family that was in Mozambique at the time (Arrow 2). He referred to this family as "the Australian family". He had a good relationship with this family; he enjoyed living with them and was looking forward to leaving with them when they went back to Australia. Unfortunately his brothers did not consent. Michael moved from living to with the Australian family to living on the streets in Mozambique at the age of 12 years (Arrow 3). He had lived with the family for a year and half and, fortunately for him, by the time they left they had taught him to speak English.

When he was about 15 he was working on the farms (Arrow 4) where he was working with an older gentleman who told him since he could speak English he should go to South Africa to live a better life. Indeed, he made means to come to South Africa, passing through Swaziland (Arrows 5, 6 and 7). He tells a detailed story of his journey crossing the border to South Africa. He likens the experience of crossing the border to his life journey.

> *Michael: ...So when I reached the border there's guys that ehm, yo know you pay them they gonna open the fence for you (giggles) but they say like this, "after you go out of this fence, you pass this fence it's up to you brother. If you die, you die, that's you, that's not us." ... said well that is really dangerous. They said "there's animals here, it's really dangerous there's some snakes and stuff even you know gangsters they can also kill you". Wow, so I said I'm already here so I can't just go back. So I went down the fence and I passed and there was another fence in the front, that wow nobody is gonna, (giggles) nobody is gonna open that fence for me*

He says that at the border there are men you can pay to help you open the border fence but once you have gone through you are on your own. In a way the Australian Family could represent the man at the first gate, they gave him an opportunity to come to South Africa but once he made his way here he was alone, like when he had to face the second gate. He later explains that going back to Mozambique would be like him turning at the second gate. Instead of facing the challenge in front of him in Johannesburg, going back to Mozambique will be like going back to the first gate

to face the same challenges he left in Mozambique. "*So if I go back, things are not gonna be the same things, I have to conquer again, so have new risks, what about I just conquer this one in the front, that's the end"*

The risk of being arrested or even killed or even attacked by wild animals does not seem to deter people from crossing the border from other countries. Handmaker and Parsley, (2001) say that due to the economic and climate challenges in Mozambique, there has been an increase in the number people crossing the border to South Africa illegally. This is not an easy journey nor is it a one day effort. Michael said that in order to get to Johannesburg he had to work in each province that he got to in order to get to the next. Coming to South Africa, he passed through Swaziland, where he met a pastor who wanted to live with him and take him to school, but he saw this as a distraction from his destination. He likens life in Swaziland to life in Mozambique. The pastor wanted to organise a wife for him but that is not the life he imagined for himself.

> *Michael: Mozambique is not a very rich country so eh let me say when it's not a rich country, it won't have eh education. I think ehm our aspiration is ehm its ehm, its ehm, its e let me say it's natural… you know it's their beauty of the nature eh... Is like they do not understand the consequences they only see the love of the nature. Like "I wanna be with her no matter what the pain". We can just we can't just dig there and put something is gonna grow up. The nature is gonna give us food we live like that… so that's that's the experience I've been coming to South Africa. But when he (the pastor) showed me the same experience but I, I've been wanting a different one America dream… Ja, wow so you trying to give*

He did not stay with the Pastor, he continued on his journey to "little America" (Arrow 7). When he arrived in South Africa he was living on the streets of Roodeport, where a family saw him looking for food in the bins and took him in (Arrow 8). However, living with this family was not what he wanted; he was not looking for a family or to be taken care of.

He first stayed with a family in Roodepoort then he left that family to move back to the streets of Johannesburg (Arrow 9) and then back, to the streets of Mozambique (Arrow 10). He

spent two years in Mozambique, he says that when he got there his then girlfriend was pregnant with someone else's child; his brothers still did not help him. Even though he was working part time jobs he decided to come back to South Africa in 2013 (Arrow 11). Although he does not state why he decided to move back to Mozambique, he clearly wanted to reunite with his girlfriend and possibly was also hoping to re-establish his relationship with his brothers. It seems that the move was therefore motivated by relationships rather than for work or any other more utilitarian reason.

When one looks at Michael's life map, one can tell that he has been in many places and that he has met many people along the way. What is also evident is the lack of close or strong positive relationships. Maybe Michael could not sustain any relationship because he did not stay in any one place long enough, but it is also likely that the early rejection by his brothers has made him suspicious of family relationships. Child neglect has been documented to have adverse consequences in the development of adult relationships (Burman, 2008). Children who do not have secure or stable relationships are likely to grow up to be adults who fail to develop and sustain healthy adult relationships (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002). Michael spoke well about everyone he mentioned in his narrative; except for the people he left back home, his brothers and his ex-girlfriend. He mentions that he recognises that throughout his life people have tried to help him; he believes that they see the "something different that he has" but he has disappointed them and he leaves because he is on a journey. When asked why he thinks he keeps leaving people, he responded that this is the journey that one must take in order to find something different to be a *"*king*"*.

Michael: do you think that the king can live among with lot of people

I: the king?

Michael: ja

I: why not

Michael: wow! i do not think that he can be a king

I: why

Michael: cos they are too many there

I: what do you mean?

Michael: (giggles) wow. If you can be up you can see many but if you can be on the same, wow you just see heads you know

I: hmmm

Michael: I can see your head but if I go up I can see your hair/head. So this is what I found, the future is about that

I: so be a king you need to above?

Michael: Ja I think you need to be above… I must be tall (giggles) to see what's going on (giggles) Ja

I: but then can a king live alone?

Michael: wow (.) not really but he needs to, he needs to live with certain people, like I told you, the family I'm going to need in the future

I: Different and a king. Do you consider the people... the per... The friend that you are staying with significant or family?

Michael: Yeah they play a big part of my life, you cannot be a ruler if you do not have followers right (giggles) so I have followers

Michael speaks of his friend he lives with in Johannesburg who is also from Mozambique. He and his friend met at the Methodist church and since then have moved together, from the church to sleeping under bridges (Arrow 12) and finally moving in to one of the abandoned buildings in Johannesburg CBD together (Arrow 13). This relationship is coded significant because Michael says even though they are from the same country and have has similar experiences, they live and do

small jobs together, he considers this friend his "follower". He is the king and his friend is the follower because, unlike his friend, he is willing to "kill the past".

> *Michael: So this is what, what cost the people like who want to be in the future. They kill the past. That's, that's real painful.... If you kill the past it's real painful cos you cos you wanna come back and you can't and when you are there in the front, that's why some people they see misery and stuff like that. Because the American dream (giggle) sometimes can build it but oh you miss a small part and you left it behind (giggles) you wanna go take it, you wanna go take a part and the piece is no more there. Someone took the piece…*

Michael's life seems to confirm reports in the literature (e.g. May, 2000; Paradise, Cause, Ginzler, Wert, Wruck & Brooker, 2001) that homeless people do not have permanent relationships and do not stay in one place permanently. It seems Michel is on a pilgrim towards the "American dream". He is not willing to settle for the ordinary. He is moving toward being a "king" and is willing to kill the past and every relationship from it.

Perhaps Michael believes that his journey is one of greatness because, when he did try to return to the past it was filled with disappointments. He went back to Mozambique to find that the "the missing part" to build his American dream in South Africa, only to find that piece is no longer available". But like a pilgrim he had to continue of his journey, despite the challenges he has to overcome and make it to his destination. Not only did he go through the challenges associated with the border twice, he also has experiences of saying good bye multiple times. Returning home speaks to being recognised as being part of the greater whole, it is about belonging to it (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Like the prodigal son returning home, perhaps, Michael expected to be welcomed back and taken care of but this was not the case. The second time rejection solidified Michael's decision to return to Johannesburg (Arrow 11) to peruse American dream.

Going back to the story of the border gate, he said there was a soldier at the gate. He realised that this man could have shot or arrested him but instead asked for a bribe. It is in not uncommon

in South Africa for Law enforcers to victimise foreign nationals and people living on the streets (Donne, 2007). Michael represents both these categories and is aware of his vulnerability. However, Michael's narrative shows that the homeless are not homeless because they have nowhere to go but perhaps also demonstrates agency. Martinez (2010) explored why some youth may choose to live on the streets rather than living in shelters. What he found is that that young people demonstrated a sense of agency in where they choose to live, even if the place they might choose is considered not ideal. Living on the streets gave them a sense of freedom and independency. For Michael it seems he could have stopped. Perhaps settled in Swaziland or with the Roodeport Family but he chose to move, possibly Johannesburg city that he thinks of as a prostitute offers hope. He says that it is better to stay in Johannesburg even though the situation is not much better than what it was in Mozambique.

> *Michael: Ja, the conclusion the end of this story. I just wanna say life, its laws and if you trying to break the laws there is a penalty and it's a real strong penalty and if you do not break it eh you can live a better life. If you keep change your mind is worse, you wot get nothing. Ehm eh let me say can I say this? Its real bad (giggles) prostitute ehm I'll use this word prostitute, eh the women that has a lot of boyfriends. Ehm she can't have none of them so eh I do not thinking will go back home cos I chose to put my life on here. But if the laws take me out that's the laws. … So when the person asked me do you think to go again back home is like ehm I'm gonna find the same risks that I already passed… so if I go back, things are not gonna be the same things, I have to conquer again so have new risks, what about I just conquer this one in the front, that's the end.*

I have titled Michael's narrative "the Pilgrim" because it seems that his narrative is about journeying to an imagined great destination. For a pilgrim "truth is else were… wherever the pilgrim may be now, it is not where he ought to be and not where he dreams of being" (Bauman, 1996, p.20) Like a pilgrim, Michael demonstrates in his narrative that he felt that he had to go to a greater destination. He could not settle, even though he met many challenges, he had to continue moving. This constant moving is motivated by the thoughts of a greater calling. Pilgrims are

moving towards spiritual fulfilment or heaven, Michael's heaven is to be a King, to be different and to have followers.

I: oh alright. And how would you... how would you define being Michael?

Michael: ehm let me say eh I think it's not pride any way, it's not pride. Its em (clears throat) it's being different

I: different to what?

Michael l: I think it's all the same. Being different and being a king

As a pilgrim moving towards spiritual fulfilment, it does not matter what obstacles they encounter along the way, they have to overcome them, constantly moving towards something. They cannot settle in any place and they cannot turn back when facing challenges. When Michael spoke about his experience at the border, facing the second gate, he said that he had to go forward he could not turn back. Michael as a pilgrim is on a journey towards himself as a king. Like a pilgrim called towards a more fulfilled life, he too sees himself as such. He does not simply imagine a home or a family one day. He wants to be a king an in fact considers himself a king already. In other words, Michael does not see himself like other homeless young men in the streets, he considered himself different and superior to others, treating those in his life, like his 'friend' as simply there to serve him.

Michael did not express any self-pity or hopelessness regarding how his life has turned out. He feels chosen or destined for greatness. Even though he is living on the streets in Johannesburg, he ascribes a level of greatness to what is happening in his life currently. Even to the extent of seeing himself as a 'saviour' of Jo'burg city, the prostitute. Because unlike everyone he can love her and not just use her.

5.5. Conclusion

One can only become a self through relationships that one has with others (Fay, 1996). Our personal stories or life stories are not just about who we are today but about how we came to be and the people with whom we have journeyed. These people have influenced us by either accepting or rejecting us. In these young men's lives their families failed to take care for them, accept or understand them. Some people along the way have tried to help or support them but generally they are yet to find a place where they belong. The most significant relationships and best days are those imagined as yet to come in the future.

The lives of the young men were fluid in nature; this is not only reflected in the oscillating nature of their narratives but also by the expressed constant movement form place to place in their lives. This life on the streets that we imagine to be so harsh seems to be a better alternative for the young men. However none of the young men mentioned abuse in their families of origin. Reasons for given for leaving home were about personal needs not being met. The need for a 'normal childhood', to be taken care of as a child, or not having to carry the burden of taking care of the family's needs like we see from Tebogo's narrative. Nelly and Michael felt they had to leave because they felt rejected or misunderstood. Young adulthood is a period in one's life where one may question their identity, and at the same time feel that others do not understand them (Marcia, 2002).

From these three narratives we see an attempt by the young men to return to their home of origin. Once on the streets, young homeless people may attempt to conform to identities they had back home and contrast these the lives they live now to form new identities by interacting with various people and spaces within in the street community. A new sense of identity and belonging may be found as one progress. To talk of homelessness through these lenses, we find that homelessness is about a loss of connection to others in a long lasting way. Although he makes

many new connections these may be meaningful and functional at a particular time but they cannot be sustained because there is no guarantee of stability when one is ‘homeless’ or constantly moving.

From the narratives of these three young men, we see that 1) home is more than shelter; 2) it is more than just about blood relative. It is rather about being acceptance and belonging. When Tebogo lost his mother and the extended family failed him he found new connections in the streets that were able to meet the need for care and support which his family failed to meet. Tebogo’s home is about not about a place or blood being blood related it is about positive relationships. For nelly home is not in relationships nor is it found at a space. it is about being true to oneself. Even though Nelly comes from a loving home, there was no way he could have remained there. There is sense that he had to move, for Nelly although his mother was very supportive and he reports they had a very positive relationship; he could not feel at home because his rural home town could not allow him to be his true self. It seems that Nelly cannot articulate who he is because he is such a complex person. It is possible that having to hide his sexuality and to conceal his “diva” persona has led to his unsettled identity development. From Nelly’s narrative we see that home is more than just about a place or the people but also about being able to be “at home” in your own skin. Michael could not be at home anywhere. His ‘home’ is a destination set before him which he must constantly pursue even when life seems challenging he must press on. Michael remains hopeful that he will be a “king” someday; he will have followers that he can “give” his name to. Even though he has not found the American dream and is living in the streets of Johannesburg he sees greatness in this, because unlike others who have come to Johannesburg to get what they want he has stayed and will love her, Johannesburg.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this project was to explore the phenomenon of homelessness through the narratives of young men living in Johannesburg. Much existing research (e.g. Christofforetti, Gennai & Rhodeschini, 2011; Martinez, 2010; Silverman, 1997, 2013) has conceptualised homelessness as little more than the inverse of home and has failed to acknowledge the complexities of the concept of homelessness. The idea of home represents stability and being part of a society, to live in a stable accommodation within a family unit is considered the norm and anything either than that is considered deviant or abnormal (Burman, 2008; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999), thus the tendency "to consider homelessness as a defining characteristic of homeless people" (Parsell, 2010, p. 182). It is therefore, convenient to think of homelessness in relation to social problems or homeless people at the problem. From this perspective, homeless people, especially young people or children, can be thought of as social problems, involved in crime and a burden on society. Most of the young men in this study confessed to being involved in some criminal behaviour. However, most of the offence they had committed did not confirm what is often associated with homeless youth.

Homelessness arouses anxiety in civil society and government. Since 1994, it has been one of government's priorities to provide accommodation to the South African citizens. However, this aim has not been, and is unlikely to be, extended to the street homeless. People living on the streets of major city centres, pose a challenge for government. While South Africa tries to portray an image of a first world country, the evidence of poverty literally lying in the streets of the city centre tells a different story. It seems that this image that government aims to portray reaches not only the investors but also draws multitudes to the city, who hope to have a better life in the City of gold all the young men imagined Johannesburg to be a land where they could have a better life.

Seven young men were recruited for this study. The young men were recruited on the basis of being recently or currently homeless. Narratives interviews were conducted and the data were subjected to two forms of analysis, narrative thematic analysis and a structural analysis; mapping movement in space and time. The focus of the first analysis was to explore the contents of the young men's narratives, highlighting meaningful experiences. The focus of the second form of analysis was to explore the construction of the narrative through tracing trajectories in space and time. The main findings of the first phase of analysis confirm home as a place where one comes from, both geographically and relationally. The findings of the second analysis demonstrate that home is not about just about place and relationship, but also about an individual experience.

Four themes were identified under the narratives of the belonging and home in the past. These first two themes confirm what we understand about the concept of 'home'. Firstly home is related to a place; many of the young men identified a place as their home, or where they come from, even if they had not been there recently or even for a very long time, only having lived there as small children. Secondly it is about related to people. These places where connected with ancestry and 'rootedness'. This speaks to a connection with people that transcends one's existence, especially related to surnames. Most of the young men were raised by their mothers and never knew their fathers. Some expressed the desire to know their fathers and mentioned why this is significant in order for them to get to know who they are.

Along with the third theme, we find that the being related to people may does not guarantee belonging. The trajectory of the life suggests that the development of the young men lives has been negative. This emphasises the fact that home is not always a place of safety, or belonging (Milburn, et al., 2005). It can also present a source of unhappiness, pain and rejection. The young men expressed a lot of hurt over the loss of the close relationships with their extended family members. Some of these relationships were rooted in disappointment due to the families' inability to care for them when they lost their primary care givers. Homelessness is thus the loss of familial

relationships and the social support that comes with this connection. The young men expressed feeling of being abandoned by these original families and that they felt alone most of the time.

The second sets of themes were about the imagined life in Johannesburg versus the reality of Jo'burg life. Sub themes about relationships were related to the young men's attempts to break ties with this identity of the past in order to create new identities and construct new connections. The participants reported that they were not in touch with their families back home nor did their families attempt to contact them. With regards to place, all but one of the young men spoke about choosing to come to Johannesburg with the hope for a better life. The imagined 'better' life was either to find a father, to get a job, to gain freedom and independence, a chance to be a child and just something different and better than what was at home. Unfortunately life did not turn out as expected for any of the young men. Even though some stayed at a shelter, and currently, several of the participants are no longer 'homeless', all of them had spent time on the streets and some are still on the street while others went to prison.

The sub theme 'real life in Johannesburg' can be summarised by this phrase the good the bad and the ugly The good represents what is not usually considered when spoken about homeless young men, such as keeping clean and having positive relationships; the bad confirms what is assumed about life on the streets. Some of the young men confirmed the use of substances and some have been in trouble with the law, including having spent time in jail. Homelessness is about a general lack. From lacking basic needs to psychological needs when these basic needs are met. The ugly highlights that homeless people are not always the perpetrators sometime what society has done to these young men and other homeless people is worse then what they are feared to be capable of. Through all this, the young men expressed optimism about life; there was a general hope about the future. In narratives of the future we see that although most of the young men identified with a place of origin and a family. These places and families did not feature in their

narratives of the future. Instead for most the imagined future consisted of new families in new places. Suggesting that home is a fluid concept.

The structural analysis revealed that homelessness is not a state that just occurs at one point in an individual's life, marked by the loss of shelter or the separation from the family unit. From the young men's narratives we see that even while they were living at home with family, the young men may have experienced feelings associated with 'homelessness', such as instability, rejection and being alone. With the exception of the two, Nelly and his mother, Tebogo and his grandfather, it is evident that the most significant or positive relationships that the young men had were not with their original family but with the people that they met along the way from home to life in Johannesburg.

The three stories subjected to this structural analysis, showed that lives of the young men were fluid in nature, demonstrated the multiple transition from 'home' to 'homelessness' in each life. In the first instance, the journey may begin by a marked break in the family connection. However, the individual may still try to stay connected to the family unit and go back and forth between 'home' and new places, including the destination or the streets of Johannesburg where people 'settle'. Reasons for given for leaving home were about personal needs not being met. The need for a 'normal childhood', to be taken care of as a child, or not having to carry the burden of taking care of the family's needs like we see from Tebogo's narrative. Nelly and Michael felt they had to leave because they felt rejected or misunderstood. Young adulthood is a period in one's life where one may question their identity, and at the same time feel that others do not understand them (Marcia, 2002).

On the street, one may want to establish one's own identity and find a self that is separate from the original home and Family. Once on the streets, young homeless people may attempt to conform to identities they had back home and contrast these the lives they live now to form new

identities by interacting with various people and spaces within in the street community. Lastly home is about fitting in or finding new forms of belonging. A new sense of identity and belonging may be found as one progress. To talk of homelessness through these lenses, we find that homelessness is about a loss of connection to others in a long lasting way. Although he makes many new connections these may be meaningful and functional at a particular time but they cannot be sustained because there is no guarantee of stability when one is 'homeless' or constantly moving.

It is evident that homelessness is not simply about shelter as although most of the young men expressed that they had multiple relatives and a 'home' to return to, they remain in Johannesburg. This suggests that even though there might be a home to return to, realities back 'home' may be worse than they are on the streets in Johannesburg. To be homeless is not s state separate from the rest of the individual's life it is the evidence of having lived a particular life; a life of instability and broken relationships. The kind of lives that the young men lived at 'home' have been mirrored in their lives as 'homeless'.

Literature suggests that homeless people may form networks or 'families' amongst themselves as protective unit, this study confirmed this but found that even the relationships that were identified as significant or important, were not sustained along the way. Generally the young men spoke about lonely lives, with the hope that this will be different in the future. By asking the question, 'What is less in Home+less+ness?' this study has attempted to provide a deeper understanding of home, homelessness and belonging and not limit the concept of homelessness to living on the streets, it seemed that the feeling of homelessness was exacerbated by the experience of living on the streets. Homelessness is inclusive of but not limited to houselessness. Exploring the pathways to homelessness may help on a preventative level and understanding the factors that keep young men on the streets will assist in development of programs, giving them the platform to use their skills and teaching them to enhance them so that one day their imagined families may become

a reality. Future research could further explore the discourses of identity negation amongst homeless

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Appendices

Appendix one: Interview schedule

Psychology

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Interview schedule

1. Please tell me the story of how you came to live in the streets of Johannesburg.
2. How long were you living in the streets?
3. Can you tell me about where you were born and where you grew up?
4. As a child, who were the most important people in your life?
5. Who did you spend most of your time with while you were on the streets?
6. Tell me about relationship with the people from where you come?
    - How often do you speak to them?
    - When last did you see them?
    - Did you keep in contact with them while you were in the streets?
7. How did you come to join the "I was shot in Jo'burg" project
8. Where are you living now and who are you living with?

Appendix two: Information Sheet

Psychology

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Information sheet and consent to participate in research

Dear Participant

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I (Refiloe Makama) will be conducting as part of my Masters in Research Psychology. I am student in the Wits Department of Psychology, under the supervision of Prof. Jill Bradbury.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to get deeper understanding of how young men tell the stories of their experiences of living on the streets, of Johannesburg city centre, as they remember them. This research study will focus on of their live stories focusing on transitions from home as a place of origin to homeless, and to new formations of home in the present. The study will focus on belonging in old and new relationships.

What will I, as a participant, be asked to do?

If you volunteer to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview which will be audio recorded. Nothing further will be required of you beyond allowing your conversation to be recorded.

Will participating put me at any risk or cause me any inconvenience?

As part of this study, we are asking that you allow us to audio-tape a conversation in which you participate. The recording equipment will be set up so that it will not distract you during the course of the interview. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, and feel any discomfort as a result of participating, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time.

Will the information I give be confidential?

We want to reassure you that your identity will be kept private, and you will not be personally identified in any research reports or presentations that are made available to public

audiences. The tapes will be transcribed by the researchers, and all personal names and identifying details will be excluded from the transcript. You will not be identifiable from the transcriptions. The audiotapes will be kept indefinitely in a locked storage area. Only approved research personnel will have access to them, and only for research purposes.

The contact details for the supervisor of the research are shown below. Please feel free to contact them should you have any concerns or enquiries about your participation in the research.

Rights of Research Participants

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this research study.

Contact details

Research Supervisor: Prof. Jill Bradbury

E-mail: Jill.Bradbury@wits.ac.za

Phone: 011 717 4515

Researcher: Refiloe Makama

E-mail: Makama.refiloe225@gmail.com

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Appendix 3: Concept form for participation

Psychology

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Consent Form (Interview)

I, _____ (name and surname) consent to being interviewed by Refiloe Euphodia Makama (the researcher), for her study that aims to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of previously homeless adults on the streets of Johannesburg, this will be through the life story I will provide.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary.

- I do not have to answer questions I am uncomfortable with answering.

- I am allowed to change my mind about participating in the study.

- I am aware that all information provided will remain confidential, although I may be quoted (my words be used) in the research report. However, if I am quoted, my real name will not be used to protect my identity.

- None of my identifiable information will be included in the research report.

- I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the researcher's degree,

- The research may also be presented at a local/international conference and published in a journal and/or book chapter.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4: Concept form to be recorded

Psychology

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Consent Form (Audio recording)

I, _____ (name and surname) give my consent for my interview with Refiloe Euphodia Makama (the researcher) to be audio recorded for his study. I understand that:

- The audio recording of the interviews will be used to transcribe the interview discussion and kept in the researchers' personal computer that has a protection login password for possible further analysis, write-up and future use.

- The audio recordings and transcripts will only be seen and heard by the researcher and supervisor.

- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

- Although direct quotes from my interview may be used in the research report, I will be referred to by a pseudonym (not my real name) to protect my identity

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix five: Ethics form

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Ethics Application Form* for *Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical)
(Revised December 2012)

Use this form in applying for clearance of research involving human participants

Instructions

1. Completed applications must be submitted to the Research Office approximately three weeks before each of the monthly meetings. The deadlines are available on the Wits Research website http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/research/ethics.htm/7075/ethics.html
2. Applications must be submitted as hard copies, one of which must be an original (see checklist below for numbers of copies required). Electronic submissions will not be accepted.
3. All submissions and materials must be typed. Handwritten submissions are **NOT** acceptable.
4. Incomplete applications will **NOT** be considered.
5. Applications will **NOT** be processed if signatures from applicant or supervisor are missing.
6. Photocopying should be done 'back-to-back' to save paper.
7. Glossy and fancy binding is **NOT** necessary.
8. Necessary supporting documents (e.g. *Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form*, copies of instruments), must be stapled to the *Ethics Application Form.*

Complete this checklist to show what documents you have submitted.

☑	**Check list**	**No. of copies required**
For all research:		
√	Completed *Ethics Application Form*	4
√	Copies of the research proposal	4
√	Copies of proposed research instruments (e.g. questionnaires/interview schedules)	4
√	*Participant Information Sheet* (for each different sample group)	4
√	*Consent Form* [*Assent Form* for under 18s] (for participant's signature) (for each different sample group)	4
Where applicable (Attach to this form):		
	Relevant permissions (from, e.g. company's HR department, National authorities such as Education, Correctional Services, etc.) or other legally required consent	4
√	Any other appropriate consent forms (e.g. consent forms for members of focus groups, consent forms (for video or photography), etc.	4
	Guardian *Consent Form* (for participants under the age of 18)	4
	Other (please specify)	4

Declaration

I recognise that it is my responsibility to conduct my research in an ethical manner according to Guidelines of the University of the Witwatersrand, according to any laws and/or legal frameworks that may apply, and according to the norms and expectations of my discipline.

In preparing this Application for Ethics Clearance form, I have consulted the ***Guidelines for Human Research Ethics Clearance Application /non-medical*** (available on this web site http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Research/Applications.htm) and have familiarised myself with the ethical guidelines specific to my discipline.

Signature

Name of researcher/applicant 21/05/2015

1. Researcher's personal data

Surname: Makama						Name: Refiloe					
Title:		Prof		Dr		Mr	x	Ms		Mrs		Other:
School:	School of Human and Community Development										
Staff / Student number:	1055324						x	Full time		Part time		Staff
Your telephone(s):	076 913 0148										
Your Email: makama.refiloe225@gail.com											
Name of Supervisor (if applicable):	Jill Bradbury										
Supervisor's email address:	Jill.Bradbury@wits.ac.za										
Supervisor's tel. number(s):	011 717 4515										

2. Specifics about the research project

Title of research project

Is this research for degree purposes?		**X**	**Yes**		**No**		
If so, for what degree?		**Honours**		**Masters (dissertation)**	**X**	**Masters (research report)**	
		PhD		**Other (specify):**			
Has it been approved by the relevant higher degrees committee or other relevant unit?		**Yes**	**X**	**No**		**Submitted & pending**	

List the names and affiliations of any *additional* researchers who will be covered by this ethics protocol

Where will the research be carried out?

The research will be carried out at "*I was shot in Jo'burg" studios,* The studios are based at Arts on Main in Maboneng which is in the Johannesburg city centre

What are the aims and objectives of the research? (Please list; be brief)

The aim of this project is to provide a deeper understanding of how young men reconstruct and recollect their experiences of living on the streets of Johannesburg city centre. The trajectory of life stories will be traced focusing on transitions from home as a place of origin to homeless, and to new formations of home in the present. The study will focus on belonging in old and new relationships.

Do you have any financial or material interest associated with your research participants or with the organisations that you will work with during your research?

	Yes	**X**	No		Potential conflicts of interest may exist

P**lease explain how you will manage any existing or potential conflicts of interest, if applicable.**

INFORMATION RELATING TO ETHICAL MATTERS

Protocols submitted to the Committee must have sufficient information to enable the committee to judge the ethical implications of the proposed research. Please be brief and concise but also as specific and informative as possible

3. Formal permission

Has appropriate formal permission been obtained, if required (e.g. employer, government department, land owner, etc.)?

	Yes (attached)	X	Not required		Pending (must be supplied before permission is granted)

Obtaining permission is necessary when conducting research *within the premises* of a particular site such as an ethnography of the functioning of a supermarket or a school, or the way staff interact with clients in a clinic, or of how the HIV Unit in the City of Johannesburg functions. Please read the detailed guidelines on the Ethics website http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Research/Applications.htm

4. How will data on human research participants be collected (instruments, methods, procedures)? (Attach instruments as an Appendix)

	In written format (e.g. questionnaires, diagnostic tests, etc.)
	Completion of on-line instruments (e.g. questionnaires)
X	Individual interviews (e.g. structured, semi-structured, etc.)
	Group interviews (e.g. seminar/discussion groups, focus groups, etc.)
	Ethnographic observation, participant observation, other informal descriptive, and/ or interactive methods
	Community-based methods or techniques such as drama workshops, community theatre, training workshops, participant rural appraisal (PRA), rapid rural appraisal (RRA), etc.
	Research on/in therapeutic or counselling contexts
	Observation of public performance, and/or public behaviour observation
	Photography, video and/or audio recording (**specific separate consent forms may be required**)
	Other research methods or techniques (specify in this line).

Brief details of instruments to be used (attach instrument or draft to this application)

I will be using an Interview schedule. Please see Appendix two

5. Who will the research participants be? Brief description of human participants, including age range and sample size, for each sample:

The participants will 8-10 young men between the ages of 18- 24.
The young men were once living on the streets of Johannesburg city centre. They are currently part of a project that helps children on the streets. .

Does this research expose either the participant or the researcher to any potential risks or harm that they would not otherwise be exposed to?	X	Yes		No

If 'yes', explain:
The participants may experience emotional distress while narrating their experiences on the streets which may have been traumatic.

Will research involve vulnerable categories?		Yes	X	No

If so, state which ones:

How will any existing vulnerabilities among research participants be addressed?

NB: The term 'vulnerable categories' includes, among others, children under 18, orphans, prisoners, persons with cognitive or communication disorders, people who are traumatised or currently in traumatic situations.

Where necessary, include details of steps to be taken to facilitate data collection across language barriers (e.g. interpretation or translation).

6. How will informed consent be obtained?

How will potential participants be identified / selected / recruited?
Identification: the participant have already been identified from the project, they all meet the criteria for participation. The criterion is they need to be over the age of 18 at the time of the data collection. The next criterion is that they must be previously homeless for a period longer than 6 months. The participants all work on the "I was shot in Jonurg" project and are therefore not a vulnerable population.
Recruitment: the participants will be recruited directly by the researchers through purposive sampling.

What will participants be told about the research (including the promises to be made)?

The participants will be informed about the aim of the project and that their participation is voluntary. They will also be informed that all the information they provide will be kept confidential and that they have the right to withdraw at any time as stipulated in the participant information sheet.

How will informed consent be obtained?

x	Formal (Signed form)		Informal (e.g. verbal)		Other

Briefly explain your strategy for ensuring informed consent
The participants will be given a consent form to read. The consent form is written in simple language and the researcher will be present to explain any terms that are not clear to the participants. If the participants understands what is written in the form they will then be requested to sign the form.

Attach *Participant Information Sheets* and *Consent Forms* for each sample group, and/or other related materials

NB: ***Consent*** in social science and humanities research involving human participants: Where informal ethnographic or participant observation methods are used, or where signed *Consent Forms* are not possible, or for research involving group contexts (focus group, Participant Rapid Assessment, Rapid Rural Appraisal, public performance, workshops) **state how the quality of informed consent will be assured**. It is essential that participants in research be fully informed and agree, on this basis, to participate in the research.

7. Protecting participant identities

Can **confidentiality** be guaranteed?		Yes	X	No
Can **anonymity** be guaranteed in resulting reports, theses and/or publications?	X	Yes		No

Explain how this will be done? (What will participants be told in this regard?)

The participants' names will not be used when quoted in the study, pseudonyms will be used.
The recording of the interviews as well as the transcripts will be kept safe and locked in a safe location

NB: While confidentiality may be desirable, it cannot be guaranteed in, for example, focus groups, or ethnographic observation. Similarly anonymity should be preserved in questionnaires, but cannot be offered in workshop methodologies, focus group research, etc. Participants should have the right to remain anonymous in the final report, and this must be respected in handling of all data relating to them. Participants need to be informed about these issues.

8. Protection of data during and after the research

How will the data be protected while the research is in progress? (This includes how the identities of participants will be protected).

The recording of the interviews as well as the transcripts will be kept safe and locked on a password locked computer.

What is to be **done with the research data** after completion of the project?

	Stored in archives (specify)		Stored in on-line data base (specify)
x	Stored in password protected computer		Stored in digital form with all identifying feature removed
	Destroyed after … years (insert numbers of years)		

Explain how the data will be securely stored during this time

The data will be stored on my password protected personal computer. I will be the only person who has access to it.

NB: 'Raw' or unprocessed data, especially **where the identity or personal data of research participants is included, must be safeguarded** and preserved from unauthorised access. Data may be destroyed after use, but **preservation in an archive or personal collection** may also be appropriate, desirable or even essential. For instance, data sets that contain **historically important information** or information that relates to **national heritage** must be preserved and should be placed in a public archive where possible and appropriate.

All data should be preserved in a way that **respects the nature of the original participants' consent**. If you are unsure about the procedure of data management and storage, please contact Nina Lewin (ninalewin@gmail.com)

9. Access to the research results / reports

How will the results be **reported**?

The results will be reported in a research report for completion of the M.A research report.

Who will have access?

As a WTS graduate, the research report will be published online, as a result anyone who has access to research data base will be able to access the research report.

Note: All Wits Masters and PhDs are stored in the main library as well being made available on the www.

SIGNATURES (REQUIRED

Appendix 6: Imagines of anti-spikes



https://31.media.tumblr.com/e5543bbcf07b21159b755fd1424271b0/tumblr_n6u6orwVyb1qk91wgo2_500.jpg



https://squattheplanet.com/threads/defensive-architecture-aka-anti-homeless-spikes.22411/



http://a1.files.psmag.com/image/upload/c_fit,cs_srgb,dpr_1.0,q_80,w_620/MTI4NzYyODUwNTYxODE0NDk4.jpg

Figures

Figure 1: Tebogo's Life Map

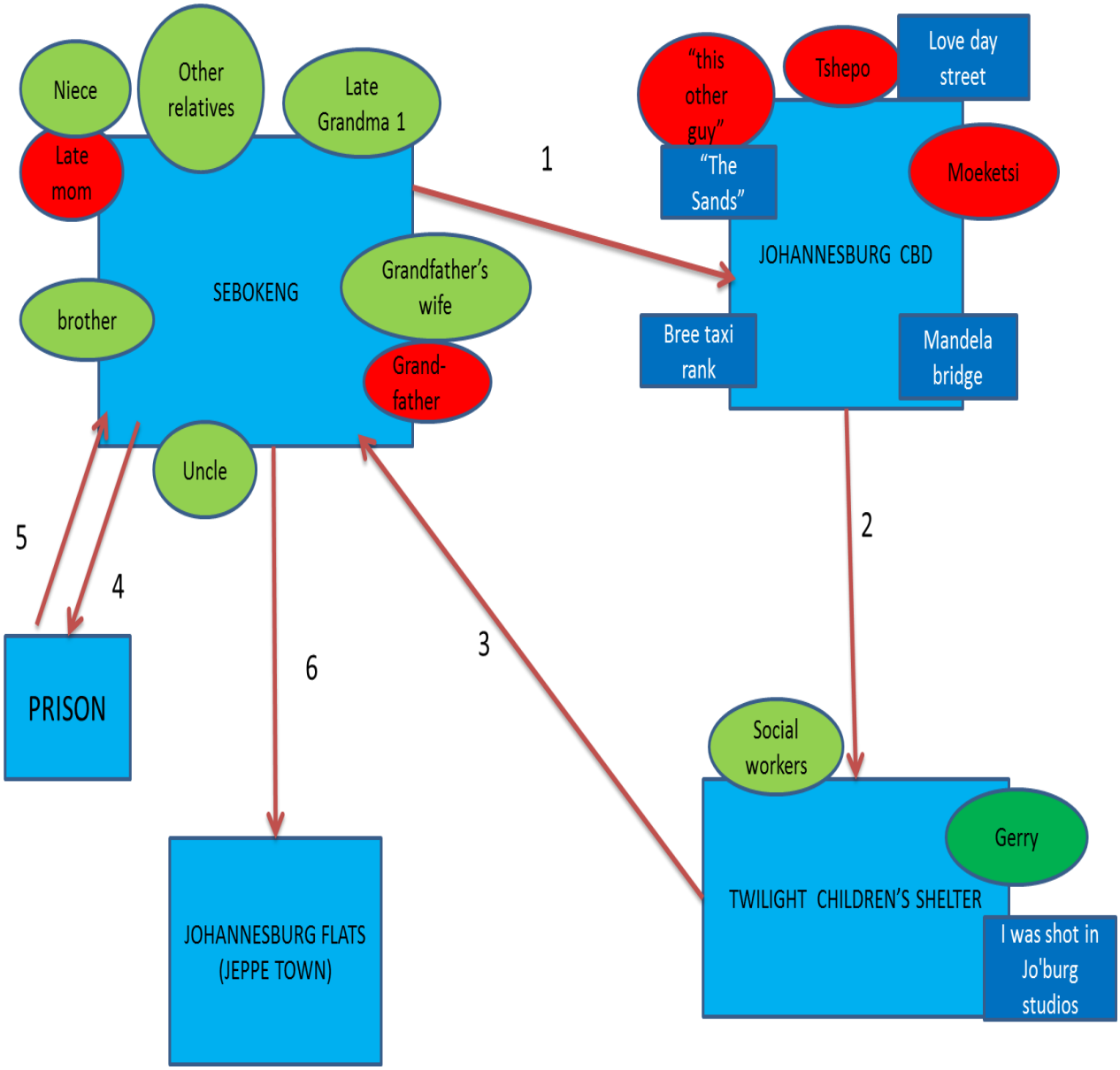
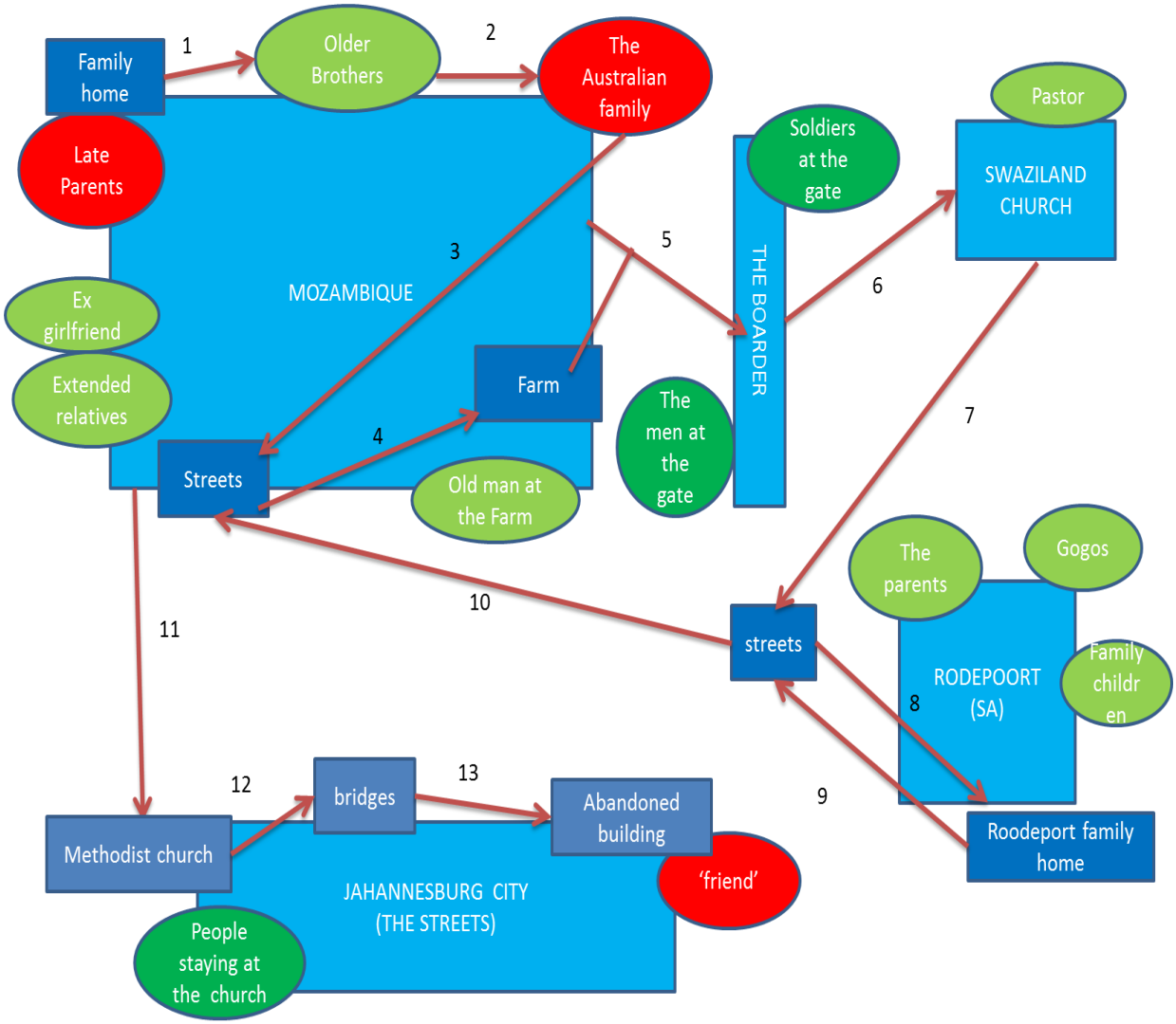


Figure 2: Nelly's Life Map



Figure 3: Michael's Life Map



Tables

Table 1: Participant Information

Name*	Age	Birth place	Lang	Family information	Education	Recruited at	Left original home/ came to Johannesburg	Current home/ living
Sipho	22	MP	Zulu	Mother passed away Father unknown No connection to extended family in MP or siblings	Grade 10	I was shot in Jo'burg	When in primary school Age and year not specified.	Alone in a Flat in Johannesburg
Chris	23	JHB/ PE	Zulu	Mom passed away Aunt in Soweto but no contact	Metric	I was shot in Jo'burg	His mother took him to the shelter when he was when he was still in primary school. Age ad year not specified	Alone in a Flat in Johannesburg
Tebogo	25	FS	Sotho	Mom passed away Family in Sebokeng but relationship not good	Grade 11	I was shot in Jo'burg	Age and year not specified	In a flat in Johannesburg
Robert	23	MP	Zulu	Mom passed away Has relatives in MP	Matric	I was shot in Jo'burg	Left home when he was 13 years old	In a flat in Johannesburg
Anthony	24	ZIM	English	Brothers in Zim Both parents passed away	N/A	Trinity Catholic Church	Came to South Africa in 2010	Abandoned building in Johannesburg and CBD

Michael	21	MZ	English	Brothers in Mozambique Both parents passed away	Primary school	Trinity Catholic Church	Came to South Africa when he was 15 years in 2009	Abandoned building in Johannesburg CBD
Nelly[1]	29	QTN	Xhosa	Mother lives in Queenstown with younger siblings	Tertiary drop out	Trinity Catholic Church	Left home in 2010	Newtown Park

Table 2: Structural Analysis Key

1. Large blue rectangles	Main places moved in between
2. Smaller blue squares	Areas related to the main place
3. Red ovals	Significant/positive/ close relationships
4. Light green ovals	Blood relative but not very close or significant
5. Dark green ovals	People met along the way but not significant
6. Numbered arrows	Depiction of movement