

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Aims of the research

The primary aim of this research was to understand the lives of women informal street traders in relation to historical time and in relation to their social networks and communities in which they feel a sense of belonging. This included exploration of the structure of the narrated lives of the informal street traders in an attempt to understand the ways in which the specific telling of their stories reflects their perception of the world and the ways in which they make meaning of their social environment. The aims of this research were:

1. Explore the ways in which the women spoke about their social roles and where they chose to give emphasis to more salient identities, which may or may not, incorporate their positions as traders and workspace.
2. Explore the ways in which the women chose to speak about their lives, and how this may be molded or shaped in response to the specific audience (the researcher) to whom they present their life narrative.
3. Explore the relational component of individual street traders' lives, and understand the ways in which various interpersonal relations contribute to, or detract from, these women's hardships.

1.2 Context

The informal sector is one of the fastest growing sectors internationally and in South Africa. It comprises all individuals working outside the regulated and taxed bracket; this most commonly includes street vendors, domestic home based workers and waste pickers (Osalar, 2001). Gerxhani (2004) notes a distinct difference between the informal sector in developing countries and developed countries. In developed countries he notes that work in the informal sector carries with it some hope of progression and a transition into a viable economic situation; while in developing countries, work in the informal sector is far more

on a survivalist basis with limited economic growth opportunities (Gerxhani, 2004). In the Philippines, research shows that in 2008, 64.9 percent of the population was involved in the informal sector (Manila Bulletin, 2012). At the recent Informal Economy symposium held in October this year in Barcelona, Spain, shifting trends of the global economies, both formal and informal, were reflected on. Smith (2012) highlighted the ways in which the boundaries that seemingly segregate the informal economy from the formal economy are blurring and that the rising prominence and importance of the informal economy is propelling this sector into a pivotal position as the formal economy of the previous 100 years appears to be “decaying before our eyes” (Smith, 2012). This position is reiterated by Hart (2012) who refers, not necessarily to the decay of the formal economy, but rather to the informalisation of the world economy. Hence, while one position suggests the surge in the informal economy is as a result of the demise of the formal economy, the other suggests the growing value of the informal economy, as a viable alternative to the formal sector.

The intergeneration flow of informal trade is a noteworthy feature, as research by Anjaria (2006) highlights. Street hawking in India is often a trade carried out by families across generations, as access to formal employment is limited by socio-economic status and the saturated formal sector. In South Africa, the history of selective race-based privileged access to resources such as education and housing, have left those marginalized at a great economic disadvantage. The socio-historical patterns of South Africa’s past are thus reflected in her extensive informal sector, as those unable to access formal employment, were forced to make a living in the informal sector during the Apartheid regime. The remnants of this legally stratified society still remain evident today, as the informal sector in South Africa is comprised predominantly of Black, African people. However, shifts in the composition of the informal sector are evident. One of the most significant shifts over time is the gender-based shift from the informal sector being a very male dominated occupation in the past, to a more female dominated occupation currently. Hence, the gendered composition of the informal sector highlights the notion of the “feminization of poverty” (Manila Bulletin, 2012).

Furthermore, the rapidly increasing rate of the elderly population has been cause for alarm in the developed world such as Sweden and Switzerland. Within these regions, the elderly population has shown to be increasing by 2 percent each year and “tripling in number” over the past 50 years. It is predicted by 2050, people over the age of 65 years will occupy up to 23, 7% of the Chinese population (Cheung & Heller, 2009, p. 170). Research has highlighted that the most vulnerable sector in the future will therefore be elderly women, who, by virtue of their gender are considered to be more economically disadvantaged, less educated, have a history of less access to formal occupations, have less access to property, human rights and a reduced pension, in relation to men, globally (Cheung & Heller, 2009). The pattern of patriarchy remains clearly identifiable as Cheung and Heller (2009) reflect:

“Their total financial dependence on their husbands makes them particularly vulnerable when their husbands pass away. Abuse is common and is often sanctioned by custom. A notable example is in rural India, where widows, considered ill-omens by their families, are removed from their homes and relocated to distant “widow villages,” where they live isolated from family contact” (p. 164).

As a developing country, South Africa is not currently confronted with the reversed age pyramid to the extent that it concerns developed countries. However, the vulnerability of the elderly, in particular elderly women remains evident through exploring social pressures this age cohort faces. In South Africa particular pressures on older black women exist because of poor social conditions, illness and poverty, as well as, youth unemployment and HIV/Aids, which has resulted in increased dependency on elderly grandmothers. Therefore, while Africa’s elderly population still remains low, and the inverse of the population pyramid is significantly slower, the pressures placed the elderly cohort to remain economically active and socially engaged places them in an equally vulnerable position. With a large portion of informal trading being elderly black women, the challenges associated with work in the informal sector are plentiful and particularly harsh. In research conducted by Horn (2009) and Skinner (2009), it was shown that long working hours, a reduced customer market and price instability are just a few of the daily concerns associated with working in this sector. Research into the lives of informal street

traders in Warwick Junction, Durban, has highlighted unpredictable and abusive policy regulation, irrational demands on permit holders, and risks of personal and sexual assault on traders as further examples of the harsh conditions in which informal workers find themselves (Coats, 2011).

1.2.1 Warwick Junction

Warwick Junction is South Africa's largest informal market, with approximately 8000 traders based on the periphery of the Durban central business district. The geographical space can be roughly divided into nine individual but interconnected markets. For many of the women, it was a path of poverty and racial exclusion that brought them to and confined them in the informal sector (Coats, 2011). In the white supremacist Apartheid era, black people were not afforded the opportunity of equal education or access to the job market to enable the "upwards job mobility" so vitally associated with economic survival (Chen et al, 2001). Instead, black people were reduced to the backdrop of the South African economic landscape, with very limited resources. The informal sector, which is represented predominantly by hawkers or street vendors in South Africa, often became the only viable means of securing a small income to enable survival. As Apartheid legislation began to be eroded, thousands of people previously relegated by the Group Areas Act to rural areas, flocked to the City centre in a desperate attempt to earn a livelihood (Grest, 2002; Dobson & Skinner, 2009). This resulted in the expansion of widespread urban poverty and overcrowding specifically in the Warwick Junction vicinity, reducing the space to little more than slum-like conditions (Dobson and Skinner, 2009). With democracy, political efforts emerged to redesign the Warwick vicinity in an attempt to cope with the overwhelming influx. The Urban Design Project was thus initiated by the City authorities, which implemented a variety of structural and social elements to enable Warwick Junction to operate more effectively (Dobson and Skinner, 2009). While the initial involvement of the municipal sector was positive, the last decade has shown increasing dissatisfaction by the traders towards local government who, they feel, are once again pushing them to the sidelines of society (Coats, 2011). This was most evident in the City's attempts to build a mall within Warwick Junction that would effectively destroy three of the markets in this

vicinity. The Warwick Mall development was a highly contested and controversial project, which gained immense media coverage and public interest before eventually being indefinitely halted in April 2011 (Coats, 2011). However, at the time of these interviews were conducted, the Warwick Junction Mall was a primary and ongoing concern for several traders who participated in this research. Thus the shift in the way Warwick Junction has been viewed by surrounding communities and local municipal officials has fluctuated through time. The perceived identity of the community of traders who exist in this space has and continues to be, constantly negotiated in relation to the wider society in which this informal market is located.

This project therefore aims at re-exploring the narratives of the women informal street traders in Warwick Junction, to understand the ways in which their individual life stories are intertwined and interwoven with this historical narrative of Warwick Junction, the wider South African society and the global economy. Understanding the ways in which the women remain connected to one another through their occupation and experiences and how these relationships contribute to the emergence and existence of a “community” of traders, enables one to understand how both have been sustained through relationship and connections, allowing them to survive over time despite adversity.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is established by drawing on literature from two primary domains: identity theory, in particular narrative theory, and community theory. This provides insight into the ways in which individuals conceptualize their identities, and specifically focus on the role of narrative as a form of identity development and expression. The review of the literature will explore the notion of community and the dynamic relationships that exist between individuals and the communities in which they find themselves.

2.1 Identity

The notion of identity and the 'self' is complex and fluid. Several theorists have differing conceptualizations of what constitutes the self, and how identities are developed and acted out. This project is informed by the view that the self is conceptualized as a variety of salient identities that can be held simultaneously and displayed differently depending on the context in which the individuals locate themselves (Billington, Hockey, Strawbridge (1998) Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). The way in which society is constantly incorporated into the construction of our sense of self is highlighted by Billington et al. (1998), who comments "the more we seek the inner core or true self, the more we find our culture with its expectations and patterns deeply embedded" (p. 41).

Similarly, Tajfel's (1970) Social Identity Theory provides a way of understanding the individual within the collective. The theory suggests that individuals form group alliances that become increasingly aligned with their self-concept. In this way the group norms, values and expected behaviors are adopted by the individual and adhered to. Critically, a social group of which one perceives oneself as a member distinguishes between "them and us", while personal identity distinguishes between "you and me" (Hogg, 2006, p. 115). People can associate with more than one group identity, but at any given point in time only one social or personal identity is salient (Hogg, 2006). Social groups to which one ascribes are rarely homogeneous. It is their values and sense of belonging that makes the group cohesive. This relates to the ways in which people express their roles in society. While

many roles can be held at any given time, the context in which individuals find themselves, and the audience to which they speak, dictates which role will be salient at that point, and therefore expressed (Mishler, 1999). This understanding reiterates the inherent social nature of roles in expression of identity construction. While social identity theory provides us with a means of understanding collective action and in-group versus out-group behavior, it also provides a means through which one can understand how individuals can project differing identities or truths of themselves depending on their context. For this research, social identity theory is helpful in exploring which identity the women draw on as salient in their narratives and how these identifications may shift across time and in relation to different social collectives.

Thus identity is embedded in symbolic, cultural and temporal nuances that shape and co-construct personal characteristics and patterns of behavior. This approach to understanding identity development and the constantly negotiated relationship between the individual and the society in which they exist is evident through the comments of Billington et al (1998):

“Roles are subjective and integral to our personalities. The roles we play become part of our identities, how we see ourselves and how others see us. They are at the same time, objective, outside, part of culture and social structure, handed down across generations. We get our roles ‘off the peg’ with the cultural scripts attached” (p. 50).

This reference to roles highlights not only the ways in which society is engrained in the roles individuals adopt, but also the temporal nature of roles. As society changes through time, so roles begin to change. It is essential to understand however, that the individual, despite acting out the roles given by society, is still able to act on those roles, to employ a sense of agency, and in doing so, shape not only the roles themselves, but the society in which the roles develop. This inherently social conceptualization of the individual is further argued by Billington, et al (1998) who observes “our activities as individuals or groups are

shaped by the society in which we live, but we are also powerful social actors who may change this society” (p. 14).

Like Billington et al (1998) Prilleltensky (2008) suggests the individual is not rendered a passive recipient within society:

While never ceasing to be constructed in socio-cultural terms, psychological beings, as reflection-capable, intentional agents, are able to exercise sophisticated capabilities of memory and imagination, which in interaction with theories of self can create possibilities for present and future understanding and action that are not entirely constrained by past and present socio-cultural circumstances (Martin & Sugarman, 2000 in Prilleltensky, 2008, p. 121).

It is individuals who respond to the culturally specific roles they adopt that become the means through which those very roles can shift. Consider the role of a woman. The ‘pushing back’ by women, against the culturally accepted notion of what it means to be a woman, has resulted in cultural shifts and changes in the role of women in society over the centuries. While this change may be minimal, the point is that “it is people who create or change roles and...people are constantly rewriting the scripts” (Billington et al, 1998, p. 50). The act of agency is largely dependent of the individual’s reflexivity and ability to recognize the constantly negotiated relationship between self and society (Billington et al, 1998). The informal street trader is constantly negotiating with her environment changing the social script that is synonymous with this occupation. As informal street traders campaign for their right to be recognized and valued by the cities in which they work, so they are ‘pushing back’ and rewriting the script of the roles they fill in society.

In reflecting on power and the ways in which individuals and groups push back on these social scripts and ascribed positions of power, Prilleltensky (2008), drawing on the work of Foucault (1970), reminds us that within any social interaction regardless of context and the individuals involved, power is always present and a power dynamic will always exist. Parker, (1989) draws on Foucault’s concepts of power in stating, “what is spoken and who

may speak are issues of power. As well as organizing and excluding forms of knowledge, discourse relates and helps organize social relations as power relations” (p.61). These power positions can exist at different levels, at different times and in different forms and they can be modified and mobile. The ways in which power can exist along different continuums is particularly important, as an individual can be both the oppressor and the oppressed, simultaneously. This is because individuals hold various identities that have relative saliency in various contexts. The black African male may be the oppressed in a society in which “whiteness” is prized, yet simultaneously is the oppressor within the confines of his own patriarchal structured home context. Prilleltensky (2008, p. 119) thus offers up several factors inherent in the concept of power. He suggests that power is “the opportunity to fulfill or obstruct personal, relational, or collective needs”, that displays of power can be overt or subtle, and be derived from various points of origin that include psychological and political sources. Furthermore, power carries with it consequences, which vary depending on the position of power one holds, either the oppressor or the freedom fighter. Having highlighted the ways in which one can hold the identity of the oppressor and the oppressed simultaneously, Prilleltensky (2008) emphasizes the ways in which social class, gender, ability and race enable individuals to hold not only different positions of power, but different levels of power. Last Prilleltensky (2008) reminds us that the various positions of power an individual holds can exist beyond their awareness and therefore impact their actions and relations with others in relatively unaware ways.

2.1.1 Relational selves

Individuals are not free standing, isolated beings; they are deeply embedded in society through their relationships with others. Appiah (2005) highlights the relational development of the self by commenting, “beginning in infancy it is in dialogue with other people’s understandings of who I am that I develop a conception of my own identity” (p. 20). In this way, it can be suggested that others give us our identity, because to have an identity is “in part to be related to others in particular ways and to understand that one is so related” (Fay, 1996; p.46). Fay (1996) suggests that others regulate our interactions; “this sort of awareness and response deeply affects everything about us, our desires, fears, hopes and motivations. In this way our identities derive from the relations we come to

form with others” (p. 46). The ways in which interactions with others mould and shape our sense of self can be considered to be a continuous and constructive process which Hall (1996) argues is “never completed” (p.2). This is because the process of identification is intrinsically temporal; it draws on interaction and relationship with others that can shift over time, offering differing and conditional positions. Furthermore, the ways in which we present ourselves to others adopts a sense of projected aspiration for the future. We present ourselves to others largely influenced by our understanding of the way we want to be perceived by them (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). Furthermore, Appiah (2005) suggests that we construct our identities based on responses of others and in relation to others. He proposes that by adopting a salient identity of a mother, a lover a friend, we inherently construct perceptions of ourselves in relation to others. Our identities are therefore not only social, but also historical in the ways in which we adopt scripts that are handed down to us by society of how a mother, lover or friend should behave. As Taylor (1989) suggests, “I can define my identity only against the background of things that matter” (p. 42). In doing so we adopt norms, models and ideas of how we should behave within our constructed identity. While these are not necessarily fixed, as was shown earlier, and can be contested, this understanding of identity construction does highlight how “to create a life is to create a life out of the materials that history has given you” (Appiah, 2005, p. 19). These concepts of identity and the telling of one’s identity to another are especially critical to this research which takes place in context of racist and oppressive history, as the researcher is a white woman and the participants are African and Indian women.

2.1.2 Using narrative to tell stories about our identity

Crossley (2000) suggests that narrative is the missing link, or bridge perhaps, that links the social constructivist approach and the linguistic structuring of the self with the realist approach. The latter suggests that the ‘self’ can exist like any other object in society, which can be “discovered and described” objectively (p. 529). On the other hand while the former position suggests that nothing can be described outside the bounds of language, yet language is embedded in culture and context, and thus each time we use language to describe anything, we do so with a layer of interpretation that may change the meaning. Narrative, she argues interweaves these two approaches:

“Everything experienced by human beings is made meaningful, understood and interpreted in relation to the primary dimension of ‘activity’, which incorporates both time and sequence. In order to define and interpret what exactly has happened on any particular occasion, the sequence of events is of extreme importance. Hence a valid portrayal of the experience of selfhood necessitates an understanding of the inextricable connection between temporality and identity. Another important related feature of the order of meaning characteristic of human consciousness is that of relationships and connections” (Crossley, 2000, p. 531).

Crossley (2000) thus highlights the ways in which stories are embedded in connections and relationships and develop across time. She suggests that any attempt to interpret the story of another person, or even in our own reflexivity, the individual is constantly asking, “how is this connected to someone or something else” (Crossley, 2000, p.532).

This concept is reiterated by Taylor (1989), who suggests that, the self and morality are intimately interwoven. The self only gains its value of what is deemed ‘good’ or acceptable by the social context in which it is placed. Hence the morality of that society will determine the morality of the self and what is considered ‘good’ or important to the self. Furthermore, morality is only attained through language, and hence the self cannot be separated from others, as it is through this medium that morality is obtained. Hence, Taylor (1989) suggests, “I cannot be a self on my own but only in relation to certain ‘interlocutors’ who are crucial to my language of self understanding. In this sense the self is constituted through ‘webs of interlocution’ in a ‘defining community” (p. 34). Hence the concept of a ‘good’ life, is one that is interconnected with others with a shared sense of what constitutes a ‘good’ life.

Stets (2006) notes that the “hallmark for selfhood is reflexivity” (p. 88), and Gilbert & Sliep (2009) highlight the way in which “reflexivity is relational, tied to context, dynamic and perpetually interactive” (p.470). This has significance for narrative and the tool of narrative in research as a means through which one can understand how the storyteller

conceptualizes their sense of 'selfhood'; and draws extensively on their culture as a "symbolic system" of meaning for understanding and explaining their sense of self (Billington et al, 1998, p. 51). A narrative perspective allows one to explore the complex links between individual and society; the extent to which the participants' agency constructs their sense of self and their worlds around them, and how they are in turn constructed by their social environment. The process is one of reciprocity and mutual exchange, "most intentions are not mere private mental states existing in the mind of the individual. Most intentions are constituted out of social practices, rules, roles, institutions, laws, conventions" (Fay, p. 41). Therefore the contexts in which individuals find themselves, and the social others they are relating to, can be seen to shape and mold the ways in which they are viewed by others and therefore view themselves and consequently relate to others. This means that people may be viewed, understood and even present themselves in different ways by virtue of their social context.

In telling stories, individuals find themselves in roles within their story. The nature of life as an ongoing trajectory allows the individual to encompass different roles of identity at different times, incorporated into a unified self (Mishler, 1999). Sarbin (1986) suggests narratives are "an organizing principle for human action" (p. 9), and implicit in the daily events of individual lives. This is because "human beings think, perceive, imagine and make moral choices according to narrative structure" (Sarbin, 1986, p. 8). In this way, the stories people tell, reflect the ways in which their lives have been structured and their interpretations of these experiences as well as recognizing the role of the audience as evaluators of their stories. Furthermore, in establishing roles for oneself, each person ascribes meaning to roles based on their personal experiences and cultural scripts of what constitutes a 'good' life. This is important because it means an individual may need to draw on other tools in the attempt to convey the meaning of a message to someone who is not familiar with their own social scripts. The individual may also shift the ways, in which they present themselves, to cater for a certain audiences. In this way, the identity they project through the stories they share and the manner in which they share these stories, is constantly negotiated with and regulated for the social recipients.

2.1.3 Narrative construction and identity truths

In highlighting the shift of the social sciences towards the importance of exploring language and hence the inherent value of the narrative approach, Palmary (2012) emphasizes the ways in which “language constructs our social world, rather than simply reflecting it” (p. 101). However, it has been suggested that while stories consist of very obvious temporal dimensions of beginnings, middles and ends; life does not. In this way, it can be suggested that the narrator imposes meaning, instills structure, on a life that does not in fact occur in this temporal manner, and in this way the narrator imposes a false sense of order in the stories they tell. This position highlights the conflict of whether the narrator is actually “story plotting” rather than “story telling” (Crossley, 2000, p. 538). Perhaps then, one is to adopt a view of what Crossley (2000) refers to as “partial” determination on the behalf of the narrator. The stories one chooses to tell can in many ways be selected, shaped and moulded by the narrator; however, they remain grounded in the reality and context in which the narrator finds her/himself. The narrator can only draw from the social scripts available to him or her, and thus in many ways are bound by context, by what society deems acceptable and by their language. They cannot choose their context, just like they cannot choose their beginnings in their life stories, nor predetermine their ends. The narrator is, in many ways, stuck with what they have. However, how they then choose to tell the story of this reality is then partially determined by themselves (Crossley, 2000).

Thus the value of narrative theory is that it connects the notion of self, others and temporality. From an early stage, children learn the inherent value of constructing value, imposing meaning and creating order in the stories they tell. Through linking objects and establishing relationships, the story becomes relatable and meaningful to others and carries with it a shared understanding and acceptance between the narrator and the audience. Hence Crossley (2000) proposes that narrative becomes a “useful tool, which enables us to recapture the ways in which selves and identities are grounded in ‘cultural’ forms of language and sense making, whilst still maintaining a sense of the ‘internal’, ‘coherent’, and ‘personal’ nature of self experience” (p. 533).

2.1.4 Multiple identities, multiple communities

While individuals have been shown to have multiple identities, which rise to saliency in certain contexts, they can also exist within multiple communities and develop a sense of belonging and collective identity in relation to that specific community. However, while individuals belong to multiple communities there is most likely a primary or salient community from which the individual derives the greatest sense of belonging. “The primary community is the one that provides the values, norms, stories, myths, and a sense of historical continuity” (Sonn & Fisher, 1998). It is within this community that the individual is seen to derive their cultural scripts that are as Billington et al (1998) suggests, handed down by society.

Even when the individual does not agree with the social scripts handed down by society the individual still uses them as the only available means to establish an external “other” against which, or in comparison to, individuals can subsequently define themselves. In this way, the manner in which one identifies oneself is in constant construction with others, creating relatable boundaries that both include and exclude social others. The process is thus conditional, sustaining and being sustained by difference. Being identified with something or someone else does not obliterate the differences; it’s a process of ‘articulation’ (Hall, 1996). It is the creation of boundaries, yet it requires what is ‘not’ included to sustain what ‘is’ included. In this way identity construction is both inclusion and exclusion specifically co-existing. Therefore there can be no self without recognition from, or differentiation from, the other.

This view of identity construction suggests that the process of articulation includes the recognition of ambivalence and is therefore not always a harmonious process as identifications can be conflicting with one another (Hall, 1996). This idea of difference is conceptualized by Derrida:

“Derrida has shown how identities construction is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resulting poles- man/woman etc. what is peculiar to the second term is thus reduced to the function

of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. It is the same with the black-white relationship, in which white, of course, is equivalent to 'human being'.

"Woman' and 'black' are thus marks (ie. Marked items) in contrast to the unmarked terms of 'man' and 'white'" (Hall, 1996, p.4).

Furthermore, the concept of identity is also positional, as it imposes boundaries of inclusion but these can be shaped moulded and changed with time and through social interaction. In this way a discursive approach to understanding identification is one that is shown to be "increasingly fragmented and fractured" and constructed across multiple interactions and positions which are constantly being renegotiated and changing over time (Hall, 1996, p.4).

The ways in which individuals ascribe to different communities is also highlighted as temporal and shifting process, which, can be formed through shared experiences, and thus can transcend boundaries that divide while simultaneously creating ties that bind¹ as Sonn & Fisher (1998, p. 467) conclude:

"...The role of a shared emotional connection in space and time, which is predicated on shared history and the sharing of positively, valued experiences and stories, in developing a sense of community. This is not to say that the community was homogeneous. On the contrary, the community was quite diverse, but these shared experiences, the meaning of those experiences, and understandings of reality contributed to a sense of solidarity and connectedness. This overarching solidarity and connectedness is captured in what Wiesenfeld (1996) refers to as "macrobelongings." That is, "members share a meaning, which they attribute to the world because they share the experience of events occurring in a common space and time" (p. 342).

¹ The phrase "ties that bind and boundaries that divide" is a concept taken from the title of a paper by Bradbury & Ndlovu (2011) and will be used consistently throughout this report.

These attributes are partly reflected in understanding the notion of community and the ways in which individuals form and shape communal practices, especially in relation to the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983). Connecting narrative and community, is the genre of the ‘narrative of community’. Coined by Zagarell (1988) who was writing on women’s narratives, this concept highlights the ways in which communities are both positive and negative factors on the self, yet can be conceptualized as entities in their own right. The subject of this narrative is not a person but rather the daily tasks and functioning’s of the community. These stories therefore carry the culture of the community they represent through the telling of the daily activities that make up that community. It is through these ordinary and daily functions and activities that the community is able to maintain its structure as an entity. It highlights the interconnectedness and networks that make up the community rather than the individual people therein, however, the self is an inherently interconnected part of the community, and cannot be separated as the community and self are interdependent (Harde, 2007).

2.2 Community

Community is a term frequently utilized within the South African context and carries multiple meanings for multiple political ends. A commonly accepted definition for community refers to a social group in which an individual has a strong sense of belonging (Smith, 2001; Yen, 2007). In understanding the development of communities, certain characteristics are often prevalent. Smith (2001) and Ife (2002) emphasize how communities generally have shared beliefs, a sense of cohesiveness, similarities in terms of work space or geographical dwelling; communities foster a sense of responsibility along these lines of likeness and create an environment for solidarity and mutuality. The risk of conceptualizing community from this perspective is that it becomes potentially romanticized and unrealistic. Yen (2007) highlights how the notion of community can foster very positive responses of togetherness, notion of utopian society and cohesion, but reminds us that the term has simultaneous negative connotations especially when used to define in-group and out-group access to resources, as it was used during the Apartheid regime.

A seminal and commonly utilized conceptualization of community is Anderson's (1983) "imagined community", specifically in relation to nationhood, in which individuals have a strong sense of belonging to a group identity which exceeds the boundaries of interpersonal contact. The benefit of conceptualizing community in this way is that despite community members not having "face-to-face" interaction, they remain cohesive as "in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 15). Similarly, Tonnies, writing in 1887, introduced two concepts of the ways in which communities can be conceived of. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* represent the two predominant "types" of community (Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom & Siddiquee, 2011). The former refers to relationships within the community that are intimate, personal, resembling that of a large family in which community members live co-operatively together. For Tonnies, this community concept resembles the preindustrial era or a rural community in which interpersonal ties are evident and utilized frequently. The latter refers to a community by association; one which is unattached, impersonal, more fragmented with fewer connections and representative of the postindustrial era or urban community (Kagan, et al, 2011). In this way, communities can be invented where they seemingly do not exist, they are imagined in the minds of the individuals, much like the nation, and distinguished by the very manner in which they are imagined and the extent to which relationship connections are carried out.

The community of informal street traders in Warwick Junction can be thought to exist in the sense of this notion of the imagined community. This is because despite all the traders being located in the same geographical space, the size and layout of the market limits interpersonal interaction, as there are approximately 8000 traders spread across nine different individual markets which are all located within the Warwick Junction precinct. However, within each individual market a more conventional notion of community exists, as the women come to know and interact daily with one another, in the immediate geographical space of their individual markets.

In highlighting this heterogeneity of community and social groups that exist in large communities especially those "imagined", Hogg (2006) highlights the potential for conflict and internal disagreement amongst community members. This may be particularly evident

when individuals align themselves with sub communities within the macro communities in which they already exist. For example, the women in this research project may align themselves to a community of women within either their age cohort or “race” amongst a wider group of women with whom they share workspace and work based similarities. Given that individuals in each generation conceptualize values and meaning in different ways, the lack of understanding of these differences between the different generations is often referred to as the ‘generational gap’ (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004). The ‘generation gap’ reflects how differing life experiences in the early ages of development predispose individuals of the same generation to ascribe to certain values, perceptions and potentially subsequent behaviors in life that will differ from the generations preceding and following theirs.

The role of community is essential in understanding how individuals conceptualize themselves, the ways in which they perceive their community and the ways in which their community influences them. The value of understanding of the role of community is to explore the ways in which the women choose to project their identity in relation to their perceived community, and what this may indicate of the ways in which social experiences and events have influenced the women’s personal experiences and agency. The extent to which and the ways in which people relate to one another has been shown to influence their ‘sense of community’ or belonging. Community psychologists have highlighted the ways in which a sense of community is not limited to geographic proximity, but rather, extends to the ways in which people relate to one another as well. (Mak, Cheung, Law, 2009) highlight a four-factor conceptualization of developing a strong sense of community as including: “membership, influence, reinforcement and shared emotional connection” (p.80). Interestingly, some research has suggested that socio-economic status has shown to influence a sense of community, with more western affluent communities having greater resources and facilities, such as parks shared recreational resources that encourage interaction and encourage interpersonal interaction and thus bonding between community members (Mak et al, 2009). However this position is contestable, as research has also highlighted the ways in which less affluent communities are more frequent occupants of public spaces. Furthermore, less affluent community members develop more

interdependent relationships with one another in the face of continuous adversity such as poverty, which bolsters their sense of connection and resilience (Killigan, 2004).

2.2.1 Developing resilient communities

The position of the informal traders in Warwick Junction, as poor, women and marginalized has resulted in a continual struggle and raises the question of how resilience is possible in such adverse circumstances. “Using a contextual lens we can view resiliency that occurs under chronically stressful conditions as emergent resiliency while resiliency that occurs in the face of sudden stressful events can be viewed as reactive resiliency” (Daas-Brailsford, 2005, p 581). Broadly understood, resilience can be viewed as one’s coping capacity in the face of adversity (Walker, Holling, Carpenter, Kinzig, 2002). An important factor to consider in any resilient individual or community is the role and extent of social support an individual both receives from and extends to their community.

Definitions and characteristics of resilience can shift from one context to another, making it unique and difficult to define (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). In exploring characteristics of resilience and factors that promote resilience, Killigan (2004) highlights how people, while living in unpredictable environments, are vulnerable but become better protected and prepared for hardships through and in anticipation of them. Killian (2004) explored the risk and resilience factors among South African children faced with the HIV/Aids epidemic and emphasizes the ambiguity of resilience in highlighting how some individuals who appear to live in extremely adverse situations go on to live very successful lives becoming well adjusted adults, while others, brought up in those same contexts, do not (Killigan, 2004). Her research suggested that ascribing to a group creates a sense of belonging and collective identity through the sharing of similar beliefs (Killigan, 2004). Furthermore, research has shown that individuals exhibit resilience characteristics at different points in their lives “This suggests that it is the interaction and accumulation of individual and environmental risk factors that contributes to both risk and resilience” (Killigan, 2004. p 33). In plotting the resiliency trajectory, research by Dass-Brailsford (2005) showed that goal directed behavior, motivation, individual agency and family support were key factors in enhancing resilience. These studies show the inherently social aspect of resilience across

time and promote further exploration into the ways in which communities foster individual resilience through an increased sense of belonging, self worth and agency; as well as the ways resilient individuals contribute positively to the group identity and through doing so, enhance the collective resilience of the group.

The ways in which communities and groups have survived under oppressive regimes highlights the value of understanding collective resilience. The ability for groups of people to adapt and survive in harsh and marginalized settings has resulted in psychologists researching the ways in which collective identity; social settings and a sense of community work collaboratively and enabling resilience (Sonn & Fisher, 1998). In exploring community resilience, the term 'community competence' has emerged. Community competence "provides opportunities and conditions that enable groups to cope with their problems" (Sonn & Fisher, 1998, p. 458); furthermore it is suggested that competent communities are able to "tolerate internal conflict and maintain diversity" (p.459). Hence, community competence is viewed as a collective form of resilience that enables the group or community to withstand the challenges of their context, drawing on one another through the development of strong relationships to govern their identity and sense of self efficacy. In contrast, incompetent communities are shown to have a reduced sense of collective identity, and interpersonal relationships which thus fail to act as an effective buffer from the harsh social context in which the community members find themselves, especially in contexts of oppression and marginalization (Sonn & Fisher, 1998). Having said this, however, one must be cautious not to blame the community for failing to become competent in a very oppressive context. As this would be shift the blame of their continued oppression from the oppressor to the oppressed community itself. While the goal of community competence is ideal as it bolsters resilience and aids what Freire (1970) highlights as necessary for empowerment and liberation; the converse should not imply that the community is content with their position of oppression or responsible for their lack of 'community competence'.

In the absence of a society that affirms the individual's sense of self, alternative and affirming communities, through smaller social groupings, tend to form. These communities,

such as church groups, family networks recreational groups etc, serve as an alternative frame of reference and a positive reinforcing social source for the individual. Keil (1966, as cited in Sonn & Fisher, 1998) referred to the sense of community as “soul,” commenting that it is,

“Something stemming from the struggle for survival that forges solidarity and cohesion among group members. These alternative settings provided the contexts in which people could have positive experiences of belonging and develop a positive sense of individual and collective identity; they moderated the impact of oppression” (p. 465).

Hence, the value of these ‘break away’ communities, especially in the context of a marginalized society is that they not only foster a positive and affirming interrelationships, which has been attributed to the development of individual resilience but also that they give “people opportunities to maintain, reformulate, and reconstruct devalued and denied social and cultural identities” (Sonn & Fisher, 1998, p.466). The history of Warwick Junction as a location for informal trading has proved to withstand great adversity across a long period of time. The links between this resilient community over the decades and the resiliency of the individual traders, who have made up this community, can be traced by exploring the traders’ life stories and understanding the constantly negotiated relationship that exists between individuals and their community.

Thus “we need others to be ourselves” because we require others to acknowledge us, we act on the basis of rules and regulations imposed by others, and we make meaning of others through social scripts and cultural tools to which we ascribe (Fay, 1996). In this way, the life narratives individuals tell, carry with them cues and elements of their cultural ascription as individual identity is interwoven with social others and culture. But this is not a one-way process. Selves are not merely passive recipients of the other or society; they are active agents acting *on* the social other. As Sampson (1998) reminds us “there is an essentially dialectical interpenetration of subject and object in which neither has full primacy...the person is the mediated product of society, and also in acting, reproduces or

potentially transforms that society” (p.6). Hence, the ways in which identities are created in and through discourse, enables one to understand them as produced within a specific history, a context, one that reveals power dynamics and the markers of both inclusion and exclusion specific to such an context, as identities are constructed “through difference, not outside difference” (Hall, 1996, p.4). In this way identities are have boundaries, are positional, temporal and reflective of a social context. They are “points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us” (Hall, 1996, p. 6).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research design

This research project has used a narrative framework for the collection and analysis of data. Riessman (2008) suggests that narratives are integral in understanding how individuals and groups construct their identities. The act of storytelling, she says is the way in which individuals tell one another about “who they are, and who they are not” (Riessman, 2008, p. 8). For the individual “narratives are the means of human sense making” (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou 2008, p 43). This is because the ways in which we tell the stories of our lives, draw on a language that carries with it cultural relevance and social scripts. The stories we choose to tell, and the ways in which we chose to tell them portray to the audience the social context in which we find ourselves. Furthermore, individual life stories are inherently relational, and in describing ourselves we therefore describe the relational others within our society. In this way, the individual life story carries with it the tale of the wider social context, its history and its nuances.

3.2 Research questions

The project attempted to explore the following questions:

1. What is the salience of being a street trader in the Warwick Community to the women’s expression of identity? How were these identities portrayed in the PINs (Particular Incident Narratives) they chose to tell?
2. In what ways do the women choose to tell their stories to the particular audience of the researcher and what aspects may be silenced or asserted in this context?
3. How do these women utilize relationships within this community and others to which they belong?

3.2.1 Profile of the participants²

Name	Age	"Race"	Market	Years in the market	Married	Home residence	Dev. Category
Gugu	64	African	Bead	43	Widowed	Verulam	Peri/urban/rural
Thabisile	62	African	EMM- Poultry	29	Widowed	uMlazi	Township
Hlengiwe	49	African	Mielies	29	Widowed	iNanda	Township
Pravina	48	Indian	Early Morning Market	21	Yes	Phoenix	Township
Jabu	35	African	Lime	12	Single	eNdwedwe	Peri/urban/rural

This table only represents the 5 women whose narratives will be analyzed in this research. However, there were 10 women who participated in the original study.

3.3 Data collection

The data were collected following a narrative approach using the experience-centered framework (Squire, 2008). The benefit of this approach is that it enabled the process of the interview to be largely controlled by the participant. Using free association narrative interviews based on a self-interpretive question allowed the participants to speak freely on topics they felt were significant to their life story. This approach also limited the interviewer's capacity to pose intrusive questions, which may have breeched ethical boundaries. Access to the participants was made possible through good relationship with a local Non Profit Organization (NPO) Asiye eTafuleni³, which is based in the market community.

The researcher used letters of consent, which were translated into isiZulu, to introduce herself and the translator to the participants. These consent letters highlighted the purpose of the research and gave a brief background to the researcher and the translator (see appendix 2). The five participants were interviewed twice. The initial interview was centered on a single free association narrative question. The researcher and translator interacted with the participant through active listening, in which non-verbal responses were given at appropriate times (Squire et al, 2008). The follow up interview, which

² The names used in this table are pseudonyms. The racial categories utilized are based on Apartheid classification as the impact of the Apartheid government was embedded in these women's life stories.

³ Translated-"bring it to the table, lets negotiate"

followed relatively soon after the initial interview, was semi-structured and based around specific topics raised by the participant in the initial interview (see appendix 1). Refreshments were provided for the participants during the interviews (Coats, 2011).

When the primary language of the participant was English, I conducted the interviews. However, in most cases interviews were conducted in isiZulu. Lindiwe Mdadane and Phelo Muyanga conducted the interviews. The researcher was present in all the interviews, adopting a passive role in the interviews, which were conducted in isiZulu. All interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews were then transcribed and where necessary translated into English. Sie Thobela conducted the translation of the transcripts. A selection of interviews were back translated from isiZulu to English. Any discrepancies between the transcripts were then discussed with the translator to ensure the most accurate portrayal of the women's narratives was used (Coats, 2011). In preparation for this project's analysis, given it's focus on structural aspects of the narratives, all the interviews were again back checked by a third party, Nonhlanhla Makwakwa, to ensure the initial translation process was carried out accurately.

3.4 Data analysis

The first layer of research analysis conducted by Coats (2011) was thematic. This research project adopted a new focus of analysis, which was the narrative structure. This research analysis consisted of a multi-phase process in which three new forms of analysis offered distinct layers of understanding the participant's individual life. First, was an analysis of each participant's particular incident narratives and an account of what meaning these hold for their overarching life narrative. Second, the analysis focused on the interactive construction of meaning in the interviews. Third, the analysis focused on the relational elements of the women's accounts in terms of the significant others in their communities of belonging. The 5 life stories analyzed were selected based on the extent to which they could be applied to all three forms of analysis in the greatest depth.

By understanding the way in which people tell their stories, one gains insight into how stories carry with them meanings and interpretations of how they perceive themselves within the given context. Furthermore, the way people tell stories exposes aspects of their cultural context, as they constantly draw on symbols and references which are inherently embedded in culture to tell their story in a meaningful way (Phoenix, 2008). Narrative analysis which pays attention to these aspects is understood to be 'psychosocial' as it highlights the socially constructed nature of narrative and the ways in which "narratives are part of the process of sense-making while also focusing on social and cultural processes" (Phoenix, 2008, p. 66).

Andrews (2008) highlights the value of revisiting previously analyzed data by emphasizing the multiple interpretative value narrative data holds. She suggests that as researchers we are continuously collecting and analyzing data in the here-and-now, but our analysis is always connected to our current position within the world and vantage point from which we view the world. Because of this, data collected can be revisited at a later stage and reinterpreted from a new stance as "researchers are not static, instead we are constantly renegotiating and developing our worldview and consequently, the manner in which we view the meaning of our own lives and the lives of those who we research" (Andrews, 2008, p. 94). In this way, the lens through which we interpret the data is always changing, and therefore revisiting previously analyzed data can provide a new angle or perspective through which the researcher not only understands the material, but also interprets it. "All interpretations are provisional, they are made by positioned subjects who are prepared to know certain things and not others...analyses are always incomplete" (Andrews, 2008, p. 86). Andrews (2008) therefore suggests that revisiting and reinterpreting data allows the researcher to gain a more "complex understanding" of the narrative and narrative subjects (p. 87). Reissman (2008) further highlights the advantages of revisiting previously collected data, as she comments, with regard to interpreting data "there is never a single authorized meaning" (Reissman, 2008, p. 89). This is not to suggest that important information was neglected during the initial data analysis, but rather, it emphasizes the temporal nature of interpretation, and value of revisiting material to gain a more in-depth and multifaceted understanding of what it is the narrator was saying. The result of

reinterpreting previously analyzed data is that it provides the researcher with multiple viewpoints of the same story and as Mishler (2004) suggests, it is the collection of these multiple viewpoints that are “most illuminating” (Andrews, 2008, p. 90). Using the selected works of others, Andrews (2008) highlights in four succinct points, the argument for reinterpreting previously collected data,

1. It is resource efficient
2. It creates an opportunity to generate new perspectives on the data
3. It enhances the possibility of comparative research
4. It allows for verification of the original study (2008, p.90).

Arguments against the revisiting of previously analyzed data suggest the researcher may be biased or preemptive in her approach, as she already knows what the material holds. However, Andrews (2008) dismisses this argument by suggesting that all researchers access the data as objectively as possible regardless of whether they have analyzed the material before. This is because of the shift in the researcher’s focus and perspective that allows her to highlight meanings in the data that may have eluded her before. “Meaning is not something that, once extracted, can be contained in a pure, undiluted form, bottled as it were” (Andrews, 2008, p. 93). Furthermore, no definitive interpretation of narrative data can ever be made due to the multifaceted meaning an individual’s words carry when speaking. Thus the opportunity to revisit and reinterpret data highlights the multilayered value of narrative and the many ways in which the meaning of data can be interpreted. Revisiting the data allows for this awareness to be constantly awakened as well as a rich interpretation of the data as the varied interpretations compliment one another in a holistic understanding of the research subject, like an object photographed from many different angles.

This research therefore revisits the data collected by Coats (2011) but adopted a very different lens of analysis. Analysis for the research of Coats (2011) focused on the experiences of informal street traders in which five themes emerged. The themes were, ‘Economic challenges’; ‘Politics, police and permits’; ‘Work’; ‘Being a woman’ and ‘Support’.

This analysis explored the common aspects of these women's lives and common experiences and created a framework for understanding the women's experiences in this specific community, thematically or horizontally across the participants.

By contrast analysis of this phase of the project sought to, 1. Highlight the particular incident narratives of each participant, which offer windows of understanding into their overarching life narratives and offer reflection on cultural and traditional narratives, which are interwoven into their personal stories. 2. Understand the ways in which the women's narratives were co-constructed in relation to the specific audience she told her story to. 3, the significant relationships the women refer to and the ways in which these relationships are either positive or negatively presented and what this means for her conception of community. Given the limited length allocated to this research project, not all the women's life stories could be analyzed. Hence five women's narratives were selected based on their applicability for meeting the requirements of each level of analysis.

The analysis therefore focuses on a structured understanding of the way in which the five women delivered their life stories, the particular incident narratives (PINs) they shared, the non verbal cues of emotional expression, the use of pauses, the ways in which they switch topics of conversation and when they do this, the experiences to which they gave meaning, and the manner in which they chose to represent themselves through the PINs they shared. Furthermore, this form of analysis highlights the links between the individual and the wider social context as well as the interconnectedness of the individual to social others.

3.4.1. Searching for PINS

In this analysis, attention was focused solely on analysis of particular incident narratives (PINs) that each narrator offered. PINs are short incident narratives that offer us a window into the wider life narrative of the participant (Wengraf, 2005). They carry with them narrative principles, key themes and key identities inherent in life stories. This is exposed through the recurring content in each individual's narrative and consequently in each individuals PIN. Hence in analyzing the PINs of participants, we seek to explore what this

may mean for the overarching life narrative, what the PIN tells us about being human and what cultural or traditional narrative the PIN carries with it. The focus was on how each PIN is told and why it was told in this specific manner.

3.4.2. Co-constructed narratives

Reismann (2008) suggests that narrative accounts are co constructed between the narrator and the audience. This is because, based on the specific audience to whom the narrator speaks, a specific version of themselves will be projected. Furthermore, the narrator will navigate their narrative based on preconceived ideas of what she believes the audience already knows, will not know and needs to know. In this way, the audience influences the story told, and the manner in which it is told, as certain aspects of the narrative may be explained or emphasized purely because the narrator predicts the audience may be ignorant on a specific issue. In analyzing the data from this perspective, the structural form of the interviews was explored. Close attention was given to where the narrator chose to switch topics, use either English or isiZulu, place emphasis, give lengthy explanations or repeat certain elements of the story. The non-verbal cues of laughter, pauses and emotion was also explored to understand the ways in which shared meaning between the narrator and the audience of researcher and interviewer, is co-constructed and how this was achieved. In this way, the dynamic interactive relationship between the narrator and the audience creates the narrated life, recognizing that individual lives can never be understood in isolation and that the researcher is an integral part of the process of meaning making.

3.4.3 Relationship networks

Finally, a “relationship network” tree was created for each participant that highlighted yet another form of analysis, one which explores the relational selves of the participants. This provided an account of the ways in which each woman spoke about and utilized the relationships that they considered meaningful or significant in their lives. The relationship network was created through highlighting all the relationships that featured in each woman’s individual narrative, which they expressed as significant. By developing an understanding of the prominent relationships each woman drew on as a resource,

especially in times of adversity, an exploration into the ways that “community” as a tool for resilience can be developed. The community needn’t be constituted of individuals who directly know one another, but rather it can be “imagined” and extend to include all people with a similar sense of belonging or communion (Anderson, 1983). This third layer of analysis thus explored the relational components of each woman’s life; highlighting relationships each woman has with significant others who may, or may not, also belong to the Warwick community. Drawing on Hayley’s (2010) innovation of ‘river diagrams’ to represent relationships in visual form, I created an alternative ‘tree diagram’ to represent these women’s relational lives.

These three new analytic approaches to the data capture the particular incidents that the participant shared, the interactive construction of meaning between the participant and the audience and the relational aspects of these women’s lives that enable them to cope during adversity. Most importantly, these forms of analysis were explored with in the context in which the interview occurred and with the community from which the participant comes, in mind. Attention was given to why the participant may have chosen to emphasize or omit certain aspects of their narrative in a constant reflective process of interpretation. The analysis explored whether there were perhaps features of the narrative that they emphasized because of their anticipated ignorance of the researcher as the audience and therefore felt that they needed to be extensively explained? Similarly were certain experiences omitted or briefly mentioned to avoid portraying themselves in a particular way towards the audience? The interaction between the story-teller and the audience plays a major role in establishing perceived boundaries of what can be said and not-said in the interview process and what is assumed to be known versus unknown. These dynamic nuances were taken into constant consideration when exploring and analyzing the structure of the women’s narratives.

3.5. Ethical considerations

Permission for participation from the participants was gained at the onset of the study conducted by Coats (2011) through signed letters of consent (see appendix 2), and ethical clearance was obtained for the study through school and faculty review procedures (see

appendix 4). Ethical considerations in relation to the collection of data are summarized from (Coats, 2011) as follows:

“Working closely with the well respected NGO in the area allowed for the research to be constantly regulated by their advised cultural norms. The NGO was trusted by both participants and the researcher, to act as an ethical yardstick. However, the nature of the interviews was personal and reflexive and given the socio economic and political marginalization of the participants some traumatic memories were elicited during the course of the interviews. When this arose the participant was referred to free counseling at a near by university. Whilst the traders independently chose to participate in the research process, they were required to spend time away from their stalls. In [some] instances the interviews were conducted at the traders stall in the market” (p.50).

Revisiting the data collected in 2011 and applying different forms of analysis did not create new ethical concerns for three reasons:

- 1) The participants’ consent was granted for the analysis and write up of data collected through the interview process and participants understood the focus of the project to be on their individual lives and experiences (see appendix 7.1).
- 2) The frame of the original project was narrative in design and it was only due to time and space constraints that the first phase of the project was restricted to thematic analysis.
- 3) The same researcher and supervisor worked with the data set, so no breach of confidentiality is entailed.

3.6. Reflexivity

A concern with this research was the awareness of how the women may have subdued aspects of their narrative and expression of their opinions in the telling of their stories because of how this may have portrayed them to the researcher. As a “white” researcher interviewing “black” participants, the construct of race may have influenced the women’s

portrayals to avoid or promote a certain perceptions of themselves. This is especially relevant given South Africa's racist history and the context in which these interviews occurred. The recognition of "race" is deeply embedded in South Africa's socio-political history, and while this construct may have been impossible to overcome, an awareness of the ways in which language carries meaning and an acknowledgment of the influence race and language may have had in the data collection process is essential. As Gilbert & Sliep (2009) remind us, there is a need to remain constantly reflexive through an active awareness of the ways in which relational ties and contextual factors influence each interaction we have with others. The analytic focus on the 'co-construction' of narratives explicitly engages with these dynamics.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Particular Incident narratives

The first level of analysis focused on Particular incident narratives (PINS) (Wengraf, 2005). This form of analysis seeks to explore the ways in which each woman's narrative includes smaller narratives of particular and memorable incidents. The telling of these incidents frequently adopts a narrative structural flow, in which, specific beginnings, middles and ends are evident. They also frequently display the quintessential narrative principles of attention to detail, plots and the portrayal of certain characters. PINS are important in understanding the ways in which particular incidents and experiences are made meaningful through imposing a narrative structure on the events of a life. The five life narratives will be analyzed in search of PINs and their meaning, questioning why these particular PINs are told by the women, selected by them from their life narratives as significant stories to be told. These PINs offer a window into the life of the individual through an encapsulating event of significance. This brief insight offered allows a glimpse into the participants life and mirrors the experience-centered approach suggested by Squire (2008). Thus, while many PINs exist within each narrative, the PINs chosen for this analysis were ones that were felt to offer the greatest insight into the women's lives and sense of self.

4.1.1 Hlengiwe's PINs: Traumatic encounters.

Two particular incident narratives were evident in Hlengiwe's life story. The first relates to her work identity and the second, relates to her identity as a mother. Both PINs encapsulate a life narrative of trauma. The first PIN is centered on the confiscation of Hlengiwe's trading resources by police. Hlengiwe explained in detail the order of events leading up to the eventual confiscation of her cooking resources and the devastating consequences.

" I lost my husband, my son passed away first and then his father passed away the following week. I couldn't afford to pay for the permit after that. I just couldn't put the money together...my stand was now stuck... one day I was selling, and then I went to

the shops to buy bread, when I came back the police had taken the gas cylinder. After that it remained like that...then I went to recover the gas from the police and couldn't get it. Whenever you go there you just get there and just don't get your things, it was like that until it came to a point that I stop using the stand... at the time when I want to pay for the permit, the police on the other hand take these mielies..I now don't know what to do when something that is my livelihood is being taken away" (I1, L21-35).

This traumatic PIN was retold in a story-like manner, beginning with “*One day I was selling and then... after that...now ...*” (I1, L24). The way in which Hlengiwe shares the tale of these events is through a universally recognized narrative structure that makes the story relatable to the audience. She adopts a linear time frame in which the PIN can be seen to have specific beginnings, middles and unfinished ends as she draws the story to a close by bringing the audience back to the present context, which remains largely unstable and uncertain as she comments “*now I don't know what to do...*” (I1, L35). The use of this approach highlights the ways in which Polkinghorne (1988) suggests individuals are “radically temporal” (p.129), using a linear framework to construct or make meaning of their experiences in an ordered manner that consists of past, present and future. The adoption of this framework imposes order and sequence into situations that perhaps were initially perceived as chaotic and incoherent, as Sarbin (1986) suggests an attempt to “impose meaning on the meaningless” (p.12). By adopting a narrative framework therefore, one can see how Hlengiwe has used the universal notion of linear time to ‘make sense’ of her experience, not only for her own understanding, but also in order to make her experience meaningful and more easily for others to relate to. The inherently social element of narrative is therefore evident within this context, in which the individual, the notion of time, and the social audience are understood to be interacting and interconnected.

Furthermore, within this PIN, the police were constructed and presented to the audience as the characters of betrayal, betraying their official role of protecting the innocent and representing law and order in the new democratic South Africa. By presenting dueling sides within this story, Hlengiwe effectively constructs a plot, opposing characters, good

and evil, placed in a temporal context. The inherent need for a plot to be constructed within a narrative is explained by Polkinghore (1988) who suggests that “*the plot configures the events into a whole, and the events are transformed from merely serial, independent happenings into meaningful happenings that contribute to the whole theme*” (p.142). It is this creation of a meaningful narrative that enables the audience to easily relate to and identify with Hlengiwe as the protagonist and become swayed through the emotional narration. In taking sides, the audience recognizes the narrator and validates not only her story but also her sense of identity. As Fay (1996) suggests, it is through recognition by social others that one’s identity is affirmed, shaped and moulded. Through identifying with the sorrow of Hlengiwe’s story, her identity as the victim is co-constructed and affirmed. Hence, it is through this psychological connection of ‘taking sides’ through which the story becomes both symbolic and interpersonal between the speaker and the audience enabling a social connection to be made where none existed before.

Hlengiwe’s second PIN was also one of trauma. It was devoted to the story of her daughter’s rape and son’s arrest. Interestingly, she told this story in a very distanced manner, avoiding the use of personal pronouns and references as highlighted in this comment “*this boy raped this child*” (I1, L113). Hlengiwe recalled this narrative in a very factual manner and without the same level of detail as in her earlier PIN. She also interrupts herself at the start of the narrative, as if about to tell the story, but then stops, “*This is what happ...you see, this one, this boy raped this child* [referring to her daughter]” (I1, L112). From this point, Hlengiwe avoids all narrative-like features, aside from imposing a very rudimentary form of chronological telling of the events. While Hlengiwe herself was not exposed to this violent incident, the ways in which the trauma affected her whole family have left her a victim of what Brown (1995) identifies as “second hand trauma” (p.107). The inability to convey this incident to the interviewer in a narrative-like manner, and rather, resorting to shortened sentences, factual recall, devoid personal references highlight the ways in which trauma has ruptured Hlengiwe’s means of sense-making. Furthermore, Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) highlights the ways in which trauma frequently transcends the realm of ordinary language, trapping the victim in an inexpressible and

isolated position, “we cannot fully understand what victims went through, in part, because the impact of the traumatic event cannot be adequately captured in words” (p. 85).

Hence Hlengiwe’s two PINS both convey narratives of trauma, one personal, and one is the world of her work. They encapsulate an overarching life story of trauma. The PINs provide small opportunities to view Hlengiwe’s full life story, yet powerfully capture a life that is centered on two salient identities, being a trader and being a mother, and how both of these incorporate a position of being a victim as both identities have been ruptured by traumatic experiences that distinctively mark her sense of self.

4.1.2 Jabu’s PIN: Socio-economic class and school shoes

Jabu’s PIN is centered on the difficulty of her schooling. While this is not a short duration incident, the ways in which she describes a particular year of her education and presents it as a ‘small story’ or PIN within her life narrative. Jabu draws on this incident to highlight the ways in which poverty influenced her life decisions. She comments, *“I didn’t have school shoes and I made the decision that I was dropping out of school. Because I didn’t have shoes”* (I2, L13). Jabu’s PIN continues to reflect the difficulty of this year, drawing on tangible examples of poverty which are presented in a plot-like manner and certain characters in her PIN are constructed as the ‘heroes’ who assisted her in her battle with the plotted enemy of poverty.

From the start of the PIN, Jabu provides a contextual background, *“I remember when we were struggling at home, I was doing standard seven”*. This sets the scene for her ongoing narrative. She then weaves a plot into her PIN through reference to poverty as the challenge or ‘enemy’ that needed to be overcome, *“I didn’t have school shoes and I made a decision to drop out of school”*. From this point the audience is hearing a story not of the events of school experience, but of one woman’s attempt to overcome poverty. Jabu continues with the plot by highlighting the highs and lows of this incident,

“When we went to him [her father] asking for the money he said he did not have money because he paid out his debts...so I decided I was leaving school. Then my

brother who had a table here helped me out...then I went back to school...but things were difficult...our school was far, we had to walk long distances. So that was it.” (I2, L13- 20).

From this extract it becomes clear that Jabu not only plots her story along a continuum of narrative highs and lows, but also introduces other characters into her narrative. These characters either come to her aid, presented as ‘heroes’, or fail to assist her, as they too are victims of poverty and thus rendered helpless bystanders. In this PIN the ways in which the incident adopts the narrative structure of plot, sequence of events, characters and constructed enemies in these are thus clear. Interestingly, she ends her PIN with a note of despondency “*so that was it*” which leaves the audience to make an interpretation over what became of her educational journey past standard seven as she continued to fight poverty through her life narrative.

Furthermore, Jabu’s PIN highlights a key narrative construct, repetition. The ways in which repetition is used to highlight key points or key identities are illustrated by Phoenix (2008) who comments, “...themes cluster around recurrent content in stories. The identification of repeated subject matter thus provides a useful means of identifying key themes” (p. 67). Within Jabu’s PIN she repeatedly places emphasis on her lack of shoes and in doing so repeatedly presents the key theme of poverty in these tangible objects. She comments, “*I didn’t have school shoes*” (I2, L13)... “*Because I didn’t have shoes*” (I2, L14)... “*he bought me a shirt and the shoes*” (I1, L18). Shoes thus become the tangible objects that represent the abstract conceptualization of a life of poverty and a noted obstruction to the formation of her scholar identity. The use of shoes as a metaphor for poverty is further highlighted in her statement of triumph “*he bought me a shirt and shoes then I went back to school*” (I2, L18).

4.1.3 Gugu’s PIN: Loss and incoherence.

Gugu’s PIN centers on the death of her eight-year old son in 1976. She spoke about this incident with difficulty, switching frequently between past tense and present tense, indicating the perpetuation of this past trauma in the present.

"The death of my son was really painful because he didn't get sick. It really hurt me and there is a wound that would never heal. It sometimes comes back because he was born on 1968 October 28. It really comes back to me" (I2, L220).

The difficulty of discussing this topic is evident in the ways in which she initially states "*it sometimes comes back to me*" and then one sentence later restates, "*It really comes back to me*". The PIN she describes is a deeply personal and traumatic experience, which seems to rob Gugu of her ability to make meaning from the experience. The ways in which narrative structure enables one to make meaning, is clearly absent in Gugu's PIN. Her story is not temporally ordered. Rather, Gugu recalls the factual experiences of the death of her child, without overt linear structure. This lack of linear narrative structure in the retelling of the incident relays the chaos that seemed to prevail at the time of the incident. The lack of structural flow is illustrated below,

Gugu: *"The way he passed away, he didn't get sick, we had to be visited by the people from church who could see how things happened, but none of that happened. It was something that ended within the family. Even if there was something people were telling me, saying, I should let it pass. But I couldn't".*

Interviewer: *"Ma, are you saying he didn't get sick?"*

Gugu: *"He didn't get sick, my child. He was playing during the day but at sunset he passed away. He asked for something to drink as if there was something in his chest but at sunset he died. He also got sick at sunset" (I2, L266 -233).*

The ways in which this PIN is relayed in a very confusing manner is echoed by the interviewer needing to clarify the factual information. Gugu seems bewildered and confused over the order of events that resulted in the death of the child. In her own inability to make sense of this experience, seems unable to provide clarity. She initially answers "*He didn't get sick*" and then a few lines later contradicts this by saying "*He also get*

sick at sunset". The ways in which trauma disrupts the ability to make sense of experience in a temporal and narrative manner is highlighted by Kearney and Perrott (2006) who highlight the ways in which trauma results in disorganization most frequently displayed by accounts of the incident that are disjointed, confusing and include repetition.

Furthermore, the incident includes a comment of family relationships, ancestral beliefs and cultural practices. She reflects, "We *could even go and see the traditional healers or Sangoma's but we didn't not even when my parents gave us money to do so. But my husband's family couldn't let me*" (II2, L240). She ends the PIN by saying, "*at the end we heard that the problem was within the family*" (I2, L243). This very specific ending of the PIN concludes the story coherently, alluding to a linkage between the death of her child and family relationships, perhaps referring more specifically to ancestors. In this way, Gugu seems to draw links between the two that allow the audience to draw this conclusion. However, the concluding explanation given by Gugu, was not explained further, despite its reliance on a cultural understanding. Perhaps because at this point Gugu was speaking directly to the interviewer, who had a shared cultural identity and thus understanding of her explanation for the death of her child. However, in analyzing this PIN this cultural reference was initially lost on the researcher who does not share the culture nor the social script on which this explanation draws and required a good deal of interpretive work. In this way Gugu's PIN, and the oversight made by the researcher, reminds us that "there will always be material that lies beyond the realm of our interpretations and that we may get things very wrong for our interviewees" (Squire, 2008, p. 59).

4.1.4 Thabilise's PIN: The ambivalent role of mothering.

Thabisile's PIN emerged as the result of a question by the interviewer at the end of her first interview,

Interviewer: "*Is there anything else Ma that you would like to tell us about?*"

Thabisile: "*I'm still thinking. [pause] Another thing. [pause] I had only one son...*" (I1, L53).

Thabisile then begins the story of her son, his addiction to drugs, her struggle in attempting to assist him through this addiction, her anguish as a mother over having to abandon her son, her decision to reconcile the issue with God and, last, her reconciliation with her son himself. This PIN is constructed using a very linear structure in which the events are temporally sequenced.

She presents her own identity as a mother who attempted all avenues for helping her child, and eventually conceded to the fact that she was unable to assist him, handing him over to the law, and handing herself over to God.

"I took this child to rehabilitation...I then came to the acceptance that if it was my fault I would answer before my God about it. I then thought it was now time for the law to take its course...I would hand him over to the law...I then decided to just leave him alone...I had done all the things I was supposed to do for him...I told myself that if he died I would mourn for him and move on" (1, L58-85).

This extract highlights the journey of an emotionally ambivalent mother who is placed in a position of conflict over her motherly role and identity, which she considers to be salient, and her desire to remain a respected and accepted member of her community. There is an element of defensiveness in Thabisile's PIN as she recounts the lengthy process of trying all avenues before eventually giving up on her child. The way in which she presents the PIN in this way can be said to highlight the ways in which she feels the need to defend her role as a 'good' mother in the face of a potentially judgmental society. She makes a strong claim that the discipline of children is necessary, and that her decision to hand over her son to the police constitutes as a final form of discipline which she hopes will teach her son a lesson, as she comments, *"It was not time for the law to take its course. Maybe he will change and be disciplined"* (I1, L). Hence, Thabisile highlights in her narrative what Squire (2008) articulates through commenting "all stories are thus to some extent morality tales" (p. 44). In her particular incident narrative, the morality centers on the notion of good mothering, which includes a willingness to assist your child in all circumstances as well as discipline your child effectively. By presenting herself as someone who has met these criteria, she is

effectively attempting to prevent the interviewer, researcher and potential audience of her narrative, from judging her harshly.

Furthermore, in the actions she took and her explanation of her decisions she highlights the saliency of her religious identity as well and in the telling of this PIN Thabisile simultaneously draws on a religious discourse. The ways in which she presents the key features of her narrative in conjunction with her religious identity convey the genre of religious ideology, which centers on blame, accountability, guilt and forgiveness. She presents her relationship with God in a similar interpersonal construct to that of her relationship with her son by commenting *“if it was my fault I will answer before my God about it”* (I1, L63) and later reflects on her son’s appeal for her grace as he pleaded *“Ma, I’m sorry for all the bad things that I have done. Please ray for me to stop”* (I1, L74). Thabilise conveys not only her personal story but also a particular religious worldview that is embedded in her sense of self. Phoenix (2008) highlights how personal narratives carry with them canonical narratives that “use identity as a resource to set up a moral worldview” (p. 69), which Thabisile’s PIN illustrates very clearly.

4.1.5 Pravina’s PIN: Lost and found-developing an identity.

Pravina’s PIN is articulated around an incident in the market when she was four years old. She explains that this was the first memory she has of being in the market as she comments, *“my first time I visited the markets and was lost”* (I2, L276). Her recollection of being lost in the market at the age of four when she was shopping with her mother reflects a very detailed account of the incident and sequence of events. Pravina recalls,

“I can clearly still remember that I boarded the bus and came to the market with my mum, and ehh she said to me, “stand here and wait for me, I’ll be back” because the market was very very busy at that stage...she said “you stand here and I’ll fetch you now now”. So I guess being that age, when my mum didn’t come back, ehh, I think I became hysterical, and being four years old I left that place and started wondering in the market...and I got lost” (I2, L263)

The value of this PIN is twofold. First, it highlights the process of story plotting; second, it highlights how narratives construct identities. The ways in which Pravina's recollection may be more a story plotted than a story told, is suggested through the very detailed explanation of her PIN. Pravina's recollection of the exact words her mother said to her and the exact ordering of events is debatable given her young age at which this incident took place. The ways that stories can be plotted rather than simply recalled is suggested by Crossley (2000). However, she highlights that this doesn't mean the narrator is lying or fabricating content, but rather alludes to the ways in which narratives are "partially determined" (Crossley, 2000). In Pravina's PIN, elements of her narrative are known to exist, her story is grounded in real experiences, but the detail that connects the sequence of events can be suggested to be selected and determined and perhaps passed down by her mother's recollections of the event rather than her own lived experience recollections.

Second, the ways in which Pravina presents her identity in this PIN is as "lost" and "hysterical". She describes this experience as "horrific" and depicts the market as a chaotic, busy and overwhelming location. The portrayal of this seeming defenseless identity, one of a child who was vulnerable and anxious in this context, unknown and essentially lost is used as a polar opposite to the identity constructed throughout the remainder of her life narrative. Pravina refers frequently to her confident, outgoing, assertive and bold character, commenting,

"If you walk in that market there and you ask any one about Pravina, they can tell you... I can walk anywhere around the Warwick area, and I'm so well known. Where as, if I tell a family member to come, they'll say no I'm not coming to that area, where as I can walk from one end to the other, I am so well known, that whether I take a walk up the bridge or whether I'm on this side, I'm well known. People know me because of my interaction with them" (I1, L).

Hence Pravina's PIN enables an identity contrast to be constructed, one in which she can use to draw on the overt comparisons of her current identity and past identity, between being unknown, and known, between feeling lost and feeling assured, between being

overwhelmed and being in control, between being isolated and being intimately and widely connected to others through relationship and interaction. Her PIN is thus a valuable resource in understanding the ways in which she seeks to portray her identity to the audience and in doing so, portray a certain self-image that is in contrast to what once was. This potential for an identity construction comparison is picked up by the researcher,

Pravina: “...*my first time I visited the markets and was lost.*” (laughter)

Researcher: “*I’m sure you know your way around much better now*” (laughter).

Pravina: “*Ja now, now, ja!*” (I1, L276 – 278).

Hence, Pravina’s use of her PIN to frame her present identity highlights what Reissmann (2008) suggests about story telling, that it is a way in which people tell one another “who they are and who they are not” (p. 8).

4.2 Co-constructed narratives

This section of the analysis will focus on the ways in which life narratives are co-constructed in the interview situation. The focus of this analysis was to explore the ways in which the women’s narratives drew on shared construction of meaning through shared experiences, shifts in topic, the use of silences and an acknowledgment of the power dynamic inherent in the interview interaction. These components of the narrative all seem to hold significant value in portraying something about the women’s narratives that may not have been overtly stated. As Palmay (2012) highlights, the particular use of language, offers a significant and “considerable role in the co-construction of meaning” (p. 100). The ways in which the women used these elements seemed to be inherently connected to the interview dynamic and the developing relationship between the interviewer, the participant and the researcher. The responses and reactions of the interviewer seemed to guide the narrative in a certain directions, offering subtle and overt forms of encouragement or censure in relation to certain topics as the women spoke. The anticipated or imagined audience of readers or to others beyond the interview situation,

was embodied in the presence of the researcher who was in most instances a passive observer being unable to speak isiZulu in which most interviews were conducted.

Through an exploration of the ways in which the narratives of these participants are co-constructed, the interaction between the participant and interviewer that navigates the trajectory of the story told becomes most evident. This co-constructed nature of narratives can be explored through a focus on 1. Common communities, shared identities; 2. Silences and topic switches, 3. Power in interview interactions. It is important to note that in most cases the interviews were conducted by a field worker who also served as an interpreter and not the researcher. The researcher was thus 'removed' from the interaction as a result of the obvious language barrier and racialised and class differences. However, the researcher was still present in all the interviews and thus her presence alone was shown, at times, to influence the stories the women chose to tell and the ways in which they told them.

4.2.1 Common communities, shared experiences

It was interesting to note how a common point of connection between the interviewer and the participant stimulated specific aspects of the dialogue. An emotional expression frequently expressed throughout all the women's narratives, was laughter. Laughter was shown to emerge in various instances, most notably; it resulted during nostalgic recollections and to express shared experience and solidarity. Laughter seemed to bridge experiences in non-verbal ways that were un-communicated but seemed to hold a shared sense of recognition. In Gugu's explanation of why she didn't want to get married, laughter on the part of the interviewer was seen to be an emotional tool of connection that bonded the women over their shared experiences with men.

Gugu: *"When I was growing up, I would regret getting married. It was better when I was single"*

Interviewer: (Laughing)

Gugu: *"Because I should have been doing my things at home as a girl. I used to enjoy working until I got married and I came across obstacles then, I missed home and wished I never got married. I love single women"*

Interviewer: (Laughing Excessively)

Gugu: *"I don't like getting married I miss home. Marriage has got problems and you can't do something whenever you like, you have a husband that controls you, the family as well. Even when there is something you wish to do"*

Interviewer: *"You can't"*

Gugu: *"You have to ask for permission"*

Interviewer: (Laughter) (I2, L299 -309)

However, laughter seemed to sometimes communicate a sense of shock or disbelief in response to the interviewer's question. This was most frequently evident after a question that the participant may have been embarrassed about because the response from the interviewer seemed to carry with it a moral judgment, for example:

Interviewer: *"If you are eating, do you eat together, do you share food, what do you do?"*

Jabu: *"No (laughter) it depends if it is your friend or not. If your friend is not around you eat alone because you are buying with your own money. Then you can give anyone that you like to give but no".*

Interviewer: *"Oh you don't eat together".*

Jabu: *"No, no"* (12, L83 -88).

From this extract the ways in which the dialogue was directed based on the response of the interviewer are evident. The Interviewer, in asking about the sharing of food implies a specific cultural norm around the importance of food sharing. The verbal response given by Jabu contradicts this perceived norm yet her reluctance to share, which is driven by her financial difficulties, carries with it a sense of embarrassment that she masks with laughter. The moral judgment is most evident in the interviewer's repetition of the question, despite Jabu having clearly answered *"no"* and explaining why. The way which the interviewer pursued this questioning caused Jabu to answer more definitely the second time, and in doing so, attempt to shut down this topic of conversation immediately.

While connections, and disconnections, were made through laughter at some points, at other times; actual moments of shared experience connected the interviewer and participant and excluded the researcher. This is best illustrated in the interview with Thabisile as she mentions her position in the women's league within the St Anna group in the Catholic Church:

Thabisile: *"I'm a member of the women's league like all mothers. I'm a Catholic under Saint Anna. I go to people's houses where there are sick or deceased people. That is what we do"*

Interviewer: *"Okay"*

Thabisile: *"Things like those, maybe I would have a position if I was at home most of the time but now I'm always not around."*

Interviewer: *"That is it Ma. That is a very important position in the community and in the congregation. What do they say we work for, the families, congregation and the community."*

Thabisile: *"Families, congregation and community"*

Interviewer: *"Yes I am also Catholic."*

Thabisile: *"That is exactly what we say"*

Interviewer: *"I'm also Catholic"*

Thabisile: *"Wow!"*

Interviewer: *"I know what you are talking about that is the most important position because if the women were not doing that, most of the families would not be taken care of."*

Thabisile: *"I think I would also be dead because of the poverty"*

Interviewer: *"You see what I mean." (I2, L284 -302)*

In this exchange the women connect over a shared experience of being Catholic and serving within the church. The identity that Thabisile puts forward as a *"Catholic under Saint Anna"* is immediately recognized as a point of connection with the interviewer who then discloses her own religious identity. The two women then discuss the faith and their roles in a manner that draws on a shared cultural script. Both women affirm one another's salient identities of being religious women; this enables more open disclosure as well as a means of interaction. This continues through the remainder of the interview as the participant becomes stuck over explaining a religious metaphor, the interviewer immediately intercedes and comes to her aid.

Thabisile: *"I only take one verse from the bible, I see a man like...(pause) the man that was troubled"*

Interviewer: “Job”

Thabisile: “Yes...”(I2, L514- 517)

The positioning of the researcher within this dynamic was more obviously removed as the ties of language and shared experience, that bonded the interviewer and participant became the lines that divided the researcher from the exchange. Hence this point of connection and co-construction within the interview is an example of how Anderson’s (1983) “imagined community” could serve as a means of connection and instill a sense of belonging between strangers. While these women have never met before, live in different communities and serve in different churches, their common sense of belonging to Catholicism immediately serves as a basis of intimate connection and tells one another aspects of the others life without necessarily having to explain them, because they have a shared cultural script attached to their role as Catholic women.

4.2.2 Silences and topic switches

The moments of silence in a narrative indicate points where the narrator seems to either reflect on a particular story shared, or give an opportunity for the interviewer to intervene. Hlengiwe’s narrative was filled with pauses that lasted several seconds as she sat quietly, seemingly reflective. The most frequent points, in which pauses in her transcript are located, are after reflections about the difficulty of her current situation. This is illustrated through “*I really don’t know, shame, I just don’t know* [3 second pause]. *It is now starting to be very difficult* [5 second pause]” (I1, L77). It is almost as though in recollecting her experiences and reflecting on her current state she is brought to a greater level of awareness regarding her own difficulties, which results in a resigned sense of hopelessness for her future as she later comments “*you can’t make it alright and yet you wake up early every morning*” [7 second pause] (I1, L108).

Furthermore, the pauses also offer a moment for the audience to intervene, to suggest something, to draw on the positive. Yet in this case the lack of viable options, and the nature of the interview process, leaves the silences unfilled. Instead, the audience (the

interviewer) employs a psychological defense against having to sit with the negativity of the situation, and the overwhelming sense of hopelessness and responds with a new topic of discussion. Using Hlengiwe's narrative, this is illustrated below:

Hlengiwe: *"I really don't know, shame, I just don't know. It is now starting to be very difficult"* [5 second pause]

Interviewer: *"Your growing up Ma, where did you grow up?"* (I1, L77- 79).

...Later in the transcript...

Hlengiwe: *"you can't make it alright and yet you wake up early every morning* [7 second pause]

Interviewer: *"So what level did your daughter go to in school?"* (I1, L108 – 110).

Clinically, the avoidance or anxiety and discomfort of dealing with the negativity in the room which results in divergence can be understood through the here-and-now transference process, in which the interviewer uses questions to deflect the topic and in doing so relieve their own discomfort or sense of helplessness (Brems, 2001). This pattern was most evident in Hlengiwe's narrative interview and resulted in the emergence of an interesting pattern in the transcript: the expression of a deep personal sense of hopelessness by Hlengiwe, followed by a symbolic pause, and responded to with a diverging question by the interviewer; this pattern is repeated throughout the narrative as this extract illustrates:

Hlengiwe: *"I live in that two roomed house, even that two roomed house I cant even extend it; you cant make it alright and yet you wake up early every morning* [7 second pause]"

Interviewer: *"so what level did your daughter go to in school?"*

Hlengiwe: [crying] *“she went up to 7, she went up to 7, she went up to 7 and then there was a problem”* (I1, L108- 111)

Unfortunately for the interviewer (audience), Hlengiwe frequently returned to the sense of hopelessness in her narrative, as highlighted above. Despite switching the topic, the interviewer becomes again faced with a new story of loss and despair that results in a recurring of the same pattern yet again. In this way the dominant themes of Hlengiwe’s narrative are thus constantly integrated and interwoven with hopelessness, and despite any attempts to escape this powerful yet negative emotion, the audience remains firmly trapped by Hlengiwe’s recurring sense of loss which eventually pulls the audience themselves into a space of helplessness.

4.2.3 Power in interview interactions

Longer, more in-depth, explanations occurred when participants shared aspects of their trade and working life. This highlights how the women may have constructed the researcher and interviewer as “outsiders” to their trade and therefore compensated for their lack of insight by offering a more detailed explanation than would usually be offered to someone who was constructed as an “insider” familiar with the trade. In answering the interviewer’s question, Jabu highlights this point as she goes into detail about the ways in which her money is spent in relation to her work practices:

Jabu: *“Before making R25 was a big thing because you wouldn’t get it if you were staying at home. Now the big round clay costs R10 if you make R500 on the big sack. That means you have worked well because at home you wouldn’t be able to have all this money. You can use R100 and the whole R400 is going back to the cave to dig more clay. You pay for going inside. You pay for the person that will dig for you. You pay for the transport because you can’t drive yourself. You pay for the transport to EThekwini and you even pay for the boys to deliver the product at the place where you are selling. I think they need me there”* (I1, L170).

Jabu's extended answer is guided by her awareness that she needs to explain the intricacies of her trade to the interviewer and the researcher, who are outsiders to her ordinary everyday practices. Her detailed break down of the financial costs of her trade were not necessarily warranted by the question, yet in conveying this detail she enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of not only the costs incurred, but the process that she, as a trader, is involved in. In many ways her explanation is a description of her life routine, which is something quite foreign to the researcher.

As Prilleltensky (2008) highlighted "The exercise of power can reflect varying degrees of awareness with respect to the impact of one's actions" (p. 119). There was a need throughout this research to consider, articulate and remain mindful of my position of power, both the known and the unknown. Regretfully, my level of awareness while conducting the data collection was not as reflective as it stands now. It is only through access to the literature on power, social positioning and white privilege, that my social blinkers have been altered. However, having re-analyzed the data with this greater level of self awareness not only highlights Resissmann's (2008) point on the value of revisiting data with new lenses, but also enables insight into why the women may have chosen to tell their life stories the ways they did, and why so many life stories may have hardly been told at all.

The ways in which I held a position of power as the oppressor simultaneously with the position of the oppressed was most evident in this research. The colour of my skin and the socio-economic status I hold as an educated woman, positions me in a position of privilege in relation to my participants. The shadow of Apartheid, which the majority of the participants lived through, places me in a specifically constructed position of power based on race and discrimination in which my skin determines my status in relation to theirs. Despite being too young to have been associated directly with Apartheid, the ways in which the Apartheid system discriminated and prejudiced against my participants, and simultaneously privileged me, was always evident. A constant awareness of the ways in which my race bound me to this role of the oppressor and in a more positive interpretation of power, to the role of the "helper" was therefore always an unspoken element in the

room. Hence despite being actively involved in the NGO attempting to fight the nature of these women's oppression, and using their stories as a means of speaking out against their oppression, I cannot shake the ways in which I was simultaneously associated with the position of their oppressor. Furthermore, even in being cast in the role of the "helper" my status is immediately heightened as being in a position that is able to help, still places me in a privileged position of power which in many ways perpetuates the unequal power dynamic in society (Ryan, 1995).

However, as Prilleltsky (2008) reminds us, we can hold the position of the oppressed and the oppressor simultaneously, and in this case, my position of race made me the oppressor, while simultaneously my gender as a woman in a patriarchal society enabled me to, in some ways, form ties that bind, connections and shared experience with the participants, as the oppressed. This was most evident in the gendered accounts of oppression that some participants told. In particular the lengthy and recurring explanations of gender inequality offered by Pravina, serves as an illustration of this,

Researcher: *"Thank you, is there anything else you want to add?"*

Pravina: *"I would just like to add a little bit you know about being a woman and just how difficult times and things are..."* (I1, L126- 128).

Pravina continued to give a lengthy account of the ways in which women have been treated through history and her desire to see this change. She also drew on education as a pivotal catalyst in changing the social positioning of women. Again, my role as a woman, and as a researcher, may have strongly influenced her decision to include this in her narrative.

In several narratives it was evident that the participants felt they needed to present a certain affirmation script of the researcher or the associated NGO. For example, the presence of the primary researcher being associated with the NGO Asiye eTafulani as well as her "race" seemed to influence the narrative told by Gugu. Gugu not only spent time

praising the efforts of the researcher as part of the NGO, but also drew on her whiteness in reference to a person who can assist her.

Gugu: *"Is there anything else?"*

Interviewer: *"No, Ma it is all up to you. If there is still anything else that you still would like to tell us about, you can continue and take as long as you need to".*

Gugu: *"I'm really loving this girl I really love her, (more laughing) I love her because ever since she arrived she has helped us to shift our focus a bit, maybe God will open our eyes more. She has come and been able to bring white people who comes and look at the place where we're working and staying from. There is no water and there is nothing, I do have faith that I will one day come out of that Egypt and into the open (laughing)... I have that in my heart that I love her and she has come and supported us, Asiye eTafuleni has done a lot of good work". (I1, L65 -76).*

As highlighted in the extract above, Gugu seems to conclude her narrative and then becomes triggered by the researcher's presence to discuss the work of the NGO she is associated with and praises the organization. In this way, the presence of the researcher co-constructs Gugu's narrative as she may have felt compelled to not only reflect positively on the NGO, but also on white people in general, who she considers able to assist her. The dual role of the researcher as a member of the NGO and as a student conducting research also complicated the interactions. This may have caused several of the participants to offer selective versions of their narrative that were more focused on their identity as traders and narratives of their occupational lives as these are the areas of interest for the associated NGO. This notion of perceiving a need to fulfill a requirement rather than uninhibitedly sharing their story was captured in Gugu's concluding comments, *"Ok, you may ask her if she is satisfied with the information she got"* (I1, L99).

Thus, the ways in which power, silences and shared experiences were shown to be significant aspects of the interview interaction are in many ways reiterated in the women's

relational ties within their social and occupational communities. The nuances and displays of power dynamics within the interview context thus serves as a microcosm for understanding the relational exchanges that are inherent in each woman's social interaction beyond the interview setting, as the relational tree analysis will illustrate.

4.3: Tree networks: Exploring the women's relationships with others

When using trees to convey relational ties the most common form of illustration is the intergenerational family tree, which visually displays demographic information as root systems. The traditional family tree conveys a chronological and biological lineage of family relationships that ignores the wider social, community and horizontal relationships that are present in each individual's life, which may and may not be genetic. The trees used in this research however, are very different. The purpose of these relational trees is to convey a visual understanding of the *significant* relationships in the women's lives. Like trees, the women's lives are filled with branches of connections, both positive and negative. Using trees as a metaphor to convey the women's relational lives is appealing because it conveys a continuously growing, interconnected array of social networks, some of which are rooted in childhood, while others are newly developing. It is these relational connections that enable the women to remain resilient through connections with others who serve as human resources despite the adversity they have come to face over the course of their lives. These trees thus visually illustrate a sense of community each woman possesses in relation to social others, while simultaneously illustrating the more negative relationships that impair the women's lives, and hence are illustrated as old or dead branches. In this way, the trees illustrate an essential aspect of the women's identities that is conveyed through social relationships. Hence an exploration of their identity can be conducted through an understanding of the significant relationships that co-construct their sense of self. In writing about the biographical illusion Bourdieu highlights that,

“Trying to understand life as a unique and self sufficient series of successive events and without ties...is nearly as absurd as trying to make sense out of a subway route

without taking into account the network structure that is the matrix of objective relations between the different stations” (2001, p. 302).

Thus the women’s lives are constantly interwoven with those of others in a way that makes it impossible to hear an individual’s story without reference to and inclusion of, relationships. As individuals are inherently relational, so to, are their life narratives.

In using the tree as a metaphor, to visually convey the relationships that connect these women to social others, I borrow from the concept of ‘life-rivers’ developed by Haley (2010) in which she rethought traditional family relationships as more fluid. Each tree represents the relationships the woman spoke about across both interviews. The leaf size and colour indicates whether the woman spoke of this relationship as positive or negative. While this was clear-cut in some cases, some relationships were both good and bad; therefore some leaves are both brown and green to visually relay this relational complexity. Leaves, which are amber in colour, represent relationships that appear significant yet were not elaborated on by the women. Furthermore, the women spoke more frequently of some relationships over others. The amount of times the women spoke of specific relationships and the ways in which they spoke of these relationships is therefore represented through the thickness of the branches and was analyzed and discussed. Therefore some leaves and branches are bigger than others in an effort to convey the significance of that particular relationship in comparison to others. Last, relationships that the women spoke about which no longer exist, most frequently as a result of death, are visually represented as leaves on the floor of the tree, yet they continue to represent the nature and significance of the past relationship through their colour and size. Across the 5 participants three key patterns emerged. The women’s relationships were shown to be gendered, extended and ambivalent. These overarching headings will thus be used to discuss the different relationships each woman possesses, yet the order in which they are presented in each tree’s analysis, will vary in relation to the significance in which each pattern seemed to emerge.

4.3.1 Hlengiwe's relational tree: Brown leaves and broad branches.

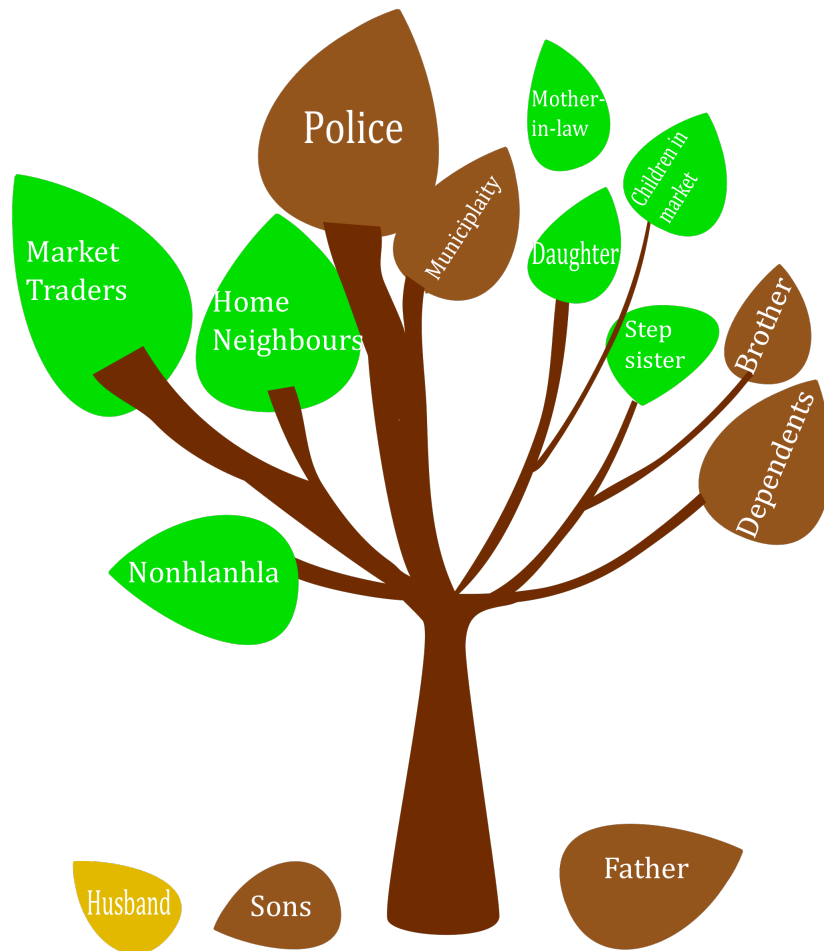


Figure 1: Hlengiwe's relational tree

Hlengiwe's relational tree illustrates various relational networks, as well as the loss of significant relationships; it also conveys all three distinct patterns of being gendered, expansive and ambivalent.

4.3.1.1 Gendered relationships

From a first glance at her relational tree and the allocation of colored leaves, the gendered aspect of Hlengiwe's relationships is most evident. Hlengiwe's positive relationships are

with women while her negative relationships are predominantly with men. This may be as a result of the women within her context having similar life experiences around poverty, motherhood and marginalization, resulting in shared experiences, enabling a sense of sisterhood in which gender is the overarching construct. The ties of poverty and gender that bind relationships are most evident in the way Hlengiwe discusses her relationships with the women in her market. She spoke of her trading community in very positive and significant ways as highlighted by the large green leaf allocated to these relational ties. Hlengiwe highlighted the manner in which the women traders she works with are much like a family to her who care and support her. *"If I am still at home maybe I will come later...I can ask anyone to take my mielies from the car then cook it for me...I do the same with her"* (I2, L238). Hlengiwe, like other participants in this research, highlighted the ways in which she shares food with the women she trades with commenting *"you see, we take care of each other like a family"* (I2, L233). This seems to be a symbolic and significant action as it unites the women through a recognized mutualism in the face of poverty. It is through this act of sharing food, that the bonds of poverty are most evident, as Hlengiwe reflects on the ways in which the traders in her work community are united by the common experience of poverty which enable them to form meaningful relationships through collective and shared experience. The ways in which she views the relationships she has with the women in her market as positive and cohesive are conveyed in her comment, *"they even gave me a nickname, they call me Makhulu [granny]. We take each other as sisters"* (I2, L223). In this way Hlengiwe highlights the extent to which a strong sense of community has developed and served as not only a resource, but also as buffer against the harsh context of harassment by police.

Another significant, and gendered relationship that Hlengiwe highlighted as positive was with her life-long friend, Nonhlanhla. Hlengiwe presented Nonhlanhla as a reliable and trustworthy friend who had supported her emotionally and financially at her most difficult times, for example over the death of her son; as she reflected *"I called Nonhlanhla that night and told her what happened. She said she is coming...by the time she is saying sister I can feel that she is saying it from deep down"* (I2, L626). Despite the distance, which seemed to prevent the two women interacting regularly, Hlengiwe praised Nonhlanhla as a great

confidante and commented, *“Even if one of us has a problem we could contact each other first”* (I2, L599).

In contrast, Hlengiwe highlights the ways in which her relationships with men are predominantly negative. Starting with the desertion of her father, including her strained relationship with her brother and ending with her feelings of disappointment with her sons, she reveals a pattern of negativity associated with masculinity, which is visually captured in the display of brown leaves of various sizes. While Hlengiwe does not discuss the relationship she had with her husband, she does highlight the financial burden of having to support several dependents alone. The additional role as a mother to her brother and sister’s children in particular was one of financial strain and difficulty as highlighted in her statement,

“But they were still young when my brother died I took care of them with the money that I get as a hawker. If I say I don’t have anything, they will say they are not going anywhere as they have nowhere else to go” (I2, L23).

While she did not perceive the actual relationship with the nieces and nephews in her care to be negative, the additional burden they placed on her was presented as negative and hence conveyed through a brown leaf. Hlengiwe bears the weight of these dependents alone and constantly feels that she is failing to provide for them and herself as highlighted through her comment *“the children on the other hand keep saying ‘Gogo we are hungry, Gogo we want bread’”* (I1, L158). Research has highlighted the ways in which widowhood, in combination with bearing responsibility for child-rearing, results in poor mental health and a lowered sense of life satisfaction in relation to married women (Li, Chi, Krochalk & Xu, 2011). While this is a universal trend, the additional burden of poor socio-economic status and marginalization based on class, as experienced by women informal street traders like Hlengiwe, only increases the levels of poor life satisfaction.

Furthermore, Hlengiwe’s relationship with her father was traced with resentment as her father left her mother when she was young and created a new family. The children, her

step siblings, had better opportunities in life through resources and access to education than she had been afforded; as highlighted in her comments *"those problems you see, it's different for them because my father built a home for them. They have everything, my father educated them; I on the other hand, am not educated, and have nothing"* (I1, L102). Attempts to reconcile with her father, after a long search to locate him, were inhibited due to his sudden death. The relationship thus remains undeveloped and strained with the memories of abandonment and disappointment over what could have been. Her comment *"even my father has now passed away, only his children are left in that home"* (I1, L98) are continued later with a depressing and negative comparison of their home, which he provided, to her home which she *"can't even extend"* (I1, L107).

Furthermore, the relationship with her sons was presented in an essentially negative way, while her relationship with her daughter was presented in a more positive manner.

Hlengiwe spoke about certain incidents that highlighted a complex and difficult relationship with her sons whom had cost her both financial and emotional pain, as she concludes by commenting *"concluded 'you see my child...my children have let me down'"* (I2, L699). In contrast Hlengiwe presents the relationship with her daughter, her only living child, in a positive light, as her daughter assists her in the market.

The relationships that Hlengiwe highlights as positive or as significant resources are all with women, the gendered division of her relational tree thus becomes most apparent. The ways in which women seek comfort and support through relationships with other women, has been shown to be especially significant within a patriarchal context. The sanctuary and resilience that female friendship provides has frequently been overlooked in history as heterosexual and intimate relationships are constructed as the social 'prize' for woman to aspire to, while female friendship is considered "second rate, insignificant or a prelude to hetero-maturity" (Raymond, 1986, p. 38).

4.3.1.2 Extended relationships

The second significant pattern that emerges within Hlengiwe's relational tree, are the ways in which her relationships expand beyond the ties of immediate family. In exploring the

array of her green leaves, one notices how her positive relationships include extended family members, neighbours, traders and friends more prominently than immediate family members. Hlengiwe highlights the most significant relationships to exist outside of the family structure, drawing on her community at home and her community in the market as the more significant relational ties. Hlengiwe spoke little of her own siblings aside for commenting, *"I only have one brother who is still alive but we are like cat and mouse, he never liked his family for the whole of his life"* (I2, L249). Hlengiwe's remaining positive family relational ties exist beyond her immediate family, her relationships with her mother-in-law and step-sister are positive but not very strong as she refers to her step-sister's home by saying, *"I have my own space and I am welcome to be there"* (I2, L690).

It seems that Hlengiwe's most significant relationships lie beyond the boundaries of family ties. United by poverty, Hlengiwe engages in a stokvel group, specifically associated with funerals, with members of her home community who share her experiences of poverty in relatable ways. This is described by Hlengiwe below:

"There is something like stokvel that we are playing around my area if one of our neighbour has lost the member of the family each person would go with a 10kg of something until the full groceries is enough for that function" (I2, L, 639).

In highlighting her positive relationships, Hlengiwe spoke about the ways in which her home community is a valued resource and hence a prominent green leaf on her tree. She mentioned the ways in which her home community and neighbours collaborated together to assist her at the time of her son's death. As she explains, *"by the time my last son died, my neighbours supported me a lot...I am able to ask my neighbours, I don't have a problem"* (I2, L333). Through these extracts, Hlengiwe illuminates the financial and emotional support her neighbours provided during this ordeal and therefore emphasized the importance of these community members in her life. An increased sense of community is understood to be the result of four interconnected factors: membership, influence, reinforcement and shared emotional connection (Mak, Cheung, Law, 2009). Community psychology highlights that the extent to which these four factors are evident will largely determine the extent to

which the individual will identify and associate with a specific community enabling that community to be viewed as a resource that fosters resilience. While her home community meets several of these factors, her market community was shown to accommodate even more of these elements. As highlighted earlier, the ways in which Hlengiwe presents and relates to the women traders in the market is through an intimate family lens. It is within this context that the four factors inherent in developing a sense of belonging and community are most evident (Mak et al, 2009). Hlengiwe is granted membership through common work practices; experiences reinforced by the other traders through shared resources and food and she displays a strong emotional connection to the community through references to family metaphors and role adoption.

4.3.1.3 Ambivalent relationships

First, a pattern of ambivalent relationships exists within Hlengiwe's relational network. The relationship with Nonhlanhla illustrates this most vividly. Hlengiwe highlighted how Nonhlanhla is a positive relational support in her life, and as highlighted earlier, she represents a significant female friendship, which Hlengiwe has been able to utilize as a resource, both financially and emotionally, in the past. However, Hlengiwe also highlighted the shifts that have changed this friendship over time and how contextual factors, such as poverty, have introduced definite boundaries that are beginning to inhibit to flexibility of the relationship. Hlengiwe indicates that, more recently, she remains reluctant to approach Nonhlanahla with her problems; because she knows that's Nonhlanahla will help her at any cost. *"I just don't know how can I call her I am afraid of the things that she has done for me...I am just afraid to tell her even if I don't have anything to eat or if I am sick"* (I2, L608). Nonhlanhla is presented as better off as her relational ties have created a better life for her despite her own unemployment, as Hlengiwe observes *"she was better because she has built a life with her in-laws"* (I2, L629). In this way, while their history unites the women along common ties, their difference in current socio-economic class, divides. This highlights an interesting psychological response to poverty, as the marginalization experienced by those whom are poverty stricken becomes internalized and experienced as shame that segregates them from social others and those with whom they share history and close emotional ties. While this paradox is presented as interpersonal, the relationships

Hlengiwe presented with that of the police and municipality highlight how the macro level interaction plagues the lives of several participants' in this research as illustrated in the recurring representation of thick branches and brown leaves visible across all the participants relational trees.

Hlengiwe spoke of the consequences of the police raids, which highlight the injustices performed by the formal networks supposedly in place to protect the rights of traders. Hlengiwe highlights how the negative relationship with the police is rooted in the unequal attributions of power in which corruption through bribery is the only form of bartering made available to the traders. The constitution and traders' rights wane in the reality of a system of formal and extorting networks that play on the vulnerable position of the traders, in particular, women traders. The negative relationship with the police was the predominant relational tie that Hlengiwe spoke about in her life narrative, and was the predominant formal network that she highlighted as being negative as she commented *"there is just no money here on the streets anymore; it is even worse when there are police involved!"* (I1, L45). In this way the paradox of the formalization of the informal sector has increased the traders' hardships through the difficulty not only in obtaining trade permits with their limited finances but also in withstanding the unregulated and unjust confiscation practices of local police which occurs as a result of the permit legislation. Closely associated with the negative relationship with the police, were the failings of local government to meet Hlengiwe's most basic needs. She highlights the difficulty of obtaining an ID book for her daughter by saying, *"This ID I don't know, she has again went to apply before the recent elections and still it hasn't come out...I don't know what is happening, I really don't know...it is now starting to be very difficult"* (I1, L72). This is an incredibly difficult position for Hlengiwe's daughter as without an ID book she is not able to secure any form of formal employment, nor does she have any access to social grants for her two young children and thus remains firmly within the informal sector, marginalized and poverty stricken. Furthermore, given her age, Hlengiwe herself remains unable to receive the old age social grant to supplement her income yet remains among one of the poorest of all the participants interviewed and in desperate need of financial support. Ironically, albeit the average age of life expectancy in South Africa varies between 45 and 49 years of age

(Duncan et al, 2007), the grant is only available for recipients 60 years and over, hence Hlengiwe, who is 49 years old, reports;

“When I apply for the grant I also don’t get it...it is early, but I am also sick and they say what illnesses I have don’t qualify for a social grant...it’s diabetes, blood pressure, they say there are no pension for those illnesses” (I1, L54)

The combination of police harassment and unattainable government services results in Hlengiwe stating the inherently negative relationship with local authority through commenting, *“Our government has a lot of oppression”* (I1, L93). Hence Hlengiwe’s comments serve as a powerful reminder that despite democracy, the social positioning of women, especially within these vulnerable sectors like street traders, remains highly marginalized.

Hence the paradox inherent in the formalization of the informal sector and the freedom of democracy has resulted in the experience of greater hardship for Hlengiwe and the trading community. Much like the divided gendered nature of her relational tree, Hlengiwe’s positive relationships are predominantly informal, while her most significant negative relationships are comprised of formal networks that ostensibly are in place to assist her well being.

4.3.2 Jabu's relational tree: Rooted in family.

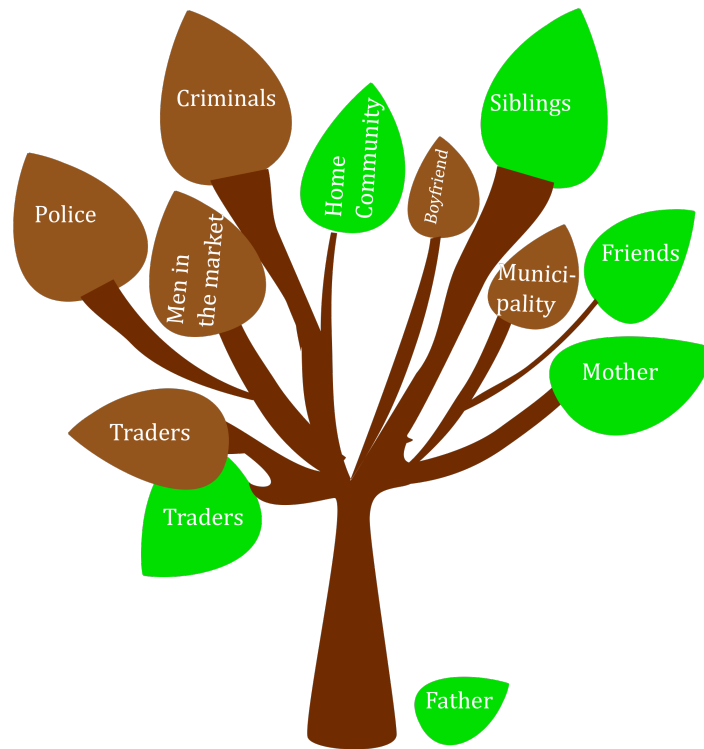


Figure 2: Jabu's relational tree

Jabu's relational tree strongly highlights the predominantly negative relationship between the traders and the local authorities, in particular the police and the municipality as indicated by the noticeably thicker branches allocated to these particular leaves. While this is significant, the paradoxical role of the police has already been explored through Hlengiwe's relational tree. Hence Jabu's analysis will focus on three different aspects. First, the strained relationships that exist between herself and the other traders in her market, second, her ambivalent relationships with the traders in her market and third the particular negativity associated with the men in her life, with the exception of her brother.

4.3.2..1 Extended relationships

Jabu's occupation forces her to remain a migrant as she lives for two weeks at a time in the City selling lime and returns home to then collect more lime from her home community. Her position as a trader in the market is constructed as temporary as she is working at her sister's stall. Hence her relational tree reflects more positively, through green leaves and thick branches, on her home environment and immediate family relational ties, than her occupational environment. In contrast to several other traders' relational trees it locates her primary support base within the immediate family and not the wider trading community. Jabu spoke about her immediate family as a positive relational support network. She spoke most frequently and with deep affection for her siblings, in particular, her brother who had assisted her throughout her educational journey by providing for her with the income he earned through informal trading, commenting "*he helped me out, he bought me a shirt and the shoes then I went back to school*" (I2, L17). As seen in her PIN (see section 4.1.4 above), this is very significant in Jabu's life story.

Despite her construction of her work in the market as a temporary role it is clear that this trade is a family intergenerational, shared practice. Her mother was the person who had taught her to mould the clay when she was growing up and hence equipped her with the skills to perform her current occupation. The positive relationship she has with her mother is thus conveyed through the slightly thicker branch on which her mother's green leaf is placed. Jabu indicated that her mother was her someone whom she admires deeply, commenting, "*I would say I'm proud of my mother ...my mother taught us to face whatever situation that we may come across*" (I2, L263). Jabu also spoke about the role her sister has played in her life. Jabu indicated that she is managing her sister's stall while her sister attends to her new baby. Jabu is thus ensuring the trading space remains occupied and that income continues to flow within the family unit. The ways in which Jabu's family are presented as a cohesive and supportive unit with members taking over roles of other members to ensure the family needs are met, highlights this as a significant supportive resource for Jabu. She displayed a great sense of belonging to her family and home context, returning as often as possible from the City to her home in Ndwedwe.

The ways in which her home community and family ties, seem to be the most significant relational resource for Jabu may be heightened due to her temporary occupancy of the trading stall and she has no desire to remain working in the market after her sister's return. The reduced sense of belonging that Jabu has towards her trading community may thus be as a result of her as being perceived of as an "other" by the group of trading women, while simultaneously, she constructs the women as the "other" in relation to herself. Ironically, the environmental attributes of the home community, being rich in the mineral lime, have resulted in the vast majority of the community being involved in some form of lime trade or collection. The way in which it is almost expected that women from that particular area will engage in some form of lime mining is highlighted by the manner in which Jabu makes the seemingly logical and obvious links between her identity as a community member and her role as a lime trader as she comments "*I was selling with the women from my village because I know almost all of them. We all coming from Ndwedwe no one is coming from a different place*" (I1, L77). Jabu thus highlights the normalcy of women from her area being involved in trading lime and highlights the ways in which the identity of her community and the collective identity of her trade are intricately interwoven and exist across generations. As she reflects, "*many women there were selling clay already and they taught their children*" (I1, L66). Having grown up within that specific context, with those specific women, Jabu has been shaped by her community into adopting a role and identity that closely aligns with the perceived norm. However, she is not fully in acceptance of this occupation and subsequent identity as she expresses her resistance to working in the market initially, commenting: "*After I finished school I tried looking for a job but nothing was available, only this job was an option. Ehe...that means there were problems because this job requires a lot of strength*" (I1, L19). In her second interview Jabu expressed her desire to stop working in the market and seek alternative employment. The projected desire to shift away from this trade and the identity of a lime trader illustrate the manner in which identity and identification are not fixed static conceptualizations, but rather discursive, conditional and under constant construction, as Hall (1996) suggests, "*Identities are thus the points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us*" (p. 6), and thus also determined by powerful social structures.

4.3.2.2 Ambivalent relationships

Furthermore, despite the women predominantly all coming from the same local home community, the group establishment within the market space seems to have very specific boundaries. Jabu highlighted that she does have friends in the market area, but that these were not necessarily women from her own market. The ways in which Jabu presented her relationships with the women in her market as negative is most apparent in her comment *“the women here make it impossible”* (I1, L149). Jabu indicated the manner in which the women in her market remained very segregated predominantly along the lines of age. Hence despite having geographical, socio-economical and racial ties that bind the women, they remain divided on lines of age and generational perspectives that create a strong sense of ‘in group- out group’ belonging. The ways in which age and age cohorts create boundaries that both unite and disconnect is well captured by Codrington and Grant Marshall (2004) as they comment, “nearly everyone has an attitude, values or expectations that are based on what life was like when they grew up “ (p. 2). It is these experiences, temporal and contextually specific, that enable generational cohorts to develop a sense of shared experience related to age. In this way Jabu’s younger age of 35, serves as a form of identification that excludes her from being taken *“seriously”* or having her voice heard adequately by the older women within her work-space. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1970) assists in understanding this sense of exclusion that Jabu experiences with her trading community. The ways in which group alliances enable the individual to merge the group values with their individual self-concept, results in a closely knitt sense of identity and belonging that ties them to one another and the group values as a collective. The collective notion of “us” is thus based on a collective and shared sense of values and norms that each member of the group adheres to. Those who do not form part of this identity through acceptance and adoption of such norms and values become constructed as the “other” (Hogg, 2006). In this case Jabu seems to be perceived as the “other” in the market, given her age, temporary occupancy of the stall and desire to work elsewhere. This inhibits her being fully accepted and incorporated into the group of traders who consist of predominantly older women, who have worked in the market for many years and are set in their style and routine of how the market should operate. Again, however, the inherently relational component of each woman’s life becomes most apparent. Jabu constructs herself in

opposition to the women in her market. She presents them as the social “other”. Without reference to them she would be unable to explain how she is different, how she is apart from them. Her identity is still only possible in relation to what she is not; Derrida’s understanding that “identity construction is always based on excluding something” is most apparent (Laclau, 1990, p. 33 in Hall & Du Gay, 1996).

Beyond this, Jabu also highlights the levels of conflict within her market that are embedded in competition for financial security. As she reflects “*others offer a big clay to the customers yet we [have] spoken of selling the same weight...they compete with one another so the customer will either buy the bigger one*” (I1, L145). This statement highlights the ways in which the women in the market are constantly competing for customers to secure their income. This relational component seems somewhat different from the other markets where a common experience of poverty unites the women through the establishment of informal networks such as the stokvel system. Jabu indicates that the levels of division in her market are more prominent than the ties that bind them together.

4.3.2.3 Gendered relationships

Last, a significantly negative relationship highlighted by Jabu, and captured in her relational tree figure, is with a “*man in the market*”. Jabu portrays a man in her market that she needs to bribe in order to get assistance. Her distinctly negative presentation of this relationship highlights a perceived gender based power dynamic that renders her reliant on this man in the market for assistance. In this way, the women within her market space, and Jabu herself, view themselves as dependent and vulnerable. Similarly, Jabu highlights the way both positive and negative relationships exist between the men and women of her home community. The stark contrast between the gender roles that open women up to extortion, are most apparent in Jabu’s narrative. Within her community sub-groupings along the lines of gender, enable the men to be in a privileged position. Without the men to dig the holes and transport the heavy lime, the women are unable to secure the mineral, which they later mould and sell in the City. The women of Ndwedwe are thus dependent on men who are aware of their position of power and are able to extort and financially abuse the vulnerable position of women. This gendered power inequality highlights what Harris

(2003) referred to as the more disguised forms of patriarchy, in which women remain reliant on men in ways that are not necessarily always clear to the bystander. Similarly Herman (1992) highlights the nature of abuse inherent within a patriarchal society in which women remain vulnerable economically, emotionally, politically, physically and socially by virtue of their gender and consequent dependence. Hence the social positioning of women like Jabu, is deeply riddled with marginalization and gender based extortion. Freire (1970) suggests that through a process of collective engagement, reflexivity and raising conscious awareness of their social position, the disempowered can unite and overthrow their oppressor. The need is for the community to recognize their position through critical reflection and want to change it by collective action. It is when communities function in this manner that Freire (1970) argues they become most resilient and deeply interconnected. However, the ways in which the women in the market are divided and disconnected pose a significant obstacle to their ability to work collectively, reorganize their social structures and overthrow the "*man in the market*" who currently holds the position of power that renders them reliant, oppressed and vulnerable.

4.3.3 Gugu's relational tree: Collective unity, cohesive communities.

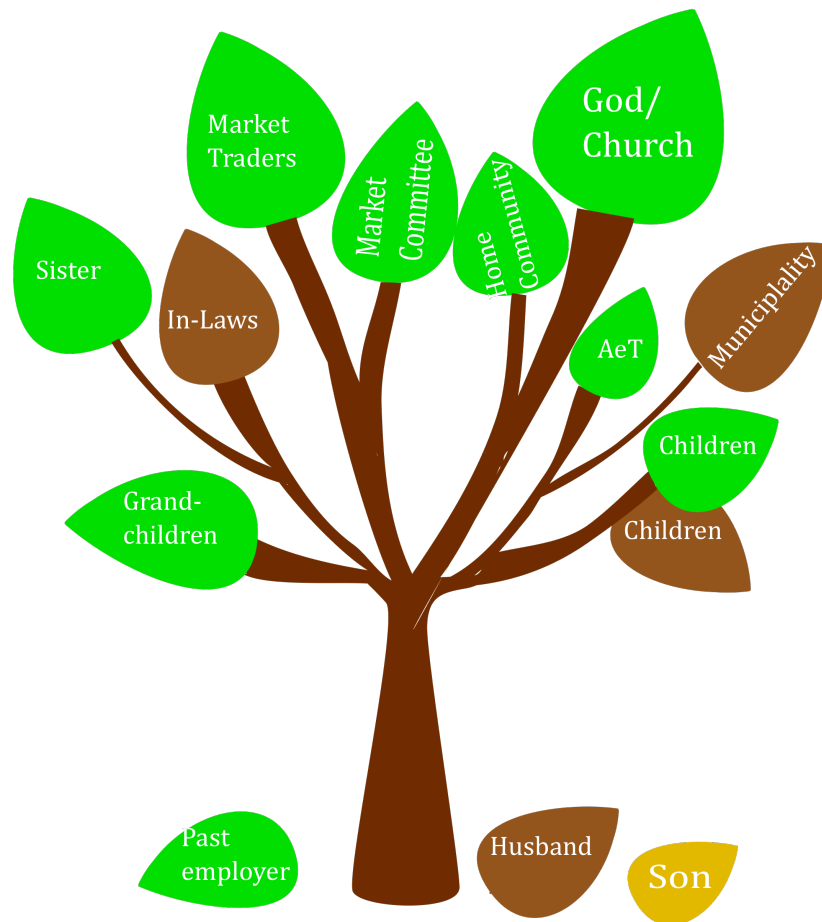


Figure 3: Gugu's relational tree

Gugu's relational tree displays a life filled with more positive relational networks than most of the participants. Like several other traders, her tree depicts ambivalent relationships with her children as well as mostly negative relationships with the local municipality. However, her ambivalence of motherhood is mirrored in the relational tree analysis of Hlegiwe (tree 4.3.1) and thus will not be explored within Gugu's analysis. Rather, Gugu's tree introduces a new level of relationships that are expansive yet significant. Her most important positive relationships exist within collective networks rather than individual people, as illustrated through the leaves of God/church, AET, and the various committees,

and this will be the focus of her relational analysis along with the gendered nature of her relationships.

4.3.3.1 Extended relationships

While Gugu highlighted significant and positive relationships with her sister, children and grandchildren, she also illustrated the ways she is extensively involved in organizations and committees that have established positive social networks beyond the one-on-one interpersonal level. The notion of relationships with organizations, and relationships with God, introduces a form of wider and imagined community ties that has not been explored in the previous relational trees. As indicated by the largest green leaf and thickest branch on her tree, Gugu's most significant positive relationship was with the church and with God. Interestingly, Gugu depicts a human-like relationship with God that at times is presented in a very tangible manner as reflected in her comments, *"I started going to church in 1973, I knew God before then. I knew there was nothing I could do without him. I love him a lot"* (I2, L251). Gugu highlights the ways in which she *"grew up in faith"* (I2, L254) and has thus been part of the Zion church for the vast majority of her life. Her religious position has thus placed Gugu within a wider relational network that connects her both tangibly and abstractly to communities both real and imagined. The relational network that religious faith provides has been shown to be an immense buffer against adversity and a source of resilience for individuals. Furthermore, belief in a god allows for a belief in a creator of omnipotent control and thus an external resource on which one can draw on in times of difficulty. The value of religious belief and faith based relationships also serve as a means for hope in a better future based on biblical stories of adversity in the past as Gugu highlights *"I do have faith that I will one day come out of that Egypt and into the open (laughing). I do trust that we will one day come out because God loves all of his people"* (I1, L 72). In using this reference point, Gugu draws on the relationship between God and his people as explained by the bible, and applies it to her own life and her current position of difficulty. Hence the ways in which faith, a belief in a higher power and the church can form a significant and interconnected relational resource are illustrated by Gugu. Sonn and Fisher (1998) suggest, *"Church groups provided alternative stories to those provided by the dominant group"* (p.467). Hence, this story highlights the ways in which ascribing to a

religious belief and participating in a church group and church based activities is often a source of emotional support for marginalized and oppressed sectors of society. The ways in which the church group reaffirms the value and worth of the individual, using stories and activities, enables a strong sense of community to develop within the group that enhances resilience of the group and the individual members. It is within this space that the oppressed individual develops a sense of belonging that a discriminatory society prevents. The ways in church groups encourage a collective, cohesive and inclusive approach enables the individual within this community to develop their self esteem and thus resilience by aligning with a collective identity in the face of a society that rejects them.

Furthermore, Gugu reflected on the positive relationship she holds with the NGO Asiye eTafuleni (AeT). The NGO, as an organization is highlighted to be positive and significant, and thus in this way the NGO, like the church, represents a collective network of positive relational ties that extend beyond a one-on-one positive relationship. The collaborative links with external organizations and groups has been shown to be significant resources in the development and attainment of health promotion (Lazarus et al, 2007). The relationship that Gugu makes reference to with AeT depicts one of external assistance that Lazarus refers to, as she commented:

“They [AeT] have helped me as well with my one child who came here and became a community health care worker...they have also taken the other one called Tu and they go with her when they take tourists on the streets” (I1, L87).

The ways in which the organization serves as a means of empowerment for Gugu and the traders in her market is highlighted as one bolstering resilience in times of adversity. Furthermore, the links in Gugu’s relational tree, displays the ways in which her relational networks expand well beyond the micro-level of interaction, into the meso-level and exo-level of society. The value of a more diverse set of relational networks is that it creates greater exposure to resources and capacity building in times of adversity, which is more likely to promote adaption and resilience (Visser et al, 2007).

4.3.3.2 Gendered relationships

Gugu's tree also displays a gendered relational component. Two prominent brown leaves on Gugu's relational tree represent her deceased husband and her in-laws. The negativity associated with these relationships, were shown to stem from the circumstances surrounding the death of her son as explained in Gugu's PIN (section 4.1.2) and thus will not be elaborated on within this section of analysis. Instead, the focus will be on the significantly positive relationships Gugu has with the women traders in her market, as indicted by her thickened branches and green leaves in her relational tree. Connected by gender amongst other factors, she reflects "*I would say I have good relationships with the people that I work with...we are all the same*" (I2, L146). She is one of the oldest traders in her market thus sits on the market committee. Despite her age and thus increased reluctance to remain as active, Gugu's position as an esteemed member of the trading community and a reliable and responsible individual, have positioned her as the "*chairperson of the women selling here*" and hence a recognized leader in her work space (I2, L185). She commented:

"We are able to sit with the committee, the ones that are closer to us. We can sit with them and talk so we can share ideas...I see that working together bring better results even if there is something you didn't understand you end up growing in that aspect" (I2, L167).

Hence Gugu displays high levels of activity in her trading environment that contribute to a deepened sense of belonging and self worth. The interactive persona that Gugu displays of herself in relation to her trading environment is shown to echo within her home community as she commented,

"I see myself as an important individual and trusted. I'm a reliable person back at home...and I see people even if there is a something they didn't know they come to me and I help them to solve their problems" (I2, L175).

As Roos and Temane (et al, 2007) highlight “through social participation, community members develop connections with one another that promote sharing and trust” (p. 288). Hence the ways in which Gugu has been active member of her trading community is seen to correlate to her increased sense of belonging and strong relational ties with traders in her market.

4.3.4 Thabisile’s relational tree: In God we trust.

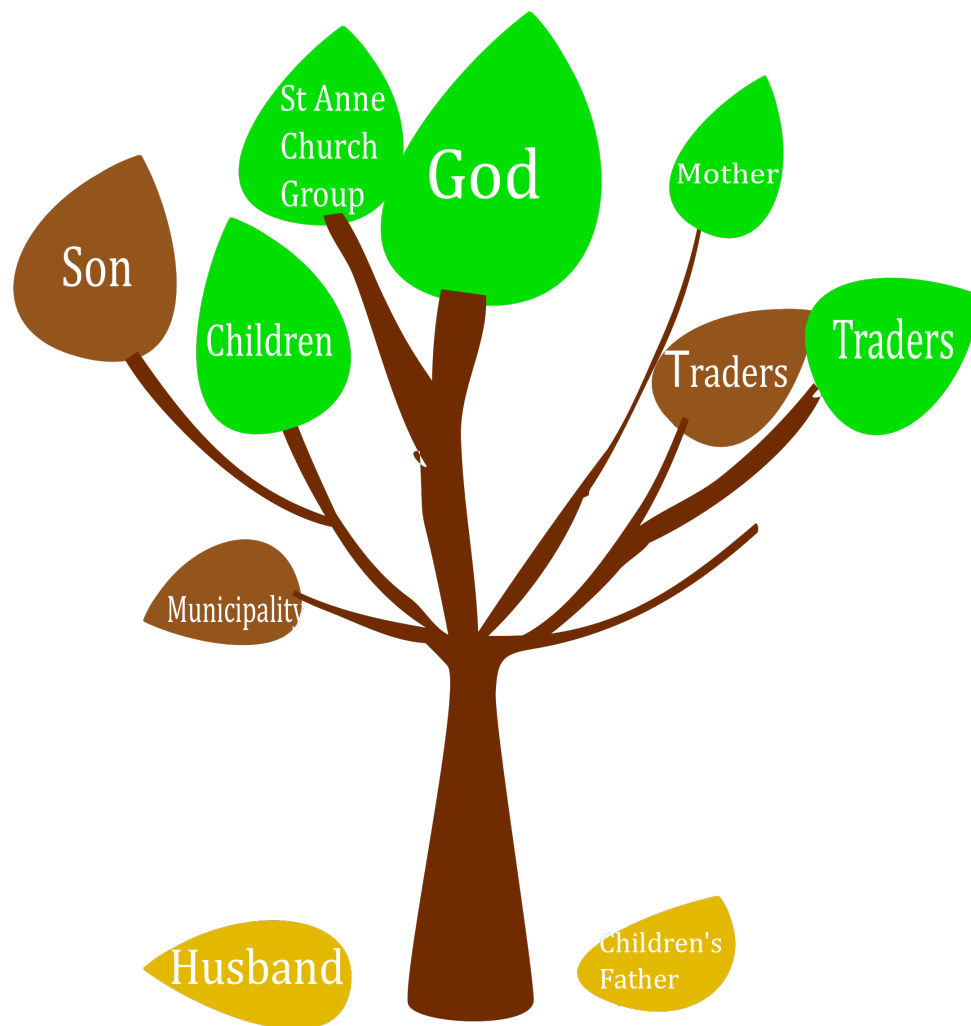


Figure 4: Thabisile’s relational tree

Thabisile's life tree reflects a similar composition to that of Gugu's relational tree. Her construction of God and her faith was also one of the most significant relational components in her narrative. Like Gugu, Thabisile's reliance on her faith and faith community represents a very different form of significant relationships in relation to Hlengiwe and Jabu, and this will be at the forefront of the explanation of her relational tree, and the focus of analysis as it highlights both the expansive and gendered pattern of her relational ties. Last, the ambivalence inherent in her relational ties with other traders as well as her significant ambivalence towards motherhood, was a prominent pattern within Thabisile's narrative. This is indicated by the presence of both brown and green leaves associated with her trading community and children and will be a focus of analysis in her relational tree.

4.3.4.1 Extended relationships

Boldly illustrated through her relational tree, the most prominent relational source for Thabisile was her spiritual faith. Like many other women in this research, Thabisile presented her relationship with God in a very tangible and relatable manner that existed apart from her relationships within the St Anne Church group. She constructed her relationship with God in the same way that she discussed relationships with human beings. Because of the manner in which she described her relationship with God; it was considered appropriate to include God as a symbolic and valued relationship within her relational tree. To omit this relationship would not accurately reflect the various resources that Thabisile illustrated as being significant and valued within her life narrative. Thabisile constructed her relationship with God as a primary, life long and sustainable resource that she utilizes in times of distress and when she encounters problems as well as in when she is in need of hope, as she commented "*whenever I encountered problems in my life, I trust in God*" (I1, L11). Thabisile referred to her relationship with God consistently through her life narrative and presented this relationship as the most significant relationship in her life. She spoke of how it plays a substantial part in her identity formation as continuous as this relationship was one that started in her early childhood and had continued until present as she reflected "*it started when I was young, ...I have never looked back*" (I2, L320).

4.3.4.2 Gendered relationships

Connected, but distinct from her relationship with God, as highlighted through the sharing of a common and thick branch, Thabisile emphasized her church women's group, the St Anna women's group as another significant relational component in her life, commenting *"I'm a member of the women's league like all mothers. I'm a Catholic under St Anna. I got to peoples houses when they are sick or deceased people. That is what we do"* (I2, L284). The women's group was spoken about as a reliable resource and as an emotional support network that she engages with regularly and thus highlights an expanded set of relational ties that is simultaneously gendered. The St Anna women's group is a belief-based group in which women from predominantly Catholic churches form groups that aid various community members in times of distress. The organization enables a strong sense of belonging that exists within the church, but also across churches as the organization is not restricted by local boundaries and has universal recognition. The role of a community of religious believers can be conceptualized through the use of Anderson's (1983) notion of the imagined community. Anderson suggests that despite geographic distance and never actually coming into face-to-face contact with others, members of imagined communities construct a highly personal identity around this notion of belonging (1983). Furthermore, imagined communities carry with them resources, through a sense of belonging, the imagined community can serve as a protective buffer and source of resilience and construct of one's identity in much the same ways that a 'real' community or 'gemeinschaft' does. The ways in which Thabisile integrates her membership within the St Anna group, and the various roles she performs on behalf of the group, highlights a strong sense of belonging in relation to this group. However, it is not limited to the members of her church, and rather can be seen to connect her emotionally though abstractly to other women who are also affiliated with the group.

Furthermore, while Thabisile did not mention her mother as a relational resource more than twice, the ways in which she presented her mother was closely associated with her own spiritual journey and she therefore always held her mother in high regard, in commenting on her mother as a foundation of her faith she stated *"that is how I got encouraged"* (I2, L326). She also reflected on her mother as a source of occupational

inspiration and emotional support as her mother had been a poultry seller in the market, and it was through her mother that she gained access to her trade after her husband died, as she reflected “*my mother didn’t want me to stay all by myself so she asked me to come sell with her*” (I2, L505). Therefore the way in which Thabisile presents her mother to the researcher has a particularly significant role as her mother can be understood to be the source of two of her major tenets of her own identity: “*a mother in contact with God*”, and a market trader (I2, L496).

4.3.3.3 Ambivalent relationships

Last, Thabisile’s identity as a market trader is closely tied to her relationships, both positive and negative, with the traders in her market community. Her trading community is referred to most predominantly as a positive relational resource as indicated by the slightly larger green traders leaf in comparison to the brown traders leaf. As women who share similar life narratives, the traders were described as an emotional resource that was utilized in times of sorrow. Furthermore, Thabisile is involved in a *stokvel* with the women in her market, emphasizing the financial relationship between the women as well, as she commented, “*we are close with the people that are across us because we understand each other. We even play stokvel together*” (I2, L242). The ways in which the women come together through the *stokvel* speaks more to the ways in which they share the financial burden of their positions within society, and highlights a common thread of poverty, that unites them relationally with one another as highlighted in her comment “*because we understand each other*”. In this way, Thabisile highlights the ways in which the community is developed around relational ties of similarity and common experience. Ife (2002) emphasizes the ways in which solidarity and mutuality, as highlighted in the *stokvel*, are natural consequences of a cohesive community. The women within this community are shown to be drawing on one another for emotional and financial support, signifying the ways in which a community serves as a resource as well as fostering individual resilience through collective identity.

While they were more predominantly presented as a positive relational resource Thabisile also referred to her trading community as a form of financial competition. The women in

her market are forced to compete over the customer base that alleviates the poverty they all experience; *"some people claim that the customer had already called them over the phone when there is actually no such thing. Others claim that the customer is their relative"* (I1, L105). By presenting the traders in this way, Thabisile highlights the double bind of poverty, a factor that can both unite and segregate communities as the common narrative is fractured by a need for economic survival which at times forces individuals to prioritize their needs over the collective. This conflicting position highlights an important point in conceptualizing poverty itself. The ways in which we consider the poor as a collective homogeneous group, or even consider women traders as a collective group, carries with it both positive and negative features. Through the establishment of a homogeneous group, the women become viewed as a united and collective whole, which enables greater recognition, universal sense of connection and hence belonging. However, by collectively viewing women street traders, one masks the individual tenets of each woman's narrative, the differences that distinguish one woman's poverty from another. Hence the need to understand poverty as a personal and lived experience is essential in understanding how this contributes to their sense of identity (Bowman, 2007).

Hence, the ways in which Thabisile articulates these two most salient identities, of being a religious woman and a trader, highlights the constructivist process of identity development. Hall (1996) suggests a discursive approach to identity development, which highlights the temporal and changing nature of identification. This emphasizes the need to recognize that while identities have an origin in the past, they are embedded in current and future representation, the ways in which we want to be perceived which influences the ways in which we present ourselves to others. The construction of Thabisile's identity is rooted in the influences of her mother through religious identification and her own journey of motherhood. Thabisile's narratives of motherhood include a pattern of ambivalence similar to that of her relational ties with her trading community.

When exploring the relationships that Thabisile highlights as negative or maladaptive, she refers mostly to her son, the most prominent brown leaf on her tree. The ways in which Thabisile refers to her children with both praise and despondency highlights the manner in

which they represent both positive and negative relational ties, and the emotional ambiguity associated with motherhood, *"He realized that I had given up on him and told myself that if he died I would mourn for him and move on"* (I1, L). Thabisile describes the relationship with her son as one of immense conflict and strain as her son's alcohol and drug addiction have caused her great financial and emotional anguish for her and her family; *"Our family gained a bad name in the neighborhood because we have a son that is troublesome"* (I1, L59). The ways in which Thabisile highlights the significance of the negative relationship with her son are closely connected to the relationships with her wider community. Her son's substance abuse was causing not only a strained relationship between her and him, but more importantly it was beginning to impair the relationships that Thabisile has with her home community. The fear of having a *"bad name in the neighborhood"*, highlights the inherent importance of relational ties for Thabisile, as to lose relations with these people would be the potential loss of a support system and even her source of self. Hence for Thabisile, the need to maintain relational ties with her home community was at the cost of temporarily cutting of the relational ties with her "troublesome" son. It is through this relational complexity that the notion of selves being intricately connected to others emerges. The ways in which Thabisile is constantly negotiating and renegotiating her relational networks highlights the ways in which the boundaries that tie and divide are her are inherently relational and shifting across time.

4.3.5 Pravina's relational tree: In full bloom.

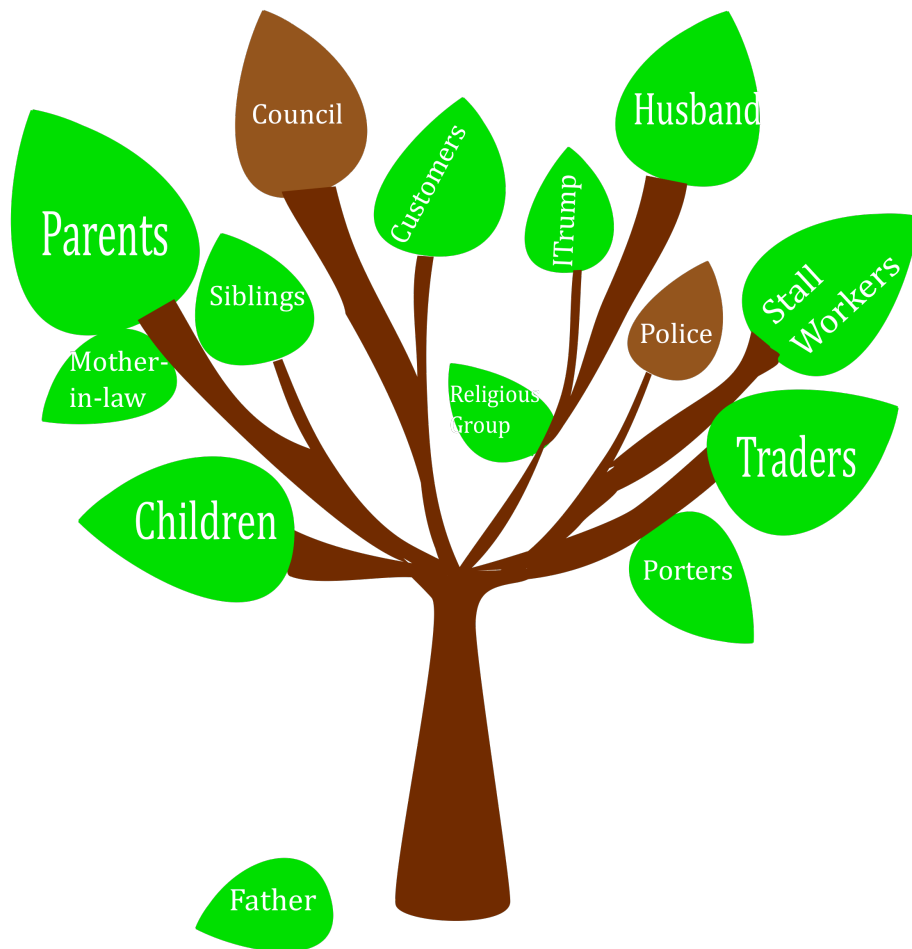


Figure 5: Pravina's relational tree

Pravina's relational tree is slightly different from the previous participants' trees. Her tree reflects the expansive nature of her relationships, similar to that of the other participants, yet her relational networks are vast and positive and centre on a family network and a trading community network. It is through exploration of these two networks that her identity as a mother and a trader are intimately woven. The gendered position within her relationships is perceived by her to be altered as in the majority of her relationships Pravina holds the position of power. Being a woman, this position highlights the shifts that are occurring across time; yet simultaneously Pravina's narratives indicate that despite her

position of power within the home and work context deeply steeped patriarchal norms continue to exist.

4.3.5.1 Extended relationships

For Pravina, the most significant relationships lay within her family unit and the relationships with her parents, siblings, husband and children. She began her introduction with referring immediately to her family position to identify herself, *"I'm married, I have three children"* (I1, L6) and frequently referred back to her children and husband throughout the interview. She emphasized the importance of being involved in her children's lives and explained that her immediate family relationships as highly valued and important. Pravina spoke extensively about her children, referring to them with fondness and affection as well as frequently highlighting her hopes for them to receive a good education and employment outside the informal sector. Pravina's income from the market has enabled her to be the breadwinner of the family and she highlighted her husband's long standing unemployment. While Pravina indicated that this has been a stressful situation, she continued to speak of her relationship with her husband in a very positive light commenting, *"I'm married for the past 29 years and I have a fantastic partner...he is a huge inspiration to me...a pillar of strength"* (I1, L92). In this way Pravina, unlike many of the other participants, emphasized the emotional relationship with her spouse rather than the financial. For her, the support he provided made him a resource that was based primarily on the ways in which he remains a good father and good husband despite his inability to provide for the family economically.

Pravina further spoke of her siblings and the ways in which she remains closely bonded to all of them as they support her parents. She described her extended family as a cohesive and regularly interacting unit that has strong emotional connections and can be relied on as a support system in any circumstances. As noted by her comment,

"I come from a family that is very very united, where you know we meet at least once a week and the entire family must meet and we have like a family reunion...we stand for each other as well you know its very very important" (I1, L 108).

The second most prominent array of relational ties, which Pravina emphasized, were with those with whom she works, as highlighted by the thicker branches and large green leaves allocated to stall workers, traders and porters. She comments, *“my community will be the people I am interacting with more on a daily basis everyday, the informal traders on the outside, my customer base as well as the traders around us”* (I2, L189). The ways in which Pravina spoke at length about her working environment and work relationships highlights the saliency of her role as a trader. Her extensive discussion around her work relationships may be as a result of how her work context strongly co-constructs her identity. Mishler (1999) refers to the ways in which people occupy different roles in their lives, and depending on context, certain roles appear more salient than others. This concept emerged quite strongly in Pravina’s relational descriptions, and she spoke in depth about her family as a primary relational support system, yet also spoke at length about her working relationships and their importance. In order of seeming importance, and represented in the leaf size, Pravina highlighted the role of fellow traders within her market, the immediate traders who work at her stall and last, her customer base. Pravina emphasized the ways in which traders within her market are united by common experiences inherent in being a trader within this community. She highlighted how traders collectively assist with conflict that arises with the local council and in their collectivity become more empowered in such challenges: *“we are now taking on the council, the huge giant”* (I1, L74). The sense of community and belonging entrenched by the establishment of the Early Morning Market Traders’ Association was thus highlighted to assume a very prominent relational strength. She positioned herself securely within this structure and frequently referred back to the association as a united and organized membership of traders who were willing to challenge the city over the impending court case, which was a pivotal issue at the time of the interview⁴.

⁴ Refer to Chapter 1, section 1.2.1 for an explanation of this court case.

In both her description of the traders association and the ways in which women in her market are collectively supporting one another in gender based issues, highlight the reciprocal nature of individuals and society. The manner in which individuals are both *acted on* by society and can simultaneously *act on* society highlights the ways they become *“powerful social actors who may change this society”* (Billington, 1998, p.14). The collective relationships formed through the Traders Association is a tangible example of the ways in which members of society are not merely passive participants, but rather, active agents that can shape and mold their context through ‘pushing back’ and resisting on what may be perceived as ‘norms’ that derive from the macro level of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1994). In this way, the informal traders of the Early Morning Market are shown to be rewriting the social scripts as they resist their marginalized position and challenge the local council for equal rights, recognition and valued social positioning within the cityscape. Furthermore the ways in which she constructed her positive relational ties with the members of the market and the market association was presented in strong contrast as opposition to the threat of the local council. In this way, the notion of resilience, which is bolstered by collective consciousness and action and serves as a protective buffer against external threats to the community can be seen most evidently (Hope & Timmel, 2003).

4.3.5.2 Ambivalent relationships

Pravina’s relational ambivalence is represented in a slightly different manner to that of the previous participant’s. Her ambivalence is steeped in race and history, which emerges in the way she contemplates the negotiation of the handing over of her stall in the future. In regard to the traders who assist her at her stall as well as the porters who deliver fresh produce to her stall, Pravina highlighted the ways in which they serve as a means of inspiration for her, and the ways in which she helps them with their own issues and therefore she feels she is an important part of their lives, as well as them being an important relation within her relational matrix, as she comments,

“You’ve got to teach them the things I learn on a daily basis in terms of the bulk market, exposing myself to the different types of people and I also give these skills to

my workers...it's important to have a healthy relationship and I always maintain that you find that even if you come to my business and you interview my workers they are all very happy, they've been here for a number of years and they happy to be with me and that is what is important to me, if they are happy, I am happy" (I1, L30).

This mutual relationship seems to extend beyond that of mere employer-employee relationship, to something more substantial and grounded on common familiarity as Pravina recognizes herself as a trader despite her stall ownership status. The strong relationship between Pravina and her co-workers was most visibly illustrated when she commented on handing over her stall one day, *"if there is anybody that I would rather give it to it will, it must, it might as well be, my workers who have worked for me, that will make me very happy" (I2, L401).*

However, while Pravina highlights a very positive relationship with her workers, the consideration of handing over her business to them can also be understood to illustrate several levels of complexity within Pravina's narrative. The refusal of her children to take ownership of the stall, and her own reluctance to hand the stall to them, highlight the ways in which she envisages something 'better' for her children, something that is not within the informal sector, given their access to opportunity. In this way, Pravina both acknowledges the ways in which the market has served as an escape route from the clutches of poverty for her family, as it has enabled their education; yet simultaneously, it is not adequate to be maintained within the family once that poverty link is broken. Hence, the progression of her own family is highlighted, while the informal sector remains largely viewed through a marginalized and "negative" lens. By passing over the stalls she owns, Pravina in many ways hands over the 'baton' of poverty, the tangible reminder of her own childhood and parent's life of marginalization based on race and class. In many ways in handing over the stalls she will segregate herself and her family from the heritage that brought them to the market space in the first place. Interestingly, Pravina is considering handing over the market stalls to her African workers. This act can be shown to highlight the ways in which the African black trading population continues to remain within poverty and marginalization, while she, an Indian trader has found economic emancipation. The act of

passing the stall to a black worker, is symbolic in that Pravina is handing over the tool which enabled her family to escape from poverty, but simultaneously, she hands over the stall with an added layer of meaning, as the stall carries with it representations of poverty, race and marginalization that are still so strongly associated with black informal traders.

Second, despite being the stall owner, the decision to hand over her stalls to her workers may not be as easy as Pravina indicates. The interactions between African and Indian South Africans has been strained throughout history with legislation privileging Indian people over African people, causing long standing friction between the races. While Pravina omits this level of racial tension in her account of the projected act of handing over a family owned business points to the historical racialised legacy of Apartheid and its effects on socio-economic mobility in the present and at least the immediate future. It can thus be assumed, that's this transition will be a very emotionally conflicting and difficult time for Pravina as she seeks to hand over something personally symbolic to people that she knows will value the entity.

4.3.5.3 Gendered relationships

Pravina spoke of her family as a support structure and highlighted the ways in which her role as a trader is interwoven with her family heritage as she began working in the market through her family lineage. The stall Pravina now manages was originally owned by her grandfather, then her father and was subsequently passed onto her. She thus highlighted the ways in which her work and family combine to form a dominant thread within her identity construction, commenting, *"This has been a family business, I am the third generation trader. It has been passed to my dad by my granddad and now passed to me"* (I, L20). This is a significant shift away from the typical generational path that family owned businesses usually follow, as Pravina, the daughter of the family, received the business instead of her brothers. While this may be due to the brothers already having other occupations in the formal sector and therefore not wanting to take responsibility for the stalls within the informal sector, the reversal of the gender lineage is remains significant and Pravina considers it to be a symbol of modernity. As Pravina reflects,

“Things have changed a lot in terms of those now, you’ll find in our older generation where in the Indians, where the sons were more inclined to taking over their fathers businesses and things, but ehh no now it no longer exists...I’ve just got one brother, he is very pleased, he does not have a problem” (I2, L340).

However, despite being the stall owner Pravina may continue to be under the authority of her family, especially her brothers, as highlighted in the ambivalence of handing over her stall. Therefore despite her perceived independence and role as the breadwinner, the ways in which her position of power is conditional and constrained as a result of gender remains evident. Another instance where this is most evident is in her relationship with her husband. While Pravina is the breadwinner and thus perceived to be in a position of power, she is not in control of her own finances. In this way the very entrenched gender roles inherent in patriarchy remain deeply embedded, as Pravina, despite her financial independence, assertive working position and social role, remains subservient in the managing of the finances within the domestic sphere (Fox, 1998). Finally, despite her husband’s unemployment and Pravina’s full time employment, the gender based social scripts that Billington et al (1998) refers to have not reversed. Instead, Pravina spoke highly of her mother-in-law as a supportive resource in the ways in which she could perform the ‘motherly’ role in Pravina’s absence, commenting:

“I am fortunate in the sense that I have my mother in law with me...who has taken care of my kids whilst I have needed to work and ehh so so you know, my kids have had a good upbringing as well” (I1, L48).

Interestingly, despite her husband’s unemployment, the role of child rearing is still attributed to Pravina’s mother-in-law and not her husband, again reiterating the notion of steeped patriarchy and gender scripts to which feminists such as Fox (1998) and Harris (2003) allude.

4.3.6 Conclusion

The relational tree analysis thus provides a very in-depth exploration at the composition and nature of the relational ties inherent in each woman's life narrative. The overarching patterns of gender, diverse yet ambivalent relationships, seemed to connect the women's trees in many ways; while the individual nature of their relational branches was often shown to be distinctively unique. Most frequently the overarching connections were entrenched in the shared experience of poverty that cut across geographic location to unite the women in smaller communities both real and imagined, that exist in various spaces, including, work, church and home. The ways in which occupational ties were shown to be significant, and in some cases, more significant, than family or home ties, highlights the extent to which many of these women are deeply rooted in their trading communities and have consequently developed a salient identity associated with their workspace. The salience of this identity was most frequently balanced, and at times quite delicately, with their identity as mothers. As the display of both green and brown leaves and thick and thin branches highlighted, the role of motherhood and the relational ties associated with this role, were considered both significantly important whilst simultaneously highly ambivalent.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The aims of this project were to explore the ways in which the women chose to tell their stories and what this could tell us about the ways in which they made meaning of their lives. While the content of the narratives is obviously important, the focus of this research was to understand what could be learnt from the ways in which the stories were told and why they were told in that way, hence reading *between* the lines. This shed light on the different identities that the women presented and which were most salient. Finally, this project attempted to visually display the relational connections and relationships that these women have with others and explore the ways in which these relationships are either positive or negative connections in their lives and how they facilitate the construction of identity.

The PIN analysis was most helpful in providing a window of insight into the women's life stories. It was through the particular incident narratives (PINs) that the researcher was able to understand overarching features of the life stories as well as critical narrative principles, which were used as a means of highlighting certain aspects within their life stories. The ways in which the women emphasized the difficulties and triumphs of their lives through the use of plots, characters and roles made each of their PINs a microscope into understanding the broader narrative structure and the social issues that plague them individually and collectively, such as, poverty and trauma. Furthermore, it was through their PINs that the women offered a salient or key identity to the researcher. Through analysis into the meaning encapsulated by their PIN, key identities emerged and key themes emerged which were most frequently centered on poverty, motherhood and trauma. These enabled useful insight into understanding how the women wanted to be perceived by both the researcher as well as the potential audience of their narratives.

The co-construction analysis enabled the opportunity to understand the ways in which stories, and lives are developed in collaboration and constant negotiation with relatable others. The ways, in which the interviewer or researcher and the participant engaged in a conversation both verbal and non-verbal, was shown to be a powerful factor in shaping the

story told. The non-verbal cues of laughter and pauses carried with them significant meaning that directed and in some cases hindered certain types of conversation. More so, the presence of the researcher and interviewer was of symbolic and political significance. The ways in which history and culture created a constant and underlying power differential was shown to be a significant influence on the narratives the women shared and the ways in which they told them. The ever-present power dynamic was a dominant and prevailing factor that enabled moments of connection and disconnection, a constant reminder of the inherent social and relational components of “individual” lives. Thus, the ways in which others co-construct the stories told, through shared experiences and common communities, silences and topic switches and power in interview interactions, becomes a template in understanding how others co-construct our identity. This was also most prevalent in the relational tree layer of analysis.

The range of relational trees highlighted branches of commonality and splinters of difference between the women’s relational networks. The relationships the women have, tell the story of who they are, and who they are not, through the communities to which they ascribe. While each woman’s tree focused on the form of relationships that were unique to their life, there were frequently commonly expressed types of relationships highlighting the ways in which wider social factors such as religion, poverty, race, age and gender enabled certain connections to be more salient over others. Furthermore, these same ties that bind the women together, divided them from specific others who were presented as negative relationships, in particular, the police and local authorities, as well as structural poverty despite political freedom. However, poverty, as well as gender, were shown to be a tie that simultaneously connected women relationally through shared experiences of financial hardship and roles of mothering that were relatable to each other. While some women highlighted strong and positive relationships with close family members; other women indicated more negative relationships with family. Interestingly, those who had more strained family relationships seemed to reflect more positively on the relationships they hold with the women in their market and in this way the relational support lost through poor family ties was compensated for in positive relationships and close bonds with their trading community. Hence the common threads of gender, poverty and

expansive relationships evident in the relational trees, reflected the common threads of shared experience, cohesive communities, power influences and trauma that were evident in the PIN and co-construction levels of analysis.

Thus this project presents three levels of analysis, that all interweave into creating a framework for an in-depth understanding of the identity of women informal street traders. The PINs the women shared highlighted salient identities that encapsulated an entire narrative. These narratives were co-constructed, not just with the researcher and interviewer, but with a wide range of potential audiences in mind. Through focusing on the process of co-construction, one gains an understanding into the ways that we shape, mould and influence the stories we tell and the identity generated in, and through, those stories. Finally, it is evident that individual narratives are not possible without the inclusion of others. It was through the relationships, both positive and negative, that the women gave insight into the ways their most salient identities and multiple roles were determined and played out. This reiterates Fay's (1996) argument that we 'need others to be ourselves'. These others were shown to derive from multiple communities, both real and imagined and contribute to a sense of belonging and thus resilience. Hence, it was through these three levels of analysis that history, power, culture and relational others were shown to be significant threads that interweave in each woman's sense of self; highlighting the psychological process of identity construction through negotiation and re-negotiation, in relation to 'ties that bind and lines that divide' (Bradbury & Ndlovu, 2011).

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8. Appendices

8.1: Interview Outline

Interview 1.

General introduction of myself and Lindiwe.

A broad narrative question will be posed:

Can you please tell me about your life, you may begin your story from any point you choose and include whatever you feel relevant?

Interview 2.

These questions are largely dependent on the issues, events and themes the participant chose to discuss in the first interview. General themes on Warwick Junction, informal trade as an occupation, and the role of gender may be probed deeper in his interview, for example:

Historical questions:

Has Warwick Junction changed over the years since you started working here?

Has the City of Durban changed since you started working here?

What do you think the future of Warwick Junction holds?

What do you think the significant of Warwick Junction is for Durban?

What interaction do you have with other informal traders in the greater Durban district?

What do you remember of the year 1994?

Tell me about the current debates in Warwick Junction.

Occupational questions:

Where do you live?

How long does it take you to travel to work?

Do you travel to work everyday?

When did you begin trading in Warwick Junction?

Have you ever done any other type of work?

How did you begin trading in Warwick Junction?

Has your work in Warwick Junction changed through the years?

What makes you feel secure at work?

What makes you feel insecure at work?

What is your relationship with the other women in your market?

Have you and the women in your market ever worked collectively to challenge or change something in or about your working area?

What do you see your future holding?

Who controls your income?

What is your income spent on?

Experiences:

Tell me about your experience of school?

How has being a woman influenced your position in this community?

Have you ever been involved in decision making in your market?

What has been the most memorable experience for you as an informal trader?

Family life:

Do you have a partner or spouse?

What is his/her occupation?

Does he/she stay with you?

What roles does he/she have in the household?

Does anyone else live in your home?

Who looks after your children?

Do you bring your children to work with you?

What do your children do?

What are your dreams for your children?

What do you want your children to know about your work space?

What do you do when you are not in the market?

8.2: Letters of consent

Letter of consent (English).

University of Witwatersrand
1 Jan Smuts Avenue
Braamfontein 2000
Johannesburg,
South Africa
01 April, 2011

Dear

My name is Tamryn Coats, and I am a student at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg. I am 23 years old and spent last year working with the NGO Asiye eTafuleni on the Markets of Warwick Project. I was inspired by the personal stories of the women working in Warwick Junction, so this year I am doing research on resilience in women in informal sectors. Researching resilience is exploring the ways that people cope through difficult situations.

As a woman working in Warwick Junction I would like to ask you to consider being involved in my research. Your name was suggested by the NGO Asiye eTafuleni. Your involvement would entail two interviews with a translator and me. The translator's name is Hlengiwe Mdadane and she will conduct interviews in isiZulu. Hlengiwe is a youth-care worker who has been extensively involved in community work for over 20 years through a local Durban organization, Youth for Christ. She has specifically worked with women through being the Project Manager and Director of Tennyson House: home for girls.

The first interview will be very open ended, and I will ask you to talk to me about your life. You can speak of whatever you are comfortable sharing. The second interview will revolve around the topics you brought up in the first interview. Both interviews will take place at the NGO Asiye eTafuleni offices on Saturdays. The interviews will be audio recorded, and later transcribed. A report will be written based on all the interviews conducted. Direct

quotations from your interview may be used in the report write up. The content of your interview will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms (name changes). You can withdraw from the research process at any time. Please be aware there will be no monetary or any other compensation for taking part in the research process.

If you are willing to share your story with me, and take part in the research please complete the slip below. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time.

Tamryn Coats

I _____ agree to take part in the research of Tamryn Coats in 2011. I give my permission to be interviewed, and have my interview recorded and used in a research report.

Name

Date

Letter of consent (isiZulu)

University of Witwatersrand

1 Jan Smuts Avenue

Braamfontein 2000

Johannesburg,

01 April 2011

Ngiyakubingelela

Igama lami ngingu Tamryn Coats ngifunda eNyuvesi yase Witwatersrand eGoli. Ngineminyaka ewu 23, ngonyaka odlule bengisebenzela iNGO ekuthiwa iAsiye eTafuleni ngohlelo olumayelana nezimakethe ezikuWarwick. Ngiye ngakhuthazwa izindatshana zabezifazane abasenza khona la eMakethe, yikho kulonyaka ngenza lolucwaningo olobhekene nezindlela abesifazane abakumabhizinisi aloluhlo abakwazi ukudlula kwizimo ezinzima abake bahlangabezana nazo. Locwaningo ke olokubona izindlela ezahlukenene abantu abakwazi ngazo ukumelana nezimo ezilukhuni ezimpilweni zabo.

Njengomuntu wesifazane osebenzela la eWarwick Junction (Market) benginathanda ukukumema ukuba ube ingxenye yalolu cwaningo. Igama lakho libe kuluhla lwamagama engilnikezwe yiNGO ekuthiwa iAsiye eTafuleni. Ukuba yingxenye kwakho yalolucwaningo lokho kusho ukuthi uzobonana nami ubuso nobuso izikhathi ezimbili ezihlukene. Igama lozositolikela uHlengiwe Mdadane uyena ozokwenza lolucwaningo ngolwimi lwesiZulu. uHlengiwe usesebenze kakhulu ezinhlelweni zomphakathi ikakhulu ulusha, iminyaka eyevale ku 20 phansi kwe nhlangano i Youth for Christ. Usesenze kakhulu nabesifazane ezinhlelweni ezahlukena eyiMenenja e Tennyson House: Ikhaya lamabesifazane abasebancane

Ucwaningo lokuqala luyobe luvulelekile, ngizokucela ukuthi ungixoxele ngempilo yakho. Ungakhuluma noma ingani ongathanda ukungitshela yona. Kolwesibili ucwaningo ngiyobe sengikubuza imibuzo mayelana nongitshela khona kucwaningo lokuqala. Lonke ucwaningo luzobe lusemahovisi eNGO iAsiye eTafuleni ngemiqgibelo. Lolu cwaningo ke luzoqoshwa bese lubhalwa phansi. Luzobe selubhalwa phansi ngokwezinto ezitholakele ngesikhathi ucwaningo luqhubeka. Ngesikhathi ke lubhalwa phansi angeke kuze kusetshenziswe amagama akho angempela. Uma uzwa ukuthi ngenxa yesizathu esithile awusathandi ukuba ingxenye yalolucwaningo ungayeka nanoma inini. Ngicela ke ukuthi uqaphele ukuthi akukho imali ozoyithola ngokuba ingxenye yalolucwaningo.

Uma ungathanda ukuba ungixoxele ngempilo yakho futhi ube yingxenye yalolucwaningo ngicela ungqwalise imininingwane yakho ngezansi.

Ngiyakulangazelela kakhulu ukuhlangana nawe sixoxisane.

Ngiyabonga ngesikhathi sakho

Yimina

Tamryn Coats

_____ Ngiyavuma ukuba yingxenye yalolu
a Tamryn Coats ngonyaka ka 2011. Ngiyamnikeza imvume yokuba axoxisane
waningo, futhi aqophe esizobe sikhuluma ngakho bese ekusebenzisa kwi *report*
wakhe.
