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"*Loxion Management*": Social networks and precarious economies, A Case Study of Tembisa.

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

2017

Plagiarism Declaration

This work or the ideas herein has never been submitted in previous works, projects or for the fulfillment of a degree. This is my own original work and argumentation. Any work (s), article (s), and contribution (s) cited in this research project have been acknowledged and referenced throughout.

Gugulethu Mabena

Signature: _____ Date: _____

[1] This thesis has been approved for the degree of Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in Industrial Sociology by the University of the Witwatersrand.

Acknowledgements

Tremendous appreciation goes to all my participants sitting on the street corners in my township of Tembisa. Not only to them, but also to the unlikely participants who engaged me in conversation in what I have termed a "mobile site" i.e. taxi-rides I had unconsciously embarked on from Tembisa to Randburg which is a site of many call centres, and therefore of much precarious employment. In retrospect, this was my own personal precarious route as a highly credentialed graduate to one of Multichoices' call centres.

This journey which began in 2015, has not been without challenges because I have not only produced insight to a field of study in the fulfilment of this degree, but have also learnt my own strengths and impediments as a researcher and a graduate. Lastly, gratitude goes to my fantastic supervisor Professor Bridget Kenny for believing in my intellectual capacities of submitting this research project but also possibly furthering my studies to a PhD level. I am also very thankful to my family for encouraging me to overcome the last hurdle of my Master's degree i.e. finally submitting this research component. Undertaking this research project has broadened my own worldview on the extent to which an idiom which has been loosely defined in the township, not only serves as a circuitous network contributing to social cohesion amongst men but also as a site where employment information, even of a precarious nature circulates.

Executive Summary of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter One of this research project provides a background on establishing whether a launching a critique against existing precarious literature and tailoring it to a township experience of "loxion management" could expand this literature. The scope of what "loxion management" is further grounds this research in a context that the reader, although having no previous understanding of what this idiom entails, can understand.

Chapter Two is the methodology which describes how this research was executed and explains what the overall approach, access to the research site, sampling, and how data collection techniques were conducted.

Chapter Three, examines what existing scholars and researchers have written on the topic under study i.e. the literature review.

Chapter Four constitutes the bulk of this research project which is the findings and analysis retrieved from the data. A significant section of this chapter is the thematic discussion which includes the participants' views, experiences, and the social meanings they attribute to their social worlds i.e. their lived experiences as detailed through the themes in this research project.

Chapter Five concludes the research process and reveals the implications that this research project informs and enriches in expanding literature on precarity and not glossing over the nuances derived from lived experiences, especially of a negated neo-apartheid township.

Table of Contents

Cover page **1**

Plagiarism Declaration 2

Acknowledgements 3

Executive Summary of Subsequent Chapters 4

Chapter 1: Introduction 7-10

Chapter 2: Methodology 11-23

2.1. Research Methods 12-17

2.2. Research Site 17-18

2.3. Sampling 18-20

2.4. Gaining Access 20-22

2.5. Ethical Implications 22-23

Chapter 3: Literature Review 24-42

3.1. Precarity 24-26

3.1.1. The Precarious Condition 26-28

3.1.2. Precarity in South Africa 28-31

3.2. Post-Apartheid Township Life and an Urban Sociological Perspective 31-35

3.3. Unemployment 35-41

3.3.1. The Causes of Unemployment 35-37

3.3.2. Getting a Job, the Strength of Weak Ties, and Social Capital 37-39

3.4. Masculinity 39-41

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis 42-58

Introduction 42

Thematic Discussion 42-58

4.1. Misinterpreting *Umahlalela, Abo'lova* and *Ma'binneplaas* for "Loxion managers"…….42-45

4.2. Managing the "loxion"…….45-49

4.3. Of Men on street corners……..49-52

4.4. A Circuitous Network and a form of Cooperation?.....53-58

Chapter 5: Conclusion……59-61

Bibliography……62-65

Chapter 1: Introduction

The nature of work is changing. In South Africa, there has been a noticeable decline of the Standard Employment Relationship (SER) alongside an increase of atypical forms of employment and precariousness. Atypical employment has come to be identified by what it is not. It is not 'typical employment' i.e. having a permanent job (Theron, 2003). Additionally, under atypical employment, there exists new emerging forms of employment recognized as being designed for maximum surplus extraction and labour exploitation, whilst leaving workers as insecure and as disposable as ever.

Precarity can thus be posited to be an all-encompassing concept especially when looking more extensively at the lives of individuals who experience repeat spells of flexible and unstable employment. Standing's (2011) conceptualization of a perpetual spiral of precariousness i.e. "the precarity trap" is significant in this instance. Therefore, as a point of departure, this research project studied an idiom which is loosely defined and used in the township. This is the township experience of "loxion management". It was examined in an attempt to expand an understanding of precarity. Furthermore, through grappling with "supposed" precarious existences in the context of this township experience, more light was highlighted on employment relations in the South African case.

"Loxion management" is an idiom which implies "making a plan" in the *loxion* (township) amidst the usage of an assortment of terms which have the possibility of obscuring an understanding of what "loxion management" really encapsulates. This means that there are terms that describe urban unemployment such as *mahlalela, ma'binneplaas* and *abo'lova* which are used in the township to describe men who are seen roaming dusty township streets and hanging around on street corners as possessing scant qualifications. Its most equivalent is the literature on *planisa* in mining i.e. miners' informal working practice of making a plan at the point of production deep down the

mine (Phakathi, 2013: 126). It is the creative and ad-hoc ways of making a plan with few resources that is key to equating *planisa* to "loxion management".

This in a township context implies the making of a plan to get and keep a job, maintaining ties that might lead to possible job prospects, and finding out about information regarding possible jobs in a "circuit"[2] derived within the township. It is significant for this research project to determine whether this circuit can be regarded as a site where individuals nurture their social ties and keep their economic lives open whilst being unemployed, or in precarious work relations; and a network contributing to social cohesion especially amongst men in the township.

Moreover, this research project is cognizant that the abovementioned terms and understandings of urban unemployment that circulate in the township gloss over significant undertones and intricacies of embodied experiences of unstable, flexible, and insecure forms of employment relationships. Delving deeper on this point becomes significant as it uncovers realities that have not been highlighted on expanding an understanding of precarity. Thus, a research project which is particularly tailored to township life, hopes to insert more knowledge into existing literature on the subject of precarity.

Literature on precarity details its indices i.e. income instability, lack of a safety net, an unpredictable work schedule, uncertainty about continuing employment, the absence of collective representation, and eroded labour-related security (De Peuter, 2011; Standing, 2011). It further posits that precarity arises from a specific context that comprises the erosion of the ideal-type Fordist-style labour contract which socially anchors accumulation (Theron, 2003).

[2] In this research "loxion management" has been coined to be a circuitous network contributing to social cohesion amongst men but also as a site where employment information, even of a precarious nature circulates

It is also suggested that relentless wage demands by unionized labour, refusal of work by younger generations, and bulging welfare costs for managing populations excluded from the material gains of standard work are among a myriad of pressures 'convincing' capital to weaken its commitment to the SER, as a mode of labour control (De Peuter, 2011). Here Scully (2016: 161) can be used to strengthen this point as he is also observant of the fact that most critical scholarship on the subject of precarity only diagnoses problems and universalizes the causes and effects of precarious work. Therefore, literature on precarity can be posited to be limited whereby life is back-grounded and the labour market is made the focus even though life is more than just about work and the labour market.

On the other hand, literature on township life does not really theorize work and the labour market and often backgrounds these experiences by focusing on the HIV/AIDS pandemic, youth sexuality, youth culture etc. (Swartz, Harding and De Lannoy, 2012), with work being back-grounded. As a result, this research project examines "loxion management" as a way of understanding the intersection between the labour market and township life

Initially this research project was focused on a narrow expansion of literature on precarity. As a result, it almost in the trenches like existing literature, of glossing over significant nuances of understanding precarious existences that were found in "loxion management". Its initial point of departure of hypothesizing that a township experience of "loxion management" was only about re-envisioning an understanding of precarity, almost catapulted this research project into a narrow focus that probably exists in strands of literature on precarity.

Therefore, it is now significant to highlight that this research project begins as a critique of existing literature which does not conceptualize the myriad of experiences or possible

manifestations of precarity, especially those of the lived experiences emanating within townships. It is through this research project that it will be clear that "loxion management" is a circuit that can be viewed as a site where individuals nurture their social ties and keep their economic lives open whilst being unemployed, or in precarious work relations, and a network contributing to social cohesion especially amongst men in the township. Additionally, this research seeks to clarify the abovementioned terms used in the township with the hope of providing an understanding of urban unemployment, and ultimately that of "making a plan" in the township.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This research employed a qualitative methodology. It was based on the need to understand human and social interaction from the perspectives of participants (Greenstein, Roberts and Sitas, 2003). Describing, understanding and explaining human behaviour is at the locus of this approach. Attitudes and behaviours were studied in their natural setting. Thus, the research process was non-intrusive, non-manipulative, and non-controlling. For the purpose of this study it was significant to observe events and actions as they unfolded with minimal interference nor intervention (Greenstein et al., 2003). Ultimately, through fieldwork, interviews and ethnography, the daily struggles of those who constitute the township experience of "loxion management" were investigated.

Apart from the qualitative approach being naturalistic, it is also process-oriented. This implies that it is interested in studying processes over time rather than the outcomes i.e. study events as they occur as opposed to reconstructing them after they have unfolded (Greenstein et al., 2003). Moreover, the participants' perspective was pivotal for this approach. For the purpose of this research project, this approach provided the allowance in gauging an understanding of how passing by some of the research sites, could possibly enrich this process further.

This is because, I commute daily by local taxi to and from my personal destinations. As a result, I am always alert and aware of the street corners that I have previously studied. I would deliberately look through the taxi window to see if my participants would still be at these sites or not. At times, I would be passing by foot, and would be stopped by a street corner vendor that I had once interacted with to check how my research was progressing. I would engage and then ask about the whereabouts of some participants, and especially of a key participant I had interacted with at this vendor's corner.

Additionally, this approach was principally interested in "thick" or in-depth descriptions and understanding the actions of individuals and events as they occur (Greenstein et al., 2003). As the research under study has highlighted, this approach was context specific. This implies that, the social world was viewed in its entirety and complexity, in its social, historical and physical context (Greenstein et al., 2003). This approach was inductive in nature (Greenstein et al., 2003). The research project immersed itself in the details and specificities of the findings to unravel important categories, and dimensions of the subject matter (Greenstein et al., 2003).

Lastly, this approach was guided by trial and error (Greenstein et al., 2003). This implies that, 'logic in practice' is a tool the researcher develops as things usually unfold differently than was expected (Greenstein et al., 2003). Ultimately, the abovementioned justifications for this research study employing the qualitative methodology is sufficient with regards to how the research ultimately came out.

I. Research methods

This research project stresses the importance of deciphering the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003: 138) note that language has the power to illuminate meaning. In lieu of the research project, individual's point of views and personal accounts were pivotal in understanding "loxion management" and the nuances therein which would only possible by talking to people. Moreover,

> the expressive power of language provides the most important resource for accounts. A crucial feature of language is its very capacity to present descriptions, explanations, and evaluations of almost infinite variety about any aspect of the world, including itself (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 126 in Legard et al., 2003: 138).

This research project employed unstructured/informal interviews as they constituted a form of conversation between researcher and participants. I am fluent in four of the eleven official languages. Additionally, I also conversed extensively in colloquial/*street taal* to get acquainted with most participants on the street corners. The interview method was key in bridging the conversation and deciphering nuances that were not apparent in the initial stages of the research process i.e. whether a township experience of "loxion management" could insert and expand on precarious literature.

This research project employed this method because it believed that knowledge can be extracted from research participants, waiting to be uncovered by the researcher (Legard et al., 2003). Moreover, this research project also embarked on a journey of 'conducting' unstructured focus groups at all of the four street corners. Therefore, it can be posited that these unstructured focus groups proved to be meaningful beyond their immediate context.

This is because, on the very first occasion, I would visit a street corner that I intended on studying, then introduce myself and inform possible participants of my intention to not only study but to have a conversation with them about their views on "loxion management". During this introductory phase, I would ask the street corner vendor of a suitable time to come back especially when the corner would be buzzing with activity, and where I would be introduced to more participants. After this initial encounter, I would leave.

According to Legard et al., (2003), the in-depth interview is aimed at establishing structure with flexibility. However, this research project was cognizant that it would employ informal interviews at the initial onset of the research process. This is because, even with unstructured interviews there were themes that the research project hoped to eventually explore. Generic in-depth interviews are generally based on a form of topic

guide (interview schedule) which sets out key issues and topics to be covered in the interview (Legard et al., 2003: 141).

However, and most significantly, this research project deliberately neglected an interview schedule as it proved to be rigid and inflexible. At the very onset of the fieldwork, it was noticeable that most participants revealed significantly less at the sight of an interview schedule. As a result, it was deliberate not to "interview" but to converse with the participants. As I had the introductory phase at each street corner, when I came back, it was as though the participants I had come into contact with, thought I would not be back. As a result, the question from them: "hey you actually came back?" initiated free-flowing conversations that I didn't expect and that have as a result, come to inform this research project. This particular question also engaged participants that I had not interacted with or met at the introductory phase. This is attributed to the methods selected, i.e. informal interviews and ethnography.

The conversation structure was highly flexible thus permitting topics to be covered in the 'order' most attuned to particular participants (Legard et al., 2003). This flexibility allowed me to probe (and achieve depth in responses) further on questions not clearly articulated by the participants, whilst providing the platform for the participants to spontaneously raise issues to that I could respond to. Most significantly, the interviews/conversations were interactive and generative (Legard et al., 2003: 141-2).

This research project continues to be cognizant of the background of a term i.e. *umahlalela* [one who is without a job, who sits around and does nothing about it] used to describe unemployment and township life under apartheid. Therefore, the initial hopes for this research project were to construct individual interviews with the older generation to ascertain the background from the colloquial *umahlalela*. However, due to time constraints, only one view from the older generation was included in the research process. The terms and this view are discussed in Chapter 4. Additionally, concerning

the gender assumptions here, most of the "loxion managers" that were under study were men. This is further revealed in the specificity of the research site i.e. street corners which are frequented by men than women.

Secondly, this research project employed ethnographic techniques of participant observation. According to Greenstein et al., (2003: 61-3), the purpose in ethnography is largely on studying an entire culture, which for the purposes of this research is the culture of those who constitute "loxion management". Through this technique, interactions, and unexpected drop-ins at some street corners were experienced first-hand, as they would normally occur in their setting.

Additionally, this approach was chosen as it became evident that it would be challenging to extract information using other methods (Greenstein et al., 2003: 62). This is because some interactions, practices, events, and patterns are only visible to those within the culture under study (Greenstein et al., 2003). As a result, for the purposes of this research project, participant observation was conducted alongside a series of informal interviews when street corners were frequented (there is always someone passing/dropping in at these corners) and buzzing with activity. Both methods have complimented each other in this research project.

This research project sought to establish those who comprised "loxion management" and were in precarious relations. To reiterate, an in-depth grasp (ethnography) highlighted by the informal interviews/conversations into this township experience, anchored the groundwork that this research project finally stands on. This method provided this research with nuances, detail and interconnectedness of a setting that a method such as a structured interview would not. The focus was derived on *participation in normal setting* i.e. where participation does not require total immersion where the researcher is close to the action whilst maintaining a certain distance from the group under study (Greenstein et al., 2003: 62-3).

Detail and subtleties on the culture of "loxion management" which could only be derived only from ethnography through participant observation have provided this depth to this research project. Where there was a shortage of responses, observation accounted for this. At all the street corners, I would come and be offered a seat (either a bucket or crate), greet everyone who was present, and once everyone including myself was settled in, the conversation would commence. However, my very first site encounter was a bit disorganized as I would be recording on my smartphone whilst trying to get guidance from an interview schedule.

This is the reason why I deliberately stopped utilizing a schedule because every time I looked at it, the conversation stopped and my participants would wait for the next question resulting in awkward silences. These silences didn't faze me because as I would identify, in every street corner interaction, there was a key participant who would speak through these silences. Ultimately, I only recorded the conversations because I knew the topic guide off by heart. At best, my interaction was minimal and not overbearing, encouraging any responses from all participants.

Participant observation was employed at various township street corners. These sites were semi-formalized avenues where people appeared to gather or hang-out and ultimately as was revealed through this method, to find out about jobs and to seek solace from their counterparts, and the "circuit". Most significantly, this method also aided in my personal revelation on a daily commute by taxi (this I have termed my mobile site) where I not only engaged in conversations about "loxion management" with my fellow *Tembisans* (residents of Tembisa) but my own personal precarious existence as a highly credentialed graduate to one of Multichoices' call centres.

In totality, on all four street corners and numerous taxi rides, I have interviewed approximately between fifteen to twenty participants. I approximate because all the

conversations that were ultimately transcribed and were meaningful for this project can be derived from at least fifteen participants.

II. Research site

Tembisa, meaning Promise in Nguni, is a large township situated to the north of Kempton Park on the East Rand, Gauteng, South Africa[3]. It falls under the municipality of Ekhuruleni. It was established in 1957 when black South Africans were resettled from Alexandra and other areas in Edenvale, Kempton Park, Midrand and Germiston[4]. Alleged to be the one of the largest townships in the Southern hemisphere, Tembisa has had its fair share of political turmoil, particularly in the early 1990s, as violence erupted in the lead up to the first democratic elections but little has been recorded about its history (Bonner, & Nieftagodien, 2012).

As a result, Tembisa is the object of investigation of this research project. Most South African townships are understood to be demarcated by sections. As a result, there are more than twenty sections that constitute the overall makeup of Tembisa. It is within these sections and on their street corners, that "loxion managers" (from age 18-35) can be seen. The reason for selecting this age range was due to the fact that this group experiences the most adverse experience of economic insecurity and unemployment (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell, 2000). To further provide textualities, I visited four sections in Tembisa, and hung out at only one street corner in each section. Furthermore, the specificity of the research site is revealed in these spaces frequented by men than women.

Street corners were a feasible site to approach as most "loxion managers" frequented these spaces. An urban sociological view further suggests that spaces such as street

[3] Retrieved in 2015 from the South African History Archive, www.saha.com
[4] Retrieved in 2015 from the South African History Archive, www.saha.com

corners actually reveal more about township life than households ever would (Wacquant, 1997). This is implied throughout this research project which details township life being carved out more on street corners than in households that participants resided in. Furthermore, through the informal interviews and ethnography, the life that is carved out in these corners of the township becomes more apparent than would have originally conceptualized. Most participants, revealed to have felt more at home at these corners than they did at their respective homes. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

However, as will be made apparent in the section on sampling, locating participants that were key for this research was not as challenging as originally thought. As a result, ethnography aided in grasping which popular street corners within a given section of the township were frequented, especially during the day. Even though street corners remain central to this project, a further site which is mobile arose out of a taxi route from Tembisa to Ranburg, which can be described as the site of many call centres, and therefore of much precarious employment. It was on these journeys that I spoke to several commuters and two participants. To reiterate, this daily commute would not only be a mobile site for this research project but was my own personal precarious route as a highly credentialed graduate to one of Multichoices' call centres.

III. Sampling

This research project employed snowball sampling due to how the research was conceptualized. Snowball sampling also called network/chain sampling is a method of sampling cases of possible networks and, is a multistage technique which begins with one or a few individuals, and spreads out on the basis of ties to the initial case (Neuman, 2006: 223). Ultimately, the sample is comprised of individuals named by those at the initial stage (Neuman, 2006).

As a result, this would necessitate that key participants, those with precarious relations who are located in "loxion management", be an area of focus. This research was interested in an interconnected network of people, which it infers to possibly be that of "loxion management". Furthermore, the specificity of the sampling is revealed on the street corners which are frequented by men than women. According to Neuman (2006), each person or unit is connected with another through a direct or indirect tie. The individuals in the various nodes of "loxion management" do not necessarily have to know each other but with direct or indirect ties, they can constitute a matrix of ties.

To reiterate, locating participants that were key for this research was not as challenging as originally thought. As a result, ethnography aided extensively in grasping which street corners within a given section were to be visited, and whether key participants would assist in snowballing this research further to popular street corners in other sections of the township. I spoke to approximately six individuals on the taxis over a period of four months whilst being a temporary call centre agent at Multichoice; who have offered poignant conversations. In addition to these taxi conversations, I hung out on four street corners in four sections, and I have interviewed approximately between fifteen to twenty participants over a period of approximately eight to ten months.

Additionally, an understanding on the aforementioned terms describing urban unemployment which circulate in the township required particular attention especially when attempting to locate participants who were meaningful to the research project. Extrapolating between those who constitute the idiom and those who fit these terms, was not as challenging as was imagined. This is because, it was easy to decipher those individuals who were at these corners just to hang out, and those who were actually making a plan.

However, this technique selected revealed a dual limitation. Firstly, the network of snowballed participants got so expansive that it became apparent that some conversations would not pass the criteria to be processed as data. Secondly, some participants in the semi-formalized focus groups held on these street corners, were just "hanging around". This as a result reveals that; some conversations were not of a meaningful kind and could not as a result be analyzed for content in this research project.

To reiterate, I spoke to approximately six individuals on the taxis over a period of four months whilst being a temporary call centre agent at Multichoice, and I hung out on four street corners from four sections. I visited a street corner twice over several months because I would initially go to a street corner I was snowballed towards by key participants at other street corners, and there I would gauge the personality of that space and the street corner vendor, who would inform me of days to possibly consider coming back on, where the corner would be abuzz with activity.

Therefore, there was the introductory visit to a street corner followed up by a last visit to converse with and observe participants. There is only one street corner that I went back to, not as a researcher but a patron who was buying chicken and chips. It was also at this very corner that the street corner vendor informed me that my previous visit had a tremendous effect on the guys I interacted with, who eventually went out there to make a plan and where one was now employed as security guard.

IV. Gaining Access

As I am a resident of Tembisa, locating the study and negotiating access was not challenging due to being familiar with how Tembisa is structured and demarcated. The criteria utilized in this research project for locating this study in Tembisa ranged from theoretical and ideological to issues of practicality and convenience. As a researcher, I have decided on Tembisa not only because it is my home town but due to the fact that

studies on precarity which are conceptualized through concrete lived experiences have not positioned research in the broader contexts of townships.

In choosing a specific township location I was motivated by further practical concerns: distance from my own home, ease of movement around the township, and safety. On the point on safety, most participants who would eventually snowball me to other sections where explicit on me not venturing into some sections, namely Ivory Park (which really falls under Midrand) and Umthambeka. Both these sections are flagged as "rough" and crime-ridden.

However, some encouraged me to not be "offish" and told me that in the event that I would venture into these sections, I needed to remain the researcher that they had experienced when I was interacting with them. They highlighted that nothing would happen to me if only I approached street corner vendors to gauge more insight into these respective locales. And if anything were to happen to me which it did not i.e. being mugged etc., the street corner vendor would certainly know who the culprits were. Ultimately, I decided not venture into these two sections.

I chose Tembisa as satisfying these practical requirements as it is easily navigable. As the main sites were selected i.e. street corners, and mobile taxi rides for my research, obtaining permission for participation in this research project came without any hassles. The demarcation of Tembisa offered a vast scope for potential access to information especially on urban unemployment amongst the youth who call themselves "loxion mangers".

To reiterate, the network of snowballed participants spanning the various sections of the township, got expansive that it became apparent that not more than four sections (Hospital View, Old Tshenelong, Mashemong, and Kanana) of Tembisa could be focused on. This could serve to be a limitation; however, it is comprehensible due to the time and

financial constraints of this project. Therefore, the makeup of "loxion management" can be viewed to comprise individuals who are part of the precariat and others who possess scant qualifications, and who fit the terms used in the townships to describe urban unemployment. However, a constraint that could have be foreseen it terms of safety and gender (me being female) did not seem to be of major concern. This will be expounded on in the ethics section below.

V. Ethics

Ethics appraisal

This research study placed no intrusion in the lives of the participants by acknowledging to do no harm. It considered the sensitivity of some research questions posed to the participants. It also obtained formal informed consent by not deceiving nor coercing the participants to be involved in the research project. According to Legard et al., (2003: 142), "the emphasis on depth, nuance and the participant's own language as a way of understanding meaning implies that the interview data be captured in its natural form".

This would imply that the interview data be tape recorded as note taking by the researcher could seemingly change the content of the data. The participants were informed that the conversations would be tape-recoded and were asked whether they consented to being recorded or not. The use of pseudonyms in the final write-up was also communicated to the participants as they were also asked if using their real names was problematic or not. They consented to being recorded and their real names being used.

Before the research commenced, informed consent was communicated to the participants. Neither anonymity nor confidentiality was guaranteed as the snowball method was employed. Snowball sampling implied that participants could possibly know each other as the access to key participants depended on the researched subject that

snowballed this research onto more participants who were of a meaningful kind. However, confidentiality of information was guaranteed before and after the interview. Informed consent implied that participants could choose whether or not to participate in this research project by being knowledgeable of the purpose and methods being used in the study, the risks involved, and the demands placed upon them as a participant.

The right to withdraw from the study was further communicated to the participants at all times. Moreover, it is the duty of the researcher to be mindful of unconsciously setting any unforeseen expectations. To reiterate, being a female researcher did not present any anxieties because I am familiar with how this township is structured/demarcated. As a result, all the fieldwork was conducted during the day, and only on weekdays. The street corners that were chosen were dependent on the popularity of the section and preference was not provided to participants to select their own sites. Such considerations were made due to the practicality provided to this research project.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

I. Precarity

According to Scully (2016: 161), "precarious work has become a central focus of the field as scholars' attempt to both analyze the present and understand the seeming future of work across much of the world". This implies that, precarity has become a much more central dynamic of neoliberal labour markets. Thus, the question of precarity has moved from one of marginal importance to a much more debated area within political and theoretical debates. Ultimately, it t is important to ask what political or conceptual clarity is brought to bear by this concept. "However, as precarity has come to be analyzed as a global phenomenon, there has been a tendency to employ a somewhat simplistic assumption of global convergence" (Scully, 2016: 161).

It is thus important to note that, "while precarious work has been on the rise throughout the world, fundamental differences in the histories of work, and of workers…should caution viewing precarity as a universal phenomenon whose meanings and implications are cognate for workers everywhere" (Scully, 2016: 161). Certainly, there is an ambivalence located at the core of precarity as a concept. Therefore, it can be highlighted that precarity as a concept is limited as it only highlights post-Fordist accumulation, neoliberal privatization and labour flexibilization (Standing, 2011; Scully, 2016 & Means, 2015). According to Standing (2011), increased levels of risk and insecurity continue to be transferred onto workers, their families, and their communities due to neoliberalism consistently calling upon the doctrine of flexibility.

For Standing (2011: 7), the precariat is a distinctive socio-economic group where an individual is either in it or not. It is defined by labour insecurity, a precarious income, a lack of work-based identity (Standing, 2011: 7-12). It also does not feel part of a solidaristic labour community which intensifies their alienation (Standing, 2011: 7-12).

Standing (2011) suggests that precarity as a condition has more in common with the *lumpenproletariat* than the working class of the past which "was defined by "*proletarianisation*" which signified a "reliance of mass labour, reliance on wage income, absence of control or ownership of the means of production, and habituation to stable labour" (Standing, 2014: 15 in Scully, 2016: 162).

This assertion is also accorded by Scully (2016: 162), who highlights that "globalization has created a [new] class structure, in which the precariat emerges as a key class where Standing views precarious work as a product of the globalisation era". This is precisely the core of the political problem i.e. it is a dangerous class, which has the potential to undermine societies if no corrective action is taken to heed its grievances because the already existing forms of institutional politics do not speak to nor represent the precariat's interests (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008).

According to Standing (2011: 12), a feature of the precariat is seen to be "the lack of community support in times of need, lack of assured enterprise or state benefits, and lack of private benefits to supplement money earnings". Standing (2011), comes to understand workers in precarious employment conditions as experiencing few trusting human relationships especially work-based ones. This is because high levels of flexibility do not just threaten job security, but "jeopardize any sense of cooperation or moral consensus" (Standing, 2011: 22).

Workers thus find themselves in precarious positions and are caught within a perpetual spiral of precariousness which Standing (2011) calls the 'precarity trap'- a vicious cycle that leads individuals to be stuck in precarious conditions because of too many costs to finding a stable job (itself eroded by the flexibilization, informalization, and casualization of labour). This "trap" is harder to escape, and is exacerbated by the erosion of

community support which is undermined due to the loss of stable employment linked to these spaces.

However, Neilson and Rossiter (2008) provide another understanding into the politics of precarity and the ambivalence existing within precarity as a political focus and analytic category. According to Neilson and Rossiter (2008) literature on precarity attempts to highlight marginal and insecure lives as a new type of political subject with their own forms of expression. They declare that, the last thing they are trying to do is to 'sociologise precarity', to render it into a concept that can be applied to map out the changing nature of class (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008: 52).

This implies that, they are arguing against the use of precarity as a concept in the way that Standing (2011) seeks to develop it as a concept i.e. especially one which ignores the much longer history of precarious work in the Global South (Scully, 2016: 161). Ultimately, how precarity is rendered in existing literature, does not reveal much about specific experiences of navigating it.

For the purpose of this research, contextualizing pr ecarity and grounding/examining it in a specific township experience of "loxion management" will assist in bridging the divide in the ambivalence that already exists within conceptualizations of precarity. I suggest that an existing and more concretized experience of "loxion management" could provide more substance in further understanding the "precariatised mind" which according to Standing (2011: 18), "is defined by short-termism" and a truncated status (2011: 8).

i. The Precarious Condition

According to Standing (2011), equating the precariat with the working poor or merely with insecure employment is misguided although these dimensions are correlated with

it. Noticeably, for the purpose of this research, Standing (2011: 10) notes a line of delineation associated with what is termed "status discord". Individuals with a relatively high level of formal education, who have to accept jobs that have the status and income below what they believe aligns with their qualifications, are evidenced to suffer from "status frustration" (Standing, 2011: 10).

However, despite incessant calls for educational reform and human capital investment, much evidence reveals that global education systems are in fact producing a global surplus of credentialed, highly skilled workers at rates far faster than they can be effectively integrated into the world economy (Means, 2015: 3-4). This research project has however discovered that within this township experience of "loxion management", there exists a surplus of credentialed, skilled workers who are currently in fragmented, and insecure work relations.

According to Standing (2011), transformations in the global division of labour and the organization of production and work have diminished job prospects and driven down the real wages of young workers, contributing to deepening generational precarity across many parts of the world. This has only been worsened by a stagnant transnational capital attempting to reconstitute itself through short-term speculative fixes (Harvey in Means, 2015) and austerity arrangements that further deepen inequality, placing a further struggle on economic recovery and employment for the majority of workers.

In the wake of the global financial crisis, societies across the world are attempting to manage potentially destabilizing levels of youth unemployment and underemployment (Means, 2015). Thus, in describing a generation of young people struggling to acquire secure livelihoods in the bleakest labour markets, terms such as 'generation jobless', 'the new underclass', and 'the precariat' arise (Means, 2015: 1).

According to Mason (2012) in Means (2015: 1) "the economic insecurity of the young represents an emerging site of social conflict and a looming challenge to the ongoing legitimacy of dominant economic, social, and political arrangements". Therefore, discussions have varied from suggesting that "the primary mechanism to manage the youth employment crisis is through more and better education" (Means, 2015: 2). According to Cowen, 2013; Goldin and Katz, 2008 in Means (2015: 2), "it is argued that educational systems need to become more closely aligned with emergent human capital imperatives to produce the highly skilled, flexible and entrepreneurial workers said to be required to fill and invent the jobs of the future".

However, even though this was the case, the precariousness of the highly skilled and entrepreneurial workers said to be required to fill and invent the jobs of the future continues to permeate experiences evidenced in locales such as such townships. This is because, it is in the townships and on street corners that those who are unemployed and in precarious work relations and who constitute "loxion management" could possibly be evidenced to be making a plan whilst keeping their economic lives open. Thus, locating "loxion management" against a backdrop of precarity is significant not only for expanding literature on this limited concept, but also understanding the eventual nuances that are brought to the fore by such an experience.

ii. Precarity in South Africa

The working class and those in poverty in South Africa continue to face growing economic insecurity in the post-apartheid period (Kenny, 2003: 31). This is due to the changes in the labour market such as the growth of contingent and service sector employment which is precarious in nature. This has resulted in the narrowing of social relations in households and neighbourhoods. According to Scully (2016; 166), South is a case in point whereby "increasing precarity has fractured networks of support and

mutuality". This is highlighted by Mosoetsa (2011: 24) who reveals that, "poverty and unemployment are changing the size of households as more individual adults and children move to households where there is little stable income".

This is the case with many South African townships, including the township under examination in this research. Workers in unstable, insecure, and flexible employment situations thus may become more isolated within their homes (Kenny, 2003: 31). However, according to Scully (2016: 167), if we were to look across time, we would find that there is a great likelihood that even "secure" workers' households do contain precarious members due to the volatility of the South Africa labour market. Additionally, what is apparent is that, almost 30% of the workforce is in the informal economy. With this assertion, atypical employment can be deduced as typical/the norm with it being more prevalent than ever (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008). The concept itself needs to be questioned as to whether it is still relevant to call it atypical as it has become prevalent.

Precarious employment is consequently designed for maximum surplus extraction characterized by subcontracting, externalization, labour brokering, part-time work, temporary work, self-employment, fixed-term contracts, and unpaid family labour (Theron, 2003). These forms of atypical employment arrangements have resulted in the precariousness and instability of what has been termed regular employment (Theron, 2003). The common denominator across all forms of atypical employment is that of substantively low pay/remuneration, reduced access to benefits characteristic of the SER, and fewer career advancement prospects.

Ultimately, it can be said that neoliberal policies thrive on uncertainty because employment insecurity amongst workers has become the norm. With the South African case, such policies allow employers to fragment and externalize labour whilst still being able to exert control over how work is done (Theron, 2003). The risks of the employment

relationship are now externalized to a third party (subcontractor), and employers avert responsibilities that would traditionally belong to them i.e. allocation of non-wage benefits, leave etc. (Theron, 2003). With atypical employment, there is a disadvantage of temporary employment disguised as fixed term employment. In this instance, precariousness is evidenced as workers on such contracts are presented with a high risk of repeat spells of temporary work as well as unemployment (Theron, 2003).

Thus, with the absence of wage employment alongside a crisis of poverty and unemployment, people are left "to depend on the most common form of clustering, the extended family" (Mosoetsa, 2011: 25). This line of argument is further expounded on by Fakier and Cock (2009: 353-4) who reveal that African working class households are the sites of a crisis of social reproduction in contemporary South Africa whereby African working class women are the shock absorbers of inadequate state provision, the restructuring of work, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the international phenomenon of rising food prices.

In South Africa, there is a deficit in decent work. This is seen with atypical employment and precarity spanning across the various sectors of the economy (Theron, 2003). Traditionally, for example, subcontracting was on the basis of expertise and contemporarily it has shifted to the subcontracting on almost everything. An increase in the flexible use of labour by capital, is now becoming more visible than ever. In South Africa, three key spheres i.e. core workers (in secure forms of employment), non-core workers (outsourced, temporary, part-time and domestic workers), and periphery workers (who in the inner periphery make a living by undertaking informal work and the outer periphery who are unemployed), make up the work order (Von Holdt and Webster, 2005).

The withering away of the core with the growth of employment in the non-core and periphery presents itself as an increasing trend. Von Holdt and Webster (2005) highlight that such a trend is typical of the South African work order especially when labour market flexibility began to proliferate with South Africa's reintegration into the global economy. South Africa has through labour-saving technology, experienced jobless growth whereby employment is of a poor quality. This is evidenced by the inability of absorbing the great number of prospective employees into the job market each year (Von Holdt and Webster, 2005).

Thus, it can be argued that mass unemployment provides the ground for vulnerable workers to be exploited further with inherent loopholes in temporary fulltime contracts. Those vulnerable individuals without jobs will always take up any form of employment presented to them because as long as employment is permanent, the unemployed will have difficulty getting work (Theron and Godfrey, 2000). This point is highlighted by Scully (2016: 167), who reveals that "in South Africa, the rise of precarity does not seem to have driven sections of the working class apart to the same degree".

Therefore, it is significant to note that, "precarious workers and the unemployed live their social and economic lives alongside many of the remaining formally employed workers" (Scully, 2016: 167). Scully's (2016: 167) assertion that "their interdependence signals a material link between precarious workers and formal wage work" is pivotal for grounding and tailoring this research project to "loxion management". This is because this research project aims to uncover whether this township experience serves as a possible circuitous network keeping individuals' economic lives open whilst being unemployment or in precarious work relations than just being an idiom.

II. Post-apartheid township life and an Urban sociological perspective

A rainbow nation that was imagined with the transition to a democracy does not correspond with what post-apartheid South Africa actually looks like (Jürgens, Donaldson, Rule and Bähr, 2013). According to Jürgens et al., (2013: 256) instead, what has emerged twenty-three years later is "a form of neo-apartheid especially in the socio-spatial differentiation mechanisms taking place in South Africa's urban centres". An urban sociological perspective pays attention to the spaces (such as street corners) that township life is carved out. It is posited that urban sociology should be conceived of as a broader inquiry into the nature of contemporary social relations in their contextual setting (Savage and Warde, 1993: 31).

According to Bonner and Nieftagodien (2012: 210), due to apartheid spatial planning, the most poverty is evidenced to be concentrated in the former African townships, which are situated on the peripheries of major urban nodes, which the township (Tembisa) under study is one. Additionally, Jürgens et al., (2013: 256) highlights that, "townships developed as dormitory settlements without any 'urban' elements, as witnessed by their rudimentary infrastructure". As a result, a drawback is the "geographical marginalisation from the economic mainstream" (Jürgens et al., 2013: 256).

The social imaginaries of South Africa's transition to democracy has aided this research in understanding the intricacies and dynamism of a post-apartheid township experience of "loxion management". Literature does reveal that the transition in the country highlights "a dual nature of the contemporary post-apartheid city, which on the one hand presents the affluent as retreating into laagers which are gated, fenced and protected by security companies" (Jürgens et al., 2013: 258). Whilst on the other hand "the poor, township dwellers, the unemployed and homeless have yet to fully experience urban life in post-apartheid South Africa" (Jürgens et al., 2013: 258).

In the post-apartheid era, the common criticism of the new dispensation in South Africa continues to be that of high levels of violent crimes (Kynoch, 1999: 55-6; Bahre, 2007). Moreover, it is posited that gang activity is not a recent phenomenon and by all accounts the townships, squatter camps, hostels and mining compounds which have comprised the urban living space for black South Africans, have always been plagued by high levels of violence, much of it being gang related (Bahre, 2007). According to Kynoch (1999), the democratization of South Africa, which ended the era of international isolation, has opened up opportunities for criminal organizations and practices to penetrate the country.

However, Kynoch (1999: 63) argues that it is unlikely that gangs could have flourished in South Africa without a significant degree of support from different segments of the urban community. Apparently, this support always shifted in emphasis, from mere tolerance to outright alliances (Kynoch, 1999: 63). According to Kynoch (1999: 63), different gangs enjoyed support from different segments of the community at different times, contingent upon a variety of social, economic and political factors (Kynoch, 1999: 63).

Additionally, according to Swartz et al., (2012: 36) black township youth living through the experience of marginalization, experience belonging to South African society through their exclusion from it. Subsequently, the larger South African collective aspires to upward mobility, which is considered the post-Apartheid destiny of free South Africans by employing the normative narrative of potential and elevated personal goals (Swartz et al., 2012). According to Swartz et al., (2012: 27-8), they

> achieve this mobility *via* what the youth term *ikasi style*- ways in which youth rationalize their participation in behaviours which are not socially acceptable in order to attain markers of belonging by alternative means. This style comprises violence, sex, alcohol and substance abuse as well as music, recreation, fashion and other diversions (Swartz, 2010).

Youth explain that it is this style that forms the setting of township life, the foundation of township identities, and serves as a 'moral ecology' adapted to the realities of poverty (Swartz et al., 2010: 27-8).

As is highlighted by the views of Kynoch (1999) and Swartz et al., (2010), incessant overviews on urban violence and negative township culture, undoubtedly permeate most literature concerning township life and township textualities. Significantly, this assertion is strengthened by Bonner and Nieftagodien (2012: xii), who reveal that during apartheid, black residents were excluded from the official histories of the towns they resided in, and when they did make fleeting appearances, it was generally as labourers and troublemakers.

Therefore, if this is the manner in which township life was/is cast and how mobility is supposedly achieved as accorded by Swartz et al., (2012), then there is considerable cause for concern if the project is to re-envision how a township experience of "loxion management" could be a site of expanding an understanding of precarity. This is because that which constitutes black life and "making a plan" in the township goes beyond Swart's et al., (2012) ikasi style. Thus, a project of understanding "loxion management" hopefully reinserts black township residents into the official histories of the towns they reside in. With this assertion Wacquant (1997: 341-2), significantly reveals that an "epistemological obstacle" continues to permeate literature on the ghetto.

This firstly implies that the notion of the ghetto tends to be diluted as reports of urban areas imbued with prevalent poverty appear to obscure the racial basis/character of poverty in the ghetto (Wacquant, 1997: 341-2). Secondly, Wacquant (1997: 341-2) notes that the ghetto continues to be viewed as a "'disorganized social formation" which is scrutinized on the basis of its "lack and deficiencies rather than by positively recognizing the principles that underlie its internal order and govern its specific mode of

functioning". Lastly, from the idea of disorganization, the most extreme and unusual aspects of ghetto life as seen from outside continue to be highlighted (Wacquant, 1997: 341-2).

Ultimately, it can be posited that thwarted aspirations, especially those of individuals caught in a perpetual spiral of precariousness, continue to imbue much of what the experience of "loxion management" stands for. This research project is aware that a nascent democracy exacerbated by neoliberal policies could be the underlying cause in which those who are trying to keep their economic lives open whilst being unemployed or in precarious work relations, continue to have difficulty in obtaining secure employment relations.

It is thus notable for this research project to highlight Wacquant (1997: 343) who reveals that "it is because they were and are ghettos that joblessness and misery are unusually acute and persistent in them-not the other way around". The ghetto or the *loxion* continues to be marred by descriptions of dire poverty thus essentially reversing its social and historical causation (Wacquant, 1997: 343). By virtue of relegating the ghetto or *loxion* as an area of high concentration of poverty, renders it not only arbitrary and empirically problematic but it deprives the term of its historical meaning and eliminates its sociological significance (Wacquant, 1997: 343).

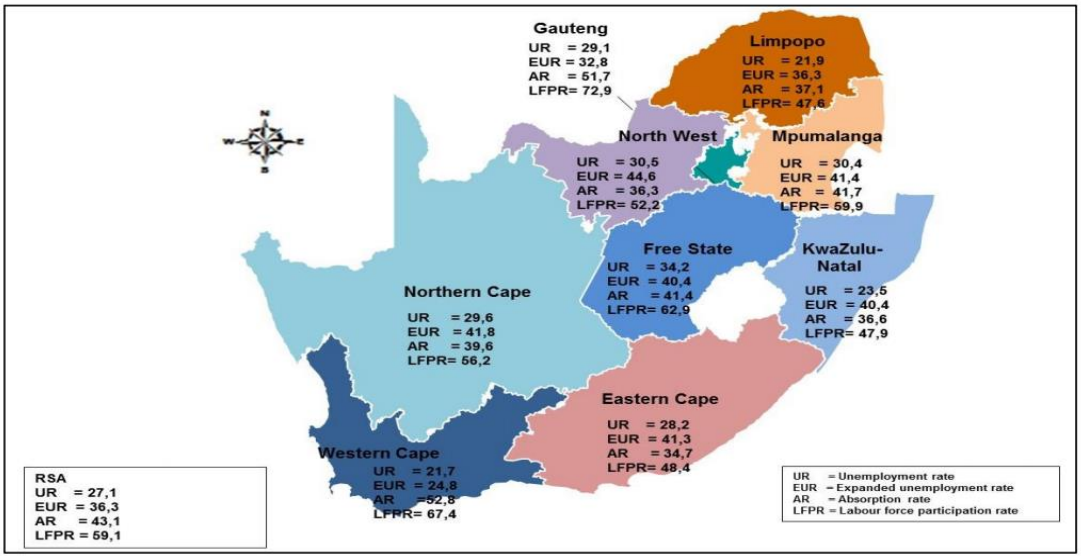
A problematic is further presented whereby blacks are the only grouping posited to ever have experienced ghettoization in most societies where the shortcomings of the ghetto and its residents continue to derive focus (Wacquant, 1997). The ghetto needs to be understood as an institutional form whereby even its street corner societies can essentially be viewed as different forms of social organization instead of exhibiting disorganization as accorded by outside observers who fail to look closely at such formations (Wacquant, 1997: 346).

III. Unemployment

i. The Causes of Unemployment

Central to the increase in urban poverty in the post-apartheid period is a rise in unemployment which in itself, is a socioeconomic challenge. Although Johannesburg and its environs constitute the industrial and commercial heartland of South Africa, it is a city that is affected by unemployment and precariousness (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell, 2000). According to Statistics South Africa the unemployment rate stood at 26.7% in South Africa in 2016 and 25.5% in 2015 both in the third quarters (Q3), and was 51.3% and 48.7% for the female and male populations respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2015/6). Furthermore, in the diagram below from StatsSA, the unemployment figures are demarcated by province. The township under study is in Gauteng where the unemployment rate is 29.1% in 2016 (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

4. Summary of labour market measures at a glance, Q3: 2016



Therefore, the sentiments of the International Labor Organization (ILO) which has cautioned on a 'scarred' generation of youth "facing a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work in developed countries, as well

as persistently high working poverty in the developing world" (ILO, 2013 in Means, 2015: 2-3), are significant.

According to Means (2015) the negative impacts of unemployment are not only felt in significantly reduced lifetime earnings and savings, but are experienced in elevated anxiety, stress, depression, and self-blame. Furthermore, the consequences are not only personal, but economic and societal as well (Means, 2015). A classical view of the economy on youth unemployment and underemployment argues that demand for goods and services are as a result lowered, prolonging a cycle of economic stagnation (Beall et al., 2000). However, what this view does not reveal which is of significance to this research project is that of questioning how these supposed consequences are written on specific township experiences.

This implies that there needs to be a better conceptualization of these negative effects of unemployment, and how township individuals navigate these especially through the experience of "loxion management". It is also essential to point out that the youth employment crisis reflects and exacerbates deeply rooted and expanding class and race inequalities across societies (Means, 2015: 3-4). Youth from working class, immigrant, and racially marginalized backgrounds face further barriers to obtaining steady work (Means, 2015: 3-4).

This research investigated this assertion as it provided a meaningful background on envisioning the experience of "loxion management", and especially how a post-apartheid South African township navigates precarious relations. This is because the youth from working class, immigrant, and racially marginalized backgrounds are more likely to face discrimination in hiring. They also have to cope with geographical and social isolation that limits access to affordable transportation, housing, high quality schools, and employment opportunities (Means, 2015: 3). However, this could be explained by

Granovetter's conceptualization on getting a job and the "strength" of weak ties, and Bourdieu's social capital.

ii. Getting a Job, the Strength of Weak Ties, and Social Capital

According to Granovetter (1983), connections (social networks) are crucial in linking people to jobs, whether they were searching for employment or not. Information about job opportunities, and influence (of references) evidently travels along social networks, privileging those whose biographies have provided with a significant number of "weak ties" who can deliver news of job possibilities they would not otherwise encounter (Granovetter, 1983). This is illustrated by Portes (1998: 13) who details a case of enclaves in which mobility opportunities through niches are entirely network-driven, and by Sassen (1995) in Portes (1998; 13), who reveals that "the power of network chains is such that entry level openings are frequently filled by contacting kin and friends in remote foreign locations rather than by tapping other available local workers".

Labour-market disadvantage accrues to those whose personal histories have failed to position in gathering effective weak ties (Granovetter, 1974: 391; 1983). Granovetter (1974; 1983) alludes that, the most significant site for weak ties is the workplace itself. This is due to advantage increasing for individuals whose career paths have brought them into contact with a wide range of people on a short period, implying long enough for them to exhibit their talents, but not so long as to restrict the group of contacts to a small number of strong ties (Granovetter, 1983). It is here that Bourdieu' s notion of social capital can be invoked. Portes (1998: 7) highlights that, "to possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage". According to Bourdieu (1986: 248), social capital is:

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition.

Bourdieu (1985: 249) in Portes (1998: 3) emphasizes that, "the profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible". Therefore, "social networks are not a natural given and must be constructed through investment strategies oriented to the institutionalization of group relations, usable as a reliable source of other benefits" (Portes, 1998: 3). There are three basic functions of social capital which are applicable in a variety of contexts: (i) social control; (ii) family support; (iii) benefits through extra familial networks (Portes: 1998; 9).

According to Granovetter (1983), the "strength" of interpersonal ties plays a significant role in a person's opportunity for mobility (Granovetter, 1983). This implies that acquaintances ("weak ties") as opposed to close friends ("strong ties") often provide access to new information which does not circulate in the closely-knit network of strong ties. Furthermore, Granovetter (1983) highlights that, the strength of a tie can be evidenced in the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, and the reciprocal services which are invested therein. Thus, he considered two types of ties, strong and weak (Granovetter, 1983). Ultimately, "through social capital, actors can gain direct access to economic resources, and increase their cultural capital through contacts with experts" (Portes, 1998: 4).

Additionally, Granovetter (1983) reveals that the young, the highly educated and the metropolitan tend to have assorted networks of strong ties. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986) further reveals, that social capital pertains to the possession of both informal and formal networks of acquaintances and recognition that give returns via "contacts," support and representation. Therefore, this research project attempted to investigate

whether "loxion management" is a site where "weak ties" offer information about new job information and whether this information was in fact circulating within the possible networks of those participating in "loxion management".

Ultimately, studying precarity and unemployment through the lens of a township experience of "loxion management" is significant in grappling with who is participating in it, how they navigate precarity and unemployment in the context of the township, what information they were exposed to, and what the possible networks were that they engaged in making a plan in a post-apartheid township. Finally, I briefly review how masculinity has been discussed.

IV. Masculinity

Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985: 551), assert that "masculinities are the patterns of social practice associated with the position of men in any society's set of gender relations", and most significantly "masculinity refers to male bodies…but is not determined by male biology". Additionally, Hadebe in Gennrich (2013: 6) reveals that, "masculinity refers to what it means to be a man, and what it means to be a man is defined differently in different societies and different communities within societies". Connell (1995) in Hadebe and Gennrich (2013: 6) alludes to the fact that, according to social context, ideas about masculinity are constantly changing, and are not fixed.

According to Hamber in Gennrich (2013: 32-33), "there are different ways to be a man". As a result, it is only sensible to "talk about 'masculinities' i.e. the different ways to be a man that are acceptable in different societies". Ultimately, as the social, political and economic context changes, so does masculinity. Most significantly, in each social context, that which is considered acceptable and unacceptable social behaviour, is attributed to the dominant understanding of masculinity that prevails in that given society (Hamber in Gennrich, 2013). It is significant to note that, "masculinity does not stand on its own".

This implies that, masculinity is defined by the "power relations" which "play out between men and women, and between men and other men" (Hamber in Gennrich, 2013: 33).

Hadebe in Gennrich (2013: 6-7) notes that there are four different types of masculinity i.e. hegemonic (dominant form of masculinity in a society, used to define the 'ideal' man), subordinate (ways of being a man that do not live up to the 'ideal' of what makes an 'ideal man'), complicit (Men who accept the rewards of hegemonic masculinity, without defending the patriarchal system from which they benefit), and marginal (has no power to act in society) masculinity. According to Hamber in Gennrich (2013: 30), in the South African context, masculinity is an ever-changing concept which must be understood to be impacted by class and race relations. As a result of this country's diversity in race, class and ethnicity, Hadebe in Gennrich (2013: 7), highlights that, defining a masculinity which is dominant or hegemonic is thus challenging.

With a change in the gender relations since 1994, there are three ways in which "men can respond to the changing expectations of what it means to be a man i.e. either being defensive (men who haven't welcomed change but try to turn back change to reassert their traditional power), accommodating (men who passively accept the current changes in gender relations and do not act violently against them) or responsive (this man is the 'alternative' as he accepts the changing context)" (Hadebe in Gennrich, 2013; 7-8). As a result, this research project seeks to understand men and their lived realities within "loxion management" in the midst of possibly attempting to keep their economic lives open whilst being unemployed, or in precarious work relations/situations. Furthermore, it would be pivotal to investigate whether masculinity especially in this township context is transforming due to an ever-changing, fast-paced, and economically pressured society.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

Introduction

In this research project, an extensive body of transcripts from the period 2015/6 were selected to highlight a litany of issues concerning precarious employment and the lived experiences of "loxion management". These transcripts have been condensed and juxtaposed in the thematic discussion in an attempt to grapple with grassroots issues permeating "loxion management". Furthermore, incorporating the conversations of key participants into the overall project is an attempt at revealing the nuances and ambiguities that have arisen out of an idiom which has not been conceptualized in literature.

Additionally, despite the overwhelming cynicism associated with the indices of precarity, the insights of my participants undoubtedly reveal a space in which to ultimately understand township life and that of "making a plan". As a result, this chapter argues that "loxion management" serves as a circuitous network which keeps individuals' economic lives open whilst being unemployed, or in precarious work relations. Therefore, it will delve deeper into: an idiom which has been loosely defined in the township, issues of being men on the street corner, social ties and cooperation, and whether "loxion management" is a circuitous network where employment information-even of a precarious nature-circulates.

Thematic Discussion

i. Misinterpreting *mahlalela, abo'lova* and *ma'binneplaas* for "Loxion managers".

In the township, there exists a vast scope of terminology, especially of describing urban unemployment. This research project is centered on understanding an idiom of "loxion management" which is used alongside terms used by township folk which possibly obscures its meaning. However, the various lay uses around this idiom can be challenging to comprehend especially when one has no previous exposure to such terminology. De Klerk (1991: 81) in Mojela (2002: 204) highlights that when learning township slang terminology,

> no one teaches these words, they must be picked up by careful observation, and used carefully and coolly. Asking what they mean would be tantamount to admitting failure as a teenager.

Therefore, for the purposes of this research project, when describing urban unemployment in the township, terms such as *mahlalela, abo'lova*, and *ma'binneplaas* were used interchangeably by various participants. Ultimately, the task at hand is to provide a clear delineation between the official meanings, the differences between, and the uses of these terms. Firstly, *mahlalela* comes from the Zulu word *uk'hlala* which has a dual meaning i.e. to sit and to live. For instance, you can offer someone a seat by saying "*hlala la*" (sit here), or ask someone if they live here i.e. "*u'hlala la*?". *Mahlalela* is derived from the second meaning.

It becomes an active term once it is tied to an individual and thus starts to imply something more than the second meaning. Here Ntate[5] Mphau's take on explaining this

[5] *Ntate* means father. He is a stern Pedi man. Referring to this participant as *Ntate* shows respect especially as he is in the same age group as my grandfather.

term is rather insightful. He is the only participant from the older generation who was included in this research project. His presence in this project is fleeting because I had conversed with him in 2015 whilst he was visiting my grandfather. At the age of seventy-two, he reveals that this term was never used during apartheid because, in this context it was hard to find a man roaming dusty township streets who was without a job. Townships were heavily policed, and if you were found to be loitering the township instead of being at work, you would be arrested! I then asked: what if you were off sick and happened to be in the township? He mentions that, in that case you needed to have a doctor's pass detailing the reason you had not gone to work that day.

However, according to Ntate Mphau, years after the transition to a democratic state, this term began to proliferate descriptions of urban unemployment. He reveals that, men who had been retrenched or those who had lost their jobs due to factories owned by whites closing down, or factory owners relocating abroad, many men no longer had the pressure to find a job compared to the apartheid context. Most significantly, losing your job no longer meant going back to the homelands as was the case under apartheid. He mentions that men were now more than before, staying/remaining in the townships despite being jobless. According to Ntate Mphau, *mahlalela* was used by the man's family to ridicule him so that he no longer just sat around "*gobe letsatsi le'dikela godimo ga'hae*" (until the sun set on him). Therefore, this term as accorded by Ntate Mphau is derogatory and demeaning to the man.

The second term to be discussed is *abo'lova*. My very first informal focus group which was held in Hospital View section revealed where this term stemmed from and what its possible meanings were. Siyabonga (27 years of age) who has an N6 in aircraft maintenance, but is currently employed as a cashier at Cash Build (a building supplies store), mentions that Tebogo (25 years of age) who has a Sports and Recreation

Management Diploma from Tswane University of Technology (TUT) and is currently a *kasi* (township) football player, constantly calls them *abo'lova*, and therefore I must ask him what it means. Tebogo mentions that the way he uses *bo'lova* as a term is how it is used as a *taal* (language) within the prison system. Inside the prison they refer to each other as *abo'lova* which simply means my friend. However, he mentions that there is another usage which simply means being a loafer, someone who does not have a job, and someone who doesn't do anything about being jobless. This second usage as accorded by this focus group is painful and demeaning, just as *mahlalela* is.

Lastly, *ma'binneplaas* is a term that incorporates the Afrikaans language i.e. *binne* (inside) + *plaas* (farm). Loosely defining this term implies an individual who only knows their own province. However, Joseph who is a supervisor at Jet Store and a participant from Mashimong Section reveals that, *le'binneplaas* (singular for *ma'binneplaas*) is someone who doesn't want to do *fokol* (nothing), someone who doesn't want to wake up in the morning to go out there and hustle for *spani* (a job). Ultimately, this has a similar connotation to what *mahlalela* and *abo'lova* mean.

All these three terms: *mahlalela, abo'lova*, and *ma'binneplaas* describe urban unemployment and township life but participants reveal that these terms are undesirable and offensive. Some participants detail that all these terms are used to denote the same understanding for individuals who use them interchangeably. Most significantly, even though there is a thin line between what each term means, using these terms without any regard as has been done in the township, has invariably relegated them to mean and describe the same thing i.e. urban unemployment. Therefore, it is now paramount to offer a discussion about what a "loxion manager" is.

ii. Managing the "Loxion".

Throughout the research process, most participants would jokingly reveal what I now write to be the hardships of having being unemployed and in the township. Such mellow jokes were pregnant with what I realized through transcribing the conversations, to be the lived reality they had endured and continue to endure. Therefore, Zakhele[6] (24 years of age) from Ilidinga Section who is currently a Wits BCom student and a Multichoice call centre agent invokes the sentiments of the lived realities of having been unemployed and in the township. He reveals that:

> *Being unemployed for extended periods…is written so loudly on a person. You can see the transformation from an individual who previously worked and is now in the township. And you ask yourself, what is it exactly that makes these individuals so dry and dusty? Maybe it isn't about just being in the township. The stress of having to make a plan that isn't working out, will make you look like umhlaba'uk'trapile (the earth has given you a beating).*
>
> *Physically, you change, and I still really don't understand why. Gugu (he refers to me) compare yourself to your high school peers who life hasn't been working out for them…unproductive life in the township will age you. Even a year will do so much to you, you have no idea! You know what they say (pauses to laugh), no one is ugly, they are just broke! I look younger than most of my unemployed peers* (Interview, Zakhele, 2015).

It is this very conversation that prompted me to pause for a moment to grapple with what Zakhele had inferred. Therefore, it is significant to deliberate what the nuance of this

[6] This is a conversation that took place on a night shift. I decided to engage Zakhele who is a fellow "service warrior" (Multichoice came up with this term to invoke a sense of ownership in us) in conversation as the call volumes get steady during this shift.

exchange invokes. Unemployment is a socioeconomic concern in South Africa, and also in Tembisa. However, the nuance that I am implying here is that, there exists a space in the township where those who are trying to make a plan whilst possibly being unemployed or in precarious work relations, can revert to. Zakhele speaks of a transformation from being previously employed to being unemployed. He did not really describe or provide a word for this space. For the purposes of this research project, I will call this space "loxion management". It is a space betwixt precarity, employment and ultimately unemployment. It is also a space to keep one's economic life open whilst being unemployed, or in precarious relations.

To reiterate, with having provided a background on the terminology (*mahlalela, abo'lova*, and *ma'binneplaas*) used in the township alongside what "loxion management" encapsulates, it is now important to provide insight on this idiom. It is noteworthy to highlight that the connotations that are laden in the three aforementioned terms have been reported by the participants to be painful, demeaning, and ridiculing. Therefore, describing what a "loxion manager" is alongside what *mahlalela, abo'lova*, and *ma'binneplaas* will hopefully provide clarity on these terms. Therefore, it can be deduced that "loxion management" has a central element of "making a plan" in the *loxion* (township) amidst the usage of such negative terminology. It is the creative and ad-hoc ways of making a plan with few resources, and sometimes fewer ties in the township.

A conversation with Joseph appears to highlight the difference between a "loxion manger", *mahlalela, abo'lova*, and *ma'binneplaas*. He reports that:

> *once you wake up in the morning with the intention of being unproductive or not even rallying your peers to do anything productive i.e. bringing along their CVs so you go and market*[7]*, you are giving yourself up to being*

[7] In the township, the word "market" means to go out there and look for a job.

> *called le'binneplaas. Plus, when you leave your house with the intention of hanging around street corners and not thinking that if tomorrow I ask Joseph for ten rands to print out or type a CV, you'll be called le'binneplaas* (Interview, Joseph, 2015).

From the conversations that I have had with my key participants, that which is now apparent is that, there is a significant difference between a "loxion manager", mahlalela, le'lova (singular for *abo'lova*) and le'binneplaas (singular for *ma'binneplaas*). This implies that, once an individual becomes cognizant of his lived reality of being unemployed or in a precarious situation, and he wakes up in the morning, goes out there to make a plan i.e. positioning himself with ties that will accrue in job opportunities/information etc. then he is a "loxion manager". On the other hand, if an individual is cognizant of his lived reality of being unemployed, and he does not do anything about it, or even make a plan, then he is *mahlalela, le'lova* and *le'binneplaas*.

Ultimately, whereas these three terms which can be regarded as vilifying highlight issues of urban unemployment, "loxion manager" describes making a plan in a space where networks and social ties are nurtured i.e. "loxion management". Additionally, Joseph further alludes to two types of people that exist at the street corner. According to Joseph, the first type is the one who comes to the street corner to hang around, who "sits in the sun the whole day" without clear intentions or goals, and asks the second type for cigarettes and alcohol. The second type is the one who hustles hard, the kind

> *washing cars at many street corners in the township. They are washing cars not because they like it, ba'zama plani (but because they are making a plan). And one day something great will come along, you never know* (Interview, Joseph, 2015).

Just like many other participants, Joseph reports that, the street corner is an important space for life in the township. As propounded by Lesley (30 years of age) who has an N6 certificate in Financial Management and is now employed as a Quality Assurer,

> *...if you don't capitalize on what the corner can do for, two to three years down the line, you'll still be begging two rands to buy gwai (a cigarette) from your guys who you were always with on the same corner* (Interview, Lesley, 2016).

Therefore, this research project is interested in the making of plan by the second type of individual described by Joseph. This is because, this is the individual who will make a plan (such as washing cars) to sustain himself in the meantime, whilst possibly nurturing his networks and social ties which can lead to a prospective job offer. Ultimately, as reported by the participants, it can be deduced that the street corner is a meaningful social space in the township, where an individual not only optimizes his life, but also a space to patiently work towards one's goals whilst making a plan.

iii. Of Men on street corners.

According to Jürgens et al., (2013: 257) "decades of discrimination against the non-white population groups were to be succeeded by visible improvements in the formerly deprived areas". These formerly deprived areas include townships especially when talking about urban planning in these spaces. Across many townships, it can be deduced that the location and the placement of the street corner invites a lot of activity. This is a case in point whereby, the likely drop-off of its commuters by a taxi, popular eateries and foreign-owned shops, are the street corner. Therefore, the street corner can be posited to be abuzz with activity, personalities and characters on a daily basis. Notwithstanding, working men who get off at the corner to see the guys.

According to Noah (32 years of age) who is the owner of the *Bafoza* carwash in Kanana Section, which provided a space for me to conduct a semi-formal focus group of four participants, he mentioned that,

> *a majority (70%) of the guys who are on the corner are unemployed. You can say that 30% of the men who come to the corner are employed* (Interview, Noah, 2016).

These are just rough figures that he details. Therefore, with attempting to gauge the function of this supposed 30%, it became apparent that, this percentage comprises of what this research project will term "conduits" of possible employment opportunities. This term will be discussed in the theme: A circuitous network. For the purposes of this research project, it was worthwhile attempting to discern what it meant to be a man in the township, on the street who was attempting to make a plan. Therefore, to properly grapple with understanding the making of a life as a man in the township, four accounts from four key participants have been included. The first is highlighted by Siyabonga who reveals that:

> *…. after finishing my N-levels in aircraft maintenance, I was home for months. I was trying to get a job, even a piece job would have been okay. The only question my mother kept asking me was: Siya, when do you plan to get a job? She never forgot to remind that she wasn't planning on fending for me and my daughter until she died* (Interview, Siyabonga, 2015)

Another account to draw on such sentiments is provided by Tebogo who reveals that:

> *You know the desperation of into'I'pope vir lento'uyi'gelezele: (hoping that something will finally give especially in the field that you studied for), I think is a curse. I wanted to do something that I studied for so bad but time will get to you when you realize that umagriza's pension uk'bayela*

> *intsipho'uk'geza: (your grandmother's pension money buys you the soap that you bath with)* (Interview, Tebogo, 2015)

It is important to note that, before these men head out to the street corner, for those who are unemployed and are attempting to make a plan, there are some menial tasks that their social reproducers can be posited to designate for them. One such account which was reported as a joke and that highlighted the intricacies of this assertion and of masculinity in the township was by Kagiso (26 years of age) who has a Diploma in Sound Engineering, who revealed that:

> *…you are sent out on errands like taking your sister's kids to the crèche (daycare) and collecting them again. My sister would insist even though I told her this was a woman's job, especially hers. She would ask me: u'munna wa'somang ku'urekela burotho? (what man am I if she still buys me bread)?* (Interview, Kagiso, 2016).

One last account which amplifies this continued pressure is by Lebuhang (26 years of age) who was at the time contracted as a general worker for setting up the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line in Tembisa. He mentions that,

> *…when you're home all day, you'll even get the stamina to cook all seven colours* [of a balanced meal] *every day because that's how you use your time. The only time they relieve you of these duties is to tell you to look for a job. And that time I'm man. Ai (deep sigh) that is sad. But what could I do to 'kill' time. The thing is that, you're not just home doing nothing, you are trying…making a plan but nothing ever gives* (Interview, Lebuhang, 2016).

According to Masenya, De Wet, & Coetzee (2017: 197), during hardships, the family usually symbolizes a safety net for its members and provides them with a sense of

belonging. As a result, individuals are thus able to combat problems or challenges with the help of their family members (Masenya et al., 2017: 197). Ultimately, the family is significant in ensuring survival of its members not only in challenging but also in good times (Masenya et al., 2017: 197). Most significantly, these accounts and several other conversations with the participants, highlight the continued pressure from family to get a job (any job for that matter), and keep that job.

There is also a continued pressure to be men, especially emanating from their families. These men detail that in such instances, their social reproducers are not conversational nor supportive of them but are confrontational. From these conversations, what stood out was how these men who were socially reproduced were relegated to what they held to be "women's roles" i.e. cleaning, cooking and looking after the children of the household, which they could not help but be accustomed to, especially to avoid any form of confrontation (like from Kagiso's sister and Siyabonga's mother) from their families.

Throughout this research, a crisis of social reproduction in contemporary South Africa townships which is highlighted by Fakier and Cock (2009: 353-4), is apparent whereby African working class women like Kagiso's sister, Siyabonga's mother, and Tebogo's grandmother are the shock absorbers of inadequate state provision, and the restructuring of work that the men in their lives come to experience. Furthermore, what arises out these accounts is how a man who does not contribute to the finances of the household is spoken to and regarded of in lesser terms.

This can be posited to be especially emasculating for a man who is doing everything in his power to make things work, and ultimately make a plan. This is compounded by Kenny (2003: 31) who reports that, workers in unstable…and flexible employment situations become more isolated within their homes. Most participants, revealed to have felt more at home at these corners than they did at their respective homes and would as a result seek solace on street corners to avoid any confrontation, especially that

concerning getting a job. They would seek solace by drinking a beer or two with other men. This is compounded by Siyabonga who reveals that:

> *… yes we are sitting on street corners because we have stress. And vele'siyapuza (yes, we do drink). And this stress comes from sending a lot of CVs without any responses. I am born and bred in Tembisa. You see this group here, we are all mens men, we have people who are depending on us* (Interview, Siyabonga, 2015).

Most significantly, not only are they seeking solace on the street corner, but they are in the company of other men who understand and can relate to what they are going through. Other men can relate to what it means to be a man who is attempting to make his life work, amidst continued pressure from those who are supposed to socially reproduce, stand by, and support you.

iv. A circuitous network and a form of Cooperation?

With attempting to gauge what the function of the supposed 30% Noah was talking about, it can be deduced that this percentage comprises of what this research project has come to term "conduits" of possible employment opportunities. This research project defines "conduits" as working individuals who frequent these street corners and have been themselves in most cases - as reported by the participants - previous regulars at these sites. Here, it becomes significant to refer to an insight about the extent to which an individual's network can span. Lesley details the extent of his network which he started to nurture as a college student. He reveals that,

> *…mo'kasi ke'tsiba batho baie (here in the township, I know a lot of people). I remember getting an internship for eighteen months which was a requirement for graduating with my Diploma. A lot of my fellow students struggled to get it. I didn't struggle because I*

> *have connections all over, I know people, I know a lot of people* (Interview, Lesley, 2015).

It is with this account and several other accounts that it is rather apparent that, "loxion management" and street corners are viewed as important avenues where meaningful information about prospective employment circulates. Even at a college level, due to having meaningful connections, Lesley was able to obtain an internship which many others could not. This is an individual who is aware of the social ties that his surrounding has afforded him. Not only this, it can be deduced that he has been nurturing his social ties since he was still at college. Ultimately, his network has gotten so expansive that at his current job, though he got the job after the interview, the interviewer never asked for his CV. I asked him if he came back to the street corner to inform other guys about possible openings at his current job, to which he replied in the affirmative.

Most significantly, as was revealed through general consensus from the participants, in the township an employed individual from *section A* who had employment information or prospects, revealed that he would without a shadow of a doubt, divulge this information to other men in his own section than other acquaintances from other sections who were possibly more qualified for that prospect.

This is due to a shared experience of a continued and daily pressure from family to get and retain any job for that matter, especially as a man. According to Granovetter (1983: 203) weak ties are in this regard vital for an individual's integration to modern society. Not only this, these ties can be posited to be functional i.e. when "conduits" are disseminating information about jobs; and beneficial when participants are getting access to job information that would not otherwise be readily available to them. For the purposes of this research project, "conduits" are what Granovetter (1983: 208) calls "bridging weak ties".

Ultimately, it can be deduced that these "conduits" act as the inevitable connection that a "loxion manager" needs when employment opportunities arise. These "conduits" come to the street corner not just to share a cigarette or reminisce about the past. They share information of job prospects they have heard of in their own personal networks and workplaces. Ultimately, this is why "loxion management" can be posited to be an established circuitous network of the township where CVs and employment information (even of a precarious nature) continues to circulate. As a result, this research project was also interested in determining the type of information that is relayed and circulated in these corners. According to Joe (32 years of age) who has a Logistics Diploma and is currently a taxi driver,

> …"*i'corner iqxwele nge'ndaba" (the corner is full of gossip), aya'shwashwatha la'madoda yaz (and these men do gossip you know). But if you only go there for this gossip, you'll miss out on information, important information. You'll only find me here when someone has something for me* (Interview, Joe, 2016).

With Joe's account, it can now be posited that men do not only go to the street corner to discuss the happenings of the townships without being perceived as "females" by doing so, but go to the corner to get important information, especially concerning possible employment opportunities. Perhaps there are grounds to also infer that these street corners also act as safe spaces for men to retreat to. Additionally, it can also be deduced that, some individuals like Joe are able to capitalize on the networks and ties that "loxion management" provides/offers whilst at the same time, being able to distance themselves from the street corner.

Ultimately, it is worthwhile to gauge an understanding of an insight like that of Joe because maybe social cohesion is not a strong factor underlying this circuitous network.

This implies that, with his account, there appears to be an element of self-interestedness. Tzanakis (2013: 3), highlights that Bourdieu views "profit as being the main reason that actors engage in and use to maintain links in a network". Most significantly, this "profit is not necessarily economic but it can be reducible to economic profit" (Tzanakis, 2013: 3). Thus, it can be deduced that this "profit" is the employment information that the "conduits" bring to the street corner when they frequent it. This employment information although not economic in this sense, is reducible to a prospective job offer. Ultimately, although social cohesion could possibly be a weak factor underlying this circuitous network, most interestingly, cooperation seems to permeate this network.

This sentiment about cooperation is signified by Joseph who reveals that,

> *I don't mind if my peers ask whether there are posts at my job. I will give you money to go to an internet café to type and print out a CV and even taxi fare to go out there and market, then give me the results of how things went. Alcohol is something I won't entertain.* (Interview, Joseph, 2015).

According to participants like Joseph, there is thus an unspoken and unwritten understanding amongst men when it comes to *dilo'tsao'pusha'lewe* i.e. issues of self-improvement. He further reveals that,

> *When you are down and hard on your luck as a man, mele ungabi ne skaam sok'vryza amajita for u'ncedo (you should not have any shame in asking your fellow men for help on a road to better yourself)* (Interview, Joseph, 2015).

This was a sentiment that most participants could relate to. It is one which describes a sense of community and cooperation when it came to providing other men, especially from the same location, with a hand-up. This is because the benefits which accumulate

from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible (Portes, 1998:3). This hand-up could be in the form of a taxi fare to go to an interview or to market[8], or information about prospective employment. Not only this, but there appears to be some form of cooperation in looking out for each other especially coming from the same section. This cooperation also extends to the employment arena whereby employed participants are heralded by most participants to be "conduits" (even of a precarious nature at times) of the labour market.

This research project has argued throughout, that "loxion management" is an established circuitous network which keeps individual's economic lives open whist being unemployed or in precarious work relations; and also a site in which to nurture one's social ties and networks. Most significantly, this research project recognizes that there is an element of informal work required to maintain ties and networks in this circuitous network. Therefore, individuals' capacities to forge their own personal networks inside of "loxion management" is not negated in this project. Additionally, a majority of participants are knowledgeable that connections are significant in getting a job like Kagiso who reveals that,

> *One thing I know is that connections are important. I finished my sound engineering diploma at Damelin in 2009. And I have been trying everything ever since. Had it not been for a relative putting my CVs all around, I'm sure I'd still be in the same place…I'm temping as a book keeper in Randburg...through connections some get jobs through their people* (Interview, Kagiso, 2016).

To reiterate, it is through Granovetter's (1983: 203) supposition of "bridging weak ties" which highlight "conduits" as the disseminators of job information to the "loxion

[8] In the township, the word "market" means to go out there and look for a job.

mangers". Most significantly, it is through these "bridges" that "loxion managers" and the individuals that Kagiso is referring to, are able to get access to job information they would otherwise not have any access to. Additionally, Kagiso's insights reveal that, it is through these 'bridging weak ties' that there is a higher likelihood of a job coming into fruition. Kagiso's sentiments are further expounded on by Lesley who says that,

> *you can have as many degrees as you want, but if you don't know people who actually know important people, those degrees will only decorate your mother's room divider* (wall unit) (Interview, Lesley, 2015).

Due to these participants being cognizant of the usefulness of connections and networks, it can be deduced that these connections are pivotal especially in providing a man with a platform to make a plan and nurture that plan. This is compounded by Granovetter (1974), who reveals that, it is through contacting social networks that many jobs have come into fruition. Bourdieu's social capital circulates at these street corners, and can be posited to lead to 'making a plan'. Ultimately, the ties on the street corners are meaningful and mutual, and hence not really 'weak ties'. They might lead to a precarious and not a proper stable 'job' but they are still nevertheless really important to many participants. Most significantly, the very act of 'making a plan' itself builds a social community within the township which has inherent meaning for many of the participants.

Although through this circuitous network men have found jobs, some like Siyabonga have revealed that, although

> *I have been employed for at least five years now, but if you were to ask me what I have to show for it, I would say nothing. I have no benefits but I think we are signed up for UIF. For all five years I*

> *would wake up with no guarantees that the next day I would have a job. I am still submitting CVs even though I have a job* (Interview, Siyabonga, 2015).

The following is Joe's account of being in a precarious work relation, in which he talks about being a taxi driver

> *Yazi' iniangisafuni e'rank nge'nhleziyoyam'yonke (you know what, I no longer want the rank*[9] *with all my heart…deep down to the bottom of my heart). You can't say you are working but you don't know your hourly rate…no service, no benefits… you're getting old and your kids are growing up…haai no…if you have ten years at the rank, it's ten years of nothing but if you are employed at a firm, it's ten years of service, a provident fund, and probably you would have invested and have bank orders or e'sncanyane e'sydini (or have a little something on the side)* (Interview, Joe, 2016)

This research has been cognizant from the onset that information (possibly of a precarious nature) about job prospects was possibly circulating in this circuitous network. However, such accounts are extremely insightful especially in highlighting the cooperation that exists in the township even with the withering away of secure and long-term employment. Joe's and Siyabonga's accounts are significant because they reveal a realness of what a precarious job encapsulates. Both these participants exhibit an understanding of a withering away of fulltime, secure, and standard employment. Therefore, it can be posited that such an understanding of the changing of the nature of work, is especially significant as it arises alongside the 'making of a plan' by a man on the street corner, in a township.

[9] "Rank" is a shorthand for taxi rank.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research project is located in the scholarship on precarity, which has grown significantly over recent years including the South Africa case. At the core of this research project, is the intersection between the labour market and township life. It has been argued in this research project that existing literature on precarity has relegated life to the margins as it focuses extensively on the labour market and excludes important realities of township residents. Additionally, literature on township life does not really theorize work and the labour market and often backgrounds these experiences by focusing on the HIV/AIDS pandemic, youth sexuality, youth culture etc. with work being back-grounded.

In this research project, "loxion management" is an idiom which implies "making a plan" in the *loxion* (township) amidst the usage of an assortment of terms which is argued to have the possibility of obscuring an understanding of what "loxion management" really encapsulates. These terms (*mahlalela, ma'binneplaas* and *abo'lova*) have been discussed at length to provide a backdrop against which to understand urban unemployment and township life. With discussing these terms, clarity was provided as to not confuse the active term of "loxion manager".

Additionally, issues of masculinity and the spheres of social reproduction and reproduction were highlighted in this research project. It was then revealed that, the family which is supposed to be a safety net to safeguard its precarious or unemployed members from hardships, is actually an element that thrusts tremendous pressure on its members to get a job, keep a job, and to be men. Through the various conversations and the insights provided by the participants, it can be deduced that there is an established matrix of networks that position the individuals involved in "loxion management", next to "conduits" of a meaningful kind. Ultimately, the extent to which an individual

positions himself advantageously, has been reported to result in the likelihood of a job in many of the accounts provided in this research project. Furthermore, as accorded by Scully (2016: 167), it can be posited that the interdependence of these "conduits" signals a material link between precarious workers and formal wage work. This is why it is pivotal for grounding and tailoring this research project on precarity to the experience of "loxion management". In totality, social networks and ties have been and will continue to be nurtured and cultivated in this circuitous network. Men are now able to cope with the contemporary realities of precarious work and unemployment.

Additionally, "loxion management" can be posited to be a way of organizing the township. This is revealed through the cooperation that exists in this circuitous network. Throughout this research project, what becomes apparent is that, "loxion management" is functional in that it produces results of some sort i.e. it has provided some men with networks and jobs (whether precarious or not). Furthermore, the act of 'making a plan' itself builds a social community in this circuitous network. Thus, this research project arguing throughout that "loxion management" is an established circuitous network which keeps individual's economic lives open whist being unemployed or in precarious work relations. These precarious work relations include being a credentialed taxi driver, cashier at Cash Build, call centre agent at Multichoice, township football player, temporary bookkeeper, and contracted BRT general worker.

To reiterate, although these are precarious work situations, these individuals do have higher education certificates which in most accounts have not yet provided opportunities for the participant to find employment in their respective fields of study. However, as reported by most participants, the street corner has amplified for those who intend on making a plan, a renewed sense of hustling and life. The street corner is a social space that information about job prospects circulates, a space which signifies a home away from home, and a space that men seek solace from without being persecuted for doing so.

This research project has studied an idiom with the aims of uncovering whether this township experience serves as a circuitous network keeping individuals' economic lives open whilst being unemployment or in precarious work relations. It is the hopes of this research project, that by studying this idiom at great length not only informs and enriches existing literature, but also catapults the township experience into official writings on the subject of precarity.

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