

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CREATIVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE LIVING IN AN INNER CITY

by

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*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree*

MOcc Ther

In the

Faculty of Health Sciences

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

October 2012

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AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is an African saying that ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ I have found this to be true of this research study also. Hence, I am immensely grateful to each person who has in some way contributed to my completing this dissertation. I would like to thank the following people in particular:

Dr. Casteleijn; a single ‘Skype’ meeting with you was enough to blow new life into my will to carry on, to alter the direction that the text was heading in (which was often a place of complete chaos) and to make me feel like, perhaps, this study would yield useful results after all, when I had my doubts.

The Schubart Park residents; your generosity in sharing your stories and your bravery in dealing with life has changed me in a beautiful way.

My husband; there are numerous places in this text where I have mentioned our conversations – I am particularly grateful for those. Also for your support in practical ways; for getting up, taking care of the baby and making coffee, so that I could work a bit longer and for your encouragement.

My ‘family’ at PEN; for accepting me and loving me, simply for being who I am, for challenging me into greater self-awareness, for teaching me to recognise the beauty of the inner city and for being my vehicle into Schubart Park.

The Crouch trust funds; for financial assistance.

My parents and my brother; for your love, help and support when I took over your dining room table and your home, so I could write.

All the occupational therapists whom I have spoken to about this research; your valuable insights have stimulated my thinking and encouraged me.

Mrs Nel; for editing the language of this document.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

poverty, environmental / contextual factors / barriers, creative ability, creative participation, inner city, autoethnography

Numerous occupation-based models and several authors have mentioned the importance for occupational therapists of taking into account the effect of, in particular, the individual environment on people's participation in occupations, during their assessments and treatment. Recent developments within the profession, relating to the terms 'occupational deprivation,' 'occupational justice,' and 'occupational apartheid' have further urged therapists to also consider the structural environment, its effects and ways of countering those effects; not only for individuals, but for entire communities, and not only for people living with disabilities, but for *all* people. In addition, the development of the World Health Organisation's international classification of functioning, disability and health has given health care providers a useful tool for considering various aspects of the environment and their possible health consequences; though the interaction between the various factors and their effect on participation isn't clearly described.

Several experiences in communities of people living in poverty, both during my under-graduate studies and during my community service year, led me to consider the effect of environmental factors on the creative participation of people. Though the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability did acknowledge the possible effect of the environment on individuals' creative capacity, it failed in providing an explanation for what I was seeing. Du Toit had suggested that the effects of the environment on people should be thoroughly tested and other authors seemed to agree. Thus, this autoethnographic research study aimed to explore how internal and external factors impacted on the creative participation of people living in an inner city slum. Drawing from the experiences of a purposive, illustrative and opportunistic sample, and through passive- and participant

observations, I took a glimpse into the sub-culture within, and the perceived impact of the environment on people's creative participation, making no claims on generalisation.

The results of this study indicate that occupational therapists have underestimated the effect of the environment in terms of the range of factors that have an effect on people's creative participation, the complexity of the interplay between the structural- and individual environment and the importance of the perceived environment.

CHAPTER 1

The Canvas

[kǎn'vəs] n. 1. A piece of such fabric on which a painting, especially an oil painting is executed. 2. The background against which events unfold, as in a historical narrative. (Farlex, 2012)

1.1. Introduction

'So I said to myself – I'll paint what I see – what the flower is to me; but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking the time to look at it – I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see in flowers.' – Georgia O'Keefe
(Wikiquote, 2011)

'Perhaps you should start your thesis in the traditional way,' my supervisor said when we had finally done all our catching up and gotten to the intended topic of discussion. 'You can use your introduction to prepare your readers for what is to come; introduce them to your metaphor and describe the writing style that they can expect.' 'Perhaps you're right,' I agreed; chuckling at my recurring tendency of unknowingly venturing into the unfamiliar (and often unorthodox), out of sheer curiosity.

The student peeks into the office and aims an uncertain knock at the door. She can feel the nervous tension swirling around in her innards and her palms are sweaty. 'Come in,' calls a voice from the inside. She arranges a smile on her face and walks into the office with a fake confidence. What if her research idea is not good enough? She hasn't got it all figured out yet. What if all the questions milling around in her head are not as interesting to everyone else as they are to her? What if... 'Hi', she says. 'Hi Rolyn, how are you? Where are you working now? You completed your undergraduate degree at the end of last year, didn't you?'

She relaxes a little, so that, when she says that she is interested in applying for a master's course, she can feel the tension being replaced with excitement.

'At one of the clinics where I am working at the moment, the therapists host a fitness- and support group for thirty-something arthritis patients once a week,' she starts, 'have been for a couple of years now. Their routine is always the same; they start by singing a few songs together, praying, and telling each other about their weekend and then one of the physiotherapists present a fifteen-minute fitness session. For the rest of the day the group waits in a queue for a session of either interferential – or heat therapy of 15 minutes. They go home quite satisfied, but we see them carrying around wooden tables on their heads or sweeping their homes with short brooms, so that they have to stand in a bent-over position for hours on end throughout the rest of the week.' She goes on to describe how the community service therapists have tried to reorganise the group, so that it would provide the patients with an opportunity to take more responsibility for their own health. 'We've started teaching the group members to run their own fitness group. We've taught them the joint-protection principles and the principles of following a resting regime and also how to apply their own hot-packs at home. None of them have applied what we have taught them and many have stopped attending the fitness group altogether, though they still come and wait in line for a 15 minute heat therapy treatment, which would have been equally effective at home.' She carries on, 'We encounter this kind of thing all the time, and though I find it tremendously frustrating, it has also started tickling my interest. It is as though the people find it difficult to identify, amongst the vast lack of resources, the resources that *are* available to them and make it work for them in changing their situations. It seems that many patients are unable to cope with the effects of anxiety that are brought about by change or by the demands that a home programme, for example, places on them. I notice that patients are unable to exert maximum effort to meet a challenge, especially when they have to sustain it for a period of time before reaching the goal and even more so when the end goal is slightly abstract or unfamiliar. These are all characteristics that I

associate with a low level of creative participation. If it is true that each person possesses a certain creative capacity, then, either all the members of these communities that I have been working in have a restricted capacity – which I strongly doubt – or the environment which these people are living in is a barrier to the development of their capacity. This is what I would like my research to be about.’ She breathes out, sits back a little and waits for the departmental research coordinator’s reply.

‘The department usually advises people to wait a bit longer; gain more experience before they attempt a master’s degree,’ she cautions. ‘They usually recommend at least two years in the field. But you seem so excited that I don’t think we should prevent you from studying. Perhaps you can attempt an ethnographic study,’ she suggests. ‘What’s that?’ the student replies.

Ethnography is a research method which is characterised by the participation of the researcher in the lives of people within a specific community, for an extended period of time; “watching what happens, listening to what is said and asking questions” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:p1) that relate to the issues that are the focus of the research. Ethnography in a postmodern paradigm studies the “fragmentary and disjointed meanings” (Denzin, 1989 (a):p.90) that our world of science has created. Denzin further notes that “there is no attempt to grasp the meanings of cultures or structures as totalities.” (1989 (a):p.90) Instead, it works from the basic premise that all cultures are in constant motion and that human beings are active agents in the construction of their worlds of meaning. (Denzin, 1989 (a)) Though the ethnographer aims to express the lived experiences of the research subjects, she is not an objective recorder of experiences. Instead she is, through her writing, a co-creator of the experiences that are studied. “There is no pretence at being objective.” (Denzin, 1989 (a):p.91) The attempt is to display “the agonies, the pains, the successes, and the deeply felt human emotions of

love, dignity, pride and honour” (Denzin, 1989 (a):p.90) so that the possibility is created that others in the world may resonate (Ellis, 1993) with the picture that is painted.

It is the 22nd of July 2008. The alarm on my new contract cell phone wakes me at 5:00 am. I don't feel like getting out of the warm comfort of my bed, especially since getting up would mean facing the chill of a winter morning and the self-discipline of a new meditation practice. I decide to lie just a bit longer, indulging in the heat and the comfort of a bed and someone to share it with, and enjoying the sound of birds waking up in the lush garden.

Another young woman, in a dilapidated high-rise apartment building a mere five or seven kilometres from the upper- to middleclass suburb that I find myself in, wakes from her shallow, dreamless sleep with a start at the sound of a loud crack – like someone kicking down a door? She picks up the second-hand cell phone that she got from someone at work. '5:00 am?' she thinks. Also, almost subconsciously, she notices that her cell phone battery is low, 'I'll have to take my charger to work today; get my phone charged.' She hears a commanding male voice saying something, but she can't make out exactly what. Then she hears her neighbour shouting out in fear and panic, 'Please, no! What are you doing? No! Please, no!'

I finally drag myself out of bed at 5:30 am. 'I'll only have time for a short meditation this morning...again,' I think to myself, angry at my lack of will-power. I hurry through my morning routine with little regard for the luxuries that facilitate (and on which I have become so dependent for) the smooth running of my early mornings. 'Gotta go,' I tell my husband as I walk over to kiss him goodbye. 'Don't wanna be late for the bus again.'

The young woman, her heart now beating hard and fast in her chest, reaches out in the pitch black and grasps at thin air. 'Shit!' she thinks, 'where'd I put the torch?' She breathes faster and feels the fear threatening to overwhelm her. 'My kids! My kids!' she thinks. After what feels like an eternity she finds the torch in the darkness. She hurries to the room where her kids are soundly asleep. 'Thank God, they're still fine.' She closes the door to their room and locks it. 'If anything should happen to them...' Now she rushes to the back window. When they broke into her apartment the previous time, they managed to get in by walking along the ledge at the back window. The ledge is completely silent. Without sparing a glance at the magnificent picture of lights that is visible from her apartment on the 20th storey, she rushes toward the front door and then stops. She hears a loud thud, more male voices, and her neighbour shouting and sobbing. Her hands are shaking violently and her thoughts are racing, 'What's going on? What should I do? I should try and help her – what if they are robbing her, or raping her? No, I should stay here with my kids. What can one woman do against more than one man in any case? No, I should try and do something. I can't just stand here and listen. What if they murder her? I'd be as good as an accomplice.'

'This really is one of the most beautiful suburbs in Pretoria,' I think as I start walking briskly down the street toward the bus stop, 'I enjoy living here.' On one of the street corners I meet up with one of my friends who also takes the bus to work each morning. He is interested in hearing whether I am making progress with my research. I talk to him about the research setting and the contextual difficulties that the participants in my study have to endure, as though it is just another academic topic of discussion; still caught up in the blissful bias that I am studying *them*. (Ellis, 1993)

She gathers all her courage and unlocks the door. She opens it slowly and peeks through the crack. In the hallway are four men in red overalls, hauling her neighbours' furniture out of the apartment and down the stairs. She walks into the hallway with a questioning look on her face. 'What...?' she begins to ask. 'Shut

up woman! Go back to your flat!’ She looks through her neighbour’s open door into the, now chaotic, apartment. In the midst of the chaos stands her neighbour, shaking her head, sobbing and clenching her fists in complete helplessness.

I am greeted by a buzz in the hallways of the office where I work. ‘Have you heard?’ asks one of my colleagues, ‘this morning at ‘round five o’clock the red ants went into Schubart Park and started throwing out people whom they claimed were behind in paying their rent. It seems they have a list of people who owe between R50 000 and R100 000, but no-one has been notified about an eviction; it’s completely illegal! The residents are protesting in the square.’ I hurry down the street to the familiar towering blocks of flats, where I have spent hours sitting and watching and listening. I am filled with a bizarre sense of excitement as I anticipate the contribution that this dramatic turn of events could make to my research.

A section of Schubart street has been closed off with orange cones and danger tape. A fire engine and a dozen metro police officers are patrolling the area, waiting for a crisis which they can respond to. The business at the fruit stalls on the sidewalk has come to a standstill. All the passersby slow down, stop and look and listen. There are piles of furniture on the sidewalk and there are dazed people, some still in their pyjamas, who won’t have a place to sleep tonight. There is an angry chorus of voices coming from inside the building.

An angry mob of residents have joined in the square. They are singing and dancing in protest. They are directing their anger toward a handful of people in red overalls, masks and steel rods in their hands – the red ants – the governments’ appointed eviction officers. Their anger scares me. The intensity of it mounts as the leader of the protest shouts, ‘Comrades! We will not allow this! We will fight!’ At some point it feels to me as though a critical limit has been exceeded, as though this group has become uncontrollable and as though anything could happen. I am filled with dread. I spot a small group of my

colleagues and walk toward them. Perhaps I can hide in the familiarity of their presence. They have decided to split up and offer our organisation's help to people who seem destitute and in need of help. 'Split up?' I think. 'What? Are you crazy? I don't want to be left alone in this mob!' One of my colleagues gives me a handful of lollipops. 'For the kids,' he says, as though I know exactly what he means, and walks off purposefully toward a mom holding a screaming baby. I look at the lollipops and at the crowd and it all seems utterly surreal. In the midst of the chaos I find myself standing, shaking my head with tears in my eyes and clenching my fists in complete helplessness.

'I am no longer making a mere replica of what I have seen,' I realise, 'I have become a part of the creation of a vibrant and living ethnography - literally a "portrait of a people". (Hall, 1999-2012) I have become an artist; looking at an object closely, allowing it to become a part of me and handing it back to the world, looking like it did before and also looking like me. And I have also become the subject of an artwork; being painted and repainted by the other artists of this painting, the very subjects whom I had intended studying in the first place.'

'I'd like to write my thesis as an extended metaphor,' I told Daleen, 'I think that using the metaphor of an oil painting would be ideal.'

1.2. The layered account – Anticipating an oil painting

'A painting, before being a warhorse, a naked woman or some story or other – is essentially a flat surface covered in layers of paint, assembled in a certain order.'

– Maurice Denis (Wikipedia, 2011)

A layered account is a "postmodern ethnographic reporting technique" (Ronai, 1995:p.396) which "decentre(s) the authority of the 'scientific' voice" (Ronai, 1998:p.407) and levels the traditionally hierarchical format of science texts,

allowing statistical analysis and other forms of scientific prose to occupy a place beside abstract theoretical thinking, emotional understanding and the remembered and constructed details of everyday life as different, but equal 'ways of knowing'. (Ronai, 1995) It is a narrative form designed to "resemble...the stream of consciousness as experienced in everyday life." (Ronai, 1995:p.396) Much like an artist uses successive layers of paint in creating an oil painting, the layered account offers readers layers of experience (Ronai, 1998) – a multitude of perspectives that they must actively synthesize (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) – impressions which paint on their existing canvasses and under paintings, blending with and glazing over their own impressions, allowing them to create their own palpable, lived emotional experiences of the research process. (Ronai, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)

However, the layered account does not merely aspire to create texts with which the reader can identify and empathise. Rather, it attempts to create texts that unfold in the inter-subjective space of individual and community, where a dialogue among authors, readers and subjects written / read is created. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) It aims at creating multi-voiced, dialogic documents that not only express the interactions between the observer and those studied (Denzin, 1989 (a)), but also moves the reader to look critically at his / her world. (Watson & Swartz, 2004) Through this dialogical encounter with others the reader is invited to a purposeful and tension-filled self-investigation of both the author- and reader's role in a context, a situation, or a social world. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) In such an instant exists the possibility that the reader might construct new meaning and purpose (Watson & Swartz, 2004); remaking him / herself and thus remaking his / her world. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)

1.3. The research ontology – Preparing the surface

'It's all a big game of construction, some with a brush, some with a shovel, some choose a pen.' – Jackson Pollock (*BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012*)

The next morning I had completed my usual morning routine and walked to the bus stop in, what felt like, a dream-like state of limbo, in which everything... happened...much...slower...than...usual. The newspaper-headings, finding the sensation inherent in the tragedy irresistible, were shouting from every lamppost and street corner – “Tower of Death.” (Hosken & Bateman, 2008:p.1)

Five die in city high-rise inferno as eviction ends in tragedy

**Graeme Hosken and
Barry Bateman**

A Pretoria man watched in horror as his brother desperately tried to escape flames and billowing smoke which consumed a city block of flats. Trying to direct his brother via a cell phone to safety Cyril Mkonsi could do nothing when his brother, Zakes (20), slipped and fell 23 floors to his death as he lost his precarious grip on a window ledge.

As Mkonsi fell, a woman several floors above him leapt to her death, flames and smoke trailing from the window she jumped through.

“I tried. I tried to tell him which way to go but he did not hear me. I heard him say yes, yes and then screams. That was it. There was nothing more,” he said, adding that his brother would have turned 21 on Sunday.’

‘Mkonsi was one of five people, including a toddler, who either fell to their death or died from smoke inhalation after the Kruger Park flats were set alight by mobs fleeing the Red Ants.’

‘The Red Ants, acting on orders from the Tshwane Metro Council after it obtained an eviction order, moved into Schubart Park flats yesterday on a

mission to evict 38 tenants who were rent defaulters. Residents began the morning by hurling petrol bombs at the Red Ants when they arrived at 6am with the sheriff who was armed with the court order. While some of the tenants’ anger spilled on to the streets as they torched dustbins and overturned rubbish bins, others clashed with the Red Ants. Tshwane emergency services were called in several times to extinguish fires in the stairwells so that the Red Ants could continue with the eviction. SAPS and Metro Police officers fired rubber bullets at tenants when they tried

to exit the courtyard between the four towers and prevent furniture from being loaded on to waiting trucks.

Fearing defeat, the tenants retreated from Schubart Park flats to the nearby Kruger Park flats where they took up defensive positions in stairwells, entrances and in corridors. A woman, who was one of those airlifted from the roof of Kruger Park flats, said she saw men pouring petrol onto the stairs and along the passages before lighting it.

“There were flames everywhere. I was on the 19th floor when I saw the men. I just ran. I tried to get past them but they

prevented me. I ran to my house on the 31st floor and when I got there I saw more smoke and flames.”

“The men were setting fire to all the floors. I tried to go up to the roof, but the entire floor above me was on fire.”

“People were screaming and I saw two people jump when I looked out my window. I was terrified. I thought I was going to die. They told me that if I tell the police what happened they would kill me.”

A tearful woman picking up her belongings on the pavement in Vermeulen Street said she was given no warning of the evictions.

“I am a single mother with two children, where am I supposed to go?”

She said the council had apparently given tenants 14 days’ notice following a march last week, but was surprised by the sight of the Red Ants outside the flats when she went to work.

“I paid R16000 last week, but the sheriff said I still owe another R21000.”

“They have damaged my fridge and one of my couches is missing,” she said.

(Hosken & Bateman, 2008:p.1)



The red ants violently threw people out of their homes (Born, 2008)



The Kruger Park building on fire (Born, 2008)



The pain of losing a brother – a victim of the Kruger Park fire (Born, 2008)

I got off the bus and walked along the sidewalk toward the offices of the non-profit organisation (NPO) where I worked, just like every other morning. I noticed the young man, waiting for his blind colleague to arrive, so that he may accompany her to work, and smiled at the man in his wheelchair begging for money in front of the coffee shop, just like every other morning. I squeezed past the queues of school children waiting for their busses to arrive, just like every other morning. ‘Everything is the same,’ I thought, ‘but everything is different.’

I was finding it difficult to walk that morning, as though the pull of the earth had doubled its efforts, requiring all my strength to lift a leg to move. I walked into Church Square and stopped for a while, looking in the direction of the building that had been set alight the previous day. It seemed as though the smoke had coloured the city sky darker. I passed the sidewalk where the homeless people

slept at night. The usual smell of urine had mingled, in my imagination, with a deathly odour of blood; the combined stench and the bitter feeling of guilt that pushed up in my throat left me nauseous.

When I opened my office door on 23 July 2008 I imagined, for a moment, that my entire office had been burnt to cinders and that I had set it alight. I sat down and vomited my remorse in words onto paper – an altar in remembrance of this epiphany; this event that would leave a mark in my life and after which I would never be “quite the same.” (Denzin 1989 (b), cited in Ellis, 1993:p.724)

Pretoria, 23 July 2008

You seem a shade darker today,
air that fills my lungs.

The shadow of smoke colouring you a darker shade of grey.

You're somehow harder today,
earth on which I tread.

The helplessness of death hardening the crust around your heart.

You feel somehow weaker today,
place of my unfound strength.

The pain of loss sucking the will to carry on from your soul.

You look somehow guilty today,
tower of my conscience.

The blood on your hands staining that which you touch bright red

And somehow you've become a part of me,
and your burden is also mine.

And somehow your life has become my heartbeat,
and your death is blood upon my hands.

And somehow I'm sure, on the day that Jesus died
the city looked just like you today.
And with a sigh of defeat, the city gave up hope,
but your hope, our hope arose again!

And somehow you've become a part of me,
and your burden is also mine.

And somehow your life has become my heartbeat,
And your death is blood upon my hands.

And my hope is life within your veins; my hope is life within your veins...

- Rolyn du Plessis, 23 July 2008

Throughout this text I will assume that some experiences and their expressions, such as this “turning-point event” are more important than others and, hence, I will emphasize social moments in which the “mundane, ordinary world of experience” was “exploded” “In these moments the threshold between the past and the future is illuminated...with existential consequence” for the persons involved. “In them character is revealed and lives are turned around.” (Denzin, 1989 (a):p.92)*.

Within the experiences of these epiphanies the connection between what society makes of us and what we make of ourselves also becomes clearer. Through this experience I realised that my activities give shape to the social world around me. (Giddens, 2001) All of the choices regarding my lifestyle, for example, in big or

*The placement of the newspaper article, photographs and poem in this section are intended to highlight this assumption.

small ways, have either supported or rejected the structures of power and money against whom the Schubart Park residents had protested, and as such I have contributed either to their construction or their deconstruction. Likewise, this experience sheds light on the ways in which our activities – and I daresay our ‘selves’ – are structured by the social world (Giddens, 2001). As such, I have assumed that “human societies are always in the process of structuration. They are reconstructed at every moment by the very ‘building blocks’ that compose it – human beings like you and me.” (Giddens, 2001:p.5)

Reality – “Man’s World” (Du Toit, 2004:p.2) – thus, is not fixed and unchangeable; rather, it is in constant flux. It is constructed and reconstructed by us and in turn also shapes us. In addition, it is also affected by people’s views thereof (Toch, 1996 cited in Watson & Swartz, 2004); the way in which people relate to their realities. “People’s perceptions and experiences of the environment can change” – their relatedness to the environment can be reconstructed – “and hence the environment itself can be experienced differently.” (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.69)

The philosophical underpinnings of the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability (henceforth the VdT Model of Creative Ability), with its “phenomenological approach to ‘man’” (Van der Reyden, 1994), seem to resonate with the above-mentioned view of reality; “the starting point of any definition or description” – or, I might add, interpretation regarding either our “abstract, or material realities” is only possible from a “human relatedness” point of view. (Du Toit, 2004:p.2)

1.4. Introduction to the VdT Model of Creative Ability – The under painting *‘Love is an attitude, an orientation of character that determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism. Yet, most people believe that love is constituted by the object, not by the faculty. Because one does not see that love*

is an activity, a power of the soul, one believes that all that is necessary to find is the right object - and that everything goes by itself afterward. This attitude can be compared to that of a man who wants to paint but who, instead of learning the art, claims that he has just to wait for the right object, and that he will paint beautifully when he finds it. If I can say to somebody else, "I love you," I must be able to say, "I love in you everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself." – Erich Fromm (Fromm, 1956:p.46)

The VdT Model of Creative Ability is used among South African occupational therapists (Casteleijn, 2001) as a practice framework for the inter-relatedness between motivation and action (Van der Reyden, 1994) in activity participation. According to this model, each individual possesses a specific creative capacity; that is the “maximum physical, mental and spiritual possibility or promise in a particular person” (Du Toit, 2004:p.3). Du Toit’s earlier work implies that she regards this ‘maximum’ as an ever-increasing, changeable composite factor (2004) which becomes increasingly demanding in relation to the life stages of an individual. Moreover, it is influenced by all the factors inherent in, and in contact with an individual, such as his / her “intellectual ability, personality, environment and mental- and physical health” (Van der Reyden, 1994).

The level of creative participation that an individual has attained, refers to the area of that individual’s creative potential which has been actualised (Van der Reyden, 1994). This realised capacity affords an individual a space within which he / she can act freely and effortlessly (Du Toit, 2004), since it is an area in which he / she has attained mastery. Creative participation is described as encompassing both an aspect of motivation (volition) and action. Du Toit, in her earlier work, suggests that the vital needs of an individual which are “an indispensable part of human nature, and imperatively demand attention” (2004:p.4) are the primitive roots which fuel our initial creative instinct; the inner drive toward self-fulfilment – our motivation – which initiates or directs our behaviour. (Van der Reyden, 1994) “The satisfaction of vital needs through

action, serves to expose” individuals “to the extending needs” of their “widening environment,” (Du Toit, 2004:p.4) once again inducing motivation toward further action. Life, demanding “an answer, a decision, at every new moment of living” (Du Toit, 2004:p.8) entices our motivation into encountering our own realities and answering the demands through action. The model suggests that the quality of this “action is considered to be an expression” (Van der Reyden, 1994) of the quality of the motivation and that action in turn, influences motivation. “The nature of the influence is determined by the success or otherwise of the action.” (Van der Reyden, 1994) The continued realisation of the creative capacity takes place when an individual successfully responds with a creative action to challenges that require maximal effort in action – that is challenges on the boundaries on his / her creative participation. (Du Toit, 2004)

An individual’s creative participation becomes evident by his / her “ability to form a relational contact with people, events and materials” (Van der Reyden, 1994) and the quality of such contact progresses sequentially from unconstructive, frail and egocentric action to robust action which is characterised by initiative and contribution to society. (Du Toit, 2004) This sequencing of the quality of (inter)action is based on the assumption that true humanity is found only in “our relatedness to our fellowman” (Du Toit, 2004:p.5); that “Man is only a human being in his directedness towards other human beings” (Nel, 1960 cited in Du Toit, 2004:p.5). The highest form of motivation, then, is directed toward actions which find new, and if necessary, original successful solutions to life’s answers in response to the needs of *others*. “The manner of man’s relatedness to his fellow man,” writes Du Toit, “causes all individual gradients of World Man Contact, or Man isolation in his world.” (2004:p.5) The directedness toward the ‘other’ has the power to make the ‘world’ acceptable and so near, as to be within us. (Du Toit, 2004)

From the moment I first encountered the VdT Model of Creative Ability, during my undergraduate studies, I was intrigued by it. Not only did the model appeal to the existentialist in me; providing a means for people to rise above their everyday challenges and to live lives of meaning, but it also provided the community therapist in me with dreams of community members initiating projects, serving their communities and transforming them. Figure I illustrates my understanding of the interaction between some of the significant components of the model.

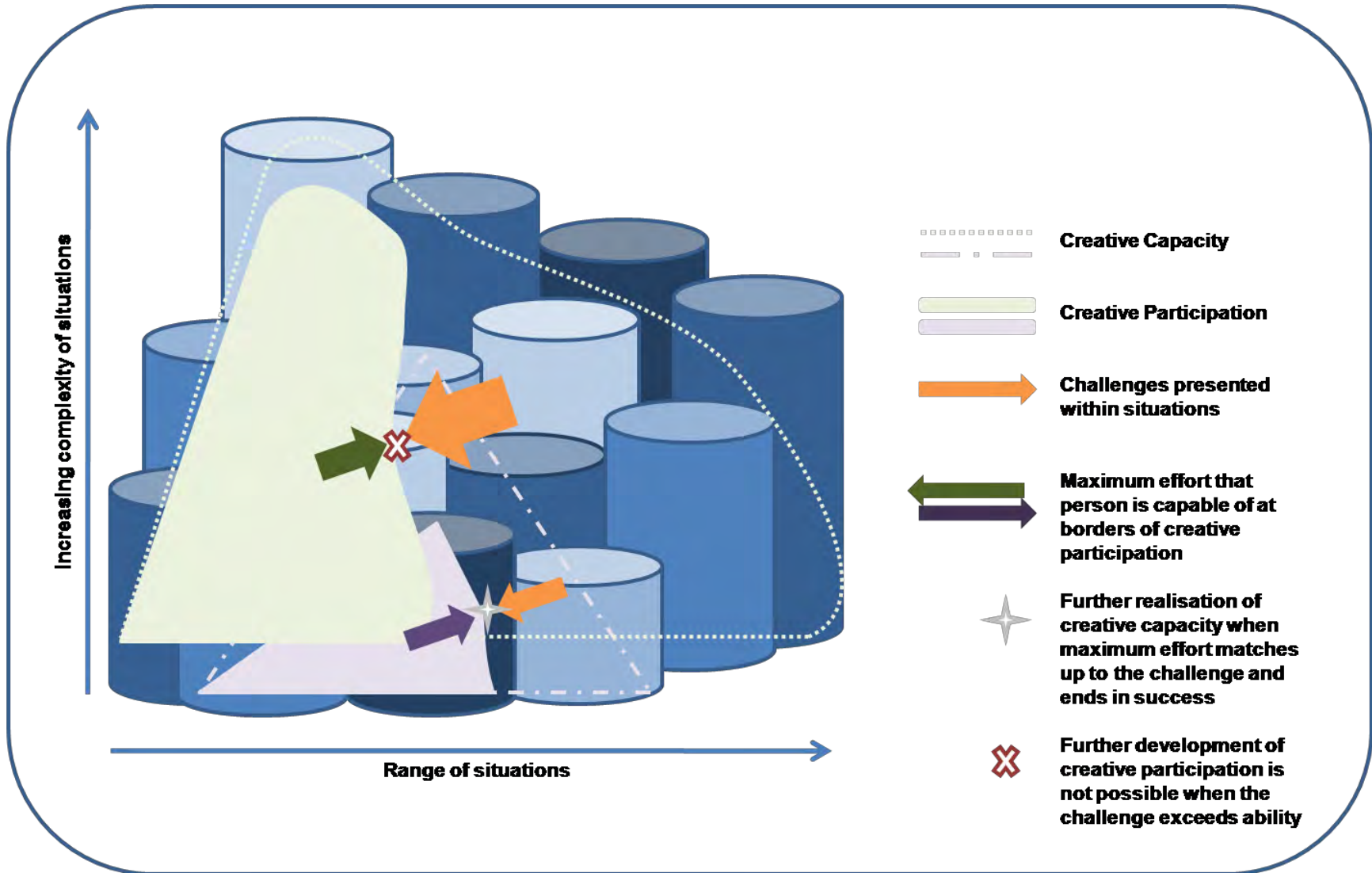


Figure 1 – A visual representation of the VdT Model of Creative Ability

1.5. Aim and objectives of the study – The drawing

All of the above-mentioned elements led to the aim of this study being: to explore how internal and external factors impacted on the creative participation of people living in an inner city.

The objectives of this study, that would inform the aim, were:

- To describe the research participants' experiences of their environment.
- To describe the research participants' perceived impact of the environment on them, specifically with regards to the emergence of (or change in) their creative participation.
- To determine to what extent the participants' creative participation had emerged (or changed) since living in this environment (inner city).
- To describe the sub-culture of the environment (inner city).

1.6. Clarification of Terms – Measuring the elements

Certain concepts that are contained in the aim and objectives, and others that are used throughout this document, needs to be clarified.

1.6.1. Creative Capacity

Creative capacity refers to an individual's maximal creative potential. In other words, it is the maximal level of creative participation that a person is able to reach. This creative potential, although present in all individuals, may be influenced by several factors, such as intellectual ability, mental- and physical health, personality and environment. (Du Toit, 2004)

1.6.2. Creative Participation

Creative participation is a term that describes the inter-relatedness between motivation (volition) and action as it manifests in activity participation. The volitional component is that which directs behaviour toward a goal. The action component represents the exertion of motivation and physical- and mental effort into a tangible or intangible end-product. The volitional component governs the action component and that action is considered an expression of volition. Action, in turn, influences volition. (Du Toit, 2004)

1.6.3. Culture

Culture is the complex system of meaning and behaviour that defines the way of life for a given group or society. It comprises intangible aspects; beliefs, values, and ideas which form the content of the culture, as well as tangible aspects; objects, symbols and technology which represent that content. Culture includes ways of thinking as well as patterns of behaviour. (Giddens, 2001) Culture has two essential qualities: first, it is learned through a process of socialisation, second, it is shared. (Harlambos & Holborn, 2000) Culture is a set of guidelines which tell individuals in a particular society how to view the world, how to experience it emotionally and how to behave in relation to other people, supernatural forces and to the natural environment. (Tjale & De Villiers, 2004)

1.6.4. Sub-culture

A sub-culture is the further sub-division of culture within a complex society. A profession is an example of such a sub-culture. The sub-culture forms a separate group with its own concepts, rules and social organisation. While each sub-culture shares many of the concepts and values of the dominant culture, it is also unique and has distinctive features of its own. (Tjale & De Villiers, 2004)

For the purpose of this research, I assumed that, despite various ethnic- and religious cultural differences between the research participants, they would have certain cultural characteristics in common. That is, I assumed that the research participants from the inner city belonged to the same sub-culture, because they were all living in the research setting; they found themselves in the same location in society.

1.6.5. Environmental Barriers

Environmental factors refer to all aspects of the extrinsic world that form the context of an individual's life and have an impact on an individual's functioning. These include the features of the physical world, the human-made physical world, people in their various relationships and roles, attitudes and values, social systems and services, and policies, rules and laws. Environmental factors which, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability are termed environmental barriers. (WHO, 2001)

1.6.6. Poverty

In his article 'The underestimation of urban poverty and of its health consequences,' Satterthwaite (1995) makes a distinction between 'income-poverty' and 'housing-poverty'. 'Income-poverty' is described as an income too low to allow individuals to meet their basic needs. He argues, however, that these minimum income levels are determined without making sufficient allowance for the cost of what might be termed 'minimum adequate quality' housing. People who live in conditions of 'housing-poverty' are described as living in overcrowded housing conditions of poor quality, with inadequate provision for water, sanitation, drainage and rubbish collection, so that their health is at risk. By implication, people living in 'housing-poverty' may not be 'income-poor' (in other words, they manage to meet their basic needs), but their income does not allow them better housing conditions. "If these people are considered to be living in poverty, it

greatly increases the proportion of the urban population considered poor.”
(Satterthwaite, 1995:p4)

For the purpose of this research ‘poverty’ is defined as ‘housing-poverty’.

1.6.7. Sub-Standard Housing

Sub-standard housing is characterized by poor quality shelter, overcrowding and inadequate environmental services; including the provision of water, drainage, sanitation and waste disposal, to the extent that people’s health is at risk.
(Satterthwaite, 2004; Stephens, 1995)

1.6.8. Socialisation

Socialisation is the process by which “individuals learn the culture of their society.” (Harlambos & Holborn, 2000:p.132) Primary socialisation takes place during infancy, when a child, by responding to the approval or disapproval of its parents and by copying their example, learns the language and basic behaviour patterns of its society. Further socialisation agencies include the educational system and the peer group. “Socialisation is not, however, confined to childhood. It is a lifelong process.” (Harlambos & Holborn, 2000:p132)

1.7. Organisation of the Thesis – Composition

‘No one is an artist unless he carries his picture in his head before painting it, and is sure of his method and composition.’ – Claude Monet (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

In Chapter 1 I have aimed at painting the events which formed the background to this study. By tentatively introducing the reader to the research design, the style of writing that could be expected throughout this text and the model that this research was based on, I have described the reason for and purpose of this

study. By highlighting a few excerpts of the research participants' lived experience, the reader has been given a glimpse into the research setting. The aims and objectives of this study were delineated, the organisation of the thesis outlined, relevant terms were defined and the chapter is concluded.

Chapter 2 accompanies the reader through an exhibition of literature pertaining to the concept of creative participation from the VdT Model of Creative Ability and how it relates to the intended purpose of this study. The widening possibility, not only for the use of the model but also for occupational therapy, which is afforded by viewing occupation from a political point of view, is discussed. Further, the relevance thereof, within a South African context – in which poverty and the associated environmental barriers are prevalent – is considered. Finally, the use of postmodern ethnography, and more specifically autoethnography, as the appropriate research design for this particular investigation is highlighted.

Chapter 3 describes the materials and methods that were used in the sampling, data collection, -recording, and -analysis of the study.

In Chapter 4 the results of the study are presented according to the objectives and the aim of the study.

The research findings are discussed in Chapter 5 according to the objectives and the aim of the study. Limitations to the study are identified and the study is evaluated. The implications of the findings for clinical practice, for the understanding of creative participation and for further research are considered and the study is then concluded.

1.8. Concluding Remarks

In this introductory chapter, I have pointed out that the intended area of inquiry of this study was the relationship between people, their environment (being an inner city slum) and their creative participation, from an ethnographic vantage point.

The following chapter serves to indicate the relevance of these objectives for current developments in occupational therapy and points out that research of this kind is lacking within the current occupational therapy knowledge base.

CHAPTER 2

The Museum

[myō̄'zēəm] n. (1)Building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited. (Dictionary.com, 2012)

2.1. Introduction

'Living is like tearing through a museum. Not until later do you really start absorbing what you saw, thinking about it, looking it up in a book, and remembering - because you can't take it in all at once.' – Audrey Hepburn
(Wikiquote, 2012)

Traditionally, research questions are sparked off through a logical process in which a researcher reviews the literature – the current knowledge and truth about a subject – and then identifies an area of competing descriptions, either within the literature itself or between the literature and the perspective of the researcher, which must be resolved. Within a modern epistemology, with its demand for logic and the privileged position of 'science' as the paradigmatic example of human reason, the research question becomes a relentless search for certitude; demanding a homogeneity of experience that does not exist. (Lose, 2003) Instead of emerging from such a linear process, this research steadily grew from my encounter with situations in which I experienced “the influences of a specific context on a community and on individuals.” (Olivier, Oosthuizen and Casteleijn, 2007:p.63) These situations, in which I came “into contact with occupational restriction and deprivation, poverty, effects of HIV/AIDS on family structures and the community, lack of resources and poor access to health care, inadequate housing and the like,” (Olivier, Oosthuizen and Casteleijn, 2007:p.63) left me with a sense of unease; groping in the dark at ideas for what I could do that would be helpful in effecting some sort of change. And always, in the back of my mind, was the VdT Model of Creative Ability.

2.2. Creative participation – The private collection

'I'm touched by the idea that when we do things that are useful and helpful - collecting these shards of spirituality - that we may be helping to bring about a healing.' – Leonard Nimoy (*BrainyQuote*, 2001 – 2012)

'Each of the groups has to implement some kind of community project and my group has to figure out which factors could help make all those other projects sustainable. Then we have to convince the other groups to incorporate those factors into their projects,' I told my fiancée. We were sitting at the top of the pretty little waterfall on the farm where my parents lived, savouring the serenity, which was so rare during my fourth year of undergraduate studies. 'All the groups of students who have been going to Hammanskraal for their service learning blocks have implemented projects, which seemed at the time to have worked well. The problem was that, as soon as the students left, the projects dissolved into nothingness. There is almost no evidence of any projects ever being done there before.' 'Mmm, so what are you planning?' he asked. 'Well, I think we're going to make use of this model that we have been learning about...'

In her model, Vona du Toit proposed nine sequential interdependent levels of motivation with corresponding levels of action (refer to Figure II). (Du Toit, 2004) In postulating the fundamental concepts of the model, Du Toit and Van der Reyden (Du Toit, 2004; Van der Reyden, 1994) explain that the levels of motivation indicate what motivates a person, the strength of motivation and the stages of development thereof. The levels of action, in turn, indicate the exertion of motivation into physical or mental effort, the creation of a tangible or intangible product and the level of skill that a person has attained.

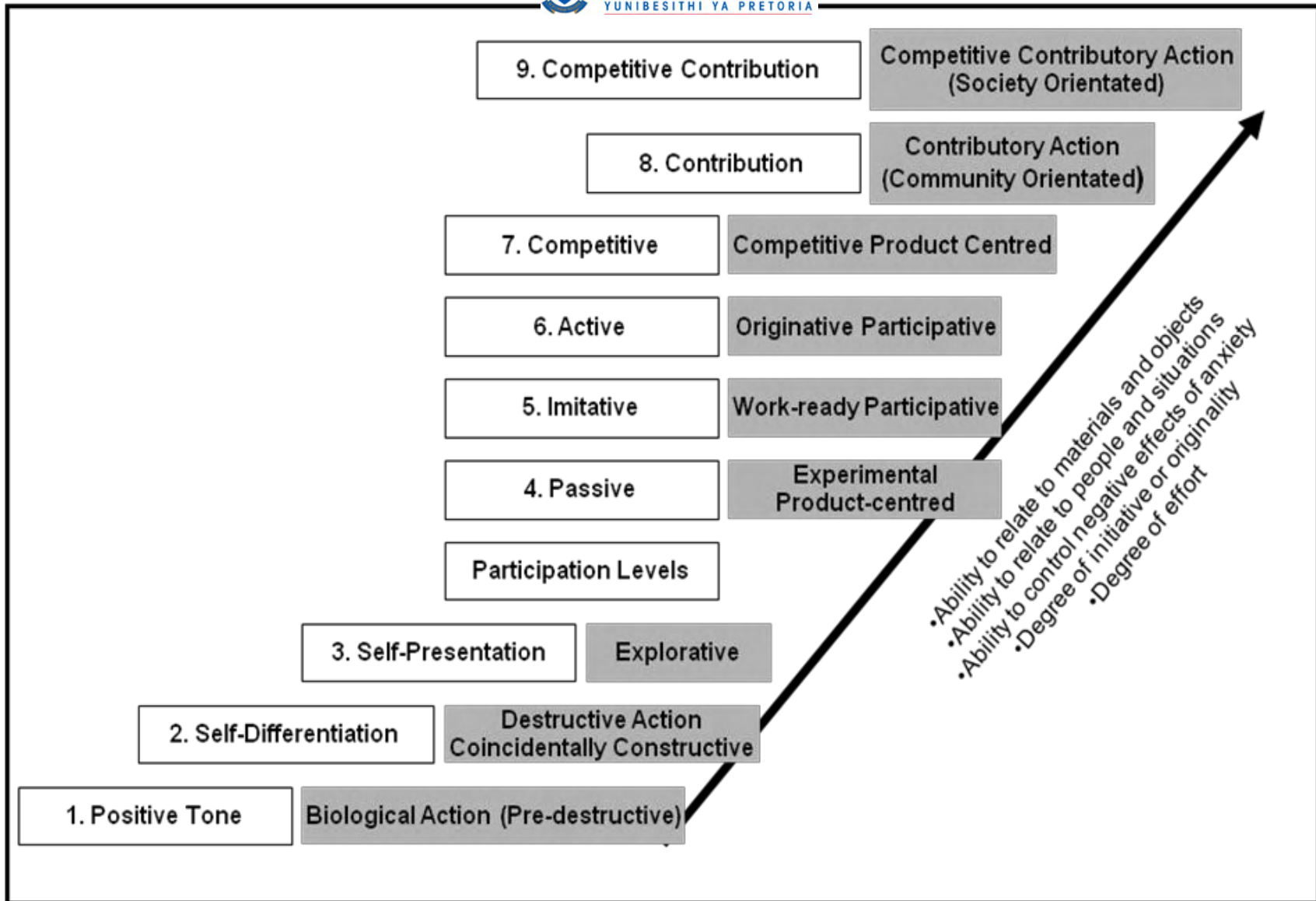


Figure II – The levels of motivation and action (Du Toit, 2004)

Each level of action is described in terms of specific characteristics; these pertain to an individual's ability to relate to materials and objects, people and situations, the ability to control the negative effects of anxiety, the degree of initiative and originality infused by the individual into thought and action and the quality of the degree of effort which he / she is prepared to channel into tasks and challenges in all spheres of life. (Du Toit, 2004) Each level further comprises three phases of progression; in the therapist directed phase an individual requires external support and initiative, in the patient directed phase the individual is able to sustain performance independently and in the transition phase an individual demonstrates signs of progressing to the following level, whilst still retaining characteristics of the previous level. (Du Toit, 2004; Van der Reyden, 1994)

Growth through these stages is dependent on mastery and success in action and a disruption of growth is also possible. (Du Toit, 2004) Though there seems to be agreement that factors, apart from physical and mental illness, which may cause such a disruption, include "general environmental stress, lack of opportunity and stimulation or even specific stressful incidents," (Van der Reyden, 1994) the specific environmental factors and their effects have not been investigated or documented.

This lack of documented research (Casteleijn, 2001; Van der Reyden, 1994) has, in my opinion, disrupted the possibilities of growth for the model itself. The use of the model has extended over the years to include not only "selected, carefully planned and graded treatment sessions" for individuals, but also "full day programmes in which the basic principles have been applied to all activities of daily living," (Van der Reyden, 1994) the categorization of patients for the purpose of training support staff and the treatment of large numbers of patients. The model has also extended its reach into a variety of settings, "such as day centres, community clinics, centres for substance abuse disorders and protective employment work areas." (Van der Reyden, 1994) However, broadening definitions of health, the changing political environment of South Africa and

progressive views regarding the social role that occupational therapy has to play might provide opportunities for the application of the model to extend even further.

2.3. Participation, well-being and politics – Exhibition designers

‘To whom does design address itself: to the greatest number, to the specialist of an enlightened matter, to a privileged social class? Design addresses itself to the need.’ – Charles Eames (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

‘Isn’t it possible that the students simply aren’t addressing needs that are important to the community itself – so that, when they leave, the community can see no value in continuing with the projects?’ he asked, probing for gaps in my developing hypotheses. ‘I don’t think so,’ I started. ‘The method that we employ in developing our projects, actively involves the community in identifying the problems that need addressing. Also, they seem motivated to participate in the projects, as long as there is an external force coaxing them on. Rather, I think that many of the community members are functioning on lower levels of creative participation; self-differentiation or self-presentation, and they simply cannot maintain projects of such magnitude without external support – the projects aren’t matched to their levels. What bothers me is that it seems as though the majority of the people in this community are functioning on lower levels of creative participation. I wonder if the development of an entire community’s creative participation can be disrupted by the environment that they find themselves in?’

The full effect that environmental factors have on individuals and communities, and on their creative participation, can only be considered against the background of the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) statement of Alma Ata (1978), the definition of health which is contained therein and the implications that it has for occupational therapy. It reads as follows: “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or

infirmity.” (WHO, 1978:p.1) Yerxa (1998), in an article in which she explores the relationship between occupational engagement and health, agrees; she views health “not as the absence of organ pathology, but as an encompassing, positive, dynamic state of ‘well-beingness,’ reflecting adaptability, a good quality of life, and satisfaction in one's own activities.” (1998:p.412) From this vantage point, participation in meaningful occupation becomes a fundamental human need, without which health cannot exist.

The work of Wilcock (1998 cited in Watson & Swartz, 2004) has extended our understanding about the centrality of occupation to life. She contends that humans’ innate occupational needs are the species’ primary health mechanism. Not only is it through occupation that a person is able to meet his / her biological needs and ensure his / her own survival, occupation is also the vehicle through which individuals engage in society, realise their potential, pursue their aims, overcome barriers and discover meaning and purpose in life. Law (2002) agrees that “participation...in everyday occupations is vital for all humans, and that the very focus of occupational therapy is to enhance participation – “it is what we are all about; it is our unique contribution to society.” (2002:p.640) As such, all factors which lead to participation that is less diverse, that is restricted to a certain setting, involves fewer social relationships, includes less active recreation, (Law, 2002) and – I daresay – is restricted or disrupted in the development of its quality, inform the scope of occupational therapy.

It is for this reason that the term ‘occupational deprivation’ has become relevant. “Occupational deprivation is, in essence, a state in which a person or group of people are unable to do what is necessary and meaningful in their lives due to external restrictions. It is the state in which the opportunity to perform those occupations that have social, cultural and personal relevance is rendered difficult if not impossible. It is a reality for numerous people living around the globe today.” (Whiteford, 2000: p.200) Not only does occupational deprivation pose a threat to people’s access and ability to participate in health-giving occupations,

the resultant consequences “include an increase in psychosocial and other illnesses; asocial risk-taking behaviour; wasted or under-developed potential; a lifestyle dominated by certain occupations; and a limited ability to adapt to changes in the environment and circumstances.” (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.22)

Though it seems clear that there is a relationship between occupation, health and well-being, (Law, 2002; Hammell, 2007) Hammell (2007) maintains that the occupational therapy profession demonstrates an overwhelming preoccupation with illness, injury and impairment. Kronenberg and Pollard (2006) agree; “a critical look at our profession’s engagements in the world reveals that we are only (or mainly) working with people who are referred to us with a medical diagnosis—patients; people within institutional settings; and (perhaps most problematically) people who can afford our services, so-called clients or consumers.” (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005 cited in Kronenberg & Pollard, 2006:p.620) Instead, these authors propose that occupational therapists should be working towards the improvement of quality of life for all people who would benefit from participation in meaningful occupations. This implies that the connection between well-being and human rights should be made explicit and that the right to participation in meaningful occupations should be recognised as a political issue (Hammell, 2007).

“Politics here refers to an aspect of human occupation and human relationships that can be found everywhere, in contrast to big-*P* Politics, which is defined as a particular sphere of human relationships, indicated by terms such as the state, government, public administration, and political parties.” (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005:p.70) The politically loaded history of segregation in South Africa, so fresh in the memories of its citizens, the disparities which remain as a result of the lack of opportunities, and a new constitution that promotes everyone’s right to an environment which is not harmful to their health and well-being (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), emphasises the need for occupational therapists, in South Africa specifically, to develop a political

consciousness and capacity to inform (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2006) the new roles that are available to them. Discussion surrounding the bigger political pictures of reality would be incomplete without the inclusion of the concepts 'occupational justice' and 'occupational apartheid.'

Occupational justice is a term derived from the concept of social justice (Wilcock & Townsend, 2002) and "has been described as the recognition of, and provision for, the occupational needs of individuals and communities, as part of a fair and empowering society." (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.56) Occupational justice asks us to consider the inequities that arise when participation in occupations is "barred, confined, segregated, prohibited, undeveloped, disrupted, alienated, marginalized, exploited, excluded, or otherwise restricted" (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004:p.71) and encourages us to enable "people to participate as valued members of society despite diverse or limited occupational potential." (Townsend, 1993:p.176) Occupational apartheid departs from the notion of occupational justice and refers to the "segregation of groups of people through the restriction or denial of access to dignified and meaningful participation in occupations of daily life on the basis of race, colour, disability, national origin, age, gender, sexual preference, religion, political beliefs, status in society, or other characteristics. Occasioned by political forces, its systematic and pervasive social, cultural, and economic consequences jeopardize health and well-being as experienced by individuals, communities and societies." (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005:p.67)

Occupational therapists are in a key position to act as agents of social control, lest they empower themselves as social agents. As such, "occupational therapists are required to understand the 'not so very fragrant world' we live in." (Chandler, 1964 cited in Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005:p.75)

2.4. Poverty, environmental barriers and context – Public exhibits

It is not a fragrant world. – Raymond Chandler (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

I breathed out and smiled; certain that I had made a relatively convincing case in defending my protocol. ‘Yes but...’ the senior therapist started. ‘This is not good,’ I thought. ‘It’s actually about internal locus of control. People view their worlds from their internal frame of reference. Their value systems are part of that frame of reference. The external factors in the environment don’t have such a big impact; rather the personal factors – emotional barriers and cognitive barriers – are the determining factors,’ she said. ‘I just find it hard to believe that the entire community has a restricted intellectual capacity – and even if they do, the environment has probably played a role,’ I tried. ‘Look,’ she said, ‘the people you are describing reminds me of the experiences I had on the farm...’ She continued to describe her experiences, convinced that, even if these people had lived in a more enabling social context, they still would not have amounted to much and still would have required ‘help’, because their ‘internal factors’ didn’t allow them to become anything of worth. ‘I’m not so sure...’ I thought.

“Poverty is a global phenomenon affecting an estimated 2.8 billion people worldwide and 25% of the population of the developing world.” (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.44) It is a brutal reality that almost 50% of the South African population is faced with. In addition, “the distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor (in South Africa) is considered to be one of the most unequal in the world.” (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.46) Poverty is “a pervasive, persistent and perplexing reality, which has a profound effect...on what people do or may become.” (Watson, 2006:p.155) In an interview that Watson (2006) conducted, the interviewee characterised poverty as “an impairment because it makes people unable to realise their full potential at times...it actually restricts people...from participating in activities, going about their daily activities, as is

preached in occupational therapy.” (Mmambo, 2005 cited in Watson, 2006:p.157) However, poverty is also closely associated with the environmental barriers, which may cause restricted participation in occupations.

In a study, comparing the psychological well-being of the rural and urban poor, (Amato & Zuo, 1992) the authors contend that the poor are more likely than others to be exposed to factors which could be classified as environmental barriers. These include unemployment, crime, victimisation and job dissatisfaction. Additionally, the poor also seem to have fewer social resources to draw on; they have smaller social networks, less organisational involvement and less frequent contact with friends and family. Furthermore, they seem to find their interpersonal relationships less useful, since poverty is associated with lowered support from immediate family members in the form of poor quality marital relations, increased risk of divorce, and general dissatisfaction with family life. It seems as though the poor in South Africa experience a greater vulnerability toward environmental barriers as well. For poor South Africans their experience of poverty includes, amongst others, alienation from community, crowded homes, usage of unsafe or insufficient energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid or secure and fragmentation of the family. (Poverty and inequality report, 1998 cited in Watson & Swartz, 2004)

Numerous occupation-based practice models and thousands of authors have highlighted the importance for occupational therapists of understanding the effect of environmental factors on occupational participation. This may lead to “a more in-depth understanding of how participation evolves.” (Law, 2002:p.644) Law (2002), in her review of the literature, which includes subject matter from disciplines such as social ecology, mentions that institutional environmental factors (economic, political, attitudinal) have been found to significantly affect the participation of persons with disabilities. (Law et al, 1999 cited in Law, 2002) In addition, she found that “research on resilience cites major environmental risk factors such as poverty, a violent neighbourhood, a peer group that acts as a

barrier to participation.” (Rutter, 1990 cited in Law, 2002:p.644) She also mentions the major impact that a person’s family and people in close relationship with a person may have on participation. According to Law, however, further “occupational therapy research is needed to examine the complex relationship among person, environment, and participation in occupations,” (2002:p.640) so that occupational therapy practice may contribute to the development and fulfilment of participation for persons with *and without* disabilities.

Peloquin agrees that we should “extend the caring ethos of occupational therapy, its spirit, beyond traditional boundaries. ... It begs unfolding in groups that are untouched by its benefits...those who are poor, disenfranchised, socially isolated and marginally cared for beckon us as they have never done before.” (Peloquin, 2005 cited in Watson, 2006: p.155) In order for the purpose of occupational therapy to expand in this manner, Watson argues that it is necessary to differentiate between ‘environment’ and ‘context.’ (2006) ‘Context,’ she says, has a different emphasis; “whereas occupational therapists usually think about environmental factors that promote, limit or prevent a person’s functioning, contextual influences are not personalised and impact the whole population, positively or negatively (e.g. social policies, economic trends and historical facts).” (2006:p.155) Sen mentions that, as expressions of culture the above-mentioned contextual factors are the ultimate sources of power and influence over the capabilities people are able to develop (1999 cited in Watson, 2006). Christiansen and Baum (1997 cited in Watson, 2006:p.61) suggested that “culture affects performance in many ways including the prescribing of norms, for the use of time and space, influencing beliefs regarding the importance of various tasks” – in other words, the meaning that is ascribed to occupations – “and transmitting attitudes and values regarding work and play.” Watson (2006) contends that occupational therapists have yet to take into account “the cultural uniqueness of different contexts” (2006:p.151) with regards to their professional epistemologies, values, beliefs and assumptions.

The WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), is a set of terminology which could be used for understanding, studying and describing health, taking into account the effect of environmental and / or contextual factors. (Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005) The ICF provides a description of situations with regard to human functioning and its restrictions and serves as a framework to organise this information. It is structured in an interrelated and easily accessible way and is organised in two parts. The first part deals with functioning and disability, while the second part deals with contextual factors. (WHO, 2001)

A list of Environmental Factors comprises the first component of Contextual Factors and encompasses the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives. These factors are external to individuals and can have a positive or negative influence on the individual's performance as a member of society and on his / her capacity to execute actions. Environmental factors are organised in the classification to focus on two different levels; the *individual* level addresses the immediate environment of the individual, including settings such as home, workplace and school. This level encompasses the physical and material features of the environment that an individual comes face to face with, as well as direct contact with others, such as family, acquaintances, peers and strangers. The *societal* level addresses formal and informal social structures, services and overarching approaches or systems in the community or society that have an impact on individuals. This level includes organisations and services related to the work environment, community activities, government agencies, communication and transportation services, and informal social networks as well as laws, regulations, formal and informal rules, attitudes and ideologies. (WHO, 2001)

The basic construct of the Environmental Factors component is the facilitating or hindering impact of features of the physical, social and attitudinal world. An environment is viewed as facilitating or enabling when it supports personal

aspirations, enabling potential to be realized and fulfilment to ensue. (Watson & Swartz, 2004) The environmental factors which are perceived as contributing to the creation of such an environment are classified as environmental facilitators. Factors which create a hindering or disabling environment, that do not match individual needs, and hinder opportunity and the realisation of potential, are classified as environmental barriers. (WHO, 2001)

Hemmingsson and Jonsson have identified that “an occupational perspective on participation in the ICF reveals major shortcomings regarding the subjective experience of meaning and autonomy.” (2005:p.569) Wade and Halligan have recommended a subjective or internal sub-division within the ICF, which would include personal (i.e., role satisfaction and happiness) as well as the environmental factors (i.e., salience and local culture). (Wade & Halligan, 2003 cited in Hemmingson & Jonsson, 2005) Ueda and Okawa have further argued that the understanding of the inner world of the client has proved an asset in clinical practice and, hence, needed to be included in the ICF. (Ueda & Okawa, 2003 cited in Hemmingson & Jonsson, 2005) Research that employs a postmodern ethnographic design may provide this kind of understanding.

2.5. A case for reflexive ethnography – The registrar

The more one does and sees and feels, the more one is able to do, and the more genuine may be one's appreciation of fundamental things like home, and love, and understanding companionship. – Amelia Earhart (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

Postmodern ethnography; the anthropology of experience, seeks to capture and interpret the problematic lived experience of those that are studied. (Denzin, 1989 (a)) Its concern is in the first place with meaning and experience. “The intent is to show how the micro-power structures of everyday life (the political economy of interaction) create and shape turning point moments of human experience.” (Denzin, 1989 (a):p.93)

Postmodern ethnography provides the researcher with the opportunity of giving the research subject a voice; bringing to life the subjects' "own theories of why they act the way they do." (Denzin, 1989 (a):p.91) However, the ethnographic research experience cannot be separated from the life of the researcher and as such, post-modern ethnography becomes a synonym for autoethnography. The researcher is allowed, no compelled, to reflect on his / her own relationship to the worlds studied and his / her interactions with those studied. (Denzin, 1989 (a))

"Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. Autoethnographers vary in their emphasis on the research process (graphy), on culture (ethnos), and on self (auto). Different exemplars of autoethnography fall on different places along the continuum of each of these three axes." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:p.739)

Finlay argues that, "in terms of occupational therapy research, the things we focus on in therapy (namely people's motivation, emotions, thinking and relationships,)" (1998:p.453) which are difficult to quantify, may be ideally observed by means of qualitative research methods that employ reflexivity. (1998) From this point of view, the use of reflexive ethnography seems ideally suited for occupational therapy research.

Reflexive ethnography is one of the approaches that are associated with autoethnography. Reflexive ethnographers focus primarily on a culture or sub-culture and use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at self-other interactions. The researcher's experiences become important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under

study. A reflexive ethnographic design, being ethnography, allows a researcher to enter into a close and relatively prolonged interaction with people in their everyday lives, enabling him / her to better understand their motivations and behaviours. In addition, as a *reflexive* ethnographer, researchers may use their own experiences to further illuminate the culture under study. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)

2.6. Concluding Remarks

Occupational therapists and specifically therapists who make use of the VdT Model of Creative Ability, aim at providing clients with ‘just-right’ challenges. This entails matching the challenge inherent in an activity to the level of creative participation that a client is functioning on and structuring the environment to enable active participation from such a client. From experience and the literature it is clear that the world that we have created and the systems that we have set in place, very often don’t pose people with ‘just-right’ challenges (challenges which do them justice) in perfectly structured environments. People living in poverty; almost half the South African population – are faced, instead, with environments in which they are deprived or segregated from meaningful participation. In such instances of occupational injustice or occupational apartheid, the fine balance between one’s ability to act, and the available opportunities for action (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) is disrupted. Du Toit suggested that the extent to which the effects of a challenging environment can be counteracted or its influence modified needed to be thoroughly tested, taking into account individual difference in the response to an environment. (Du Toit, 2004) A post-modern ethnographic research design is ideal for the task at hand.

CHAPTER 3

Materials and Techniques

[mə'ti(ə)rēal] n. (1)The articles or apparatus needed to make something. (2)A group of ideas, facts, data, etc. that may provide the basis for or be incorporated into some integrated work. (Dictionary.com, 2012)

[tek'nēk] n. (1)A way of carrying out a particular task, especially the execution or the performance of an artistic work or a scientific procedure. (Google, 2012)

3.1. The research design

The research question of this study, pertaining to the effect of the environment on the creative participation of people living in an inner city, required a research design that would aid understanding of a phenomenon in a context-specific setting. It further needed a design which would take into account the complex and dynamic interactions that take place in a social setting, and finally, it required a design that would enable the understanding of a phenomenon about which limited research has been done in occupational therapy. (Hoepfl, 1997) As such, a qualitative research design seemed the obvious choice.

Furthermore, an autoethnographic research design seemed to suit this research well, for a number of reasons. The purpose of employing an autoethnographic research design is to understand complex situations and to describe the richness and nuances which would be missed by superficial enquiry. In addition, such a design would allow me to participate in the lives of the research participants and to give voice to their lived experiences without any pretence at being objective. It would allow me to link the personal to the cultural by reflecting on my own experiences, and how these made sense in the light of the experiences of the research participants. This choice further implied that narration would dominate my text and that, throughout the research process, my own views, perceptions and values would give way to understanding of the cultural setting under study; it implied a 'remaking' of my own world. (Chang, 2008)

3.2. Sampling – *Selecting the palette*

‘The hard part is how to plan a picture so as to give to others what has happened to you. To render in paint an experience, to suggest the sense of light and colour, of air and space.’ – Maxfield Parrish (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

“Qualitative research uses non-probability samples.” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:p.78) Non-probability samples, in contrast to probability samples, do not aim to produce statistically representative samples. Instead “the characteristics of the population are used as the basis for selection.” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:p.78) Various non-probability sampling approaches have been developed and in this section I will discuss the approaches that I chose to employ for this study.

I initially made use of a *strategic* sampling method to select a *purposive, illustrative* sample, (Mason, 2005) and throughout the research process I employed an *opportunistic* sampling method as well. (Burgess, 1982)

The aim, when employing strategic sampling, is to produce, through sampling, a relevant range of data in relation to the wider universe, but not to represent it directly. The relationship between the sample and the wider universe is, however, not ad hoc or accidental and it does not include simply those elements of the wider universe that will substantiate one’s argument, while ‘strategically’ excluding those elements that might inconveniently counter it. (Mason, 2005) For the purpose of this research, I wanted to establish an illustrative relationship between my data and the wider universe and I was particularly interested in sampling a relevant range of human experiences.

Strategic purposive sampling, which is synonymous with judgement sampling, (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) implies the selection of groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to the research questions, the researcher’s theoretical position or analytical framework and the argument or explanation that she is developing. In other words, I constructed a sample that contained certain

characteristics and criteria, which would help me to develop the research argument. (Mason, 2005) The characteristics of the people in my sample included that they all belonged to a specific sub-culture (for the reason that they all lived in a specific location in society) and that they all had numerous experiences in which they have had to deal with environmental barriers.

An illustrative approach in sampling seeks only to provide a flavour, and sometimes a very vivid and illuminating one, of how things can be in the wider universe, but makes no claims about how well it represents that wider universe. (Mason, 2005)

My sample would provide an illustration of:

- The way in which people might experience the environmental barriers that are associated with low socio-economic circumstances in an inner city.
- The impact that people might perceive such barriers to have on them (and specifically on their creative participation).
- The cultural values and beliefs which people may hold, which shape the way in which they experience their environments.

My initial planning didn't involve the use of opportunistic sampling. However, throughout the research process, I encountered unforeseen people, events and opportunities and deliberately included them in informing this study. Opportunistic sampling requires that a researcher adopts a flexible approach, putting together the sample according to the research context as events unfold and as people show up (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Burgess, 1982)

During the initial phase of the research I gained entry into the research setting by getting involved in existing activities, which were driven by the organisation that I was working for – PEN. This allowed me to start building relationships with the people within the research setting and to observe the population for potential research participants.

It was in June – the middle of the winter. The electricity in the block of flats just around the corner from our organisation had been off for a week already; implying that the residents (all 6000 – 8000 of them) were without water as well; save for a single tap which functioned independently of the electrical pump system. The residents were united in their speculation that the municipality had deliberately turned off the power in an attempt to get them to move out. No water and no electricity for an entire week – this was starting to become a threat for the elderly and the disabled, who were unable to walk down multiple flights of stairs several times a day, queue for water and carry heavy containers back to their flats. It was also starting to become a threat for children of working single parents, who had to walk up multiple, pitch dark flights of stairs on their way home – alone.

Our organisation felt it their duty to seek out and find the elderly and the vulnerable, and to offer help in the form of basic supplies such as bottled water, candles, blankets and a 24-hour emergency number. As such, they dedicated an entire week to scouting the blocks of flats in search of people in need of help. I found it the perfect opportunity to embark on a search of my own.

We were divided into small groups. Each day the different groups were assigned to a number of floors in one of the four blocks of flats. We had to knock on every door, introduce ourselves and find those who needed help. I had to find those who could be of help to me.

I tried to take it all in; the 23 gruelling flights of stairs on the first day, the overwhelming smell of urine and rotting garbage on the staircases, the graffiti against the walls, the caution and fear in the darkness, the deafening music on some floors, the dangerously open garbage shoots, the leaking pipes and subsequent puddles in places, the broken fire extinguishers and the cracked

walls. We were invited into some flats and even offered a cup of tea. At others we were eyed suspiciously and subtly asked to leave. We were ignored at a few. One of the flats was home to 17 foreign refugees who had been living there for 6 months. Many flats were occupied by students; an affordable stepping stone to a better life later. In one of the flats we found a plush double bed as the main attraction of the lounge and a host wearing no more than boxer shorts. In many of the flats I found people who did not match the criteria for potential participants, but every now and again I found a person who was exactly what I was looking for and I greedily took down their information.

I identified two appropriate participants in this manner, phoned them and arranged a meeting for an informal discussion concerning the research. During this discussion I described my research in an understandable manner, explained what would be expected of a research participant, answered questions which arose and gained consent from them. The other participants of this study were identified through opportunistic sampling; in other words, I didn't go out looking for them. Instead, they crossed my path throughout the research process and I identified them as appropriate research participants. (Refer to Appendix A for an example of the participant consent form)

The fact that I would conduct intensive interviews with the research participants dictated that I would need a relatively small sample; four - six participants, including myself. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

I documented my sampling decisions as part of my research audit trail, in the form of a reflexive journal. (Refer to 3.6.1. Data collection and –recording for the content of the journal). The data that was recorded in this journal proved an invaluable source of autoethnographic information, specifically with regards to tracking my own reflections in relation to the research setting.

3.3. The research population – The brand

*‘...now I paint people who happen to be in a particular place.’ – Peter Wright
(BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)*

This description of the research population (the wider universe of interest) is intended to clarify the logic behind my sampling strategy and to better explain the relationship between my sample and the research population.

In its broadest sense, the research population that I was interested in were people living in poverty (Refer to 1.6. Clarification of terms) who were more likely than others to be exposed to environmental barriers (Amato, 1992). However, I was working in the inner city and it was convenient for me to conduct my research in an urban setting. Comparatively little is known about the implications of rural poverty versus urban poverty for well-being (Amato, 1992), and hence, I chose to narrow my population to urban areas, and more specifically “the urban poor” who “cluster in inner city neighbourhoods with sub-standard housing, high crime rates, excessive noise levels, and inadequate services.” (Stephens, 1995:p109 - 110)

Council runs ‘death traps’

Tenants march on mayor’s office over squalid flats

Amukelani Chauke

Thousands of Tshwane residents are living in stinking, filthy conditions in city-owned buildings.

Residents of the Schubart Park and Kruger Park complexes in Vermeulen

Street said their health was being affected by the council’s failure to properly maintain the buildings they label ‘death traps’.

Jacolien Ackerman of the community organisation Pretoria Evangelism and Nurture said: ‘Last year, a

woman in a wheelchair died after she could not get to the ground floor to use a public phone to call for medical assistance – because the lift was not working.’

Metro has established that the company that operates the lifts in the two buildings

has switched them off, citing non-payment by the council as a reason for not carrying out necessary maintenance work.

In addition, said residents, water and sewage leaks in both buildings are out of

control, leaving the walls of many flats damp and smelly. Said one resident, who did not want to be named: 'Due to the water the walls are turning green, they stink and one can easily put a finger through the wall.'

A spokesman for Tshwane Housing...blamed the deteriorating condition of the buildings on the 'wear and tear' of overcrowding, and vandalism by tenants. (Excerpts from Chauke, 2008:p.1-2)

Nightmare in complex is council's mistake, says dr. Gwen Cobus Claassen

'We have a huge, huge problem on our hands.' With these words Dr Gwen Ramokgopa, executive mayor of the Tshwane Metro council, highlighted her concerns yesterday, after visiting the council's deteriorated apartment complexes, Schubartpark and Krugerpark, in the western part of the Pretoria business centre.

Ramokgopa described the inhospitable conditions and deterioration of the buildings as a 'safety- and health nightmare'. The once popular block of flats, which boasted its own shopping centre, swimming pools, play parks and community halls in 1977 when it was opened, has deteriorated into an unsafe slum

dwelling in the past few years.

There isn't a single working elevator, water is seeping down walls everywhere, residents rarely have water and the structural damage is unmistakable. (Freely translated excerpts from Claassen, 2008:p.7)

The Schubart Park apartment complex in the inner-city of Pretoria seemed to match the description of a 'sub-standard' (Refer to 1.6. Clarification of terms) housing facility, in which people living in poverty were densely concentrated. I selected it as an appropriate research setting.

3.4. The research participants – The primary hues

‘He always mixed his colours on the canvas. He was very careful to keep an impression of transparency in his picture throughout the different phases of the work ... he worked on the whole surface of his canvas [and] the motif gradually emerged from the seeming confusion, with each brushstroke.’ – Jean Renoir, son of the Impressionist Painter Auguste Renoir, writing in his memoir Renoir: My Father (About.com, 2012)

3.4.1. Sampling criteria

The research participants were not sampled primarily on the basis of belonging to specific demographic groups, but instead on the basis of their experiences (Mason, 2005) with poverty and the resulting environmental barriers. Hence, the participants I chose from the research setting were all people living in poverty, as it is defined for the purpose of this research.

I selected participants from different age-, gender-, and ethnic groups in order to maximise variation, for the purpose of increasing the trustworthiness of the study. (Refer to 3.7.2. Maximising variation) This also allowed me to consider differences in the way that people experienced their environments which were related to age, gender or ethnic culture, and it allowed me to consider similarities despite these differences, which would be an indication of the characteristics of the sub-culture.

I did not choose people on the basis of their religious orientation. However, people’s religious values and beliefs influenced the way in which they experienced their environment and I explored this during the interviews.

Even though I expected that the majority of the population from which the sample would be chosen, would be functioning on lower levels of creative participation (that is self-differentiation and self-presentation), I purposely included persons who seemed to function on a higher level of creative participation (that is imitative- or active participation) as a discrepant- or negative case, (Mason,

2005; Merriam, 2002) as a strategy of increasing the trustworthiness of the study. This implies that I included cases in my sample which contradicted my developing analytical ideas – that people living in poor socio-economic conditions were mostly functioning on lower levels of creative participation. In other words, I used my sampling, not only to generate data which supported my explanation, but I also searched rigorously for cases which did not fit with my ideas and could not be accounted for by the explanation that I was developing. (Mason, 2005)

I did not include people with noticeable physical disabilities in the sample. The reason was that physical disability brings along its own additional environmental barriers, which would considerably affect the way in which people experience their environments. Additionally, the lowered physical endurance that is associated with physical disability may have hindered the participation of individuals in the interviews.

I did not wish to include people who presented with acute symptoms of any of the psychiatric illnesses as they are classified in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) (Sadock & Sadock, 2003) in my sample. The reason was that the cognitive and volitional effects of psychiatric illness would hinder the participation of individuals in interviews and hence, prevent me from generating rich data from these participants.

For the sake of this study, I assumed that the Schubart Park residents would have a normal intellectual distribution and that the participants of the study would reflect such a distribution. Intellectual ability would, hence, play a negligible role in the changes that I observed in the participants' creative participation. The variation of the participants' personalities was viewed as an internal factor that might plausibly affect the creative participation of the participants of this study.

3.4.2. *Experience sampling*

The nature of this study required that the research participants should possess rich knowledge about their context, that is; they should have been able to generate data which described depth, nuance and complexity (Mason, 2005) regarding poverty, environmental barriers and the sub-culture of the research setting. For this reason, only individuals who had had at least five years' worth of experience in the research setting were included in the sample, as they would be able to provide the necessary rich data and representativeness of the research setting.

3.4.3. *Texts & artefacts*

I selected texts, such as newspaper articles, of which the content described the research setting and the perceived effect that the setting had on its residents. I also included photographs which described my experience of the research setting or which carried particular meaning within the sub-culture. I described the logic of selecting specific texts and artefacts as part of my audit trail. (Refer to 3.7.3. Dependability)

3.5. **The measurement instruments** – The brushes

'A violinist had a violin, a painter his palette. All I had was myself. I was the instrument that I must care for.' – Josephine Baker (*ThinkExist Quotations*, 1999 – 2012)

3.5.1. *The researcher*

Patton, in writing on qualitative methodology, states that: "The only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves." (Patton, 2002:p.106) For this reason, in qualitative research, the researcher is considered the primary data collection

instrument (Merriam, 2002). Patton (2002) further notes that, in autoethnography, the foundational question of the researcher is: “How does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this culture, situation, event and / or way of life?” (2002:p.84) This implies that the researcher maintains no pretence of being objective (Denzin, 1989 (a)), but rather reflexively evaluates her own experiences, with the aim of gaining understanding into the culture under study. (Patton, 2002; Denzin, 1989 (a))

I was the instrument for this study; collecting field notes and artefacts.

3.5.2. Interviews

I made use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews to generate data from the research participants. I made use of a procedure which is suggested by Mason (2005) to plan for these interviews. (Refer to Appendix B for an interview schedule)

The questions were adjusted and additions were made throughout the research process. The response of the research participants to the interview questions determined any such changes. I conducted pilot interviews with two Schubart Park residents before the commencement of my data-collection. It was analysed and I received feedback from my supervisor. This adds to the trustworthiness of the research. (Refer to 3.7.3. Training and practice)

3.6. Procedures – The techniques

3.6.1. Data collection- and recording

Table I provides a summary of the data collection- and recording process.

| Data Source | Method of collection & recording |
|---|---|
| Researcher | Passive –and participant observations were recorded in a reflexive journal, field notes and memory |
| Various Schubart Park residents (some of whom were selected participants), inner city residents and PEN personnel | Semi-structured interviews were digitally recorded. The content of informal conversations were recorded in a reflexive journal and memory |
| Local and national newspapers, websites and blogs | Articles, photographs and posts relevant to the Schubart Park protests were filed as artefacts |

Table I – Summary of the data collection –and recording process

- Passive observations

The initial method of data collection that I utilised was that of passive observation, and I employed it throughout the course of the research. This method allowed me to place myself within the research setting for short periods of time to observe the population, in an attempt to identify suitable research participants and to initiate contact with them. It also allowed me to make observations regarding the research setting and the sub-culture which functions in it. This method further compelled me to remain unobtrusive in situations in which I might normally have intervened or made suggestions as a therapist, for the sake of a deeper understanding of the culture. These observations were recorded in the form of field notes.

- Participant observation

The most characteristic technique of data collection in ethnography is that of participant observation. Working in the inner city allowed me prolonged access to the research setting as both a participant in, and observer of the inner city community. The data of my experiences in the research setting were recorded in the reflexive journal as field notes. Supporting photography was recorded as artefacts.

- Individual in-depth interviews

I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with each participant individually. Though I used the interview schedule as a guideline (Refer to Appendix B) the questions that I asked the participants varied according to each of their unique stories. All the interviews were, however, opened with the question: 'Could you tell me about your life in Schubart Park?' The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

- Reflexive journal

I am naturally inclined toward writing down my intense experiences and emotions in the form of poetry as a means of dealing with and making sense out of them (Refer to the poem in Chapter 1). As such, a written journal, which would form part of my field notes, seemed a natural choice for collecting my own experiences. The content included my own experiences (thoughts and emotions), which I documented by making use of a process called emotional recall. I also reflected on these emotional experiences and thoughts by making use of a process called systematic sociological introspection, in which one analyzes one's thoughts and feelings as socially constructed processes. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) The content further consisted of questions which arose throughout the research, problems and issues which I experienced and the reasons behind the solutions which I decided to employ, ideas that I came up with and a running record of my interaction with the data. This journal serves as the audit trail of the research, as a strategy to ensure the reliability thereof.

- Assessment of levels of creative participation

Throughout the research, I made informal observations of the research participants' everyday lives, which related to their level of creative participation. Such information was noted in the field notes and enabled me to determine the participants' level of creative participation.

- Collection of artefacts

I collected relevant texts as I came across them during the course of the research. I collected photographs of objects and events and collected documents as their meaning within the setting and in relation to the sub-culture became clear. Artefacts other than documents were recorded digitally, while documents were kept in a filing system.

3.6.2. Data analysis

Data in the form of field notes, transcriptions and journal entries were analysed by making use of an inductive data analysis process. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007) This process required that I emerged myself in an analysis of the raw data to try and identify units of meaning; that is pieces of information (a word, a sentence, a few lines or even several pages) which contain a single idea. From these meaning units I then identified topics which emerged from the data and categorised similar topics under a descriptive name. I then identified relationships amongst the categories, looked for recurring patterns and interpreted them as themes.

Artefacts were analysed and matched to the emerging themes from the data analysis and then served to enrich such themes.

3.7. Trustworthiness – Preserving the painting (Krefting, 1991)

3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility pertains to the researcher's ability to adequately represent the multiple realities, which were revealed by the research participants. A research study is regarded as sufficiently credible when it presents accurate descriptions and interpretations of the lived experiences of the research setting. (Krefting 1991) In an autoethnography, this depends to a great extent on the credibility of the narrator. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011) As such, I employed the following strategies to ensure the credibility of this study:

- Triangulation

I made use of multiple sources of data as a means of triangulation. These data sources included interviews with various participants, collected texts and artefacts and my own experiences as a passive- and participant observer.

- Saturation

I planned on continuing to collect data, specifically by means of interviews, until I reached a point of theory-saturation. (Refer to 3.2. Sampling) Though much of the information that the interviews produced proved similar across the various participants, there were also large discrepancies amongst their responses. I was, hence, unable to reach a point of data saturation.

- Discrepant case analysis

I purposefully sought out individuals in the research setting who challenged my expectations of the findings. (Refer to 3.4.1. Sampling criteria)

- Reflexivity

I kept track of my own bias by keeping a reflexive journal throughout the study, in which I critically reflected on my position toward the research topic, the factors on

which I based decisions as well as the values and assumptions which might have affected my findings. Within an autoethnographic research methodology such reflexivity is deemed as important, in that it illuminates the culture under study. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)

3.7.2. Transferability

Transferability pertains to the extent to which the findings of this research study matches contexts outside of the research setting. In autoethnography sufficient transferability is determined by the researcher's ability to sufficiently illuminate cultural processes, so that readers may determine the extent to which a story describes their own experiences, or experiences of others that they know. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011) During this research, the following strategies were employed to ensure the transferability of the study:

- Adequate database

Autoethnographic writing is highly personal. For this reason it was important that the descriptions I made and the information that I provided were thick and rich; adequately conveying the nuances and experience climate of the research setting, so that readers would be able to determine how closely their situations matched the one that I was describing.

- Maximising variation

Though I selected a diverse sample as a means of maximising variation, (Refer to 3.4.2 Sampling criteria) I didn't fully utilise the potential for maximising variation in this study. Fully utilising it would entail selecting a much greater number of research participants and handling a load of data that would be inappropriate for the academic purpose of completing this dissertation.

3.7.3. *Dependability*

The dependability of a research study relates to the consistency of its findings. It is important that the data collection, -recording and –analysis is sufficiently described, so it would be possible to repeat the study. (Krefting, 1991) During this research, the following strategies were employed to ensure the dependability of the study:

- Training and practice

I was trained in interviewing skills during my undergraduate studies. However, I practiced these skills by conducting a pilot interview, on which I received feedback prior to going into the research field.

- Audit Trail

The audit trail of my research was documented in the form of a reflexive journal. (Refer to 3.6.1. Data collection- and recording)

- Peer Review

I provided excerpts of the raw interview data to my supervisor, to assess whether the conclusions that I have drawn from the data were plausible.

3.7.4. *Confirmability*

The confirmability of a research study suggests that another researcher could reach comparable conclusions, given the same data and research setting. (Krefting, 1991) In autoethnography, being as highly personalised as it is, the confirmability measures would ensure that the findings emerged from the data, rather than from my own predispositions. (Shenton, 2004) During this research, the following strategies were employed to ensure the confirmability of the study:

- Investigator's position

My position was recorded in a reflexive journal. (Refer to 3.7.1. Reflexivity)

- Peer Review

My supervisor reviewed whether my interpretation of the data was plausible. (Refer to 3.7.3. Peer review)

3.8. Ethical Considerations

During the initial stage of the research, while employing passive observation as a data collection technique, I informed members of the research population that I was a researcher who was interested in learning more about the way that people conducted their living in the research setting. This information formed part of my informal introduction to the research setting. I wished to represent myself as a non-threatening observer without creating false expectations that I was going to effect some sort of change within the setting.

I obtained permission from the executive committee of PEN (Refer to Appendix C for the PEN consent form), since some of the PEN activities provided me with an opportunity to enter the research setting. (Appendix D provides a description of the organisation and its relevant functions)

An informal discussion was held with each participant, during which the research was explained to them. They each received a consent form (Refer to Appendix A for the Participant consent form), which they were expected to sign once they understood the purpose and process of the research and if they were willing to participate.

All interviews throughout the research were handled with confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in the privacy of an office and the recordings and

transcriptions were used only for the purpose of the research. I removed any names and identifying information from the transcriptions.

I realised that the content of the interviews could elicit emotional responses from the participants, which I would handle by making use of the counselling skills which I was trained in. I planned that, if the situation stretched beyond my own capacity, I would refer the participant to one of the social workers or the psychologist working at PEN. This was never necessary.

The research, specifically during the participant observation phase, posed the risk of negatively affecting me. My supervisor monitored me and helped me to regularly bracket and debrief. I also had the option of consulting a psychologist when it became necessary.

Due to the nature of this research, the possibility existed that additional ethical issues may have arisen during the research. In such a case, I planned on consulting with the Ethics committee for guidance.

3.9. Concluding remarks

This chapter has set out a detailed and systematic description of the methodology that I made use of during this research process. Here and there it has also provided an inkling of the experiences that I would encounter in employing this methodology; hinting at what is to follow in the next chapter – the content of which describes, for me, a life-altering experience.

CHAPTER 4

The Painting

[pānt] v. (1) to depict as if by painting; describe vividly in words. (Dictionary.com, 2012)

4.1. Introduction

In these communities there †(has to be) outlets for their feelings, there (has to be) room in a space for their stories to be told, and they (have to know that they) will be applauded...and that their pain is everybody else's pain. – Adapted from Tom Hiddleston (BrainyQuote, 2012)

‘What I would like to know is just your story of living in Schubart Park... just feel comfortable and tell me your story,’ I told the participants as they suspiciously eyed the digital voice recorder I was using to record every word they uttered. They generously squeezed their precious gift onto my palette and I painted their stories.

Figure III provides an overview of the themes that were identified, and hence also a summary of the findings. A detailed mind map of each theme is included before its analysis.

† Brackets mine

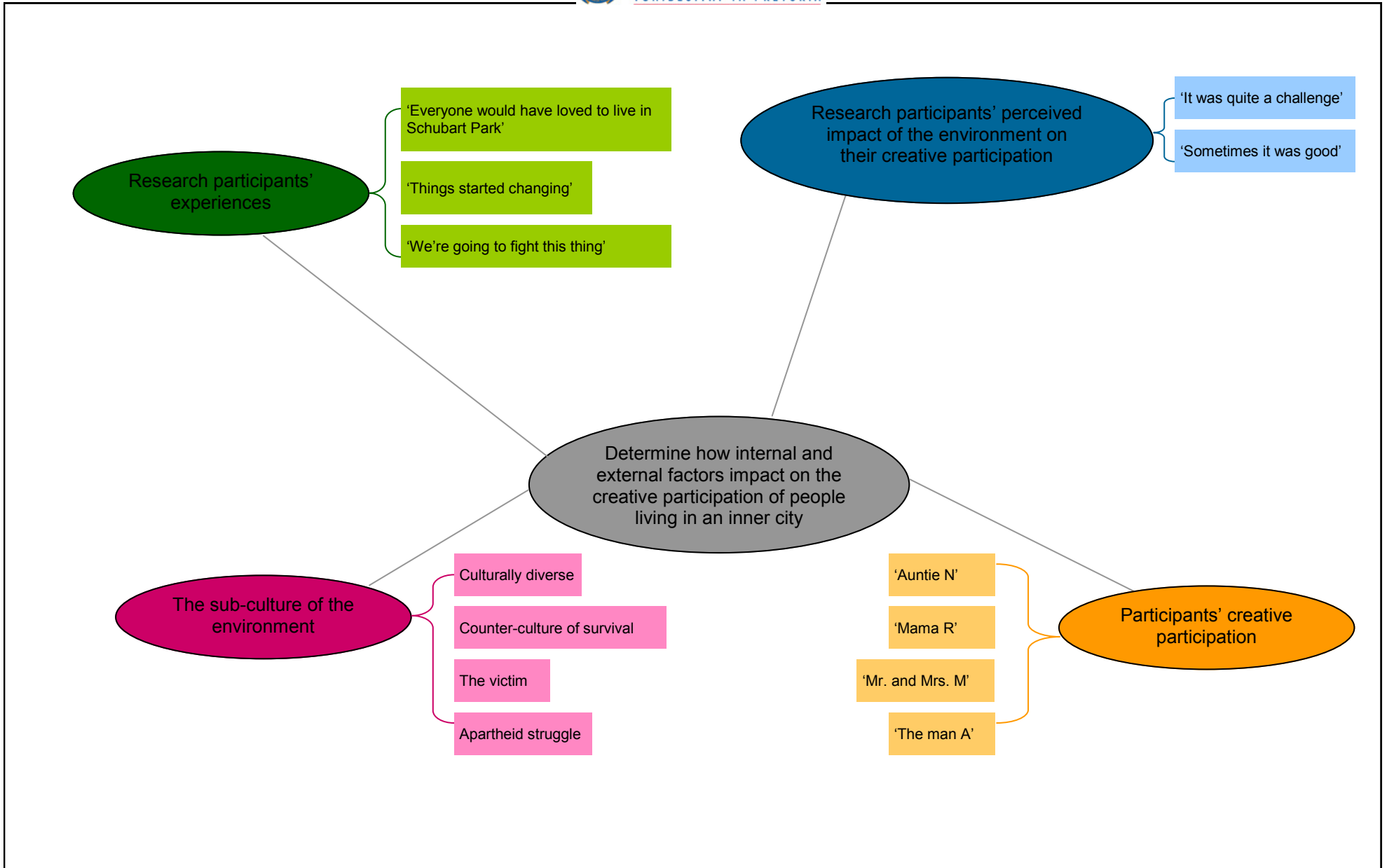


Figure III—A summary of the research findings

4.2. Participant profiles

Before delving into the findings, however, I would like to introduce the reader to the research participants by means of a short description of each of them. I have included mention of the level of creative participation of each participant, but a detailed description follows in ‘4.5. The emergence of and change in participants’ creative participation.’

4.2.1. *The iron lamb*

When I close my eyes to think of ‘Auntie N’, I see a vivid picture of an ordinary, 64-year old, white woman, dancing an enraged dance of protest amongst the front lines of a remonstrating crowd of black faces; a tired old lady, crying tears of desolation and helplessness; a desperate woman, trying to sell a home-baked banana bread to anyone willing to buy it. This woman, a resident of Schubart Park for 14 years and member of Schubart Park resident’s committee for 8 years, is at once ordinary and extraordinary, bold but meek, strong yet empathetic. As a young girl, she says, her mother used to wonder what would become of her, because ‘I was very shy, I was reserved’ – a far cry from the woman that I got to know. Instead, I perceived her as a woman on an active participatory level of creative participation; constantly solving problems, reaching out to others and sharing what she had, even though at times it was little.

4.2.2. *The mother who moved*

‘Mama R’, the friendly, well-groomed 28-year old Northern-Sotho woman, whom I met as a cleaner in our organisation’s clinic, went to live in Schubart Park in 2004. She moved out of Schubart Park within 5 years of moving in. After the tragic eviction drama in 2008 she was finally convinced that it was no longer safe for her or her children to live in Schubart Park. Hers is a story of someone who was aware of what was expected, but who was without motivation strong enough to consistently conform to the norms. Through challenging odds, and desperately

wanting to act in the best interest of her children, she grew into a level of passive participation that contained more depth than before her stay in Schubart Park.

4.2.3. The city-slick cowboy

'The man A', a 30-year old Phedi man was young and ambitious and certain that a better life was waiting in the big city. Having spent some time living on the streets, he managed to get together enough money to pay the deposit on a flat and moved into Schubart Park in 2001. After experiencing first-hand the structural decay of the building, he decided to get involved in the residents committee. His committee membership seemed only to provide a new social arena in which to explore. Though he was elected the chairperson, it is doubtful whether he truly understood the Schubart Park problem. Instead, it became another opportunity to present himself: 'Being the chairperson of Schubart Park it's worse than...being the president of the country. You are the chairperson, you are their father, you are everything to them.' In this role, he was unable to constructively problem-solve; indicative of a poor task concept and characteristic of a level of self-presentation.

4.2.4. The blaming bunch

Desperate for alternative accommodation after a mishap with their move from Pietermaritzburg, Mr. and Mrs. M, an Indian couple – 47 and 53 years old respectively, their son, his girlfriend and their daughter went to live on the 15th floor in one of the Schubart Park towers. By the time that the lifts in Schubart Park were no longer working and power failures were eminent, the Schubart Park demise resembled the demise that had set in within most of the spheres of the couple's life. They blamed the pastor and the Pakistani, they blamed the foreigners and the government, and they blamed their son and their daughter; all indicative of a lower level of interpersonal functioning. Yet, they managed to solve the problem of maintaining their daily livelihood, by running a tuck shop from their flat; a capacity afforded them by a level of passive participation.

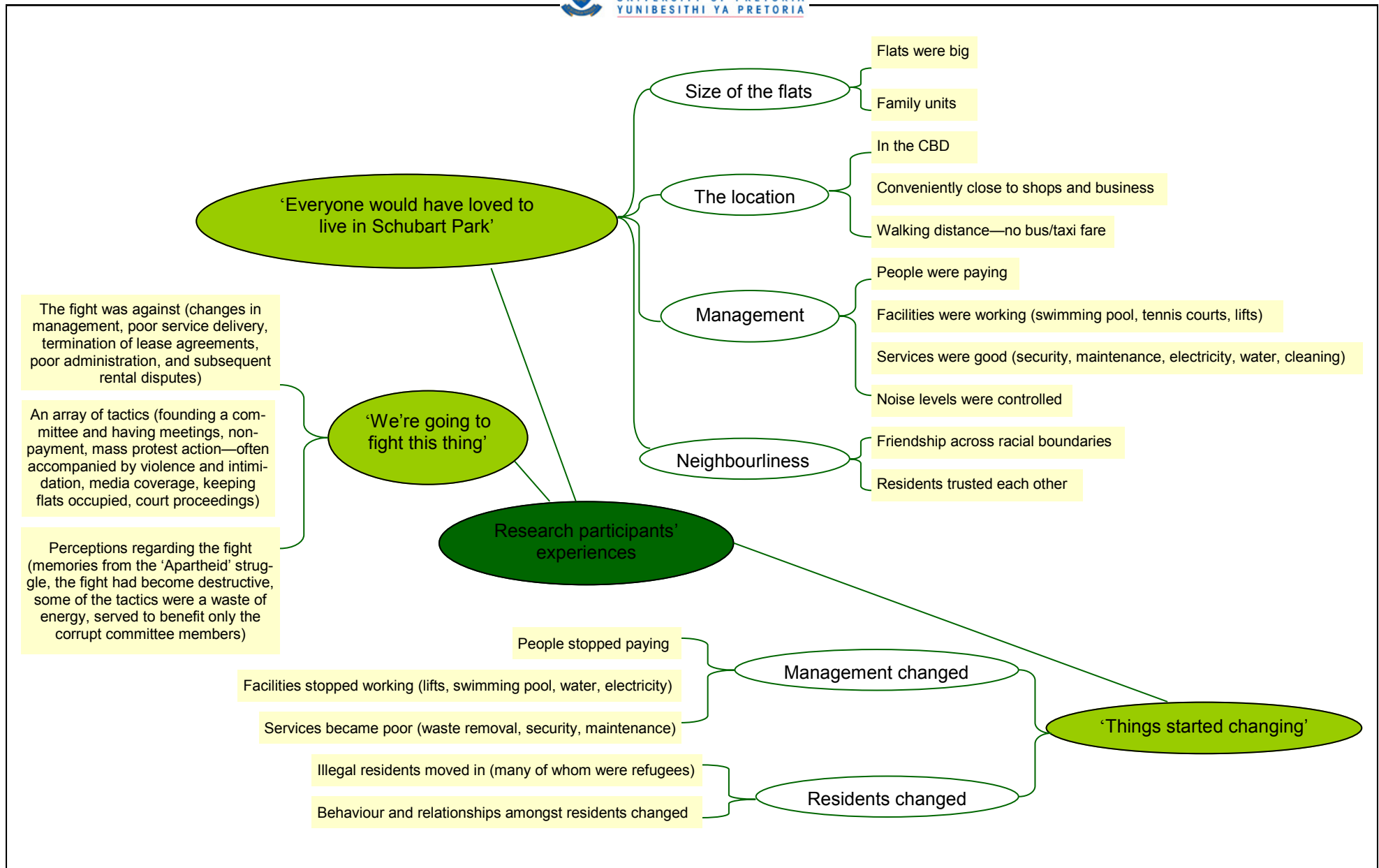


Figure IV—A summary of the analysis of the participants' experiences

4.3. Participants' experiences of their environment – Focal point

These participants, upon moving into their respective flats (some of them in the early 1990's and some as late as 2001), were still basking in the dying rays of the hay-day of Schubart Park. 'When we moved in there, it was still the good times.' 'I really believe that **everyone would have loved to live in Schubart Park.**' 'And then, of course, people before us actually had it even better.'

The towering blocks of flats, with their large 'family units', appealed to people because of *size* and *location*. The complex is situated in the heart of the Pretoria CBD and the flats higher up provide a magnificent view of the city: 'To live up there, you know, was something special, because you could see basically everything.' It is a convenient walking distance from many shops and businesses; as a matter of fact, there is a convenience store in the building itself. 'You don't have to pay bus fare or taxi fare...to do your shopping.'

It seems as though proper *management* played an important role in making Schubart Park a 'very good place.' Under the reign of the provincial 'Land affairs and housing' department of the apartheid regime in the 1990's and later, but to a lesser extent, under the contractual management of City Properties at the beginning of the new millenium, 'people were paying,' enabling the management to take proper care of the facilities and to deliver necessary services; 'the place was running smoothly.' 'There was a swimming pool...hot days you could go down and have a swim. Tennis courts were there, you could play tennis,' and all the lifts were working. 'The security was there' and 'there was no crime by that time. Everything was ok. You know the issue of the noise, it was controllable.' 'The maintenance was better than perfect,' 'if you had problems in your flat, then you went down to housing and they would come on the same day, basically, to have a look.' The tenants were also 'spoilt' with properly functioning electricity, water and cleaning services.

In those early days, the participants experienced a friendly *neighbourliness* amongst each other. They made friends across racial boundaries and trusted each other. 'We got to know many people there, lots of people. A...multi-racial area it was. We had a lot of white friends, the coloureds, the blacks too'. 'If you are not around and maybe...going somewhere' you could 'just leave your door and go.' And then your neighbour would 'tell you that: "I saw you are not around and I just close your door." I say: "Thank you."'

'But, when time goes on, you know, ***things started changing.***' It seems as though the change started gradually, so that participants disagree on the exact event that led to the eventual demise of the Schubart Park buildings. There is, however, a fair consensus that the *change in management* played a major role.

In 1999 the management of Schubart Park was transferred from the provincial government to the housing department of the Tshwane municipality who, in their turn, out-sourced the management to City Properties on a 5-year contract. Many of the participants agree that 'when the City Properties were running the place it was very good, the place was.' There are others, however, who are convinced that the seeds for the downfall of Schubart Park were already sown when the 'buildings were fraudulently transferred...into the city of Tshwane' and 'the subsidy was not transferred as well.' Without a subsidy, the Schubart Park management was left with no choice but to increase the rent. 'Now they had to escalate the price, for example, for the bachelor from R150 to R560. Now poor people could not afford to pay anymore.'

'In June '99...they decided...they're going to give the place to...City Property...to manage and we must now pay our rent to them. Then they came and knocked on my door and they said: "Auntie N...you people won't be able to pay City Property, because you are pensioners." I'll be honest with you; I didn't pay my rent...because we haven't got a contract with City Property.'

When the 5-year contract between the Tshwane municipality and City Properties ended, the Tshwane municipal government decided to take matters into their own hands. 'They now...formed this new housing committee...New Housing Forum.' Many participants agree that 'when the Housing Company took over...they wrecked the place.'

The facilities which once made Schubart Park an attractive place to live started deteriorating rapidly; 'the place just deteriorated and deteriorated and deteriorated.' One of the first things that stopped working was the three lifts in these 21- and 25 storey buildings. 'They could not manage to service the lifts. They were indebted to...the company that was responsible for...the service of those lifts. We had 3 lifts per block, now the first one went off. That was when everything started. And then the second one went off...until there was no lift.' 'And then the issue of the swimming pool; they could not service it. Now it has to be closed down.' The water and electricity started causing problems as well; 'there was a time that we had to sit without water for almost an entire week,' 'and then we had no lights for days and days. Our food got spoilt; we had to throw it away.'

Along with the facilities, the services that had maintained order and kept the place neat declined as well. 'They did nothing, nothing, nothing.' 'They never used to clean...then the stink as you going up the stairs.' 'And even the people, they messed down...You sit downstairs; they're throwing you with water from the top, or whatever, bottles.'

My impression of Schubart Park is one of chaos, filth and decay. Weeds grow lushly in the seams of the paving where the concrete slabs meet, old beer bottles, papers, an old umbrella and other kinds of rubbish litter the public square. Rubbish flies through the sky, flung from flat windows onto the square,

with no regard for potential victims. I'm somewhat scared that I'll get hit with something – a 2l Coke bottle came quite close. There are brown water stains from years of rainwater draining down the walls, the blue paint has faded in the harsh sunlight and it doesn't seem like anybody is going to repaint it. Looking up at these buildings, I can see a burnt apartment, which was simply left that way. Like a rotten tooth it shouts: 'Decay!' for the entire world to see. It seems like everybody in this place have stopped working against the inevitable tendency towards chaos, which sets in if one doesn't work HARD; it is as though the force pulling towards the inevitable destruction has won out.



Heaps of rubbish piled up all over Schubart Park premises (Labuschagne, 2008)



The weeds had taken over the netball courts (Henning, 2008)

The extent of the destruction was echoed by the failing security services of the buildings and safety became a rare commodity in Schubart Park. 'There's no security,' so 'that place is not safe because...everything is happening at Schubart Park. Children are dying there...and...people are selling drugs. Right now you can't even open the door without locking. You have to open and lock the door.' 'I have a personal belief criminals...are hiding there...they started killing one another. Now, already 3 people died in those buildings. Now, as I speak to you even today, there's someone that died – they killed him.'

M, a Pakistani man, is the owner of the Schubart Park cell phone shop. He has been living in Schubart Park for about 4 years – that is as long as his shop has been there. He says that, even though it is difficult living in Schubart Park, it is beneficial because he is so close to his shop. When he stands on the balcony of his flat, he can look right into his shop. Initially during our conversation he is suspicious of me and asks me a lot of questions. Finally he points to an 'official-looking' white man in the shop across from his and says: 'Is that man with you?' After assuring him that I am not 'with' that man, he relaxes a little and talks to me about his experience as a refugee living in the inner city and in Schubart Park.

Suddenly a man, dark in complexion, enters the store. He is most definitely not a South African citizen. He greets the shop owner, hands him a bag and leaves. Within a couple of minutes he returns along with two other men, one of whom he takes into the backroom of the shop (along with the bag) and the other whom he leaves to guard the shop entrance. It is at this point that I realise that something suspicious is 'going down' and I become aware of a frightened pull in my stomach.

‘A considerable number of drug dealers from Nigeria and Tanzania...operate from within the dark fetid corners of the rundown structures’ (of Schubart Park). (Mysoa, 2011) They ‘are separated into several rival gangs, who are forever at loggerheads with one another. Their violent disagreements...contribute significantly to the current body count of corpses’ that ‘are collected at Schubart Park, almost on a weekly basis. In 99 percent of the cases the cause of death is unnatural, ranging from drug overdose, to murder. ‘I was...informed how the occupants of Schubart Park always make the task much lighter for the mortuary guys, by carrying the dead downstairs – i.e. after stripping the deceased of all possessions.’ (Mysoa, 2011)

The Schubart Park buildings were stripped bare as well; ‘they steal the...lights...so it is dark. They...steal everything there,’ and ‘the people were stealing the cables and there were people breaking in the houses.’ ‘Somebody tried to steal inside of my flat, because of...the back window...you can go to any flat at the back window. They...broke my window.’

Theft further crippled the already deficient management and the maintenance services at Schubart Park turned into a nightmare. ‘They replace nothing, they replace nothing. What they’ (the thieves) ‘take out there is left that way. They did nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing. Nothing. Basically nothing. If something breaks...in your flat, they refused – you have to fix it by yourself. And when we called the people...if they had to come out; no, you can forget it. You have to wait until they feel up to it.’ The poor maintenance started affecting the very structure of the building. ‘They must have flow valves for the (leaking) pipes. They did not

replace them. Now that resulted to a lot of leakages into the units. D block...was not well constructed. Instead of using bricks...they used boards. When the leakages started they became wet, now they started falling one by one...they did nothing about that. They didn't fix the master floor valves, they didn't replace the pipes that were leaking. Now, when the time goes on...even though it was bricks, when it comes to water, cement and water, they are not friends...the water...starts attacking cement.'



The walls of the buildings started caving in (Henning, 2008)

The structural ruin of the building went hand in hand with a similarly shattering *change in residents* of the Schubart Park community. 'They moved in and out just

like they wanted to. It still happens daily – a family moves out and then a different family just moves in, whether they are foreigners or...refugees.’ The influx of illegal residents seemingly brought along a change in the values, beliefs and ideas which shaped the norms of the residents. Consequently, the behaviour of the residents along with their relationships amongst one another changed. Many of the participants feel that the illegal residents ‘corrupted the place.’[‡]

The changes in their home caused a considerable upset among the residents of Schubart Park and, with their vast numbers to their advantage, they decided: **‘we’re going to fight this thing.’** Initially, in 2000 – 2001, *their fight was directed towards* the new management; City Properties: ‘We haven’t got a contract with...City Property. We got...a contract with housing department and with the...government and that is that. So, we’re going to stand up.’ ‘City Property...told the people...they must come and register with them. We refused...because...we have a contract. Why do we have to sign another contract? That is why...we fought. We said: “They must take out City Property and they must bring back Housing.”’

When City Properties proved to be incapable of properly managing the buildings, the residents directed their intensified protest toward the poor service delivery. ‘They did nothing – I mean, it’s not our responsibility...it’s not our flats, you know, we’re renting it from them. So...we “toyitoyi’d”[§] a lot.’ When the City Properties contract finally came to an end, the residents expected an improvement in service delivery, but ‘everything started to be worse.’ ‘According to me, they did not have enough budget to...they did not have that capacity.’

Adding to the fury of the residents, the Housing Company Tshwane, ‘which was not fit enough to...run Schubart Park’, sent out letters to residents at Schubart

[‡] Refer to 4.5. Objects in the background for a detailed discussion in this regard.

[§] A commonly used South-African term, referring to a protest march accompanied by the singing of protest songs and dancing.

Park in 2007, informing them of the termination of their lease agreements and threatening them with eviction 'due to the fact that' they 'are owing a certain amount of money'. In response the residents 'had a march.'

Though there were residents who weren't paying, letters were also sent to residents who had been diligently paying their monthly rent. The poor administration on the part of the Schubart Park management and the subsequent rental disputes, gave the fight further momentum. 'Unfortunately...their administration was very poor (and) some of the records where people were paying...were not showing. The only thing that was there is that people are owing.'

'We were paying all the way right through. And...when the new...Housing took over, they gave us a letter and said we owed them R50 000. So we asked them: "How come?" they said: "No, things are wrong." We just didn't go back. We didn't pay after that.' The administration was handled so poorly that confusion arose regarding the bank account which had to be used for the payment of rent; 'One day we received the letter...they told me that: "You are not paying your flat and you are owing almost R20 000". So...I felt...surprised! The time I deposit the money, I put my slip safely. So, I go with...those slips...to...the office of...Schubart Park...and I show them the slip. And then they told me that the bank account is wrong...we have been paying your money inside...somebody's bank account. And it is not me alone; everyone was having...the same problem. A lot of people they do pay the rent but to somebody else bank account.' 'And we fought against that, because...why must you pay to one bank account and I must pay to another?'

The rental disputes between the residents and management were not only about bank account discrepancies, but also about large discrepancies in the amount of rent that residents had to pay; 'I was staying inside a bachelor and my neighbour was staying inside a 2 and half flat, but he was paying R300 and something

and...I was paying R1200 – and they were fighting for that thing. “Why...some people are paying small money, some people are paying lot of money?” And then City of Tshwane told them that: “These people are paying small money, they stay there for a long time and then you people, you are still new...that is why. Every year we change things...that is why you are paying R1200.’ They say: “No, that is not fair.” They start to fight there...causing problem.’

The residents employed *an array of tactics* in the fight for their home. Their initial step was founding a committee who held meetings amongst themselves and with the residents to discuss their plan of action. ‘We founded a committee’ and ‘many evenings they came and knocked and woke us: “We have a meeting now.” Then we would sit: “What are we going to do now? This thing is going too far. All those years, since ’99...we got together...and we really tried.” “They (the committee) tell you what to do and...meetings they have, saying: “Don’t do this, don’t do that.”’ Later the committee also held meetings with the Tshwane Housing Company and requested meetings with the mayor: ‘that evening...they had a meeting with everyone...all those people...the people from Housing.’

The committee, now in the front lines of the fight, encouraged other residents to join them in a number of ploys aimed at forcing the Schubart Park Management into action; one of which was non-payment of rent: ‘We drew in many people’ and ‘people like me...decided not to pay them anymore. I’m not paying them. Never!’

The committee, realising the advantage that a vast number of residents offered, decided to use mass protest action as another line of attack. When the fight intensified and the emotions started running high, these protest actions were often accompanied by intimidation and violence. ‘We toyi-toyi’d countless times, countless times.’



A poster gives voice to the violence that accompanied the protests (Born, 2008)



Mass protest action; the emotions running high (Born, 2008)

‘They give us little paper like this that you have to go to your work place; give...these little paper that tomorrow...we are going to strike and then you are not coming to work. I told them that they...will never accept this... piece of paper. They said: “No, there is no one who is going to go outside tomorrow.” By 3 o’clock in the morning...all comrade...were blocking the gate. Some of them...were walking around, up and down, looking if...there’s somebody who go outside. One lady tried...to go out...they beat her, they beat her...ambulance come and take her. I don’t know if was dead or was living, because of was still just laying like this. So, there is no way that...you’re going to work or somewhere. By past 8 the comrades come each and every flat; knock. “Come, come, come, come, come!” They forced you to come...unless maybe you’re sick, they leave you. There was...those people who hide themselves inside the flat and then...later on they go there, they shout them...sometimes they beat them. They forced us to join them. So, there is no way to say: “No, I’m not going to join you.” You have to strike like that. They will tell you the rules: “Now...we are going to move...to that place and from there we are coming back. From there you can go to your flat.”

These mass protests often left a trail of destruction; ‘the residents went to the street and blocked the roads; barricade every road that they believe, every street that they believe...it’s leading to wherever they think is important. Like, for example, Vermeulen...it’s going to Monitoria - now started burning tyres.’ They also started ‘burning dustbins’ and ‘burning the trash...on the stairs.’

The destructive behaviour on the part of the residents led to violent retorts from the municipal officials who were either supposed to maintain calm, or who were instructed to evict some residents. ‘That’s when...cops they misbehaved by shooting at co-residents. They did not even come here and ask: “1,2,3,” they started shooting at our residents.’ ‘There was chaos in Schubart Park. Police were shooting rubber bullets and...residents together with the red ants were fighting because the red ants were fighting back.’



Tyres burning in Schubart Street (Losi, 2011)

All the drama at Schubart Park attracted a considerable amount of media coverage in 2008, which was exactly what the residents' committee was aiming at, in the hope that awareness of their plight would cause a public outcry against the injustice that they were suffering. 'Now, the media was all over Schubart Park. We told everyone...worldwide. We didn't care what they will think, we didn't care what the president will say, because we believed, and until today I still believe that...they were oppressing us – even now they are still oppressing us.'

By this time, many residents who had the means to leave the 'war-ridden' Schubart Park, had done so. The residents' committee, suspecting that the Housing Company was purposefully neglecting their duties in order to get rid of the residents, decided to keep the flats occupied at any cost. 'Our strategy was,

even though people leave...we put others inside for our own benefit. We're not gonna give them what they wanted, which is; when a unit is empty, they seal it off. And at the end of the day they'll rush to court and claim that they've given people alternative accommodation, while they did not do that.'

Indeed, a great part of the fight for Schubart Park took place in the midst of court proceedings. 'We rushed to...high court chambers, where we did not have an attorney...we were planning to have an attorney. Arriving at high court chambers we just looked at the list of the advocates that were there. Now, we picked advocate J. And then he said: "I will take your case." In the meantime...we were preparing affidavits in order to go to the high court on an urgent base.' 'We went to court...and every time that they came with their eviction papers we were...a step ahead. So, then we had an attorney and we stopped that eviction...then they couldn't do anything.'

Despite their every effort, the situation in Schubart Park continued down its steep decline and numerous *perceptions regarding the fight* arose amongst residents. For many residents – and this seemed especially applicable to young black males – their fight for Schubart Park brought back memories of the 'Apartheid' struggle. These memories fuelled their determination; if they fought long enough and hard enough, they would achieve results. 'The meaning of the word "Apartheid"...a lot of people don't understand what does it mean; it doesn't help to...have a government that doesn't respond back...when you cry. It doesn't help...to have a father that, when you go to and say: "Father, I'm hungry," and then he doesn't provide the way he's supposed to. 'Cause it is what...our government has done to us in Schubart Park.'

From this point of view, some results were already being achieved and it was a good indicator that they were on their way to victory. 'They never won...any single case against us, until today. And I believe they will never win a single case against us, until...Jesus comes,' and 'We are not leaving, because there are

only...four questions that we have for them. If these questions can be answered then...we are willing to leave that place immediately. The first question was the issue of the Kruger Park...which has been empty since last year. We said: “Renovate it first, so that we can see that you are really interested in renovating.” And then the second one was the issue of...alternative accommodation, that...you should provide an alternative accommodation. And then the third question was...after you have renovated the buildings...what is gonna happen in future? And who’s gonna be allowed to come back? And what is gonna happen to those that are not coming? What are they going to do for them? How are they going to assist them to make sure that they settle...somewhere else? And then the last question was on the determination of rent. Now, how are they going to determine the rentals in Schubart Park, because we know the history; we’ve got documents...that are telling us that...the rent was determined at a cost recovery, not a market-related rent. That is not a private property where you want to make money. Now, unfortunately, until today, the questions are not answered. That’s one of the reasons why we are staying in Schubart Park. I’m not willing to relocate to any other place unless people that are in there are given an alternative accommodation. Even though it’s not everyone, but there are those people that the council knows that they are responsible for. Until those people are given alternative accommodation, I will still be in Schubart Park, together with my comrades.’ This perspective dictated that, all they had to do to get what they wanted was to up the stakes: ‘People are gonna die here. That is...what...the struggle is about...that’s what all the struggle is about – people die. If you...look in the beginning too, people died.’

For other people these views were too extreme and they felt that the fight had become destructive. ‘I said: “No. In the first place, if you’re fighting for your place, you don’t burn your own place down...this is not Apartheid now. You must remember...we are in...the year of democracy now. So we gotta fight now for...what we want and what we believe. Not negative things. You can’t go, want to shoot a policeman, or...throw him with stones and that sort of thing.”’ For

these people, remaining a part of the fight would mean compromising either their own safety: 'But when times go on I say: "No, City of Tshwane is safe, but me, I'm not safe – so I have to move out,' or it would mean compromising their integrity: 'Then I saw...this is going to lead to trouble. They thought...they can make and do as they pleased...that's how I saw it. The minute that they (the Tshwane Housing officials) started talking...then they (the residents) would take chairs...and they would start to...toyi-toyi and go crazy. 'That...is wrong. That's uncalled for. The way you are going to sit and...get what you really want, is to negotiate. That is when I said to the Lord: "Lord, this is the cherry on the cake now. I can't handle this anymore.'"

While there were tactics that had yielded some results, there were residents who perceived that some of their fighting tactics were a waste of energy. To walk from the municipality...to the Union Buildings; you're just wasting your...energy. You go and deliver that paper, you get no reply. Nothing, nothing!' 'We rushed to the city, the mayor and complained – she never responded.'

There were also residents – and this seemed particularly applicable to residents who deliberately avoided participation in the fight or took part only reluctantly – who perceived the fight to be a perverted ploy, serving to benefit only the corrupt members of the residents' committee. 'We had a lot of corrupt...committee members. They're corrupt because they want to rule the place. They got flats of their own that they leave it for rent. And they collect the money, when they're not even paying...Housing.' 'No. I don't see the help of the striking, because...they'll lie to you, those comrades...They...told you that: "The City of Tshwane said you must stay...and no one must move. We spoke to minister of City of Tshwane....he understands us...he told us that...next week Thursday he'll come and fix the light and fix the lift. Everything is going to be...normal and we are going to live nice again. And sometimes they will tell us that: "No, every flat must kick out R20, R20, R20 and we are going to buy a lawyer." At the end of the day they eat the money. You see that...it was not fine.

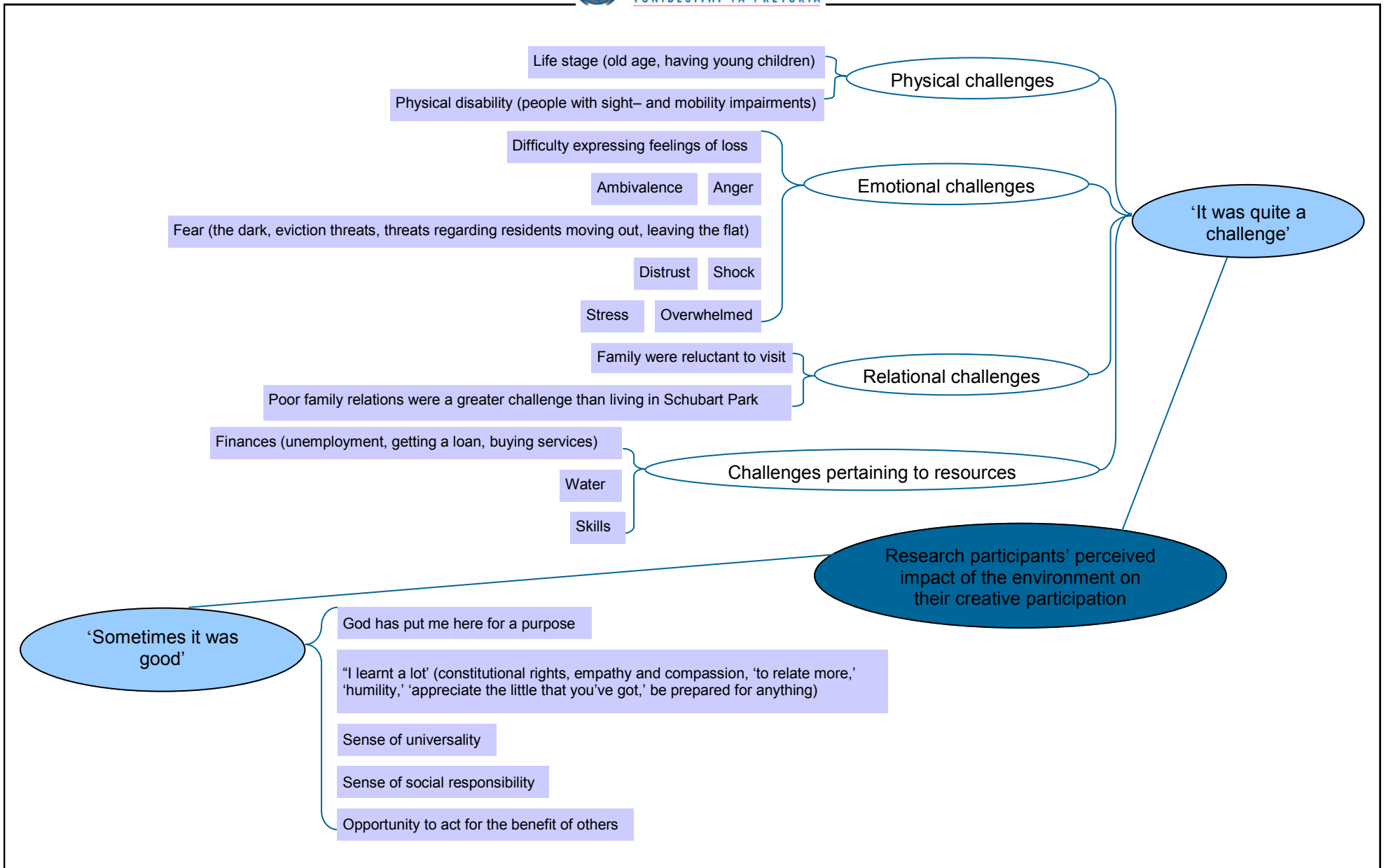


Figure V—A summary of the analysis of the perceived impact of the environment

4.4. The environment and its perceived impact – Tonal Value

Tone has the living soul. – Shinichi Suzuki (BrainyQuote, 2012)

Despite their conflicting views regarding the fighting tactics, participants all perceived their life in Schubart Park to have been **‘quite a challenge.’** Numerous factors contributed in making their lives ‘very tough;’ some of which were *physical challenges* posed by the particular life stage of certain participants. Old age seemed to intensify the challenge when meetings were held: ‘then you have to, at my age...go out late at night...and have a meeting,’ and when the situation in Schubart Park required physical action: ‘I was about 62, 63 by that time... then you have to carry this bucket of water up 23 storeys.’ Being above the age of 50 also made it almost impossible to find a job; ‘We gave our CV’s so many places, we looked for jobs. We can’t...age, certain age...because he’s over 50,’ and made it difficult to seize opportunities that required skilled use of technology: ‘So, the thing is now, we’re from the old school...I don’t know how to get into the internet to check the things. I don’t know how to. So, it’s hard...I need somebody to help me.’

Having young children in the home also made life ‘a bit difficult’. Some participants were concerned for their children’s safety; ‘It affect me a lot because...I have...a girl. He’s (*she’s*) 9 years old and then sometimes the stairs are dark, all of them, and...she has to walk to school, come back,’ and other residents weren’t willing to move out of Schubart Park at the risk of not being able to provide a roof over their children’s’ heads; ‘Where are they going to...live with my (*their*) children.’

People with physical disabilities, such as visual- and mobility impairments, were particularly frustrated and inhibited by the broken elevators and the dark stairs: ‘by that time we had...physically disadvantaged people, for example there was this woman...the security had to carry her from the ground floor to her flat and it’s at the eighth floor. And...even for her to come down, someone will have to carry

her.’ ‘I only went down when I had to....if I went to the doctor or clinic...otherwise I would stay in there all the time.’ The family members of people with disabilities also felt this burden: ‘when he lost his sight...I had to take this man up...almost 23 storeys.’

Numerous *emotional challenges* ‘affected a person’ living in Schubart Park. Residents experienced difficulty in expressing their feelings of loss toward people who had not lived through the experience with them. ‘You cannot describe it. Unless you’ve gone through it, you’ll never know what it’s...like. You feel that you actually losing your dignity.’

It seems as though many residents were under experiencing numerous conflicting emotions and didn’t ‘know how to handle’ their ambivalence: ‘sometimes...you think to yourself that you are lucky to be alive...to have a place to live...that you can still walk and breathe...but then, if you look on the other hand, you think to yourself: “No, this is not how people are supposed to live...this is not how people are actually supposed to live.”’

The Schubart Park residents were often ‘very angry’ and fear was a constant companion to many of them. The dark and who hid in it, made residents ‘afraid to go down because...there is no light’ on the stairs. ‘You can’t even see who’s coming...who’s going out.’



The graffiti against the walls give voice to the residents' experiences (Born, 2008)

The ever-looming threat of eviction on the part of the municipality caused a 'scary feeling.' 'That morning when they came (we were) thinking: "Now they just gonna come and throw us." So the main things that I took was our ID and a set of clothes.' 'They forced open those people's doors and they....threw things down (the stairs)...many of the things were found on the stairs.' 'They start chasing people who were owing R50 000 and R100 000. And these other people, they get killed.'

The threats on the part of the residents' committee, regarding residents who were moving out, were similarly frightening: 'They told me that...if you go out, you go out, you are not coming back. And I asked them: "Who's going to stop me?" Said: "No, we have...comrades. The comrades will stop you." If you move out they leave you. You can move. But, don't come back. They will take over

your flat. They will give to somebody else. So they can't move if they are not sure.'

For some residents the mere thought of leaving their flat scared them. 'We were scared to...go around. You can't...go somewhere, because...somebody is going to come inside your flat. Like, if, maybe it's Saturday, I want to go to my sister. I can't go there, because...once you go...somebody is going to break your door or he's going to move inside of your flat.' This fear was intricately entwined with the growing *distrust* that existed among residents. 'Some of people, I don't know...stay...15 of them inside the flat and then that...flat is your neighbour and you're scared always that: "These people...see me when I'm going. They see me, or they didn't see me?" We were scared; we were not trusting each other.'

The residents not only distrusted each other, they were also distrustful toward the local municipality. According to them the municipality 'didn't worry' and 'doesn't care for humanity.' 'Even if they say they care countless times...I know, because I saw what happened at Schubart Park.' They felt that the municipality had not taken 'their common responsibility': 'I'm not going to leave this flat, because...I don't have money. If government can provide...the place for me I will go, but if the government is not providing anything I will not go.' 'The city failed to provide transport' after the eviction tragedy in 2008 and they 'failed' to 'seal off' the unstable D block. The residents' distrust extended to the point at which some resident's suspected that the government had deliberately targeted and conspired against them; 'It was them who made that...fire.' 'It's like they...targeted the people at Schubart Park and Kruger Park. Why are they targeting us like this? What are we doing wrong...that we deserve this sort of treatment?'

The eviction events that led to the controversial fire, left residents shocked: 'The time...they removed the people who were owing the rent at Schubart Park...I was so shocked...because of they were beating people. The time they were busy

in C block...we saw a big fire there at Kruger Park. They said: “The flat is burning, the flat is burning!” We see people going out with the window. Some...people are dead now. I was so shocked...I was asking myself: “What if was me, or maybe...my child?”

For many Schubart Park residents, their circumstances ‘really stresses’ them; ‘especially when you don’t have...food. You have to worry where it’s going to come from,’ but it seemed as though the committee members were particularly stressed, not only about their own circumstances, but about the state of affairs in Schubart Park and the effect it was having on other residents: ‘I had a lot of stress. I couldn’t sleep for...almost 2 weeks. The walls that were falling’ and ‘residents were given around five accounts...that they have to go and pay rental into; it was quite a challenge.’ ‘I remember there was this...blind woman that was 86. Now, the city has been trying to move that woman for years, they failed. I had to personally go there and sit down with her and explain to her. And then she...finally agreed and then PEN assisted us in moving her from here to the other place.’ ‘As I speak to you we have to make sure that the buildings are secured. Every Friday we wake up at 12’o clock and safeguard the building inside. Now we don’t even sleep enough – now that’s where comes the challenge.’

The continuing difficulties that they had to face, overwhelmed some of the residents; ‘I can’t handle this anymore. These stairs and that, it’s killing me.’ It left them helpless and ready to leave: ‘It actually just got too much for me, really.’ ‘I tried many times to...be different, but because of situation of Schubart Park, you can’t do nothing.’

On top of all of these difficulties, the Schubart Park residents also had to face *relational challenges*. The environment that they lived in made their family members reluctant to come and visit; ‘She (my sister) used to call me, ask me that the lift is working. If I say the lift is not working, she’s not coming. But if I lie,

say: “No, it’s working,” she would come and she would shout at me: “Why you tell me that the lift is working and the lift is not working?” At my family nobody visited you if the...lift are not working, because...the stairs are dark.’ Some of the residents perceived their poor family relations as being a greater challenge than living in Schubart Park – if they could change anything in their circumstances it would be ‘just to have the family bond again.’

Though there were numerous challenges that the residents had to overcome, *challenges pertaining to certain resources* seemed particularly difficult to cope with and often intensified the challenge of living in Schubart Park. The constant struggle for finances was one of these; ‘I don’t have money, I’m not working.’ Indeed, unemployment and the consequent lack of finances made life ‘a bit difficult.’ Residents perceived trying to find a job or starting an entrepreneurial venture as ‘very difficult.’ Some experienced that foreigners were more readily employed than South Africans; ‘so what I’m trying to say is, foreigners can come here and get jobs, while we as South Africans, born South Africans, we can’t. We can’t get a way forward,’ and that people who didn’t abide by the ‘by-laws’ were able to make a living by selling things in restricted areas; ‘I don’t go and stand on the street there and sell food, because the metro police will come and lock me up plus take my stock. But you find everywhere else in town, every corner, everyone can sell whatever and nobody worries them.’

Residents wanting to start a business or move out of Schubart Park, tried getting loans from the bank: ‘You must be working in order for you to get a loan from the bank, because it’s a surety, we got no surety at the moment.’ Those that did manage to get a loan, found it troublesome to pay their monthly instalments; ‘I go to the bank, ask for money. That...one was troubling me because...I have to pay... I have to buy the place. So I struggled alot, I even would come to the office ask money and all stuffs, so I struggled before I moved.’

Money was also useful in buying the services of the security personnel at Schubart Park when another resource, water, became a scarce commodity; ‘an entire week without water!’ ‘then you have to pay the security to carry that water up for you...or someone else, because they won’t do it for free.’ Without money, life was more complicated: ‘then we didn’t have money, so I had to walk up with the water.’ ‘We had it very tough, because we had to carry water from ground floor right to the 15th floor that we were staying. He used to go like 8 times a day to get water and I used to go like 4 times. We’re carrying like 2 buckets each time, you know?’ ‘That time, we struggled a lot...we used to go down there and fetch the water and come back.’

When the maintenance services of the building failed and residents ‘had to do maintenance on our own,’ maintenance *skills* became a sought after resource; ‘if you don’t know something about electricity...or plumbing or that kind of thing...then you wouldn’t know what to do. Like me, woman, I don’t know anything. So...you have to run and find someone to help you, to tell you what to do...so it is difficult. If you can’t...if your husband cannot do something, then you can forget...you are going to sit with those broken things in that flat.’

Despite all the difficulties that they had to endure, some residents perceived that ‘**sometimes it was good.**’ It seems as though this view was held particularly by ‘Auntie N’, a participant who managed to *find meaning within the suffering*; ‘I often asked the Lord...“What...is going on?” She came to the conclusion that: ‘God has put you here for a purpose.’

She found purpose in the fact that she ‘*learnt a lot.*’ ‘You can learn from everything.’ She got to know her human rights: ‘I never knew what my right was, never...being on the committee....going to court...and listening...to what the magistrate has got to say, and what the prosecutor has got to say and what your lawyer says...I’ve learnt to know...my rights.’

She learnt empathy and compassion for the people around her: ‘I always thought of these people...who live in the rural areas...where there is no water...where they have to go and fetch water with a wheelbarrow,’ ‘You learn to look at other people through your eyes differently - it’s a human being that... you’re looking at. It’s...not just some person...I always think...what (is) that person’s situation... I feel that compassion in...me...for people.’ This newfound empathy helped her to ‘relate more’ to different people: ‘That is why...today I can communicate with people. I can communicate with anyone. Even if I can’t give anything...to just sit there and listen to what that person has to say, I think that is the most important. You don’t find many people today that listen...and that is all that they want. They just want someone who listens to them; “just listen what I have on my heart.”’

In that sense, Schubart Park also taught her humility: ‘I will never think that I am better than anybody else,’ and ‘when you come across a person and you want to chat, you can come down to that person’s level, it’s like you’re on their level. But...when you look at these people...that’s got everything, it’s like they high up there and you down here and, it’s like you can’t get there to them.’

Though she didn’t have ‘everything’, she learnt ‘to appreciate the little’ that she had. ‘A person must appreciate everything that he has. Really...if we walk to the light switch and our light switches on...you turn your tap and you have water...it is something that people take for granted...but it is a privilege...you are blessed.’ ‘You live in a place where you have to be content with the bare minimum...and then you see how food is wasted...as if it is just taken for granted. Actually...they (her rich employers) just live in luxury...where everything just has to be there...you’re so spoilt...you just go put on the light and...you’ll get in your bath of water. But when...it’s not there, then you realise...how it affects you.’

Realising how precious every sparse resource was, she and her husband learnt to use their resources as sparingly as possible: ‘(my husband)...when he sees a tap dripping he will go and close that tap. If he hears just a little leak, he will go

and have a look...because that drop of water can be saved. And lights that burn for no reason...they should be switched off. You learn...don't use unnecessary things.'

With water, electricity and other basic resources being a luxury, she learnt to be prepared for anything – even in her new home outside of Schubart Park: 'We have a gas lamp...we always have candles...and we have buckets and things here... It's not to say that because we're here now (in their new home) we must forget about...because you never know what can happen. Going through life...you've got your hardships and you've got your nice days again.'

Realising that she was not alone in dealing with the hardships in Schubart Park, gave 'Auntie N' a positive *sense of universality* with her co-residents. 'When we moved in there...I didn't actually know many people...but as time went by and we encountered problems with the water and electricity...you feel that you are not alone. There are others that (are going through) exactly the same as you...you feel that you are part...you're standing together. And...in the end you become almost like family. I still feel part of Schubart Park, even now...even though I don't agree on what they did, or wanted to do (referring to the violent and destructive behaviour).'

This sense of universality extended to include people in other communities who were enduring similar hardships and evoked in this participant a sense of *social responsibility*: 'Once you've...been in that situation and...you've walked with those people, you feel you can't just leave them, let them do what they, you know...You gotta, it's your community. You're gonna stand with them.' 'I already... feel part here, because if I go to meetings (in her new community), then I know...what went on in Schubart Park. I can understand. Then I can use the things we did there. I can tell them: "This is how we did it." Then I'm able to give advice now to them again. I can tell them: 'We're not going to do this...we're not allowed to do that.'" So I know now...more or less, and I can help them now.

The little information that I have...if we bring it together then we can work on it. It makes me feel good to think that...I can still stand with people...I can still be there for someone else who is in the same situation.'

Another positive aspect with regards to living in Schubart Park, is that residents, who would, under normal circumstances, not become involved in helping others, were afforded *the opportunity to act for the benefit of others*, while also benefitting themselves. 'We used to help R (lady who was running an NGO called 'Promise Keepers' from her Schubart Park flat) to cook and feed the homeless...Sunday evenings. It was nice to feed them, you know. So she used to give...us things...help us with things and we used to get vegetables...from the market. We used to help her with the parties...at Christmas time and wrap the gifts and we used to put them against the tree. But one time, it was a nice experience, to the miners. They all came to Schubart Park to stay...in the hall there. We had to get up...every morning and cook and feed them. And that was something we were looking forward to.'

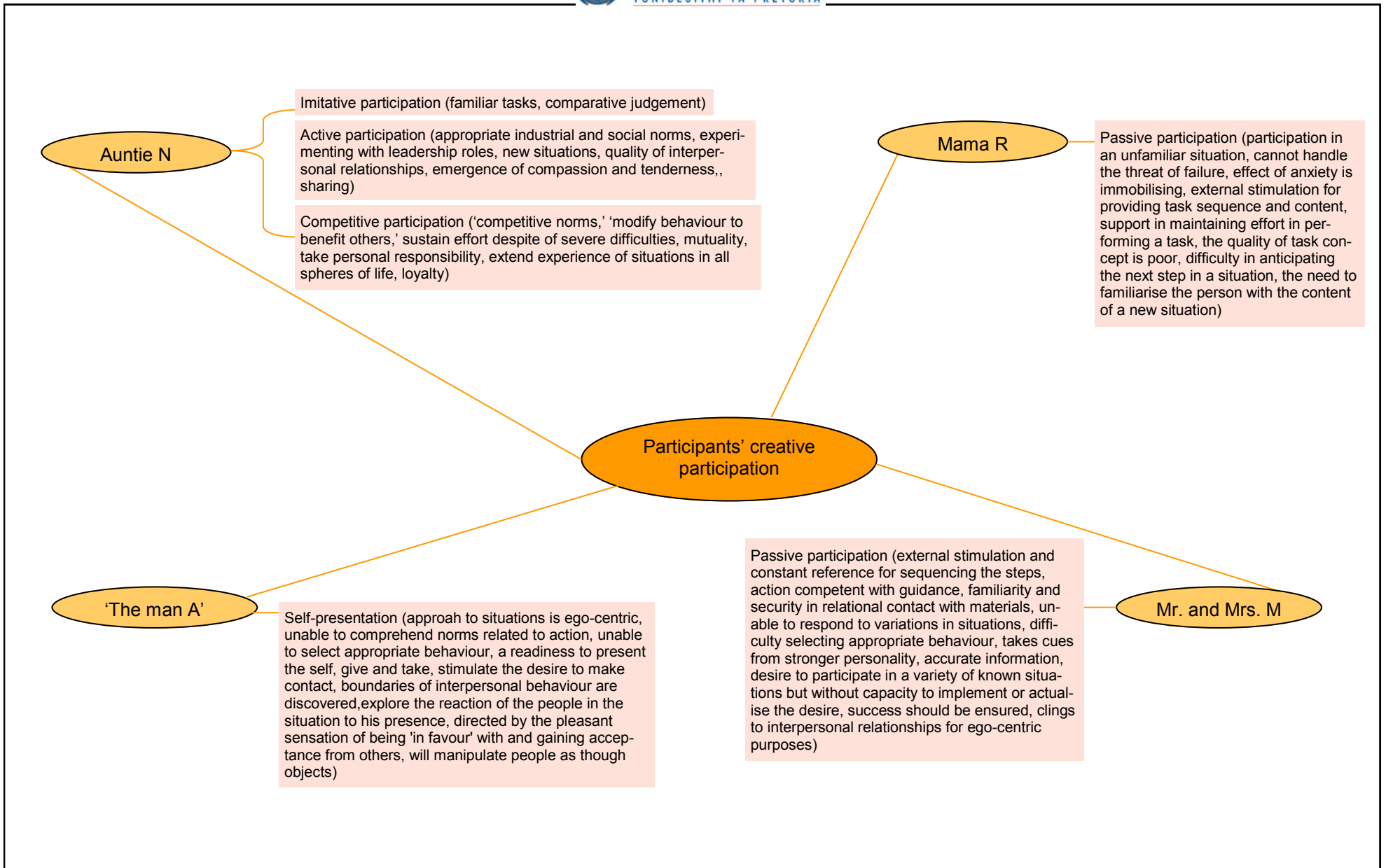


Figure VI—A summary of the analysis of the participants' creative participation

4.5. The emergence of and change in creative participation – Texture

What I sought was to grasp the flavour of a man, his texture, his impact, what he stood for, what he believed in, what made him what he was and what colour he gave to the fabric of his time. – John Gunther (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

Apart from the effect that the participants experienced Schubart Park having on them, the manner in which the participants related with me during the interviews and the accounts of their lives in Schubart Park, gave me markers to track any changes in their creative participation that they were experiencing.

‘**Auntie N**’ was acutely aware that: ‘When this crisis really hits you...it changes your whole life.’ Living in Schubart Park not only changed her creative participation, but I daresay it contributed to the emergence of her creative participation. When ‘Auntie N’ and her husband moved into a flat in Schubart Park with their son, his girlfriend and their grandson, they were both unemployed and dependent on the goodwill of their children. Initially elements of *imitative participation* were visible in ‘Auntie N’s’ behaviour. She stayed at home, taking care of her grandson and the household, while her husband managed to find employment. When he lost his job, ‘Auntie N’, out of the need for financial relief, volunteered her services as a housekeeper to a middle-to-upper-class family. The situation innately graded itself to demand a greater level of personal presentation than ‘Auntie N’ was used to, but required only the familiar tasks of housekeeping.

Her own situation; which was slowly starting to deteriorate, forced a comparative judgement between the lives of the Schubart Park residents and the life that she witnessed her employers living.

The day that I would conduct my first ‘official’ field visit to Schubart Park, I woke up, acutely aware of the stark contrast between the life that I was living and the lives that I was going to observe. I prepared myself meticulously; dressing as plainly as possible, tying my hair back simply (no blow-drying on that day) and choosing to leave my wedding ring at home. I didn’t want to draw unnecessary attention to myself or to anything of mine that seemed worth stealing: ‘I must dress the part. I must try and fit in.’

I left my office with only a notebook and a pen, intentionally taking as little of my worldly possessions as possible. Despite all my ‘precautionary actions’, every step toward Schubart Park increased the anxiety that I was experiencing; partially because I was scared to death, but partially due to a growing sense of guilt. I didn’t own much, but I perceived it to be more than most of the participants in my study and: ‘I feel that somehow I don’t deserve it; somehow others were cheated out of their share and I am responsible.’

It seems as though ‘Auntie N’s’ motivation became infused with elements of *active participation* as she became willing to participate in new situations and experiment with a leadership role; she accepted an invitation to join forces with other Schubart Park residents in founding the ‘Schubart Park residents’ committee,’ a forum in which she was afforded the opportunity to direct her motivation toward attaining more appropriate industrial and social norms within her environment. An increase in the quality of ‘Auntie N’s’ interpersonal relationships became apparent in her involvement with the committee as she managed to maintain increasingly intimate friendships with the other committee members and showed the ability to adapt her behaviour and show loyalty in different situations: ‘I am very...reliable...in the committee. When it comes to...meetings – I was always there. They could come and call me...any evening

at any time...then I was there. I would get up and go. They saw...if they toyi-toyi'd...I was there.'

Loyalty, compassion and tenderness also started emerging in other spheres of 'Auntie N's' life. She carried the burden of a son in prison, but she visited him often, encouraged him and attended his sessions in court diligently. 'I also tell W (son in prison)...just look at these people through the eyes of Jesus. And then, maybe, you would have other ideas...you don't know what...that person's been through, unless you sit and chat with that person, and hear where does he come from...what was his life? If he's in prison, what made him do things that he is there? What triggered it all?' The component of sharing in relationships also became apparent: 'You see children running around, you see mothers...who come and ask you for a bit of sugar, or a bit of flour...or a bit of oil and I can thank the Lord that I always shared. It didn't matter how little I had, I always shared.'

When the other committee members started suggesting more violent and destructive measures of protest, actions characteristic of *active participation* featured in 'Auntie N's' behaviour as she stood up and defended her norms: 'Normally when...we're in a meeting and we are going to toyi-toyi now, then they would say: "Ok, we're going to do 1, 2 and 3." Then, if I don't agree with that, then I say to them: "No...it's not done that way. In the first place, if you're fighting for your place, you don't burn your own place down...you're going to protect that place". That...I was dead against...and they knew it. I believe that you can't negotiate unless you sit down around a table...and discuss. You've got to see the other person's point of view as well.'

It seems as though 'Auntie N' was capable of modifying her behaviour to benefit others, because despite their differences in opinion, she still managed to give the other members in the committee a feeling of importance and security: 'They respected me,' and 'Like A (chairperson of the committee)...he's like a child to

me. If he sees me, then he says: “Oh, my mother,” and then he will give me a hug.’

When ‘Auntie N’s’ husband, started losing his sight and was forced into retirement, she was left responsible for generating an income, looking after their grandson in the afternoons and taking care of her ailing husband. Despite the severe difficulties, both in her personal life and in her environment, ‘Auntie N’ managed to sustain the effort it required to remain active within the residents’ committee. She contributed this to her belief in God: ‘God is there and...He’s given me that strength to go on, to go on, to go on, to go on.’ Through her continued involvement in her community, ‘Auntie N’ developed a sense of mutuality with her fellow residents: ‘I felt that I wasn’t only doing it for myself...but to stand with the people who were going through the same thing as me.’

When ‘Auntie N’ realised that her values were no longer reconcilable to the ideas of the rest of the committee and that she would no longer be able to take personal responsibility for the actions that they were planning, she retired from the committee and realised that it was time to move.

When the opportunity to move away from Schubart Park finally presented itself in 2009, ‘Auntie N’ didn’t hesitate. Though her husband was sceptical about moving, she was determined; convinced that God had answered her prayers and was calling her to go and extend her experience of the situation in Schubart Park in a new community. It didn’t take long for her to become involved in a committee in her new community, who was facing much the same dilemma as the people in Schubart Park!

‘Auntie N,’ remaining loyal to the people at Schubart Park, would visit there every once in a while: ‘to see the committee a little...and there are...elderly people whom I still know who live there.’ When she did, those who knew her would happily shout: ‘Auntie N, Auntie N – you came to visit us!’

‘Mama R’ also still knows a couple of people who continue to live in Schubart Park, but has no desire to go back and visit there. When she bumps into someone she knows in town, she asks them incredulously: ‘You are still living there?’ For her: ‘Ah, Schubart Park – you can’t live there.’ Elements of *passive participation* and the change that her creative participation underwent, is most clearly seen in the way that ‘Mama R’ moved out of Schubart Park.

When ‘Mama R’s’ daughter was old enough to start attending school, they would set out together in the mornings – ‘Mama R’ to her job at the clinic, and her daughter to school. In the afternoons her daughter would have to walk back to their apartment on the 20th floor by herself, and wait for her mom to return from her five-hour work day. When the demise of Schubart Park was reaching its peak, the hours that her daughter had to spend there by herself became ‘Mama R’s’ greatest concern: ‘When she comes she has to go alone up there – then it’s not safe.’

The birth of her second child, a two-week long power failure and a subsequent water shortage during her maternity leave, added to her mounting anxiety about remaining in Schubart Park. Though thoughts of moving into her own home started looming in the back of her mind, it seems as though she was unable to venture into participation in such an unfamiliar situation. In addition, it seems as though she was unable to handle the threat of her endeavour failing and as such, the effect of her mounting anxiety immobilised her. Even if she were able to respond, she didn’t ‘have enough money so...I wait a long time to save the money. Then they (the Tshwane Housing company),’ providing her the necessary external stimulation on the sequence and content of the action she should take, ‘told us that we should not pay the rent from last year...June until December. We should not pay the rent and save the money...so we can leave by December.’

The dramatic eviction drama of 22 July 2008 provided her with the necessary 'support' that she needed to maintain the effort that it took to perform the task of moving out. With the quality of her task concept being poor and experiencing difficulty in anticipating the next step that she should take, she frantically started enquiring about houses that were for sale, acquired a loan from the bank, borrowed money from colleagues and bought a house in Soshanguve. It was only after buying the house and living in it for a while that she realised that: 'I have a problem of transport in Soshanguve.' She didn't sell her newly acquired house, but opted to rent it to her baby's father, packed her belongings and moved back into town – into a well-kept rented apartment, walking distance from work. Now, she says: 'I feel better...I'm happy because...right now...I feel safe.' Though no dramatic changes took place in 'Mama R's' creative participation, it is clear that her circumstances manoeuvred her into participation and fulfilled her need to become familiarised with the content of a new situation. In that sense her environment became therapeutic in extending the depth of her passive participation.

The Schubart Park environment wasn't as kind toward '**Mr. and Mrs M,**' the Indian couple 'formerly from Pietermaritzburg;' where they found themselves in, what seems to have been an enabling working environment, which allowed them to function freely on a level of *passive participation*: 'We were working in the leather industry.' Their employers provided them the necessary external stimulation and constant reference for sequencing the steps in their jobs and hence their action was competent with guidance. As such they were living a comfortable life: 'We actually had our own house, we had a car,' and they ran a tuck shop from their home. It seems as though they had become familiar and secure in their relational contact with the materials in the leather factory and their tuck shop.

When the leather industry took a tumble ‘we lost our jobs.’ Being unable to respond to the drastic variations that were taking place in their situation they ‘fell back with our payments, our house went on auction.’ ‘That’s when...this pastor told us to come up and...start from here. He told us to sell all our things there’ and ‘come and stay in his house,’ and he promised them that he would find jobs for them. Finding it difficult to select the appropriate behaviour, the couple took the cue from this stronger personality and moved to Pretoria west where ‘we stayed...for a year ‘cause he (the pastor) went away to England.’ It seems as though the pastor had not given them the accurate information that they required and when ‘things didn’t work out for him in England, he came back, he wanted his place.’

Unemployed, homeless and desperate, the couple moved into Schubart Park. While Mr. M managed to secure an income through contractual work, initially as the Schubart Park maintenance manager and later as a security guard in Waterkloof, Mrs. M remained unemployed and frustrated. Though it seems as if she had numerous skills: ‘I can do stage décor, I can do the background on the polystyrene. There’s a lot of things...I’m a hairdresser, I’m a dress maker,’ and a desire to participate in a variety of these known situations, she didn’t possess the capacity to implement or actualise any of her plans. She started selling samoosa’s in the Schubart Park public area, but the buildings’ security chased her away; she got involved in a hairdressing business, but she and the owner had a misunderstanding and she left. It seems as though life just didn’t afford her any opportunities in which success would be ensured.

With her hope of a creative career waning along with the money in her wallet, Mrs. M started clinging to her interpersonal relationships for the ego-centric purpose of financial security. She expected her children to take care of her and her husband as a favour in return for the years that she took care of them: ‘children now...they don’t count the costs that you...pay for them.’ However, her son couldn’t ‘afford to look after us. Because my son’s saying he – remember he

works for ABSA – got 2 loans to pay, he got his Edgars account, plus he’s paying half the rent half the lights. So he can’t afford to put food on the table for us.’ Their daughter ‘used to help us,’ but she stopped after they used her money to pay for transport to attend a wedding, instead of buying groceries. ‘She (their daughter) feels like we don’t know how to budget...but we’re grown-up people.’ Subsequently ‘I don’t talk to my daughter, gone over a year now, and...there’s not so good vibe between my son and us. Their friendships were also negatively affected: ‘We got a friend that’s very helpful...whatever she’s got there...like groceries, or give us money, you know, to buy the bread and milk. She stays in Pretoria in Lotus Gardens. We actually walk there just to get something from her.’

Unemployed and alone, the couple – returning to what they were familiar with – seized the opportunity brought along by the deteriorating circumstances of the building, to run a tuck shop from their flat: ‘The people were quite happy, because they say they don’t have to run down,’ and though they weren’t making hundreds of rand, it was enough to ‘put food on our table. We were quite content with working...just to survive,’ and ‘we got quite comfortable staying there.’

So comfortable were they, that they didn’t make any plans to leave Schubart Park. ‘When the red ants came there that day and they said they’re evicting people,’ their son, fearing for the safety of his parents, found a different place for them to live and helped them move.

Another participant who had no plans of moving was ‘**the man A,**’ chairperson of the Schubart Park resident’s committee. It took a long time for me to finally manage arranging an interview with him. He seldom answered his phone, missed several appointments and didn’t bother to inform me that he wouldn’t be able to make it. I perceived his approach to the situation as ego-centric; as though he thought himself too important and too busy to be held up by the menial

formalities of life. He walked into my office late and proud, wearing shiny pointed shoes, a tight-fitting pair of trousers and a belt with a large silver buckle, a stylish buttoned shirt and a white cowboy hat. It was clear that he was unable to comprehend norms related to action or to select appropriate behaviour and he displayed a keen readiness to present his city-slick self. He displayed no work-orientation and spoke of no long-term plans of employment. These traits, so distinctive on the level of *self presentation*, echoed throughout his account of his life in Schubart Park – an environment which seemed to hinder the emergence of higher levels of creative participation in this participant.

In 2001 ‘the man A’ moved into Schubart Park. He experienced problems from the start – paying his deposit diligently, he expected the Schubart Park management to make good on their promise of fixing the flat for him to move in: ‘I did my part of the job...now they had to fix everything that was not well in the flat; for example, the geyser was not working, they had to replace the door, they had to paint the flat; they did nothing.’ He refused to continue paying and an opportunity for him to experience a healthy give and take within a situation, was stifled.

His flat, in the D block of Schubart Park, continued to deteriorate until the walls of his flat – seemingly made of dry walling board, rather than bricks – literally fell off like sheets of wet paper! It took this event, something that drastically affected himself and his comfort, to stimulate in him the desire to make contact with others: ‘I would say...if that wouldn’t have happened, maybe I wouldn’t have been involved in the Schubart Park struggle...now I had to stand up with other people and then we start fighting.’

During this fragile time in the emergence of creative participation, when the boundaries of interpersonal behaviour are supposed to be discovered, ‘the man A’ became a member of the resident’s committee. Rather than contributing solutions to the problem, he seemed to use the committee as a platform to

present himself and started exploring the reaction of the various parties within the situation to his presence – initially voicing their plight in the newspapers and during interviews on the radio. These initial, non-violent actions, were ignored: ‘I remember the first article that came out on Pretoria News...where I...complained about the walls that were falling, it was during 2005. Now, unfortunately they did nothing about that.’

Being ignored, he continued to test the social boundaries even further, each time resorting to more destructive and violent behaviour: ‘I personally said on the media that: “If...they need war, that’s what we will give them. If they come into the buildings and act in an illegal manner we will make sure that we do the same thing. And, I...don’t even care if the blood will have to flow; but even though the blood flow, it won’t be on our hands, it will be on their hands, because they are the ones that did not do things accordingly.” Attracting much attention from the media and the municipality with his wild statements, ‘the man A’ became somewhat of a celebrity amongst the Schubart Park residents, so that by the following committee elections, he was voted the new elected committee chairperson: ‘...and people started cheering: “A! A! A! A!”’ Directed by the pleasant sensation of being “in favour” of others and gaining acceptance for his hatred, intolerance and aggression, ‘the man A’ continued in like fashion – making only unconstructive contributions in his role as chairperson and achieving no solutions.

Though there is no data to suggest that ‘the man A’ was directly involved in the violent intimidation of residents or the illegal collection of rental payments that the committee was accused of, it is quite plausible to imagine that a person on a level of self-presentation (and particularly when he is in a position of power) will manipulate people as though objects and continue with violent and destructive actions when those are what he gains acceptance, encouragement and pleasure for. This is even more likely when the constructive and socially acceptable behaviour is met with apathy and failure.

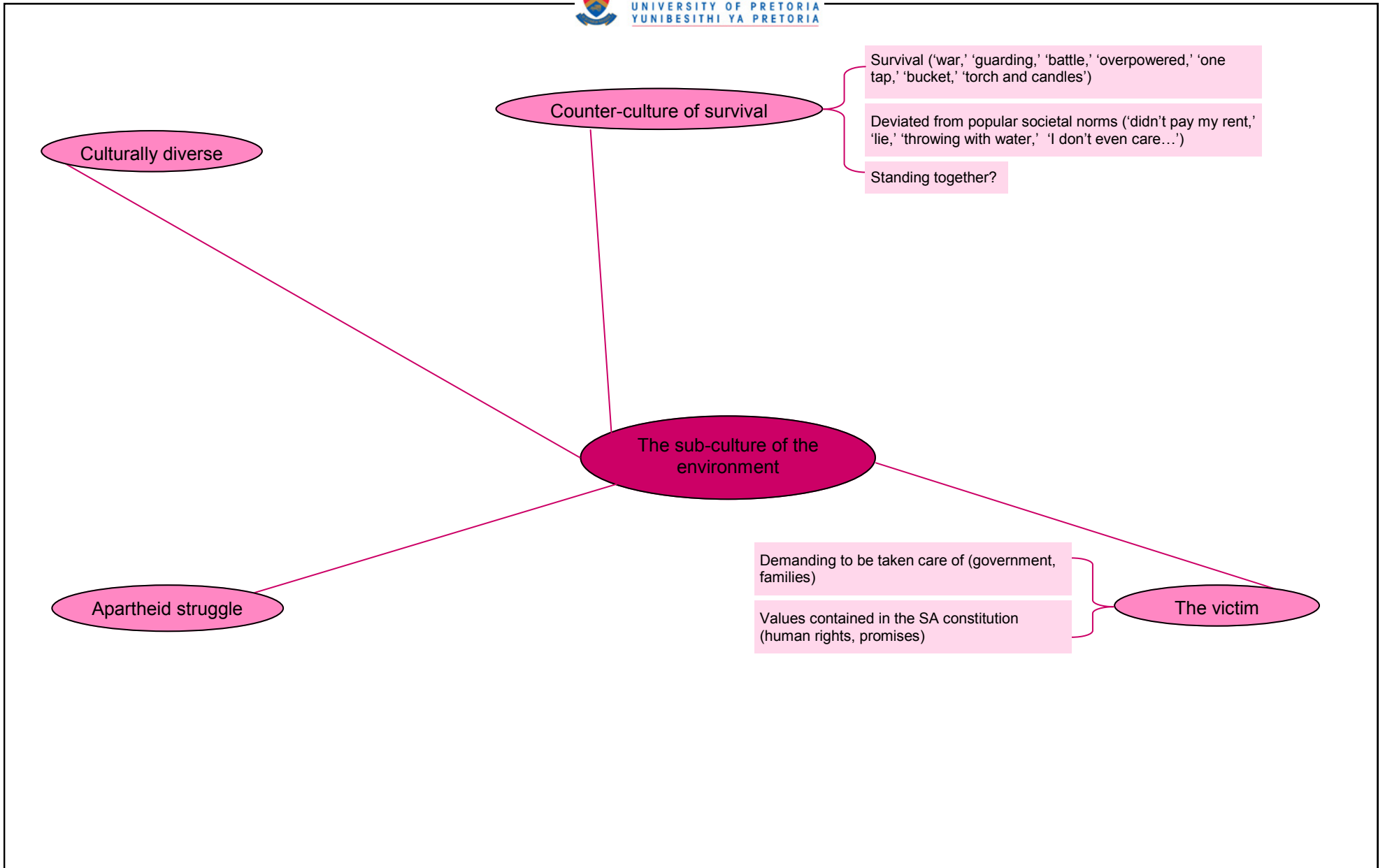


Figure VII—A summary of the analysis of the Schubart Park sub-culture

4.6. The sub-culture – Objects in the background

Man's unique reward, however, is that while animals survive by adjusting themselves to their background, man survives by adjusting his background to himself. – Ayn Rand (BrainyQuote, 2001 – 2012)

The changes that were taking place within the Schubart Park buildings happened parallel to numerous other changes all over the city post-Apartheid; none of which were more noticeable than the change in demographics. The inner city of Pretoria used to consist of a more or less uniform, white population – all of relatively equal social standing, all embracing a capitalistic, western mindset, and all from a fairly ‘advantaged’ background. With the Apartheid legislation out of the way, all citizens of South Africa had equal access to all parts of the country, and many people who were previously denied access to the cities, flooded to the urban areas. In response, many of the ‘previous’ inner city inhabitants who could afford it, moved out of the inner city. The inner city community was transformed into a vibrant **culturally diverse** population; a more unequal population. These changes were also reflected in the demographics of the Schubart Park residents.

Here are people in designer outfits – as if they have stepped out of a ‘Glamour’ magazine – with car keys and fancy cell phones. There are also the exact opposites; people who look dirty, unkempt and poor...and everything in between. Here are people in all the different shades of brown. Here are people from all ages. Here are people who have disabilities and people who don’t. If nothing else, Schubart Park is a place of great diversity.

Despite the great diversity, or perhaps because of it, Schubart Park had developed a unique sub-culture, which governed the behaviour of the residents

and determined the character of life in Schubart Park. I would describe this sub-culture as a **‘counter-culture of survival.’** Within this sub-culture, it seems that certain values that were regarded as ‘polite’ and ‘correct’ by the popular culture, were discarded for the sake of *‘survival.’* The extent to which ‘survival’ governed life in Schubart Park becomes especially clear in the language, which likens life in Schubart Park to a situation of war; ‘you must be prepared like for war,’ ‘we were guarding the buildings,’ ‘win the battle’ and ‘overpowered them.’ It is also reflected in the artefacts that are related to the basic human needs of the residents; ‘there was only one tap,’ ‘taking the buckets up’ and ‘a torch and candles.’ The way in which the norms of this sub-culture *deviated from the popular societal norms* becomes evident in the behaviour of the Schubart Park residents; ‘I’ll be honest with you, I didn’t pay my rent,’ ‘if I lie (by saying that the lifts are working), she would come (and visit me),’ and ‘they’re throwing you with water from the top.’ It is also reflected in the language use of some of the participants; ‘I don’t even care if the blood will have to flow’ and ‘we didn’t care what they will think, we didn’t care what the president will say.’

I met a man, L, who lives in Schubart Park. He came here recently from Zimbabwe. He is a fine artist and an actor. He came here looking for greener pastures...and he found Schubart Park. Isn’t that ironic? He lives with 19 other people in one flat. They each pay R200 rent to an Indian woman or sometimes to a ‘rastafarian’ man. ‘L’ doesn’t really know who owns the flat he is living in, he is just glad to have a place to stay. He tells me that he cannot wash his clothes and hang them in the flat to dry without staying to watch his things. His flat mates steal his clothes and sell them if he dares to leave. He is trying to make some money by painting portraits of people and selling them. He is finding this difficult, because his flat mates steal his art equipment as well.

One of the values of the Schubart Park sub-culture that were mentioned by most of the participants was the belief in *'standing together.'* I found it difficult to understand how this value could possibly take form in a community in which individual survival was the first priority – to the degree that flat mates would steal each other's clothing to sell for money. It seems to me that the value of 'standing together' was upheld when it would benefit the chances of individual survival or when it would ensure that a basic need (such as the need for a place to stay) would be met. The residents didn't seem to notice the conflict inherent in, on the one hand working to each other's detriment, and on the other, trying to cooperate; unless they were at the receiving end of an individual survival ploy.

With a few individual exceptions, being **'the victim'** seemed to further characterise the sub-culture of the people who remained in Schubart Park. This led to a community *'demanding to be taken care of'* by forces outside of themselves, whether it be the government or their families. This is reflected in statements such as; 'they were oppressing us...if we were important to our government, our government would have made sure that those buildings are secure. It doesn't help to have a father that, when you go to and say: "Father, I'm hungry," and then he doesn't provide the way he's supposed to.' 'If the government is not providing anything, I will not go.' 'We want the place and you have to give it to us. We will get it and that is that.' 'So it's a problem for us....my son can't afford to take care of us...financially.'

Of course, much of the demands made by the residents were based on the *'values contained in the South African constitution.'* The oppression that they experienced, reminded many of the Schubart Park residents of similarly oppressing circumstances during the Apartheid regime. As such, they appealed to their human rights and to the promises that were made by the post-Apartheid government of improving the lives of people – especially of those who were disadvantaged by the Apartheid government. Understandably then, the Schubart Park sub-culture was also greatly influenced by beliefs and ideas from the

‘**Apartheid struggle,**’ which guided the fight in particular. Symbols that illustrated this abounded in the language; ‘comrades’ and ‘struggle.’ It could also be seen in the symbolic actions; fists in the air shouting “amandla,” ‘toyitoyi’ ‘strikes’ and ‘marches,’ as well as in the artefact of burning tires.

4.7. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter the reader was afforded the opportunity to become acquainted with the participants of this study, their experiences of life in Schubart Park and their perceptions of the effect that living there had on them. I have taken the liberty of elaborating on their experiences by including my own, in the hope that it would aid understanding. Further, I have included the conclusions that I had drawn of the participants’ levels of participation and of the sub-culture that was prevalent within the Schubart Park environment.

In the following chapter I will consider the relevance of this data for realising the aim of this study and for informing the practice and knowledge base of occupational therapy in South Africa. Numerous factors, external factors in particular, such as the assumptions held by researchers and therapists, the cultural underpinnings of the models that we use, the historical background of a particular context, poverty, the implementation of legislation, security of tenure, exposure to criminal occupations, inequality and the political situation, emerges as factors which may potentially affect the creative ability of people living in an inner city. The participants of this study indicated that the effect of these factors may either enhance or inhibit the emergence of creative ability in individuals, depending on any number of variables. As such, the results of this research, though useful, are inconclusive and require further study.

CHAPTER 5

The Critic

[kritik] n.(1) A person who describes, interprets and assesses a work of art.

(CETL, 2012)

5.1. Introduction

'Yes: it has been said...that the proper aim of Criticism is to see the object as in itself it really is. But this is a very serious error, and takes no cognisance of Criticism's most perfect form, which is in its essence purely subjective, and seeks to reveal its own secret and not the secret of another. For the highest Criticism deals with art not as expressive but as impressive purely.' – Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist* (JalicInc, 2000 – 2012)

In the attempt of trying to make sense of the data that this study has produced, one might be tempted to revert to the 'outside out' position (Swain et al, 2004); clinging to the idea that the social world can only be properly understood through the application of the principles of rational thought, the natural sciences, and the pursuit of 'objective' knowledge. (Giddens, 2001) From this stance, one would posit the interpretation of the results providing a 'static' or 'holistic' take on the research problem, which would fail to recognise the ever changing, 'conflictual' and 'processual' nature of culture. (Denzin, 1989 (a)) It would be like an art critic, denying her subjective response to a work of art and claiming that all who look at that particular artwork would respond in exactly the same manner, simply based on the technical elements that the artist used.

Similarly, one might venture towards an 'inside out' approach, (Swain et al, 2004) arguing that "the direct experience of a phenomenon is necessary not only to facilitate a thorough and meaningful analysis and understanding, but also to engender an appropriate political response." (Swain et al, 2004:p.31) This point of view could well exclude those without direct experience of urban poverty in an

inner city slum in South Africa from any discussion of this phenomenon; reducing the results of this study to a ‘special pleading’, a ‘sentimental biography’ (Hunt, 1966 cited in Swain et al, 2004) without the production of any meaningful recommendations. It would be like a critic, claiming that an oil painting could not be appreciated by anyone other than the one who painted it.

Instead, I wish to approach this discussion from an ‘outside in’ position. (Swain et al, 2004) This position, though it acknowledges the significance of direct experience, maintains that by itself it is not enough to inform the practice of occupational therapy; people’s experiences of disabling barriers that are associated with poverty (inside), must be located within an occupational political interpretation (outside). Using this approach within a reflexive ethnographic paradigm, allows me to explicitly employ my own relationship toward the subjective experience – which is clouded by the epistemology which underlies occupational therapy – as a lens through which to interpret the data. Moreover, within a layered style of writing, this approach allows me to simultaneously consider the data from multiple theoretical angles, which have all shaped my views as an occupational therapist. In that sense, this discussion is much like an art critic, who, in delivering her critique on a work of art, acknowledges and describes her own artistic taste and the emotion that the artwork evokes in her, yet – through the lens of her own subjectivity – also interprets the meaning that the work may, or may not have, for others, not forgetting to apply her theoretical knowledge of art. In writing her critique, rather than closing the discussion surrounding the artwork with a final answer, she is merely providing a few opening thoughts to set the critical dialogue in motion.

5.2. Residential Ruin – Reviewing Participants’ Experiences

5.2.1. *Poverty, culture and creative participation*

An initial glance at the theme ‘everyone would have loved to live in Schubart Park,’ that arose from the participants’ experiences, urges me to consider my assumption that every resident of Schubart Park would have wanted to move out of Schubart Park, had they the means to do so. Moreover, much of what initially led me to conduct this study was based on the assumption that people living in ‘sub-standard’ housing conditions would move out of those conditions or would want to change them if they could. This assumption is based on the Westernised middle-class standard of living that I impose upon myself – ridiculous really, when one considers how subjective the term ‘sub-standard’ is or how vastly the definitions of ‘unacceptable living conditions’ could differ, depending on who’s doing the defining. When I think about it, I have a laugh at myself; without fully realising it I have epitomised a brick house with running water, electricity and a flushing toilet, municipal services and a pretty garden with a dog as the ultimate standard for housing. This is not the only assumption that I carried into this study with me. To a more or lesser extent, what I know is the only measure that I have for measuring the world and the people around me; my standard becomes *the* standard, my norms the norm against which all else is judged. This realisation makes me acutely aware of the fact that, as a researcher, a therapist or a citizen with the intention of ‘helping,’ my assumptions may become a factor that influences the creative participation of people in situations that differ so vastly from my own.

The ‘personal tragedy theory,’ though usually associated with disability studies (Swain et al, 2004), applied here helps me understand the vast impact that my assumptions may have on people living in situations of material poverty. Much like impairment in this theory, material poverty seems to be “thought to strike individuals at random, causing suffering and blighting lives” and “it has to be

avoided, eradicated or ‘normalised’” by all possible means of policy, practice and intervention. (Swain et al, 2004:p.34) Often, it is assumed that people living in material poverty want to be ‘normal’ (read wealthy) and that they cannot be happy or enjoy an adequate life otherwise. One needn’t look far to find this view permeating our language, for instance – is it a coincidence that the word ‘poor’ which refers to material poverty is the same word that finds synonyms in the words ‘miserable’ and ‘needy?’ What may further add to the view of poverty as being a ‘tragedy,’ is the association that ‘being poor’ has with ‘being dependent.’ Many Western-minded professionals – including occupational therapists – who work in services for poor people, “often use the promotion of independence as a central reference point for both theory and practice in their work” (Swain et al, 2004:p.42) and would find it almost inconceivable to imagine a person being happy and financially dependent. ‘Don’t give a man a fish, give him a fishing rod and teach him to fish,’ is a common Western approach to people living in poverty.

Being unaware of the extent to which these Western views pervaded my own thoughts, I initially entered into situations of material poverty and, upon finding people who ‘weren’t making an effort’ or who ‘weren’t taking control of their own health and their own lives;’ I entered into a victim blaming discourse. “Victim blaming occurs when situations that appear as widespread public issues are discussed largely as personal troubles, and responsibility for them is located primarily in the individual.” (Wright, 1993:p.3) Leaning on my belief in ‘individual rights and responsibility,’ I unknowingly bought into the “individual explanation of poverty that holds individuals personally responsible for their economic situation, particularly their own failings;” (Wright, 1993:p.2) in my case – their own ‘low’ level of motivation. Colleagues, friends and family who share my Western views, expressed their agreement with the personal explanation of poverty in statements that point(ed) to lack of ability, low intelligence, low ambition, or morals as causes for poverty as well as expression(s) of belief in distributive justice, the existence of widespread opportunity, and support for ‘work ethic’

assertions that material success should occur as a result of personal effort within the legitimate occupational structure.” (Various authors, cited in Wright, 1993:p.2)

Research has indicated that the tendency to “hold individuals responsible for failure or success is most pronounced among those in upper- and middle socio-economic status positions, and among those holding other statuses generally associated with greater access to power and wealth.” (Various authors, cited in Wright, 1993:p.2) As such, occupational therapists, in trying to clarify the complex social phenomena that are related to poverty, which they come across in practice, might tend to employ victim blaming. Victim blaming could also occur through the use of academic ‘buzzwords,’ which are developed in an attempt to “simplify concepts and communication about complex relationships, typologies or theories.” (Wright, 1993:p.4) The words ‘enable’ and ‘empower,’ that is commonly used in considering the service that occupational therapists need to provide to people living in material poverty, strike me as examples of possible vehicles of victim blaming; inherently implying that poor people are unable or powerless unless granted ability or power by those in positions of wealth and power. Though in theorising about poverty and its resultant social problems from a Westernised point of view, we are trying to ‘help’ our clients, “unthinking benevolence” in which our clients become “the deserving subjects for our sympathy and care” has “undesired consequences” (Wright, 1993:p.6) for our clients. Our victim blaming merely becomes “cloaked in kindness and concern ... (and) obscured by a perfumed haze of humanitarianism.” (Ryan, 1971 cited in Wright, 1993)

Iwama (2006), Watson and Fourie (Watson & Swartz, 2004) urge occupational therapists to consider whether the cultural underpinnings of the theories and models that they use are in “sync with local people’s realities and shared meanings,” lest our therapy in itself becomes “an agent of oppression, colonising and perhaps further marginalising people.” (Iwama, 2006:p.13) I have, hence, thought it necessary to critically consider the use of the concept of creative

participation from the VdT Model of Creative Ability as a thinking tool for the role of occupational therapy in poor communities – especially in South Africa, in which poverty is prevalent among communities who are considered to hold an African collective world view – by briefly reviewing the cultural premises that underlie it.

The VdT Model of Creative ability is essentially based on the humanistic approach. (Casteleijn, 2001) With the teachings of Buber, Rogers, Piaget' (Van der Reyden, 1994) – and I might add Frankl and Reilly – clearly influencing the work of Vona du Toit, the model has its roots firmly embedded in phenomenology and existentialism; (Casteleijn, 2001) and hence, in a Westernised world view. The Western individualist value system has, at its centre, the solitary 'self,' determined to transcend the environment, that is set in opposition, through acting upon it. (Iwama, 2006) These values become evident in the prime postulates of the VdT Model of Creative Ability; 'Man' is regarded as the starting point for any definition or description; interpretations emanate from and relate to 'Man.' (Du Toit, 2004) 'Man' is depicted as an open system (Casteleijn, 2001) who, in relating with the material-, social- and situational world through the vehicle of occupation is determining the quality of his 'being' – is actualising himself. (Du Toit, 2004) The quality of a person's 'being' (the levels of motivation) is seen to have direct bearing on the quality of such a person's 'doing' (the levels of action) and, as such, the quality of the 'doing' can be used to measure the quality of the 'being.' Hence, in this model, common to models with a Western foundation, identity and occupation are inextricably linked to each other. Successful participation in occupations is equated with having mastered the demands that a situation presents through maximal effort in action, and great emphasis is placed on independence, especially on the higher levels of creative participation.

'Wake up! I have something to tell you,' I told my husband, coffee-in-hand. 'Numerous things that have been bothering me about this model have started making more sense after thinking about the culture which underlies it. Look...' I said, showing him a visual depiction of the levels of motivation and action. (Figure II in this document) 'Haven't you showed me this picture before?' 'Yes,' I said, 'but look at it again, I want to use it to illustrate something to you. Do you see these levels?' I said, pointing to the lower levels, tone through active participation. 'They are clearly based on a Western individualistic world view, with their main focus being work-readiness. These levels, however,' I said, pointing to the contribution levels, 'are characterised by sharing, mutuality and reciprocal responsibility – values which are much more in line with a collective world view. You know, during my undergraduate studies I once spoke to a therapist working in a poor community. She told me that, in using this model, they managed to get their clients onto a level of active participation, but as soon as the clients were working and earning money, they left the community and didn't want to come back to "give back."' 'Of course,' he said. 'You cannot expect people to suddenly act according to a collective value system after systematically individualising them.' 'Exactly,' I said. 'I am afraid that, in using this model in communities where poverty is prevalent, we might have been unknowingly, systematically westernising our clients.'

Clearly, the tacit cultural assumptions that underlie the theories and models that we use in approaching our clients may become a factor which influences the creative participation of our clients. Theories and models based on a Western world view may perpetuate our own tendency to place all the 'emphasis on personal characteristics,' to enforce our Western norms on non-Western communities and to victim blame. Additionally we may be blinded to the effects of the macro political-economic factors in creating a structure of lack of opportunity. (Wright, 1993) Kronenberg (2005; 2006) in his exploration of the possible

contribution of occupational therapy to the lives of street children, similarly found that the available vocabulary and theories tended to indicate that the children needed to be changed (fixed). Thus, instead of viewing the bigger context as the main issue to be addressed, the children were problematised. (Kronenberg, 2005; 2006) Some of these structural contextual factors become apparent under the theme ‘things started changing.’

5.2.2. The environment and occupational choice

Though an array of environmental factors as listed in the ICF, and some factors that are not listed – ranging from the ‘indoor air quality’ (read ‘the horrible smell’) through ‘political services’ – emerges from this theme, I have decided to focus on those factors which can be classified, in ICF terms, as ‘societal environmental factors.’ Those are the impersonal contextual factors which encompass the social structures, services and overarching approaches or systems which affect the entire community or society. In addition, I will consider how these factors shaped, not only the ‘individual environmental factors’ (those factors pertaining to the immediate ‘social and physical’ environment of the participants), but also the occupations which participants chose or had the opportunity to choose.

I am struck at how, in analysing my data into neat, manageable compartments, the complex lived experiences of the participants seem to have become reduced and over-simplified. It is as though, in the act of capturing a moment in time by putting it down in words, the dynamic vibrancy of the real lived experience is lost. I wish to describe in words, the complexity which underlies the simple statement: ‘management changed.’

Like other slums the world over, a combination of factors contributed to turning Schubart Park into a 'slum of despair' – a declining neighbourhood 'in which environmental conditions and services are in a process of seemingly inevitable decay.' (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.9) The first which becomes apparent in reading through this theme is the undeniable Apartheid history of South Africa. Not only does "Apartheid's legacy to the democratic South Africa" include "highly visible income poverty and inequality," (Seekings, 2007:p.1) it has also left those who were impoverished by it, in a housing crisis. The 1913 Land Act, which alienated Africans from most of the land, (UN-Habitat, 2003) the imposition of influx control and the Group Areas legislation, implemented in an attempt to contain African settlement in the urban areas, (Knight, 2004) as well as a lack of housing (UN-Habitat, 2003) for an expanding urban population (Knight, 2004) has left South Africa with a large housing backlog, especially in and around urban areas. The situation of many of the Schubart Park residents was not dissimilar from the description of 'Maggie Heyman, an occupational therapist at the Chemawa Indian school in Salem, Oregon: "...theirs is a more forced kind of poverty because of the geographic isolation and historical trauma of their people, which I believe still very much lives in their spirits.' (Kronenberg, 2006) This is also akin to the description of the negative consequences of Apartheid that Galvaan (Watson & Swartz, 2004) identified in Lavender hill in Cape Town, which included, amongst other things poverty, lack of opportunities or services and overcrowded living conditions.

According to the UN-Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements, (2003) the conditions that remained as the South African Apartheid legacy, would create the ideal circumstances for the occurrence of slums, since "slums result from a combination of poverty or low incomes with inadequacies in the housing provision system, so that poor people are forced to seek affordable accommodation and land that became increasingly inadequate." (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.17) The first change in Schubart Park management, marking the end of the subsidised provincial governance of the buildings under the Apartheid

regime, highlights the significant role that poverty had to play in the decline of the buildings. It becomes apparent that “slums and poverty are closely related and mutually reinforcing.” (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.28)

‘So, how was your tour of the city?’ I asked my husband, smiling and finding it ironic and satisfying that ‘my’ organisation and ‘my’ city was worth an ‘academic’ tour. The entire class of Theology students had gone on a field visit to the inner city, hosted by one of my colleagues. ‘Very interesting,’ he said. ‘So, what did you do?’ I probed a bit further. ‘They took us to all the PEN projects and to Schubart Park where the chairperson of the residents’ committee spoke to us. Oh, and for lunch we went for a walk through the streets around the PEN offices; they gave us each R8 – the approximate equivalent of \$1. They told us that many people in the inner city have to survive with only R8 for an entire day – we had to see what we could afford for lunch.’ ‘What did you get?’ I asked. ‘A cooked mealie and a small sweet “vetkoekie.” I would starve if I had to live off that every day!’

Though ‘monetary measures of poverty,’ such as these, are often used, they fail to capture the multidimensional nature that comprises the lived experience of urban poverty. (UN-Habitat, 2003) The UN-Habitat identifies a number of other factors, besides low income, as constituents to urban poverty. Amongst other things, people “may be poor...because they are not protected by laws and regulations concerning civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.” (2003:p.29) Many of the Schubart Park residents were poor with regards to their income, but the second change in management, which left Schubart Park entirely in the hands of the New Housing Forum of the Tshwane municipality,

clearly points out that they were also poor with regards to the extent that their rights were protected.

In South Africa, access to adequate shelter is defined as a basic right for all citizens in terms of the country's Constitution. Section 26 (1) states that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing." Section 26 (2) also provides that "the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right." (1996) To implement its Constitutional mandate for housing development, the South African government adopted a Housing White Paper, providing a framework within which "creating an enabling environment," (South African government, 1994) which would allow "social, economic and community life to flourish," (Bank, Makubalo & Maqasho, 2010:p.11) would take place. In addition, "Parliament adopted the Housing Act of 1997. The Act legislated and extended the provisions set out in the Housing White Paper" and "clarified the responsibilities of national, provincial and municipal government." (Knight, 2004) Under the Housing Act and the resulting National Housing Code, each level of government – national, provincial and municipal was given some responsibility for housing delivery. However, the responsibility for ensuring that the right to adequate housing is realized – the responsibility for delivering – is vested with the municipalities. (Knight, 2004)

There are, according to UN-Habitat (2003), numerous factors that could prevent a municipality from implementing its housing policies. Amongst others "apathy and the lack of political will," the "lack or misuse of financial resources," the "lack of adequately trained personnel in most municipalities" and "the misuse and poor targeting of subsidies for the urban poor" (2003:p.145) might have been applicable in this situation. What is certain, however, is that the lack of political- and housing services that were available to the Schubart Park residents and the subsequent collapse in utilities- and civil protection services, had a pervasive

impact on the immediate environment of the Schubart Park community and on the choice of occupations that were available to them.

The disuse, as a direct result of the ‘change in management,’ of the swimming pool and the tennis courts (factors which pertain to products and technology for culture, recreation and sport) provide an example of how the complex interplay of a number of external factors may restrict the range of occupations that are available for a person or a group of people (Whiteford, 2000) to participate in. Without the facilities available at their home for free, a Schubart Park resident would have to spend a considerable amount of money on travel- and club membership fees to be able to spend time with a grandson, for example, on the tennis court. Whiteford (2000), in an article in which she considers the conceptual origins of occupational deprivation, notes how “those deprived of opportunities to engage in the occupation of paid employment, have the time in which potentially to engage in other occupational pursuits but have little available financial resources with which to do so.” (2000:p.202) She quotes Lobo (Lobo,1999 cited in Whiteford, 2000) in suggesting that “leisure has become commodified to the extent that it requires significant discretionary income. Increasingly...you need money to be a leisure participant in Western society.” (2000:p.202)

Further, the complete shutdown of the elevators, a factor pertaining to the access inside buildings – or, for many Schubart Park residents, access to the outside of the building – illustrates how such factors may restrict people’s occupations to a certain setting; in this case, some of the Schubart Park residents’ flats. It seems as though the environment not only restricted the occupational opportunities for the Schubart Park residents, but also affected their participation in occupations that were available.

In all my visits to Schubart Park, one of the most noticeable observations was how dirty the place was. My field notes are fraught with descriptions of the ‘mess,’ the ‘chaos,’ the ‘filth’ and the ‘muck.’ I wondered why the residents didn’t clean up, or if I would have, had I been in their situation. I tried on various perspectives – from a hierarchical needs point of view, one might ascribe the residents’ refusal to clean up to limited aesthetic needs or, from a creative ability angle, one could make a case for limited initiative and low motivation – but these perspectives underestimate the role that factors within the environment could play on informing the occupations that people perform or choose not to perform.

One such factor, which has been found to significantly affect the willingness of residents to participate in the improvement of their living conditions, (Lall et al, 2004; UN-Habitat, 2003) is the lack of security of tenure; a concept which is regarded as a central characteristic of slums. (UN-Habitat, 2003) Insecure tenure implies that residents face the risk that their “rights to occupy land will be threatened by competing claims, and even lost as a result of eviction.” (FAO, 2002) The UN-Habitat claims that, “if security can be gained, neighbourhoods are likely to improve.” (2003:p.60) In addition the “lack of housing security makes it very difficult for people to participate in society, to establish firm roots and their networks,” “as access to secure tenure has often been a prerequisite for access to other opportunities, including credit, public services and livelihood.” (2003:p.107)

Similarly, a range of environmental or community risk factors (UN-Habitat, 2003) contribute to exposing slum residents, more than non-slum dwellers, to criminal occupations. “Some recent analyses suggest that slum dwellers are...victims of urban crime and related violence, often organized from outside slum areas. Slum dwellers are, in fact, more vulnerable to violence and crime by virtue of the exclusion of slums from preventive public programmes and processes, including

policing.” (2003:p.xxviii) Whiteford (2000) adds that, for groups of people who have had little or no legitimate voice and representation, and thus limited legitimate ‘participation in mainstream forms of cultural production (Giroux, 1996 cited in Whiteford, 2000), engagement in non-legitimated occupations, such as vandalism and participation in occupational groups like gangs (Snyder et al, 1998 cited in Whiteford, 2000), may become a seemingly attractive alternative. Other risk factors include, but are not limited to, unemployment and poverty, family disruption, the availability of weapons (UN-Habitat, 2003) and inequality. Kronenberg & Pollard (2006) similarly found that “war, chronic poverty caused by serious socio-economic and political inequalities” in Guatemala, “produced a relatively large population of street children and youth at risk, many of whom (chose) participation in gangs for lack of better alternatives.” (2006:p.621)

5.2.3. Inequality

Inequality appeared to me as such a prominent factor throughout this study, that it warrants discussion. Also, in few other places in the data did the effect of inequality become as clear as under the theme ‘we’re going to fight this thing.’ The Schubart Park residents essentially directed their fight against their structural environment; an environment that was not only faced with an Apartheid legacy of inequality, but one in which inequality seemed to have been further perpetuated – no longer on the basis of race, but on the basis of social status.

‘They’re talking about poverty in South Africa this morning,’ my husband said; referring to the talk show on the radio, which he insists on listening to every morning, to the detriment of my own need to start my morning quietly and calmly. ‘It sounds like something that you might be interested in.’ I turned up the volume to listen. The guest speaker – an expert on poverty in South Africa – mentioned an aspect that caught my attention. ‘South Africa,’ he said, ‘is in a unique

situation, in which it is very obvious to the poor exactly how much they are being denied. The reason for this is that, unlike countries such as India, in which poor people often accept their poverty as their karma, our elected government based their election campaign on promises of change and ‘a better life for all.’ This has created an expectation among the citizens for a more equal distribution of resources and wealth. The poor people of the country, after more than a decade of democracy, are starting to become impatient, because only the lives of an elect few have changed dramatically, while the situations of many have remained dismal. They see people in the upper social class spending lots of money on big houses and cars, and this makes them angry.’

Social problems like violence, such as the angry, violent behaviour of the Schubart Park residents, which became so apparent throughout their fight, is ‘ more common among the poor than the rich. As such, one might conclude that these problems are caused directly by poor material conditions. (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) However Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), in their extensive research, have found that social problems are instead caused by the scale of material differences between people within societies being too big. That is; social problems, such as violence, are more prevalent in more unequal societies. The reason for the significant effect that inequality has on us, according to these authors, is the strong relation that exists between social status and the sense of confidence, adequacy and self-worth with which it endows a person.

“If the social hierarchy is seen – as it often is – as if it were a ranking of the human race by ability, then the outward signs of success or failure (the better jobs, higher incomes, education, housing, car and clothes) all make the difference. Higher status almost always carries connotations of being better, superior, more successful and more able. If you don’t want to feel small, incapable, looked down on or inferior, it is not quite essential to avoid low social

status, but the further up the social ladder you are, the easier it becomes to feel a sense of pride, dignity and self-confidence.” (2009:p.40) The authors suggest “that increased inequality ups the stakes in the competition for status: status matters even more.” (2009:p.134) In the face of evidence, which points to violence most often being a response to disrespect, humiliation and loss of face, one could expect more violence in more unequal communities, in which more people lack the ‘trappings of status,’ which serve as protection and buffer against shame and humiliation. (2009) The negative effects of inequality penetrated numerous other aspects of the social life of the Schubart Park residents, which I will refer to throughout the discussion as they appear in the data. For now, it will suffice to bear in mind that inequality played an important role in informing the ‘tactics’ which the Schubart Park residents employed in their fight.

5.2.4. Political activities of daily living

Kronenberg (2005), in considering the concept ‘politics’ and its relation to occupational therapy, quotes Van der Eijk (2001 cited in Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005): “politics are concerned with conflicts between groups of people, the development of conflicts, the development of co-operative strategies to influence the outcome of the conflicts in one or another group’s desired direction, and the resolution of the conflict.” Undeniably, then, the Schubart Park residents, amidst their fight for their home, found themselves in a clearly *political* situation. For this reason I have thought it appropriate to consider the ‘political nature’ of the Schubart Park struggle by using Kronenberg’s (2005) suggested ‘pADL questions’ as a guideline, bearing in mind the authors’ suggested aim of ‘raising awareness and understanding of...the political nature of people’s participation in daily life.’ I have found the ‘answers’ to the various questions so intermingled, that I have decided not to try and untangle them and discuss them one by one, but rather to discuss them as a whole, using the ‘pADL questions’ as a point of reference.’ The ‘pADL questions’ are concerned with the characteristics and actors within a situation, the aims, interests, motives and means of the

various actors, the political landscape and the broader context of the situation. The latter two aspects have been extensively spoken about in the previous sections and the current discussion should be seen against that background. Also, though numerous actors were involved in the Schubart Park situation, I will highlight those relationships of conflict and co-operation which become clear throughout the data and which become clearly illustrated in the different perceptions that were held regarding the fight.

My initial observation is that the fight for Schubart Park was characterised by angry, violent and destructive conflict rather than co-operation, and that much of the co-operation that did exist was obtained forcefully. The entire residents' community of both Schubart Park and the neighbouring Kruger Park buildings were involved in the struggle. At stake for all of them was a place to stay; though for some an alternative accommodation would suffice, others were determined to remain within the Schubart Park buildings and insisted on its renovation. There were also those for whom more was at stake – for example, those who had managed to exploit their living conditions for their own benefit and those who had found a cheap refuge in which no-one was concerned about their paper work. As such, each one's motives were subtly in conflict or in cooperation with the various other actors. The residents had, as their representatives, the residents' committee; some of whom were individuals who were benefitting – financially and in terms of their status – from (and thus, to a certain degree co-operating in maintaining) the conflict at Schubart Park. Other members of the committee were genuinely concerned with developing cooperative strategies to improve the conditions of their home. Clearly then, there was a situation of conflict amongst the aims, interests and motives of the various members of the committee as well as with those of the residents. I am convinced that this situation – in which personal motives for attaining means of some sort are in conflict with the 'greater public good' – is not unique, especially in a broader context in which means are so unequally distributed. In further considering the effect of inequality, one has to bear in mind the status that would accompany one of the Schubart Park 'freedom

fighters' if they managed to 'win' – especially within the specific South African historical context. The benefit of achieving the status of a 'struggle hero,' might far outweigh the costs, even of a few lives; especially when the loss of those lives could be typified as martyrdoms for the greater good.

This might be one explanation for the reason why co-operation between the committee and the residents was often attained through force. Or perhaps the committee realised that, without money or connections and with only limited legal information and ability to communicate their plight to the powers that be (through the media and legal representation), their sheer numbers and force was the only means of power available to them to influence their situation. This would also partially explain the increasingly violent and destructive behaviour of the residents – if force seems to be the only power that you have, your only appeal against not getting what you want would be to apply more force

This leads us to the relationship between the residents and the 'faceless' housing forum and the mayor. In this conflict situation, the residents initially used 'socially acceptable' behaviour; appealing to their constitutional rights and the sense of responsibility of the municipal housing services in letters to the mayor, temporary non-payment and peaceful mass protest action, to object to their situation. The authorities – rather than initiating a process of cooperation in-line with the South African constitution and housing policies- and laws – chose a 'negative' retort of forced eviction, benign neglect and involuntary resettlement, (UN-Habitat, 2003) which led to a more violent and destructive response from the residents, also amongst each other. One factor which merits consideration with regards to the violence that was visible, the residents amongst themselves, is 'displaced aggression.' Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) maintain that "inequality increases downward social prejudices" and that "those deprived of status try to regain it by taking it out on more vulnerable people below them." (2009:p.166)

The sad and absurd irony of the Schubart Park fight, so characteristic of occupational apartheid (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) is that the residents themselves, in a desperate attempt to wield some sort of power, unknowingly co-operated with their own demise; the very tactics which they employed had in the end become the grounds for justifying having them thrown out of their home. During the writing of this document, the final Schubart Park residents have finally been evicted or relocated. It is not unlike the example of 'occupational absurdity' mentioned by Pollard, (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) in which "a group of people with chronic mental illnesses were daily sent to occupational therapy in order to knit squares. The completed squares were passed to another group of people in the same room who unravelled the squares back into balls of wool." (2005:p.80) In Schubart Park, however, the 'knitting' group had proverbially realised what was going on and started to complain. Upon getting no reaction and out of sheer frustration they had started poking and hurting the 'unravelling' group with knitting needles and on the basis of being 'too violent and destructive,' had been denied any further 'therapy.' (In this case an appeal to the constitutional court might see justice prevail yet, though.)

5.2.5. Concluding remarks

Through considering the research participants' experiences of their environment, it was possible to identify certain factors which might affect the creative participation of people living in an inner city. Furthermore, their experiences illustrated the complexity of the interplay between various contextual factors and their possible relation to occupational deprivation and occupational apartheid. There is limited occupational therapy research available to compare these findings with – much of the available work has been done in rural areas rather than in cities and has often included people living with disabilities. However, these findings seem to be in agreement with other studies that focussed on the effects of poverty and the environment on occupation; though it is clear that the

various factors at play differ from situation to situation and are exacerbated by the presence of disability. The experiences of the research participants have, thus, sufficiently served to inform the ‘external factors’ which are contained in the aim of this study. The participants’ perceived impact of the environment might serve better in informing the ‘how.’

5.3. Life in the ruins – Reviewing participants’ perceptions

5.3.1. Effort, time and creative participation

Thinking about the contextual factors and their effect on the participants of this study, I have become more sensitised to my own living environment and its effect on me. This has helped me to find parallels of the participants’ experiences in my own life, which has made it possible for me to somehow relate to those experiences. So, though I have never had to walk up and down 23 flights of stairs to have water to wash my dishes, my own experience with dishes and their washing facilitated my understanding of life in Schubart Park.

We had moved into our new home; a rectory even larger than the one that the previous church had provided (apparently the minister whom they built it for had 7 children, so he needed plenty of room). Being much too critical and, hence, never satisfied with the cleaning that anyone else had done and also too proud to have anyone other than myself clean up the mess that / have made, I had insisted on doing all the housekeeping by myself. A bigger house, a crawling baby, an incomplete master’s thesis and finding my feet in a new community left little time for washing the dishes, and they seemed to pile at an unbelievable speed – I simply couldn’t keep up. When I finally got round to tending to the dirty heap, it would take the necessary effort and a considerable amount of time to clean it all up. It didn’t take long for me to ‘invest’ in a dishwasher – a simple

addition to my environment that allowed me to spend much less effort and time on dirty dishes – and then I understood...

In reading the theme ‘it was quite a challenge’ – which clearly denotes ‘effort’, I realised that the complex interplay of the various environmental factors shaping the Schubart Park situation, obligated its residents to spend much effort and, consequently also much time, on those everyday-occupations which, in an equipped and facilitating environment, would take only a small part of one’s day. In research on “how the drudgery of getting water shapes women’s lives in low-income urban communities,” Crow and McPike (2009) note that the daily collection of water, a ‘pivotal reproductive activity,’ affects the productive opportunities of especially women, living in slums. Further, “inadequate water sources often make this task time-consuming, unpredictable, and difficult to balance with other tasks of the day.” (2009:p.53) Slum residents’ occupations thus seem to be restricted, in that their environment limits the amount of time and, consequently, energy that remains for participation in occupations, other than those activities that are necessary for survival and self-care. The above-mentioned study also quotes Blackden and Wodon (2006 cited in Crow & McPike, 2009) in their exploration of the concept ‘time-poverty.’ ‘Time poverty’ has been found to affect women in particular in that they have to work especially long hours due in part to a lack of access to basic infrastructure services such as water and electricity. Time poverty reinforces income poverty and limits the opportunities outside the household for those who are affected by it. (Crow & McPike, 2009). Kronenberg (2005), in his exploration of the potential for occupational therapy practice with street children in Mexico similarly found that these children’s occupational and social participation was denied or restricted to survival. Bazyk & Bazyk (2009), in their work with low-income urban youth, also stress the lack of a balance of occupations, which includes structured leisure occupations for children living in impoverished conditions.

In her 2004 Eleanor Clarke Slagle lecture, Ruth Zemke (2004) exploring the relationship between time, space and occupation, expresses the profound way in which our occupations are bound to space and time; “Time and space can constrain or enable occupations.” (2004:p.613) In the real world, time and space “determines where, when, and, in some ways, what occupations we can do. The time it takes to move through space limits the distance we can travel between occupations. Certain activities are constrained or enabled in certain times and places. We have a certain degree of occupational time and place dependence. That is, we depend upon times and places to allow us to ‘be’ and ‘do’ our selfhood through our occupations.” (2004:pp.613-614) “Places are ‘behaviour settings’ (Barker, 1968 cited in Zemke, 2004), where individuals and their surroundings together create systems from which emerge a certain behavioural status quo.” (Zemke, 2004:p.614) In addition, quoting Tuan, (1977) she remarks that “units of time convey a clear sense of effort.” (2004:p.614) In other words, spending more time would imply spending more of our limited resources of energy and attention.

This perspective implies a ‘quantitative’ element embedded in the concept ‘effort;’ an element which might warrant consideration from a creative participation perspective. In some of her earliest work, Vona du Toit (2004) describes ‘self-application’ as one of the fundamental ingredients of initiative. It then logically follows that, if the emergence of creative participation is characterised by the emergence of initiative, ‘self-application’ or ‘effort’ would fulfil a character role therein also. The relationship becomes clear when considering Du Toit’s (2004) exposition of the term ‘self-application;’ the quality thereof depending on a person’s ‘awareness, responsibility and attentiveness’ and the direction thereof being determined by one’s willingness to turn ‘towards one’s fellow man’ through ‘sharing and mutuality.’ Hence, the emergence of creative participation runs along the continuum, and is dependent on, the emergence of ‘self-application’ – through continuing successful ‘self-application,’ or effort, one gradually becomes more equipped at applying oneself with greater awareness and responsibility,

increasingly paying greater attention to the needs of one's fellow man. According to Du Toit, both the quality and direction of 'self-application' is determined largely by environmental factors. The experience of the Schubart Park residents indicate that the 'quantity' of 'self-application' is intrinsically linked to the time that is available for occupations, and as such may also be largely affected by the environment. The emotional experiences of the Schubart Park residents add yet another dimension to the effect of the environment on the concept of 'self-application' and creative participation.

5.3.2. Anxiety, 'self-application' and creative participation

Anxiety is defined as "a response to a threat that is unknown, internal, vague or conflictual." (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.591) It serves "as a warning of external or internal threats" such as "threats of bodily damage, pain, helplessness, possible punishment, or the frustration of social or bodily needs; of separation from loved ones; of a menace to one's success or status; and ultimately of threats to unity or wholeness. It prompts a person to take the necessary steps to prevent the threat or to lessen its consequences." (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.592)

The emotional challenges experienced by the participants gives voice to the different shades of anxiety which a conflictual (read political) situation, such as the one in Schubart Park, may evoke. The experiences of anxiety included the more subtle 'status anxiety,' which is described by Alain de Botton (2004, cited in Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) as "a worry so pernicious as to be capable of ruining extended stretches of our lives." Further, he suggests, that when we fail to maintain our position in the social hierarchy we are "condemned to consider the successful with bitterness and ourselves with shame." (De Botton, 2004 cited in Wilinon & Pickett, 2009:p.69) Wilkinson and Pickett have proposed that higher anxiety levels, which they have found to be strongly correlated with inequality, can be ascribed to the high value which is placed "on acquiring money and possessions, looking good in the eyes of others and wanting to be famous,"

(James, 2007 cited in Wilkonson & Pickett, 2007:p.69) that is more prevalent in unequal societies. The participants' experiences further included chronic anxiety in the face of crime and looming eviction threats. The UN-Habitat's global report on human settlements (2003) has similarly indicated that the greatest fear amongst slum dwellers was of eviction, violence and crime.

Anxiety is regarded as adaptive when it “prevents damage by alerting the person to carry out certain acts that forestall the danger.” (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.592) As such it may be regarded as a prompt towards self-application. If, however, the effort is unsuccessful in precluding the threat – as in the case of the Schubart Park residents – it would understandably lead to further feelings of anxiety, helplessness and of being overwhelmed. The theory of flow seems to agree with this perspective; people are regarded as experiencing anxiety during tasks or in situations in which the perceived challenge is greater than the skills that are available to meet it. (Csikszentmihalyi. 1990)

The experiences of the participants in this study seem to emphasise the role that the availability of resources and opportunities could play in enabling the use of above-mentioned skills. The development of creative participation that, according to the VdT Model of Creative Ability, is dependent on success in action, could seemingly be stunted in situations in which the challenge continually exceeds the ability or opportunity to successfully respond to it. As such, the deepening of the quality and direction of self-application itself could be stunted. This becomes clearly illustrated in the increasing difficulty with which the Schubart Park residents were able to ‘turn towards’ their neighbours and their families. To further emphasise the role of the structural environment in this regard, it is interesting to note that Wilkinson and Pickett have found levels of trust to be highly correlated to levels of inequality. “Imagine living somewhere where 90 per cent of the population mistrusts one another and what that must mean for the quality of everyday life – the interactions between people at work, on the street, in shops, in schools.” (2009:p.54)

5.3.3. *Meaning and growth amidst the turmoil*

In exploring the role of spirituality in occupation, Weskamp and Ramugondo (Watson & Swartz, 2004) pose the following question: “Is it possible for people to live in hope and to achieve the meaning and purpose that spirituality brings while living in poverty and exposed to acute suffering? Can one find even a glimmer of human potential, alive and active under such circumstances?” (2004:p.160) The theme ‘sometimes it was good’ suggests that the answer to these questions are ‘yes.’ Throughout this research experience I have become convinced that, amidst the most challenging circumstances, some of the most inspiring stories of the awakening of creative participation and ‘turning towards one’s fellow man,’ may unfold.

“On her visits to the townships on different days of the week, Ramugondo observed many elements of community living that pointed to the hope and human potential that can exist in seemingly desperate situations. For example, one contrast she noted was the dilapidated condition of a number of the shacks, and the spotlessly clean washing on the lines next to them. This suggested to her a sense of self-worth held by the people who dwelt there – that they were able to use very limited resources to strive for cleanliness and therefore retain human dignity.” (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.161) Similarly, in this study, the contrast between hopelessness and purpose emerges and the contrast between feeling too unskilled to face the challenge and yet learning practical skills, compassion, humility and gratitude (the clean washing of the spirit) which lightened the burden.

Ramogondo further notes: “It was humbling to see that some women became pillars of support for others, despite their own problems. This helped the ‘helpers’ to recognise their own abilities.” (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.164) The findings of this study similarly point out the value of ‘doing for others’ in providing a sense of meaning, purpose and positivity despite the grim environment and despite a

'lower' level of creative participation. For me, this opens new questions and possibilities with regards to the term 'contribution' within the VdT Model of Creative Ability.

5.3.4. Concluding Remarks

Through a review of the participants' perceived impact of the environment on their creative participation, it became clear that the environment had a perceptible effect on the quality, direction and quantity of the participants' self-application; an element which, according to the VdT Model of Creative Ability, is pivotal in the development of creative participation. Further, the participants' experiences highlighted the relationship between the environment and anxiety, which led to an exploration of the relationship between self-application and anxiety. The 'ability to control the negative effects of anxiety' as well as the ability to exert maximum effort are considered as indicative of the level of a person's creative participation. As such, the environment may play a crucial role in each of these aspects individually, as well as in the way that they relate to each other. However, a thorough exposition of these key concepts of the VdT Model of Creative Ability seems lacking in literature and limits the deductions that could be made from these findings. The effect of the environment, despite being challenging and in many instances severely limiting, also included positive outcomes that might stimulate thought surrounding occupational therapy in slum- or other poverty-stricken communities. The perceptions of the research participants have, thus, given us an inkling of the possible effect of environmental factors on the creative participation of people living in the inner city. The emergence of and change in the participants' creative participation may further inform us in this regard.

5.4. Participation amidst the demise— Reviewing changes in creative participation

5.4.1. *Internal factors and external factors*

‘I have based my entire protocol on the idea that environmental factors might negatively influence the creative participation of people. If they want me to change the aim, I would have to change the entire protocol. I would have to start from scratch,’ the student said, frustrated at the school’s rejection of her initial research protocol. ‘You don’t have to start from scratch,’ the lecturer replied – always the voice of reason. ‘Your emerging hypothesis is that the environment, rather than internal factors, may negatively affect the creative participation of people living in challenging environments. We’ll change the aim and say that, throughout the interviews, you’ll pay attention to any internal factors that arise, which seem to have an influence on the participants’ creative participation.’

The ICF (WHO, 2001) specifies eight different temperament and personality functions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and psychic stability, openness to experience, optimism, confidence and trustworthiness. I will briefly review their presence or absence in each of the participants and consider their possible effect with regards to the change in participants’ creative participation.

‘Auntie N’ had a cheerful and hopeful disposition which helped her to find the ‘silver lining’ in difficult circumstances and is indicative of optimism. I experienced her as co-operative and accommodating throughout her involvement in the research process, which indicates agreeableness. In addition, I would describe her as conscientious and trustworthy. Though she was mostly even-tempered, calm and composed (aspects pertaining to psychic stability), the challenges in her environment sometimes affected her such that she became worried and

erratic. Her willingness to express her emotions and to seek new experiences indicates that she was open to experience. Also, throughout her story, it was noticeable that her confidence and extraversion grew along with her creative participation.

The other participant that demonstrated growth with regards to her creative participation, 'Mama R,' showed an amicable and accommodating disposition, indicating agreeableness. She was conscientious, trustworthy and her soft-spoken calmness indicated psychic stability. I would not, however, describe her as extroverted, optimistic or open to experience.

'Mr. and Mrs. M' could be described as being extroverted in that I experienced them as being sociable and demonstrative. From their interviews, however, they didn't appear to be agreeable, open to experience, particularly conscientious or optimistic. I did experience them as being trustworthy.

'The man A,' though he seemed anything but conscientious, agreeable or trustworthy in his behaviour towards me, appeared extroverted, open to experience, optimistic and confident.

In considering the dispositional underpinnings, which may enable individuals to construe benefits from adversity, Affleck and Tennen indicate that people displaying specific psychological dispositions, such as optimism, extraversion and openness to experience, are more likely than others to experience positive growth amidst adversity. (Affleck & Tennen, 1996) This would entail that the growth of 'Auntie N's' creative participation could be ascribed to the presence of these personality traits and that the distortion of 'Mr. and Mrs. M's' creative participation could be ascribed to their lacking the necessary personality traits. This becomes especially plausible when considering the way in which 'Auntie N' managed to 'find the benefits' that arose from her life in Schubart Park which is documented under the theme 'sometimes it was good.' However, 'Mama R' also

lacked the mentioned personality traits, and yet she experienced growth, while ‘The man A’ seemed to display these personality traits and yet his creative participation was disrupted.

Though ‘personality’ most likely did have an effect on the change that was visible in the participants’ creative participation, the extent and nature of the effect can only be speculated. It might be that an optimistic outlook simply shrunk the perceptible threat, so that it seemed less insurmountable. However, such speculation is outside of the scope of this study and merely warrants saying that further research in this regard is necessary.

All of the changes in creative participation, however, could not be ascribed to ‘personality’ alone. Another aspect which seemed to have had an effect on the change in the participants’ creative participation, was the level of creative participation they were on upon entering their crisis.

5.4.2. The levels that the participants started out on

It is noticeable that ‘Auntie N,’ who seemed to construe the most benefits from life in Schubart Park, and in whom an emergence of creative participation was observable, was also the person who seemed to have started out on a higher level than the other participants. Further, it is interesting to note that ‘the man A,’ who started out on the lowest level in comparison to the other participants, seemed to have been most negatively influenced by the environment. This might be an indication that the impact of environmental factors may vary across the levels of creative participation.

Certain phrases in Du Toit’s (2004) descriptions of the different levels also seem to point out that, depending on their levels, people might be more vulnerable to the effect of their environments. For example, on the level of self-presentation: “the only control of (anger or fear) will be stimulated by the disapproval of the

group,” and “will be directed by the pleasant sensation of being ‘in favour’ with others, rather than the unpleasant feeling of being rejected by them.” (2004:p.63) On the contrary, on the level of competitive participation: “satisfaction and fulfilment are attained through competition with others.” (2004:p.79) Also, on a level of imitative participation: “he will experience difficulty in handling new or unpredicted situations,” (2004:p.72) while on a level of competitive participation: “complex situations can be handled successfully.” (2004:p.79)

By reviewing the emergence and change in the creative participation of the participants of this study, it becomes clearer how people on different levels of creative participation may respond differently to environmental challenges. However, in order to draw more definite conclusions in this regard, would require further study.

5.4.3. Concluding remarks

Through reviewing the changes that took place in the participants’ creative participation, the possible role of ‘personality,’ as a factor that influences the creative participation of people living in an inner city, was explored. In addition, the varying effect of the environment on people’s creative participation, depending on the level that they were on, was considered. As such, though not many definite conclusions could be drawn, this objective has sufficiently informed the ‘internal factors’ contained in the aim of this study and has further explored the ‘how.’ In the following section, we will review the inner city sub-culture.

5.5. Dissecting the sub-culture – Reviewing the Schubart Park sub-culture

5.5.1. Sub-culture and creative participation

The UN-habitat global report on human settlements (2003) suggests that slums “are communities in their own right. They are melting pots for different racial

groups and cultures. (2003:p.xxxi) The report further describes the cultural contribution that many slum communities, because of their diversity, have made across the world. This includes the development of new genres of music and art, and new styles of literature and language. However, the cultural diversity that is often found in slums, similarly to the findings of this study, does not always yield such positive results. Rather, the diversity may reflect a mix “of disparate populations.” “These populations come together through in-migration. They may well be foes; they may have a history of exploitation or fear, such as whites and blacks; or they may be groups that understand very little about each other’s culture.” (UN-Habitat, 2003:p.71) When one views the diversity of Schubart Park against the Apartheid history and the recent xenophobic violence across South Africa, it becomes clear that the diversity within Schubart Park was for the greater part disparate, rather than merely diverse. This could be part of the reason why the Schubart Park sub-culture went awry.

The development of a ‘counter-culture’ in Schubart Park seems similar to findings reported by the UN-Habitat; “observers of high crime neighbourhoods have long identified the pattern of ‘oppositional culture’ arising from a lack of participation in mainstream economic and social life. Given the apparent rejection of community members by the larger society, the community members reject the values and aspirations of that society by developing an ‘oppositional identity.’” (Sherman et al, 1998 cited in UN-Habitat, 2003:p.75) This is especially notable in terms of values that oppose the protective factors of marriage and family, education, work and obedience to the law. As unemployment and segregation increases, the strength of the opposition increases. Efforts to gain ‘respect’ in oppositional cultures may then rely more upon violence than upon other factors.’ Though the effect of the development of such an ‘oppositional culture’ on creative participation would require more in-depth inquiry, it is noteworthy that the members of this kind of sub-culture actively reject the popular social norms – thus the ‘ability to comply with norms,’ which is regarded as a factor indicative of the level of creative participation – is directly affected. It is further interesting to

note how the values of such an ‘oppositional sub-culture’ might distort the values of ‘turning towards one’s fellow man,’ which is contained in a collectivist world-view. The ‘lack of participation’ is mentioned as a cause for the development of such a sub-culture. As such, perceived victimisation and marginalisation (being left on the outside of the popular forms of participation) are likely contributors to the development of an oppositional culture.

Feelings of being victimised abounded in Schubart Park. This emerged from the theme ‘it was quite a challenge’ and was then highlighted as a theme in itself in considering the Schubart Park sub-culture. ‘The victim’ is considered as one of the archetypes – “representational images and configurations with universal symbolic meaning.” (Sadock & Sadock, 2003:p.222) ‘The victim,’ writes Caroline Myss (2002) in her extensive work on archetypes, may manifest when “you don’t get what you want or need.” (2002:p.116) ‘The victim’ may serve as a painful reminder of weakness when one remains afraid to stand up for justice or one ‘may enjoy getting sympathy.’ However, ‘the victim’ may also serve as a reminder of one’s own strength, a guardian of one’s self-esteem. “The core issue of the Victim is whether it’s worth giving up your own sense of empowerment to avoid taking responsibility for your independence.” (Myss, 2002:p116)

This theme evokes a great deal of ambivalence in me in that ‘taking responsibility’ and ‘independence’ are such loaded ‘Western’ values. It is further complicated by the fact that the Schubart Park residents were indeed being ‘victimised,’ and that the buildings and their upkeep were indeed the municipality’s responsibility. Yet, I cannot escape the thought that, in demanding to be taken care of (instead of creating a culture in which they took care), the residents were compromising their own empowerment; their own creative participation. The question that this ambivalence brings to mind, is whether it is possible to be ‘empowered’ even though you are being victimised? Does ‘empowerment’ necessarily imply ‘individuality’? How would the Schubart Park struggle have been different, had it come from an ‘empowered’ community? I’ve

heard that, in an interview with the press, the Dalai Lama was asked why he displays no anger toward the Chinese government, who continued to commit atrocities toward the Tibetan people. His answer displays an example of how I imagine ‘empowerment’ despite crippling victimisation may look: ‘They have taken everything away from us. Shall I give them my mind too?’

But the Schubart Park struggle was not informed by the Dalai Lama; instead it was informed by memories of the Apartheid struggle, unfulfilled political promises and the constitution. It should suffice to say that it seems that the previous exposure of the individuals in a community, serve to inform the sub-culture of such a community. Hence, ‘exposure’ may be a factor which influences the creative participation of people living in an inner city, deserving further study.

5.5.2 Concluding remarks

Through the review of the Schubart Park sub-culture, it became clear that the cultural composition of an environment may facilitate or hinder the participation of the community living there. Further, it seems as though a diverse mix of cultures would inevitably lead to the development of a unique sub-culture. Such a sub-culture and the values, ideas and beliefs which are upheld by it, may become a factor which influences creative participation, specifically when it influences individuals’ compliance with norms. Another belief that might negatively influence a community’s participation seems to be the extent to which they are stunted by being ‘the victim.’ Though these findings are useful in informing the aim of this study, these factors, including the role that ‘exposure’ plays in affecting creative participation, require further investigation.

5.6. Realisation of the aim – Putting it all together

The aim of this study was to explore how internal and external factors impact on the creative participation of people living in an inner city. Throughout the

discussion of the findings it has become clear that the influences of external factors, rather than internal factors, dominated what the participants perceived to have had an impact on them. I have thought it worthwhile to compare three widely-used occupational therapy conceptual models in relation to their current perspectives on the environmental effect on occupational performance – the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO), the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance (CMOP) and the Occupational Performance Model of Australia (OPM(A)). Thereafter I will consider how the findings of this study relate to those perspectives and in whether the aim has, or has not been, realised. By viewing the findings in this manner, it should be easy to identify any contributions that this study has made to the existing body of occupational therapy knowledge.

5.6.1. External factors and participation

In a study which explored ‘the link between conceptual occupational therapy models and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health,’ Stamm et al (2006) linked the different concepts, on which each of the above-mentioned conceptual models are built, to the ICF categories and components. Using the section of their findings which pertained to the ICF environmental factors seemed a useful way of comparing the way in which these models address the effect of the environment on participation. (Refer to Table I)

| Concept | ICF Category |
|--|---|
| <i>MoHO</i> | |
| <p>In the MoHO, the environment is seen as consisting of ‘physical, cultural and social environments,’ which ‘constitute behaviour settings’ and that ‘influence human occupational behaviour.</p> | |
| Physical environment | e199 Products and technology, unspecified |
| Social environment | e465 Social norms, practices and ideologies |



| | |
|---|--|
| Occupational behaviour settings | e299 Natural environment and human-made changes to environment, other specified and unspecified. |
| CMOP | |
| <p>According to the CMOP there exists a dynamic relationship between the environment, occupation and person, which brings about occupational performance.</p> <p>'The key elements of the environment are cultural, institutional, physical and social.'</p> | |
| Physical environment | e199 Products and technology, unspecified |
| Institutional environment | e599 Services, systems and policies, unspecified |
| Cultural environment | e465 Social norms, practices and ideologies |
| Social environment | e465 Social norms, practices and ideologies |
| OPM (A) | |
| <p>In the OPM(A) 'the external environment is divided into the physical, social, cultural and social environments.' In addition 'occupational performance is embedded in space and time.</p> <p>Space refers to physical matter (physical space) and the person's experience of space (felt space). Time refers to the temporal ordering of physical events (physical time) as well as the meaning that is attributed to time by the person (felt time).'</p> | |
| Sensory environment | Environmental factors |
| Physical environment | e199 Products and technology, unspecified |
| Social environment | e456 Social norms, practices and ideologies |
| Cultural environment | e456 Social norms, practices and ideologies |
| Space (physical space) | e299 Natural environment and human-made changes to environment, other specified and unspecified |
| Space (felt space) | Not coded |
| Time (physical time) | e2459 Time-related changes, unspecified |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Time (felt time) | b1802 Experience of time (classified in the ICF as a body function) |
|------------------|---|

Table II – A comparison between the environmental factors contained in MOHO, CMOP, OPM(A) and the way in which they are linked to the ICF (Stamm et al, 2006:p.15)

The authors mentioned “differences in the definition of concepts and ICF categories” (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16) that affected their choices. ‘Sensory environment’ in the OPM(A) was linked to the ICF component environmental factors rather than to a more detailed ICF category because of its definition in the OPM(A). ‘Sensory environment’ in the OPM(A) refers to the “sensory surroundings of a person. Sensory aspects of the environment give a person information about the physical-sociocultural aspects of the environment and its survivability.” (OPM(A), 2006) “No detailed ICF categories that match this definition could be found, although it seemed that all aspects of the definition of sensory environment in the OPM(A) were covered by the higher-ranking ICF component environmental factors.” (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16) They also explain their link between both ‘cultural environment’ and ‘social environment’ to the ICF category e465 social norms, practices and ideologies among the environmental factors. In the OPM(A), ‘cultural environment’ is defined as an “organised structure composed of systems of values, beliefs, ideals and customs, which contribute to the behavioural boundaries of a person or group of people.” (OPM(A), 2006) “In the CMOP, ‘cultural environment’ is defined as ethnic, racial, ceremonial and routine practices, based on ethos and the value system of a particular group (Townsend, 2002 cited in Stamm et al, 2006). The ICF category e465 social norms, practices and ideologies includes both a cultural and a social perspective. However, ‘cultural environment’ is not a separate category in the ICF.” (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16)

In comparing the models, the authors mention that the MoHO, though it acknowledges that the environment does have an influence on human behaviour,

it does “not explain the interaction and relationship between its components.” “Both the CMOP and the OPM(A) explain the relationship between the concepts that are included in the model.” (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16-17)

5.6.2. The findings of this study in relation to conceptual models

Viewed in comparison to the findings of this study, it becomes clear that, though occupational therapists have acknowledged and, in many instances tried to explain, the impact of the environment on the participation of people, we have been greatly underestimating the effect thereof. This is clearly noticeable in the limited range of environmental factors that are taken account of in each of the above-mentioned models. Consideration for the effect of societal environmental factors seems lacking in particular, with only the CMOP taking account of the ‘institutional environment.’ In the OPM(A) the ‘political and economic environments’ are regarded as further sub-divisions of the environmental factors that are mentioned in Table I, and though their effects are described as ‘profoundly’ affecting ‘occupational performance,’ they don’t seem to be clearly defined and their interaction with the other concepts of the model don’t seem to be explicitly described. (OPM(A), 2006)

Further, it seems as though, in the instances in which the models have described the relationship between the environmental factors and the other concepts, the descriptions have failed to describe the complex interplay which the findings of this study have pointed to. Additionally, the models have mostly failed to acknowledge “that occupational performance is closely related to the perception and the experience of the environment,” (Stamm et al, 2006:p.16) except in the concepts ‘felt space’ and ‘felt time’ of the OPM(A).

It seems, thus, as though the findings of this research have sufficiently realised the aim of the study in identifying factors that may have an influence on the creative participation of people living in an inner city, and in exploring what such

an influence might entail. These findings may be useful in identifying more specific areas that require inquiry. There are, however, also factors which limit the use of these findings.

5.7. Limitations to the study

The qualitative nature of this study implies that the findings aren't generalisable. Further, despite the fact that I employed various techniques to ensure that the findings are transferable to different, but similar situations (Refer to 3.7.2. Transferability), the small sample size limits the number of situations to which the findings can be transferred. However, a larger sample would most likely not have allowed me to present such rich and detailed descriptions. In that sense this study could be seen as an exploration of a rather barren field of study, with the purpose of generating more specific areas that require inquiry.

An aspect of safety also limited this study. To fully understand the environment and culture of the research population, and to properly employ an ethnographic research methodology, I would have had to expose myself to potentially dangerous situations, such as going to live in Schubart Park or roaming around the inner city streets at night time. Though I initially planned on going to live in Schubart Park for a period of time, the University discouraged this, for the sake of my safety. This limited the conversations that I was able to have with residents, and thus the triangulation of the study. To try and compensate for the potential loss of data, I accompanied a night time tour of the city within a group of people, guided by a member of a PEN who was familiar with the city. Also, the NPO that I was working for was two blocks away from the research setting and served quite a number of its residents; in addition to my field visits, I made contact with as many residents as possible through the activities of the NPO.

A further limitation to this study was the fact that I have limited experience of practicing occupational therapy in disadvantaged communities and limited

knowledge with regards to social matters. This is particularly limiting within an autoethnographic research methodology, in which much of the data and the interpretations thereof is generated through the researcher's lens. A researcher with more knowledge and experience in the social field might have generated different interpretations.

5.8. Evaluation of the study

Despite the limitations inherent in using an autoethnographic research design, I regard it as one of the best possible choices for this study. Not only did it allow for exploration within an under-researched field, which could serve as a foundation for further research in this area, it also permitted me close and prolonged contact with a population of people that I wish to serve. I was able to understand and relate to the research participants in a way that a more 'distant' methodology would not have been able to achieve. In realising, so up-close-and-personal, the enormity of the effect of context on shaping people's lives, I am 'ruined' for 'traditional' occupational therapy and resolute in pursuing a practice 'without borders.' (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005)

The fact that this methodology is still relatively under-used in South African occupational therapy research, made it difficult, initially, to defend my research protocol. Further, in performing the research and writing this document, I often felt unsure about the way forward. I hope that this study might serve as a beacon along the way for other prospective occupational therapy autoethnographers.

5.9. Implications of the study

5.9.1. Recognising the full impact of the environment

The findings of this study have pointed out that, as occupational therapists, we have failed to recognise the full impact of the environment, in terms of the range

of environmental factors that we have included in some our most used conceptual models.

The findings of this study imply that, in approaching communities who live in material poverty and who are faced with environmental challenges, occupational therapists have to recognise their own contribution to the environment of such communities. Therapists have to be aware that their ideas, values and beliefs, which shape their system of norms, may facilitate or create barriers to the participation of such a community. This is particularly applicable to therapists who employ the VdT Model of Creative Ability, in which the assessment of the quality of a person's participation is affected by his / her ability to comply to a set of undefined norms. Our tendency to 'force' our own system of values on those we serve may subtly make itself known in feelings of frustration toward 'clients' who 'aren't making an effort' or 'who aren't taking responsibility,' and in feelings of 'sympathy' for our 'poor, needy' clients. It may be useful for therapists to regularly employ bracketing to observe their own perceptions, their tendency to victim-blame and their need to 'want,' for those they serve, what they 'want' for themselves. The following practical illustration may demonstrate this well.

As part of our tour to the inner cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Maputo, we visited a project for boys living on the street, driven by an Anglican church in Maputo. Here the boys were taught all kinds of practical skills; basket weaving, fine art and wood work, amongst others, while living on the church premises. The project also made contact with the boys' families and worked extensively at trying to reunite them – when the boys and their families were ready, the boys were sent home. Our entire group immediately noticed that the sleeping quarters contained no beds or mattresses and we were curious, if not shocked. In explaining, the priest directed our attention to a bunch of rolled up straw mats in the corner of the room. 'That is what the children will sleep on once they go

home. If we give them beds to sleep on, they won't be satisfied with sleeping on the floor anymore and they might not want to go home.' Belonging to and being with a family was simply regarded as being more important than sleeping on a plush bed in a fancy bedroom.

It would be useful for therapists working in poor communities to become aware of the different dimensions of poverty, which this study has pointed out. The UN-Habitat global report on human settlements (2003) have identified low income, low human capital (comprising poor education and health), low social capital (involving a shortage of supportive networks) and low financial capital (comprising the lack of productive assets, such as a house, which may be used to generate income or avoid paying major costs.) as the different facets of poverty. "Being part of a supportive family or group, without any tangible outputs, may sometimes be sufficient to fulfil the needs of an individual." (Watson & Swartz, 2004:p.163) That is why it is of integral importance that we allow the people that we serve to inform us as to how they wish to be served. By doing that we are allowing them to wield their fundamental power of choice and we are acknowledging that our Western, individualistic, capitalistic culture, which has equated material wealth with happiness, is not the only 'right' world-view.

Furthermore, the findings of this study point out the importance of critically evaluating the cultural world-views that underlie the theories and models that we employ as part of our clinical reasoning. We must realise that, in using a specific model, we are also choosing to impart a specific world-view. This must be done with awareness and intention. As such, the lack of the documented development of the VdT Model of Creative Ability was also highlighted. Iwama suggests that models are adapted and amended in the "cultural relationship between their creators and users." (Iwama, 2006:p.48) This may mean that, in being applied to poor communities, the VdT model has been morphed to suit a more collectivist

cultural user population, but because it is so poorly documented, it remains unnoticed.

In addition, this study has named a number of factors that make up the structural- and individual environments of people, which may affect their participation. Many of these factors (and possibly some others that didn't emerge from this study) are not included in the conceptual models that are readily used by occupational therapists. This implies that therapists working in communities have to evaluate their environments beyond the current boundaries of the models that they are using; specifically including structural environmental factors, such as the history of their countries and of the development of the communities they are working in, the services, systems and policies that govern what goes on in such communities and the prevalence of inequality. It may be helpful to therapists if the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa, similarly to what Watson has described, (Christiansen & Townsend, 2003 cited in Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) proactively monitor and report on employment, unemployment and education and justice policy and legislation. Furthermore, therapists then have to recognise the complex interplay between the structural environment, the individual environment, communities and their members as well as their participation in occupations, as part of their clinical (or social) reasoning.

5.9.2. Recognising the complexity of the environmental impact

Though I have found the ICF a useful tool in that it seems to account for most of the environmental factors that were identified in this study, I agree with Stamm et al. (Stamm et al, 2006) that it is found lacking in describing 'the relationships between its components.' The pADL questions, suggested by Kronenberg et al (Kronenberg, Simó Algado & Pollard, 2005) could be a helpful tool in evaluating the politics, overt and subtle, which are created by the interplay between different environmental factors.

The interactions that became highlighted in the findings of this study may be useful in identifying similar interactions in other communities or for stimulating further inquiry into specific interactions. For example, the pervasive effect of the structural environment on the individual environment became clear, along with its impact on occupational opportunities and choice. These findings indicated that even the choice *not* to participate may be affected by environmental factors. Further, the interplay between time, space, effort and their limiting effect were discussed – this may have specific bearing on the additional effort that we require from individuals during therapy. The interaction between the environment, personality and participation was identified as an area requiring further study.

The findings of this study has pointed out the inability of the VdT Model of Creative Participation to sufficiently describe the person / community – environment – participation interaction. One reason is that (like in the conceptual models which were reviewed) the model understates the environment’s interplay with its other constituting concepts. Another reason is that, many of the concepts of the model, such as ‘compliance to norms’ and ‘maximal effort,’ as well as their interrelationships are only vaguely described. This highlights the need for further development of the model.

5.9.3. Recognising the importance of ‘perceived’ environmental impact

The findings of this study further suggests that, in addition to evaluating the various environmental factors and their interactions with communities, individuals and participation, therapists should also consider the ‘felt’ environment. That is, the way in which the environment and its impact is perceived by a community or an individual. Personality, the level of creative participation that a person is on, and the ideas, beliefs and values of a sub-culture may all constitute a unique experience of the impact of the environment.

5.10. Recommendations

5.10.1. *The VdT Model of Creative Ability*

Numerous authors have identified the need for the further development of the VdT Model of Creative Ability (Casteleijn, 2001; Van der Reyen, 1994) through research. I will mention a few suggested areas that might benefit from further inquiry, which were emphasised throughout this study.

I would suggest that the cultural underpinnings of the model be investigated; with the aim of discovering the effect that the use thereof has on communities who do not maintain a Western world-view. This seems all the more important in the light of the fact that it is now also being 'exported' and used in countries, such as Japan, who do not adhere to a Western value system. Practitioners working in 'collectivist' communities may be valuable sources of information with regards to potential adaptations which might have already been made to accommodate the users of the model. In addition, I would suggest that the coherence between the values that underlie the initial levels of creative ability (self-differentiation through competitive participation) and the values that underlie the final levels (contributory participation) are examined. I perceive tension between the values that are contained in, for example, a treatment aim for self-presentation: 'to evoke a feeling of wanting to possess the product' versus 'the individual reinforces his capacity...to make a contribution.' It seems strange that the value of 'wanting to possess' may lead to 'wanting to contribute.'

Furthermore, I would suggest that all the concepts contained in the model be clearly defined and described in terms of their practical manifestation and the way in which they relate to each other. It might also be useful to examine the effect of the environment on each individual concept (for example norms, effort and anxiety), so that one could consider the effects of the environment on each different level.

5.10.2. *Internal and external factors*

In identifying the limitations of this study, it became clear that studies, similar to this one in their aim, would be useful in broadening the knowledge base of this under-researched area in occupational therapy. Studies which might lead to generalisations regarding the environment and its effect on participation, or studies which focus on a specified number or kind of environmental elements, would be especially useful.

Research focussing on the interplay between specific internal factors, such as personality, and the environment could do much to inform current models that have failed to describe such interactions. It would also be worthwhile to consider ways in which current models could be adapted or amended to reflect a wider range of environmental factors, the complex interplay between such factors and the importance of the 'perceived' environment.

5.10.3. *Translating the findings into practice*

Once we start understanding the impact of the environment on the communities and people we serve, research regarding the role that occupational therapists have to play will be invaluable. Such research might include ways in which the benefits that can be construed from adversity (such as were illustrated in the findings of this study), may be translated into therapeutic tools.

5.11. Concluding remarks

The environment seems to have a more pervasive effect on creative participation than the profession of occupational therapy had previously envisaged. By further exploring the various environmental factors, their interplay amongst each other, their effect on various innate factors and on participation in occupations, the profession – and models such as the VdT Model of Creative Ability – may make

strides in pursuing the new social opportunities that are afforded them, by terms such as ‘occupational apartheid’ and ‘occupational justice.’ This research represents an initial step into a largely unexplored research landscape. I can only hope that my account and interpretations of the stories of the Schubart Park residents may do justice to their experiences, so that meaning and contribution may be construed from the challenges that they endured.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Participant consent form

| |
|---|
| Informational Leaflet and Participant Informed Consent |
|---|

Title of Study – *Factors that influence the creative participation of people in an inner city*

Dear Participant

1) Introduction

We invite you to participate in a research study. The information leaflet will help you decide if you want to participate. Before you agree to take part you should fully understand what is involved. If you have any questions that this leaflet does not fully explain, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher, Rolyn du Plessis.

2) The Nature and Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research is to investigate how people of the inner city experience life in the inner city and what impact it has on them. You, as a person who has been living in the inner city for 5 years or longer, are thus a very important source of information.

3) Explanation of Procedures to be Followed

This study involves that you will be asked to attend a series of interviews, during which I will ask you questions about your experience of the

Consent to Participate in this Study

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this study has told me about the nature, process, risks, discomforts and benefits of the study. I have also received, read and understood the above written information leaflet (Information Leaflet and Informed Consent) regarding the study. I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details, will be anonymously processed into the research reports. I am participating willingly. I have had time to ask questions and have no objection to participate in the study. I understand that there is no penalty should I wish to discontinue with the study and my withdrawal will not affect me in any way.

I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

Participant's name.....(Please Print)

Participant's Signature..... Date.....

Investigator's name.....(Please Print)

Investigator's signature.....

Date.....

Witness's name.....(Please Print)

Witness's signature..... Date.....

Appendix B –Initial interview schedule

Interview questions included the following:

1. Tell me about your life in Schubart Park
2. Would you like to change your life?
3. What would make life better for you?
4. Why would (...) make life better for you?
5. What prevents you from changing your life in Schubart Park?

Appendix C – PEN consent form

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

Title of the Study – *Factors that influence the creative participation of people in an inner city*

PEN Executive Committee

1) Introduction

Herewith we would like to request permission to make use of your facilities and use some of your activities as a vehicle to conduct the above-mentioned research study. The following leaflet will explain what the research will entail. Please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Rolyn du Plessis if you have any questions.

2) The nature and Purpose of this Study

The aim of this research is to determine how internal and external factors impact on the creative participation of people living in an inner city.

3) Explanation of the Procedures to be Followed

This study involves the researcher gaining entrance into one of the low-income blocks of flats in the inner city by attending some of the activities, which are driven by PEN, as well as building relationships with some of the people who are served by PEN. 4-6 Research participants will be chosen and interviewed within the PEN premises, to determine what their experience of their environment is and what they perceive the environmental impact on them to be. Any psychological or counselling needs which may arise from the interviews will be referred to the PEN O Hamba Nami centre.

4) Possible Benefits of This Study

The results of this research will add to the body of knowledge of occupational therapy and may inform occupational therapists with regards to ways in which they can treat their clients from challenging backgrounds more effectively.

The results may also inform occupational therapists with regards to the role they have to play in human rights issues from a social justice perspective.

Furthermore, the results may provide valuable information to the South African government with regards to the needs of people living in challenging environments, policies and programmes which affect them and the way in which these are implemented. This information may benefit your organisation directly and as such; the results of the study will be made available to you.

5) Ethical Approval

The research protocol will be submitted to the Faculty of health Sciences Research Ethics committee. They require that you have given permission for the research to be conducted before granting approval.

6) Information and Contact Person

The contact person for this study is Rolyn du Plessis. If you have any questions about the study, please contact her at cell nr. 078 501 3489 or e-mail music@pen.org.za.



Permission to Conduct this Study

I, in the capacity of
herewith grant permission for the research 'People's experiences of
environmental barriers on the realisation of their creative capacity in an inner
city' to be conducted by making use of PEN facilities and activities.

Authority name.....(Please Print)

Authority Signature Date.....

Applicant name.....(Please Print)

Applicant Signature Date.....

Witness's Name.....(Please Print)

Witness's Signature..... Date.....

Appendix D – PEN; description of the organisation

PEN (an acronym for ‘participate, empower, navigate’) is an inter-denominational, Christian, non-profitable organisation in the inner-city of Pretoria, where I worked from January 2008 to December 2009.

This organisation strives to achieve the vision of a God-loving community, living in the city, caring for themselves and others by sharing their wisdom, values and resources. PEN hopes to achieve this by rendering a variety of services to people living in low socio-economic circumstances in the inner-city of Pretoria. These services, as they pertain to this study, are described here.

| Reference within this document | Description |
|---|---|
| 3.2. Sampling – Activities which were driven by PEN | <p>PEN was involved in the following activities at Schubart Park, which I made use of to gain entrance into the setting. It is through in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PEN development centre was an after care service for primary school children living in Schubart Park. It was located in a basement apartment of Schubart Park. Children were provided with lunch and homework help and stayed at the centre until their parents return home from work. In 2008 I visited the centre weekly. * PEN community centre used to be situated in a ground floor apartment in Schubart Park. It closed toward the end of 2008, because the apartment flooded. It continued to exist in the PEN offices, on the corner of Bosman- and Vermeulen street. It was open to community members to come and drink a |

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| | <p>cup of tea / coffee, read magazines or newspapers, attend sewing classes or seek counselling. An Anglican priest, who is also trained in narrative therapy, was available to give pastoral- and narrative counselling. I visited the centre weekly.</p> <p>* O Hamba Nami was the guidance- and support department within PEN. They were concerned with the basic needs of the people in Schubart Park, providing food, clothing and blankets to people in need. They also provided counselling and therapy (which will be discussed later)</p> |
| <p>3.8. Ethical Considerations – The PEN executive committee</p> | <p>* The PEN executive committee consisted of an engineer and two Dutch Reformed ministers, who were responsible for the management of the organisation.</p> |
| <p>3.8. Ethical Considerations – O Hamba Nami</p> | <p>* O Hamba Nami has been introduced as the guidance- and support department within PEN. This department employed an educational psychologist, a psychology master's student and 4 social workers.</p> |
| <p>5.7. Limitations – Guided tour through the city</p> | <p>* The Dutch Reformed church of Riviera attended an outreach to PEN annually. The outreach started with a guided night-time 'tour' through the city. The group would walk in the streets around church square and would be encouraged to talk to the people they came across. A PEN employee (a member of the executive management or the manager of the development centre – who had been working in the inner-city for many years) would guide the tour. I attended one</p> |



| | |
|--|--------------|
| | such a tour. |
|--|--------------|