Exploring the role of an NPO in the ECD sector: A case study of ELRUs Collective Society of Community Stakeholders and Staff Members within the Cape Flats

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by

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to all the young children and their families living in or from the Cape Flats.

ABSTRACT

This research delves into the intricate challenges and interconnected dynamics of early childhood development (ECD) within the socio-educational landscape of South Africa, specifically focusing on the Cape Flats area in the Western Province. By examining the work, stakeholders, and operations of the non-profit organization ELRU, this thesis underscores the critical importance of ECD in addressing the broader societal issues stemming from a history marked by colonialism and apartheid.

South Africa's educational paradigm remains contested due to its historical legacies that birthed racial segregation and societal disparities. Despite efforts post-apartheid to establish equality, the foundational challenge of education for the very young persists, resulting in adverse implications for the country's future.

The central chapters intricately weave ELRU's dynamics with the broader educational landscape, emphasizing class distinctions, economic realities, and symbolic powers within the organization. The narrative mirrors the complexities of the Cape Flats, resonating with historical injustices and aspirations for educational equity.

Despite these challenges, the research illuminates ELRU's commitment to early childhood development as a means of counteracting historical wounds through quality education. It underscores the role of empowered women, ethical leadership, and the transformative potential embedded within ECD in nurturing resilient communities. Moreover, the study emphasizes Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Intersectionality as crucial frameworks to challenge oppressive structures and address interconnected societal inequalities, advocating for a comprehensive approach to foster inclusivity and resilience.

Opportunities for further research is promoted, including exploring the intricate relationship between memory and pedagogy within ECD, conducting situational analyses in similar socio-challenged regions, and leveraging anthropological tools for deeper insights into NPO-driven ECD interventions.

This research underscores the transformative potential of ECD staff and their pivotal role in nurturing equitable societies. It calls for continued efforts to dismantle systemic inequalities and create inclusive educational landscapes for a brighter future in South Africa.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBPR	-	Community Based Participatory Research
CRT	-	Critical Race Theory
CSI	-	Corporate Social Investment
DBE	-	Department of Basic Education
DoH	-	Department of Health
DSD	-	Department of Social Development
ECD	-	Early Childhood Development
ECE	-	Early Childhood Education
ELDAS	-	Early Learning and Development Areas
ELRU	-	Early Learning Resource Unit
FCM	-	Family Community Motivator
IM	-	Indigenous Methodologies
NGO	-	Non-Government Organisation
NPO	-	Non-Profit Organisation
PAR	-	Participatory Action Research
SRBs	-	Socially Responsible Behaviours
STEAM	-	Science Technology Art Mathematics
UN	-	United Nations

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The ignition emersion and the awareness of the social shrapnel

Quality ECD investment promises long-term gains, improving outcomes for children and positively impacting society, from employment to social justice in South Africa.

1.2 Understanding the ECD function

ECD is a comprehensive approach focusing on children's social, psychological, cognitive, physical, nutritional, and spiritual growth from birth to around nine years old. Evolving over the past century, ECD integrates various disciplines to understand the multifaceted influences shaping a child's early development. ECD is generally considered to be provided to the very young, from the ages of birth until before the ages of the first year of primary school age, which in South Africa, is five to six years old.

Beyond its academic roots, ECD has become an industry shaping educational initiatives, research projects, and policies globally. However, addressing issues in this field proves challenging due to the unique contexts surrounding each child's upbringing.

ECD is fundamental to humanity's development, forming the basis for success in education, employability, and wealth. Yet, in places like the Cape Flats in South Africa, marked by poverty and violence, these opportunities are scarce, stemming from historical injustices of apartheid and colonialism.

1.3 A situational context

The Cape Flats is an area that became notorious from the unjust racial policy of apartheid (1948- 1994). This area was reserved for non-white persons of colour and were given lower privileges and support from government because of the apartheid policy. Overcrowding, violences, crimes and lack of social support and infrastructure are still presently prominent features of the Cape Flats area since the start of apartheid. ‘It is an area that is designated as part of the Cape Town suburbs of the Western Province of South Africa and lies in a low laying area with Northern suburbs toward the North, Heldeberg towards the East, Southern Suburbs

towards the West, Peninsula on the Southwest and Atlantic Ocean towards the South (Lefulebe, Van der Walt and Xulu, 2023). 'Having a low-laying topography supported and high laying terrain, the informal settlements and townships there have poor drainage systems and has been destroyed by land infilling to meet accommodation demands (Lefulebe, Van der Walt and Xulu, 2023)'. It is an area known for violent crimes, gun violence, murders, and the like, recent estimates show that there are over 100 000 gang members within the Cape Flats, which is part of the greater city of Cape Town that has just over 4 million people (Makwambeni, 2020: 95). Makwambeni, 2020, and Bax, Sguazzin & Vecchiatto, 2019, suggest that the amount of gang members and bloodshed from violent crimes there are due to high unemployment, decades of government neglect, generations of apartheid social engineering, coupled with lack of resource funding, quality education and police resource.

"Translated from the Afrikaans meaning 'apartness', apartheid was the ideology supported by the National Party (NP) government and was introduced in South Africa in 1948. Apartheid called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa.. Apartheid made laws forced the different racial groups to live separately and develop separately, and grossly unequally too…Apartheid was a social system which severely disadvantaged the majority of the population, simply because they did not share the skin colour of the rulers. Many were kept just above destitution because they were 'non-white'." ("A History of Apartheid…", 2022).

ELRU (Early Learning Resource Unit), an ECD institution in Lansdowne in the Cape Flats, has a 40-year legacy, emphasizing quality early education as a solution for South Africa's challenges. Stacy, its current director, aims to address the root causes shaping individuals by focusing on their early development. ELRU, a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and Non-Government Operation (NGO), serves as a hub for ECD programs across multiple South African provinces, mainly focusing on the Western Province and Cape Flats communities. As stated on their website their mission "Building tomorrow, today by facilitating better child outcomes for children in vulnerable communities through effective early intervention programmes" (www.elru.co.za). They perform their mission through a three-pronged approach, Home Based, Community Based and Centre Based (www.elru.co.za). The Home Based approach is delivered through their Family Communicator Motivation (FCM) Programme which is aimed

at the first 1000 days of life of a child's life with goals of equipping pregnant women, primary caregivers the tools and equipment of supporting the sound development of the new born child (www.elru.co.za). Community Based Approach is aimed at children 3-5 years old, and requires community involvement here by empowering communities and caregivers to support ECD programmes who do not have ECD centres (www.elru.co.za). Centre based approach entails The Whole Centre Development programme which offers centre support, mentoring and training to community ECD centres for the purpose of creating quality ECD programmes, this is seen as a holistic approach for community ECD delivery (www.elru.co.za). Along with this ELRU is contracted by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) as a social service organisation and plays a role assisting ECD centres to comply with norms and standards.

Unlike a profit-driven supermarket, ELRU's focus is on providing quality ECD services, measured by its impact on disadvantaged communities (Mahlaba, Ige & Tshabalala, 2022) (Grander, Roelofs & Salonen, 2022).

The organization is reliant on both funding and service provision.

Entering this field during the COVID-19 pandemic, my involvement with ELRU aimed at contributing to purposeful social development in South Africa by exploring ECD's role in realigning societal strata. I was based at the head office; however, my research involved all areas of their operation with special attention given to the Cape Flats. Entry into this field space, was from both working and volunteering there.

1.4 Chapters outline and the core thematic connections and theoretical framework

1.4.1 Synopsis

Chapter One introduces the research's motivation, offering a background on ECD's importance in South Africa, particularly in the Cape Flats. It outlines the chapters, serving as a roadmap and setting the context for its rationale.

Chapter Two delves into a literature review contextualizing ECD in South Africa and the Cape Flats, laying foundational concepts for the thesis.

Chapter Three details the research methodology, discussing its conditions, methods, limitations, application, and resulting analysis, setting the groundwork for subsequent chapters.

Chapters Four to Six form the core of the thesis. Chapter Four explores ECD globally and its challenges in the Cape Flats, along with ELRU's operational aspects. It is about the complex nature of being remunerated for their work and a means to provide sustenance for their lives whilst being in a position of service.

Chapter Five examines the impact of Cape Flats living conditions on ELRU stakeholders (ELRU Stakeholders are defined herein as community members that benefit from ELRUs services. These are community leaders such as mayors, such as discussed in the thesis when speaking about the two Northern Cape towns, police chiefs, also discussed through the Northern Cape project, donors and their staff and other respectable community leaders or even parents, mothers and children) and staff. This is tied to the relationship of the history of South Africa from colonial to neoliberal subjects. The significance of this chapter is to provide as accurately as possible, real-world examples from the thesis participants how their ECD programmes are affected by the Cape Flats living conditions.

Chapter Six focuses on ELRU employees' motivations and their role in advancing ECD, particularly emphasizing women's leadership. Their purpose is highlighted from the belief that emancipation could be found through education. It discusses how empowered women are seen as the real agents of change in the struggle for quality ECD. This shows how women are viewed as the leaders in ECD and how they are believed to grow ethical leadership from this field.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis, summarizing key points and proposing areas for further research.

1.5 Research question

I plan to conduct an ethnographic study focusing on ECD professionals at ELRU, a non-profit organization. I'll explore their impact on childhood development and their interactions within

the ECD landscape. My research delves into gaps in current literature, examining how historical contexts influence present-day ECD practices, particularly under neoliberal systems. By spotlighting ELRU's unique insights and experiences, I aim to broaden our understanding of ECD within the Cape Flats. This includes challenging existing pedagogical norms and fostering newer, more effective practices for child development. Anthropology's depth and specificity will provide a nuanced analysis of the intricate relationship between the child, the practitioner, and their cultural contexts, offering valuable insights into promoting positive societal outcomes. This study ultimately seeks to contribute a detailed contextual analysis of ECD practices, emphasizing the pivotal role played by trainers, practitioners, principals and ECD programme managers and their staff in shaping early childhood education at ELRU and similar communities.

Therefore, the question arises: How an NPO, such as ELRU, within ECD attain socio-economic progress within a neoliberalist society? This involves seeking to examine the role of their workforce in determining how they consider and conceive of ECD within their unique commonality of the ELRU and Cape Flats landscape. Thirdly, I wish to explore how their ideas are assembled practically through a process in terms of their relationship with their work and relationship with each other. Finally, this research aims to contribute to major debates involving how emancipation, empowerment is progressed through education, in this instance ECD education and how it grows ethical leadership amongst women therein?

***Note: All names, except my own are pseudonyms in this thesis.**

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Thesis statement and introduction

Thesis statement: The Intersection of Education, Neoliberalism, and Racial Violence: Understanding the Dynamics of ELRU's Impact in the Cape Flats.

Operating as an NPO certain free market tactics of operation for greater performance output is promoted by its work ethic. ELRU's efforts within the Cape Flats are stymied by the reality of the notoriety of the area. The resistance there are a result of the limitations caused by crimes including gang, domestic and racial violences, poor living conditions, over crowdedness, sub-par educational facilities, generationally inexperienced parenting skills, victimisation, trauma, stigmatization and the lack of government support. For ELRU it is a fight against the limitations that these affects have brought to the community. It is about changing the mindsets of the people there and instilling positive beliefs and actualisation of these beliefs into reality. ECD programmes is what ELRU believes helps to combat the challenges both they as an organization and the Cape flats face.

"Stacy, since Covid, there have been less children attending Mickey's play centre. Die ouers kan nie betaal en die kinders kry nie quality education soos verlede jaare nie (the parents cannot pay the school fees and their children are not gaining quality education as previous years). We are in need of those stipends and nutritional packs that you guys het vir ons gegee (used to give us)." Esmerelda, one of the community leaders in Lavender Hill, and Chairperson for Mickey's playcentre was speaking to the fundraising team at ELRU Head office, but addressing Stacy, ELRU's director in particular. "Esi, thank you for voicing your matter. Fundraising Team, your job is to ensure we can provide for our stakeholders. Since Covid our funders have committed less in support and this has impacted what we can offer stakeholders like Esi and her community. We need to find a way to make up for these losses." Essi with a bolt of excitement and a large brim smile announced "Come on fundraising Team!" Everyone then at that moment clapped and roared in agreement.

2.2 Universal perspectives on ECD pedagogy

"Numerous scholars have illustrated the long-term individual and societal benefits of investing resources in ECD programs (Barnett, 1995; Berlin, Brooks-Gunn, & Aber, 2001; Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Duncan et al., 2007; Heckman; Reynolds, Ou, & Topitzes, 2004). This literature shows that ECD has a profound effect on disadvantaged children." (Jenkins, 2014: 147).

The work by Britto, Engel, and Super (2013: 65-82) identifies global aspects of Early Childhood Development (ECD), viewing it as a platform to nurture children for primary schooling and integrate them into the global economic landscape. This contrasts with local expectations in places like the Cape Flats, where children often shoulder adult responsibilities and cultural roles. ELRU, operating in disadvantaged areas, aligns with these local conditions, acknowledging the need for ECD investments to positively impact South African society. Jenkins (2014: 147), states quality ECD has positive effects, on the amount of tertiary education qualifiers, employability rates and adequate income earnings for individuals who attended ECD programmes, to name a few. ELRU staff, particularly its director Stacy drives the organisation and its programmes from this belief, stating "our work allows us to benefit the whole of South Africa, and create opportunities for the underprivileged, not least allowing women to play a larger and more important role in this process".

Their developmental framework integrates biological needs with local cultural expectations, which is crucial for effective ECD pedagogy. ELRU's programs, like the Family Community Motivator (FCM), involve community members in disseminating ECD practices while considering local cultural contexts.

2.3 ECD in South Africa

"According to the National Integrated ECD Policy (2015), ECD programmes refer to programmes that provide one or more forms of daily care, development, and early learning opportunities and support to children from birth until the year before they enter formal school" (Baloyi and Makhubele, 2018: 10773).

For my research purposes, my focus is on persons involved with ECD that cater for children between birth to five years old. This is the age where most young children in South Africa attend an ECD program. This idea was based on "The South African National Curriculum Framework: For Children from Birth to Four, (Comprehensive Version)" compiled by the Department: Basic Education of Republic of South Africa (DBE). Children from the ages of five to six years old and onward are usually in pre-primary and primary school, respectively. For this research, the emphasis is on ELRU's capacity and relationship to ECD within disadvantaged communities such as the Cape Flats.

These ideas of ECD are reiterated by the departments of government who facilitate the conduct of ECD in South Africa, the Department of Social Development (DSD)- who up until this year was the primary governing body for ECD in South Africa, The Department of Education (DBE), and the Department of Health (DoH) as noted from Baloyi and Makhubele (2018: 10773). Currently the DBE is now the primary administrative department for ECD in South Africa. As per Atmore (2013:160) what is noted is that the development of children within South Africa are negatively affected by inadequate access to health care, education, social services and nutrition even though the South African constitution's Bill of Rights clause advocates for the right to basic education and protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation. Although ELRU acts as an independent NPO and NGO, it works according to the ECD standards set out by the South African government and works closely with it for ECD and related matters such as access to water and housing, child home infrastructure, healthcare, sanitation, nutrition, security, to name a few which affects the quality of ECD.

2.3.1 Colonizing discourse

ECD is a homogenising concept eradicating local autonomy. In South Africa, colonialism and apartheid destroyed local communities, environments and traditions. This is shamedly evident in the Cape Flats and is the foundation for most of the challenges the citizens in the area face. It impacts negatively on ECD. Understanding the solution to such negative impacts, ELRU recognises the historical situatedness that is part and parcel of formulating ECD solutions. From its roots the desire people sought education out was for colonial, racist or control conquests in minority rule, such as within South Africa from the origins of first colonial and

then apartheid rule, noted from Abdi (2002: 1). In an ECD context this could be described as nurturing the fragmented and disrupted South African society through its very young, but only knowing how to go about doing this from the origin of its educational basis, which was of colonial and racial conquests, and therefore the concept of ECD in South Africa (and throughout the world) was born.

This is affirmed by Nkomo (1991: 337), Cross (1986: 186), Sehoole (2006: 1-13) and Mungazi (2005: 231) who interprets education within South Africa originally being at the forefront of the apartheid system, as both a construction for it and ironically also as a means for its destruction through the education of the oppressed non-white peoples of the country. Sehoole (2006: 1-13) and Nkomo (1991: 337) show education as the beginnings of the partitioning of race in the country and concurrently the development of the mining industry in South Africa, where Dutch and English were the primary mode of the educational language.

Abdi (2002: 1) discusses how Dutch, along with other colonial languages such as German was the predecessor for the Afrikaans language, and well illustrates how education not only was the development of apartheid but also the tool for the resistance to it. Language here was also an educational protesting point, where people died protesting about the learning of non-traditional languages. The best example was the 1976 Sharpville incident, that today is celebrated as youth day on July 16th in South Africa, commemorating the students shot and killed by police due to protesting about being taught Afrikaans in school. These sentiments discuss about education's (ECD education) push for universal cultural homogenisation and concurrently the erosion of local traditions and culture. During Apartheid, there were only two official languages in South Africa, English and Afrikaans, post-apartheid and at present, the country has eleven official languages, and will have twelve official languages, as sign language will be added to represent the diverse cultural and traditional backgrounds of all South Africans ("South Africa now…", 2023). This showcases the strides the country has taken thus far to move from oppression through racial injustice to democracy in the present.

The above 'Colonizing Discourse' highlights the intricate link between ECD and the historical trajectory of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. The examination of ECD as a

globalized, neoliberal construct, and its association with developmental agendas and control illuminates its roots deeply embedded within colonial education systems.

The discourse surrounding modernization, development, and globalization, as portrayed by Sachs (1992) and Stiglitz (2002), draws attention to the detrimental impact of these processes on local autonomy, traditions, and communities. In South Africa, the remnants of colonialism and apartheid are starkly visible, particularly in areas like the Cape Flats, where historical disruptions and the erasure of local autonomy continue to influence the challenges faced by citizens, significantly impacting the ECD landscape.

Rapley's (2004) perspective, emphasizes how the pursuit of development often lacks substantial justification beyond its desirability, particularly in contexts where education historically served as a tool for colonial conquests and racial control. This historical foundation has shaped the essence of ECD in South Africa and parallels the sentiments echoed by scholars like Nkomo (1990), Cross (1986), Sehoole (2006), and Mungazi (2005), who depict education as both a construction and a means for challenging oppressive systems like apartheid.

The role of language in education serves as a poignant illustration of resistance against cultural homogenization. Events like the 1976 Sharpville incident, commemorated as youth day, symbolize the resistance to enforced languages and cultural erasure. The subsequent increase in official languages in post-apartheid South Africa reflects the country's strides towards acknowledging and celebrating its diverse cultural and traditional heritage.

ECD in South Africa emerges as a platform embodying the complexities of a colonizing discourse deeply rooted in the country's history of racial oppression. The examination of locales like the Cape Flats, where organizations like ELRU operate, provides a lens through which to comprehend the lived experiences and perspectives of communities affected by historical injustices.

2.3.2 Inclusive ECD in South Africa

‘Many ECD approaches used in Southern Africa were special education models developed in the late 20th century and were inclusive models that aligned with principles of inclusive education pedagogy such as differentiated instruction, universal design for learning and the inclusive pedagogical approach in action framework’ (Luambano, Stordal & Saether, 2023). There are namely five strategies to achieve effective inclusive education, ‘these are teachers or facilitators that plan for the different needs of varied learners, co-teaching which teachers share responsibility of the classroom where focus for each teacher is done through their unique specialities, co-operative learning that allows for learners with a variety of skills and traits to work together, activity based learning where learners draw on their life experiences for class-room activities and finally, effective teaching which is about outcomes such as setting goals, evaluations, assessments including direct instruction and feedback’ (Luambano, Stordal & Saether, 2023).

In South Africa, ECD services have been promoted by government along with the international trends of the benefits of ECD for long term positive benefits for humanity’s potential especially for achieving equity for impoverished economic and systemic children, this is why there have been several policies and plans implemented for the expansion of ECD there (Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016). In South Africa, children under five years old fall under the governance of an interdepartmental committee comprising of National Departments of Social Development, Basic Education and Health (Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016). Measures to address poor schooling outcomes of children in South Africa (such as the statistic of grade 3 learners having results for the Annual National Assessments, 56% for literacy and 56% for mathematics, where the worst results were from the poorer areas within the country) are early childhood services where the introduction of the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth until four years old by the Department of Basic Education, studies have shown that better schooling outcomes can be attributed to pre-school attendance ((Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016). Approximately 35% of children attend an ECD schooling system, and only 20% of those 35% come from poorest households, meaning those that need it the most in South Africa are least likely to attend it (Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016).

The South African model encourages a play-based pedagogy, and direction within a child's mother tongue for as far as possible and follows universal ECD models promoted by regions such as the USA, United Kingdom and other international ECD bodies (Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016). 'These are a large pool of age-appropriate activities with a focus on language, balance of free choice, warm teacher-pupil directed activities and for South Africa greater emphasis on cultural diversity acceptance and promoting both local and international knowledge in the programs '(Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016).

According to the Daily Maverick, as of Census in 2021, there are approximately 42420 ECD centres in South Africa, 40% are fully or conditionally registered ECD centres, 16% are in the process of registering, 42% of the programmes are not registered and 33% receive a subsidy from the government departments, this as tallied from the census (https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-08-22-early-childhood-development-goals-south-africa-making-progress/). There are 1.6 Million children under six years old that attend an ECD Centre, employing 198 361 staff (https://www.growecd.org.za/the-alarming-state-of-early-childhood-development-in-southafrica/).

2.3.3 Contextualising 'the memory' of the ECD sector in South Africa

"Apartheid was a period of socio-economic inequality and a childhood of adversity for South Africa's children, child development did not meet the standard Bill of Rights, Socio-Economic rights, basic education, protection from abuse and exploitation, and approximately 60% of children in the country today live in dire poverty; this includes poor service delivery, lack of learning materials and resources, minimal funding, lack of quality teachers, poor toilet and security facilities at ECD centres" (Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashley-Cooper, 2012: 160).

The real lived experiences of research participants about their daily lives living in and working in the Cape Flats reifies the historicized colonizing discourse of the education sector of South Africa. Furthermore, the present-day disposition of ECD acts like a trigger to memories of racial traumas that the 'Colonizing Discourse' the section above discusses. Lambrechts, 2012, notes how citizens from the Cape Flats have a failed relationship with government since the period of apartheid due to the lack of adequate services and poor socio and economic

conditions there; this has allowed criminal organisations such as gangs to step in as organizations for survival strategies for the citizens there and these gangs have taken over the state control (Lambrechts, 2012: 789-792).

Atmore (2013: 160) show how during apartheid years all learning in the country was damaged and only six percent of 'non-white' children attended an ECD centre. Although there have been significant improvements in this sector in recent years, unfortunately this period has affected the present through the ghosts of the past. This has been shown through the contexts of my research participants. Whether they experienced these challenges themselves directly in the present or indirectly through the historical context of their present dispositions in and around the Cape Flats as a worker or resident.

Memory (like a ghost of a past figure in the present) has always been a concept deeply rooted in anthropology, from Levi-Strauss, who claimed that memory could be viewed as part of, if not the same as the unconscious mind which provides meaning to one's belief systems, for him much more so than the 'present' conscious mind (Rossi, 1973: 207). For Maus, memory was seen as that which existed purely in the past such as the outdated concept of 'primitive societies' but challenged this by saying that these societies exist in the present with how our memories exist with us in the present too (Valeri, 2013: 262). Malinowski suggested memory function as a 'mnemonic device for the recall of a myth', a structural marker as a means for restricting social change at least temporarily to a specific institution (Harwood, 1976: 783).
Memory as a purely academic discipline only started as recent as the early 1990's (Kidron & Handelman, 2016: 421). These theories show how memory is seen as socially enduring collective social artefacts. "No memory is possible outside the framework used by people in society to determine and retrieve their recollections" (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992: 43).

In South Africa, due to its apartheid and colonial systems, histories and memories of violence could then be said to be transmitted across generations and linking to Lefcourt (2021: 15-17) even brought up in the parenting/teaching of the children that the teacher or parent is interacting in this way with. This is linked to ideas of how educators work is linked to their own childhood memories with regards to passion and painful loss, in the process of identifying themselves and sharing histories with their students as mentioned by Soto (2001: 104-112)

through the idea of only being able to teach 'out of one's own being'. Mchlaughlin (2001: 104) builds on these ideas from Soto where the memory out of one's own being is a method for understanding oppression where it is believed there 'is no real common vocabulary for naming it and collective strategies for challenging it'. Determination and self-emancipation, that is "we must turn our gaze from inward to outward, from self-reflexivity to a problematized world" (Mchlaughlin, 2001: 104).

Friere (2000) argues that the 'oppressed through time become the oppressor by adapting an attitude of adhesion', "at this level, their perception of themselves as opposites of the oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradictions, the one pole aspires not to liberate but to identification within its opposite pole" (Friere, 2000: 43). For, Friere (2000: 43) teaching is the model that informs the paradigms of the minds of the young, for this reason teachers are also able to empower the young through understanding their role in how their experience of oppression during oppressed times may have an influence on those they are teaching and to empower and liberate those students, from the root of ECD, that are oppressed or living in an oppressed world (Friere, 2000: 43-45). Memory here serves as important tool to understand how the past influences these latter ideas. In the case of those involved with ECD, it is about understanding how their memories may inform their approach to ECD; their work purpose and considerations of themselves affecting the minds and lives of the very young of ECD age.

This sub-section delves deep into the entwined nature of memory, historical trauma, and present-day realities, particularly within the context of ECD in South Africa. It underscores the importance of acknowledging and understanding the influence of inherited memories on educational practices and societal transformation, offering a profound anthropological lens to comprehend and address socio-economic disparities and developmental challenges faced by the country's children.

2.3.3 ECD, gender and women leadership in South Africa

Another important component of ECD pedagogy and where they may exist notions of oppression and a place for empowerment lie within the conceptions of the learnings of gender

at the early years of a human's life. Gender along with ECD are similar in terms of being the root of various forms of oppression entering the lives of the young.

Unterhalter and North (2011: 495) addresses the importance of gender equality, and the role education plays in the development goals for countries such as South Africa. Education starts in the early years and therefore these development goals about gender equality need to therefore start in ECD. Gender roles are constructed in the early years and this phenomenon also plays out in the social impacts that gender differences in society have shown, for example hegemonic masculinity and its role in gender violence's. Mashiya, Kole, Luthuli, Xulu and Mtshali (2015: 259-263) looks at it from the viewpoint of the ECD practitioners who are predominantly women, and how men are more trusting of women in this role even though it would be good for young children lacking a father figure to have men in these roles as well.

Comparatively it was found at ELRU that more than 99% of their ECD workforce is comprised of women (Evidence gathered from ELRU HR statistics), where women leaders are celebrated and continue to develop ECD progression within areas such as the Cape Flats area. Gender violences are often seen in the Cape Flats, particularly abuse against women, and often father figures for children in the area predominantly are minimal. Alternatively, Bhana (2009: 327) describes how the impact of teachers, such as male teachers, bring with them masculine ideas, socially constructed inherent belief systems about the behaviour boys should display and in so doing are inadvertently educators of ideas of hegemonic masculinity limiting both boys' and girls' early childhood educational growth, therefore a critical rectification is necessary for educational pragmatic and research endeavours.

Muthukrishna and Sakoya (2008: 1577); Ebrahim and Francis (2008: 274) and Mayeza (2017: 476) all note that in the early years of childhood, children through activities, including play shows how they reconstruct societies ideas of gender differences, for example girls don't play soccer or only girls play with barbie dolls. This literature illustrates those educators of the children, parents, teachers, principals, and so on, need to be sensitive to their own beliefs about gender and understand how such beliefs may add to the promotion or limitation of potential gender-based violence and harm that play out in South African society today. To what extent ELRU recognises and plays this out in its activity? Is a question that can only be

answered to a minimal extent as the ELRU workforce and community stakeholders in the Cape Flats comprises of mostly women.

Crane (2016) and Marais and Van Wyk (2015) discuss how the apartheid legacy in South Africa has resulted in the present challenges women face in education there. Further description of these challenges and barriers, in accordance with South Africa's specific context is dissimilar to international and pan-African accounts. Edwards and Perumal (2014) and Le Roux (2022) show how women educational leaders in South Africa adopt various chief modes utilising emotional and social intelligence to foster social transformation. Chapter Six of this thesis discusses aspects of women leadership in relation to emancipation through education within the context of ELRU and adds to the literature focusing on gender and women leadership in ECD.

Delgade and Stefanic (1993: 461), and Mpofu (2019: 1-16), speak of the interrogation of power in society, specifically challenging traditional patriarchal systems and unequal power dynamics based on race and gender from a viewpoint of feminist and critical theory. Le Rou (2022: 2-4) discusses women leadership praxis and empowerment of women, through a critical feminist theory lens. This is because most ECD practitioners, ECD trainers and those involved with the ECD process and leadership at ELRU are women.

"ECD, Gender and Women Leadership in South Africa" delves deeply into the intertwining facets of gender, education, societal norms, and power dynamics, shedding light on the foundational role of ECD in perpetuating or challenging notions of oppression and fostering empowerment.

Unterhalter and North (2011) show how early education shapes societal gender perceptions, impacting behaviors and perpetuating gender-based violence.

ELRU's female-dominated roles, noted in studies like Bhana (2009), celebrate women leaders but also highlight the absence of male figures, affecting children's educational experiences.

Educators' biases, as seen in works by Muthukrishna and Sakoya (2008), Ebrahim and Francis (2008), and Mayeza (2017), influence children's gender perceptions and societal expectations, impacting inequality.

Mkhwanazi (2014) and Mkhwanazi et al. (2018) link caregiving practices to societal structures, affecting gender norms and issues like teenage pregnancies.

Apartheid's impact on women's education, discussed by Crane (2016), Marais and Van Wyk (2015), underlines unique challenges in South Africa's context, different from broader accounts.

Scholars like Delgade and Stefanic (1993), Bozalek and Carolissen (2012), Mpofu (2019) and Le Roux (2022) examine power dynamics, advocating for challenging patriarchal systems and promoting women's leadership in ECD for societal transformation.

The above literature sub-section provides a nuanced understanding of how gender dynamics intersect with ECD, societal norms, and power structures. It highlights the importance of critically examining and reshaping educational pedagogy within ECD to challenge oppressive norms, empower women, and create a more inclusive and equitable environment for the youngest members of society. These ideals support ELRU's goals and sentiments and an analysis of ELRU's participation in this conversation is further explored throughout this thesis in the primary chapters herein.

2.3.4 Situating ECD pedagogy within South Africa (Schoolification)

Bipath and Theron (2020: 228) identifies the pedagogic notion of ECD within South Africa. Here ECD pedagogy is seen as schoolification; Doherty (2007:7) defines schoolification as "an emphasis on the acquisition of specific pre-academic skills and knowledge transfer by the adult rather than a focus on broad development[al] goals such as social-emotional well-being and the gaining of understanding and knowledge by the child through direct experience and experimentation".

Broström (2006: 391-409) in Bipath and Theron (2020: 228) suggests schoolifying ECD makes educational practices within ECD as merely adjustment models for the current schooling systems and does not seek to incorporate “children and parents in democratic educational practices”.

A socio-constructive pedagogy is shown to be better useful than current models within the country, this pedagogy means a collaborative approach between children, teachers and parents (Bipath and Theron, 2020: 228). This method is further emphasized by the ECD objectives of ELRU.

A prescribed curriculum focusing solely on the pursuit of academic performance is seen as a threat to child centred pedagogy and curricular (Bipath and Theron, 2020: 228). Through ELRU’s work as an NPO, shows the possibility of having a child centred pedagogy and curricular as well as pursuing academic performance from the age of six years old onward for the child.

“Situating ECD pedagogy within South Africa (schoolification)” presents a critical perspective on the concept of "schoolification" in ECD and its impact on educational practices in the country. The notion of schoolification, as identified by Bipath and Theron (2020), denotes an emphasis on pre-academic skills acquisition rather than holistic developmental goals centred around social-emotional well-being and experiential learning for children.

The critique of schoolification, articulated by Doherty (2007) and Broström (2006), highlights how such an approach in ECD merely aligns educational practices with existing schooling systems, neglecting the incorporation of democratic educational practices involving children and parents. The call for a socio-constructive pedagogy, emphasizing collaboration between children, teachers, and parents, as advocated by Bipath and Theron (2020), signifies a shift towards a more inclusive and participatory educational model.

The tension between prescribed curricula and child-centered pedagogy is a significant point of contention. Bipath and Theron (2020) underscore the threat that a curriculum solely

focused on academic performance poses to child-centered approaches, which prioritize the overall development and well-being of the child beyond academic achievements.

Through the lens of ELRU's work as a non-profit organization, there's a demonstration of the feasibility of fostering a child-centred pedagogy and curriculum while still addressing academic performance, particularly from the age of six onward. This suggests a balance between academic achievement and a more holistic approach to child development, aligning with the objectives of ECD that prioritize broader developmental goals alongside academic learning.

This sub-section offers insights into the complexities of ECD pedagogy in South Africa, advocating for a shift away from schoolification towards more inclusive, participatory, and child-centred educational practices. It underscores the importance of considering diverse developmental needs and experiences of children while simultaneously addressing academic pursuits within the ECD framework. This analysis calls for a rethinking of pedagogical approaches to foster a more comprehensive and responsive educational environment for young learners.

The necessity of this sub-section is to factor in where ELRU positions itself within this debate, particularly from the research participants and the broader thinking of the community stakeholders with their ECD developmental expectations and goals.

2.3.5 NPO sector

“Ethnography in non-profit (NPO) studies is increasing but sparse” (Beaton, 2021: 1).

ELRU exists as an NPO. It promotes ECD services in the form of programmes for the community in areas such as the Cape Flats. The work it does for the community is paid by donor support in terms of finance, infrastructure and other goods that allow themselves to operate including staff to earn an income. Fundraising and donor support is central to the organisation’s objectives and existence. Confidence in its fundraising and donor support most likely promotes positive staff and community stakeholder well-being. Therefore, an understanding

of its NPO operation and link to staff and community stakeholder well-being is critical for anthropological research there.

However, the NPO sector has been regarded as mysterious for academic research purposes (Beaton, 2021: 2). Just over one percent or research articles since 2018 to 2021 have been NPO ethnographies, the majority of which are from the disciplines of history, economics, sociology and political science (Ma & Benneth, 2018 in Beaton, 2021: 2). More anthropological research in the NPO sector is needed, particularly from anthropological studies to 'better explain how NPO organising works to bridge its research and practice divide, to challenge Western ethnocentricity that characterises the sector, to grant the sector more exposure and most importantly build upon non-profit management studies' (Lewis, 2002, in Beaton, 2021: 2). Therefore, there is a gap in research and makes this research a little more challenging in attaining useful academic literature on the sector. Therefore, an anthropological ethnography would grapple with the inner workings, including perceptions, of the enigma of NPO organisation in greater qualitative detail.

On my first meeting with the director Stacy, she had emphasised "We are an NPO that is looking to operate like a corporate business". She explained further that NPOs generally operate like a start-up enterprise for most of their lifetime. This means lack of cohesion between different departments or organisational programmes, 'workers wearing different hats' (meaning if you are a trainer for example, it would not be unusual for you to also assist with fundraising or even Human Resource duties such as recruitment). In the simplest of terms, there is constantly great disorganisation, high stress due to constant deadlines, lack of resources including finance and infrastructure, underpaid staff and staff that operate within their own silos. In other words, operational deficiencies are paramount. 'The nature of the NPO sector is such that is far from homogenised, including varying significantly in terms of size, purpose and funding arrangements' (King, 2017: 243). Although there is a great belief that operating like a for-profit business would streamline the organization. Farrell (2015: 254), King (2017: 241-243) and Williams (2010: 655) all argue there is a common drive toward adopting a business or for-profit approach to running an NPO. "Supporters claim business-like and professional approaches make NPO's more effective and efficient, accountable and financially disciplined" (Kaplan, 2001 in King, 2017: 242). Dart (2004) in King (2017: 243)

concurs with the latter and mentions the way NPO's seem to adopt a business model is by having the business idea of goods made as programmes (ELRU has four primary programs that aim to promote ECD in the areas its model operates in including fundraising, training, FCM and nutrition), organizational service delivery including organizational management and an organizational rhetoric, tools used in business processes for the NGO sector.

ELRU's director emphasizing the aspiration to operate like a corporate business reflects the complex nature of NPOs striving for efficiency and sustainability. The portrayal of NPOs operating akin to start-up enterprises underscores the prevalent challenges—disorganization, resource scarcity, and multitasking roles within the workforce—indicating operational deficiencies and high stress levels within the sector.

The debate surrounding the emulation of for-profit models in NPO operations, as discussed by Farrell (2015), King (2017), and Williams (2010), suggests a prevailing inclination towards adopting business-like approaches for enhanced effectiveness and accountability. Dart's (2004) perspective on NPOs adopting a business model by structuring programs and services aligns with ELRU's approach, utilizing various programs to promote ECD while emphasizing fundraising, training, FCM, and nutrition.

Anthropological ethnography presents a valuable opportunity to delve deeper into the inner workings of NPOs, unravelling the complexities and nuances that define these crucial entities within communities.

2.3.6 Neoliberalism and critical theory in the NPO sector

"There is an ideological belief in the virtuousness of market capitalism" (Farrell, 2015: 254).

ELRU much like most NPO's operate independently from the governance of market capitalism in South Africa. However, there is an emphasis on attaining sustainable sources of capital (monetary and infrastructure) in usually challenging economic environments and great reliance on funding from donors. It is believed that adopting a business-like approach can assist in achieving their sustainability goals. It is well noted by commentators such as Farrell (2015) that NPO's 'seek to incorporate components of Neoliberalism to serve socially focused

agendas but these have the potential to undermine the democratic governance of non-profits' (Farrell, 2015: 255). This is explained further through an idea that 'relational work' (strong bonds and durable engagement with both employees and community stakeholders) aspect of NPO's such as ELRU have allowed 'critics to associate these efforts as paternalistic and as a disciplinary regime that encourages broader neoliberal trends' (Jindra, Paulle & Jindra, 2020: 160). Evans, Richmond and Shield (2005: 74) argues that neoliberal governance structures have moved NPOs away from community focused agendas toward a business model that shows a "compromise of their autonomy and advocacy function, while commercialising nonprofit operations and imposing burdens that have strained organisational capacity" (Evans et al., 2005: 73). The latter is argued through this thesis's interpretation of how altruism, remuneration and vocation have to do with neoliberalist agendas and traditional modes of NPO structure at ELRU in Chapter Four involving the idea of 'complex transactions versus education challenges on the Cape Flats.

Critical theory proposes that societal conditions, social structures, government policies and market restrictions, to name a few, harbours the liberality of the individual. For ECD proponents, like ELRU, some of the challenges for liberality can be eradicated through quality ECD endeavours. Therefore, understanding how critical theory in relationship to ELRUs challenges within the Cape Flats needs to also consider neoliberal forces affecting their work and communities and show the way it is believed that education in the form of ECD deployment can assist in the emancipation of poverty and disadvantage. More in depth discussion and relevant literature about these factors are discussed further in Chapter Five.

"Neoliberalism and Critical Theory in the NPO Sector" explains the intricate relationship between NPOs like ELRU, market capitalism, and the ideological underpinnings that shape their operational paradigms within challenging economic landscapes.

The quest for sustainable capital sources, prevalent in NPOs operating in economically challenging environments like ELRU, prompts the consideration of business-like approaches. The tension arises as these approaches, as Farrell (2015) observes, may inadvertently introduce components of neoliberalism, potentially compromising the democratic governance and community-centric agendas of NPOs.

This underscores the intricate interplay between critical theory, neoliberalism, and the challenges faced by ELRU within the Cape Flats. It accentuates the importance of understanding these multifaceted forces affecting NPOs and communities while highlighting the perceived role of ECD in combating poverty and disadvantage. The in-depth discussion and relevant literature presented within this thesis form a foundational basis for comprehending these complex dynamics and their implications on ELRU's mission within the Cape Flats.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND LINKED FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

The research navigated challenges in the ECD field, balancing respect for participants' workloads and institutional constraints, notably ELRU's limited resources. Funding limitations, reliant on corporate donations, strained the institution despite its vital role in impoverished Cape Flats communities. Staff retrenchment due to lack of funds led to unrest and demoralization.

In this environment, the researcher aimed to avoid "othering" participants by immersing as both a staff member and observer, prioritizing mutual respect and collaboration.

Participant Observation was the paramount research method, as my involvement as an employee and anthropological researcher meant I was always actively participating in this method thereby gathering rich data to allow the other methods to also draw from to unpack themes and concepts further in relation to the research question.

Interviews allowed personal connections, fostering a safe space for individuals to share their views on ELRU and the Cape Flats' impact, contributing to understanding personal perspectives. Forum discussions captured group consensus on various topics, clarifying institutional themes and concepts.

Journaling served as a reflective tool, aiding in data organization and thesis construction, examining the intersection of NPOs, ECD, neoliberalism, and emancipation within the unique context of the Cape Flats.

3.2 Objective versus (fluid) methodology

My approach to methodology has been informed by Paulo Freire's notion of education as an instrument of both oppression and liberation (Friere, 2000). Friere (2000) uses the concept of dialogical action considered as unifying, cooperative and culturally synthesizing, against oppression (Freire, 2000: 125).

Netta, the head of the training department at ELRU, remarked at our first meeting “Darrin, whatever you need, we are here to support you. Don’t worry about asking, we are here to help you and are committed to giving you what you need. Just ask and we will make a way!”. As I explained to Netta, and Stacy, the director of ELRU, “I will set-up a calendar and schedule, and send an email for you to distribute to your staff, and we can then meet to discuss how It will run every week. What I do need from you is your schedules for the week and then I will work with it in my planning”. It became apparent that my hope in this plan was not successful. Diligently, I prepared my presentation to show how the research was to be conducted, factoring in information received from all participants.

“Darrin, so sorry, I did not get a chance to read your email. We have been so busy with catching up on a training proposal (for funding) that we have not yet finished. Also, there has been a delay in terms of our preparation for the new training season. We are unfortunately inundated with lots of work this week. Our calendars have been updated with the new schedules. Everything has been pushed back by 3 months. Perhaps there is a way to work around this?”. Netta responded, when I met with her the very next Monday, after having prepared the schedules for the research. I was fine with the delay, as I could work around it, however, the delays and change of their work schedules and time because of constant emergency work was ever present. Therefore, conducting PAR research for the primary research question was pushed back further and further, where participant observation became the more dominant and primary research method.

The shift from PAR to participant observation stemmed from ELRU participants' reduced availability due to increased workloads caused by funding changes, staff turnover, and community stakeholder volatility. Participant observation offered a less demanding approach, providing deeper insights into daily experiences without imposing additional duties on participants. This method aimed to capture natural situations, minimizing stress related to the research process and enhancing the study's quality.

Feminist theory and perspective factored into my research because of the direct involvement of minority groups and women involved in ECD and who were also my research participants.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 PAR

PAR challenges Western Positivist Science, providing equal opportunities for participants in all research phases. Advocated by Paulo Friere (1970)(1973)(1985) and linked to feminism by Reinharz (1992), Stewart (1994), and Wilkinson (1996), it fosters critical reflection and social change. In this study, most participants come from minority or marginalized groups in South Africa, primarily women—58% coloured, 38% black, and up to 2% white. PAR involves both researcher and participant within the participant's experience.

As an active employee at ELRU involved in ongoing projects, I reengaged with the PAR method during urgent ECD situational analysis in the Northern Cape. Balancing my roles as both employee and research participant was challenging—my commitment to work mirrored that of other team members. Despite meeting objectives and being granted flexibility for research, some colleagues perceived special treatment, misconstruing my workload. While my academic insights were expected to enhance creativity in tasks, my contributions sometimes fell short, impacting how my value was perceived. However, key team members acknowledged the value of academic interest and research in amplifying participants' voices and aiding business processes by swiftly sharing insights across departments. Buhle, Mabel, Sarah, Stacy and others during my time with them often remarked how excited they felt about the interest shown in them and seeing their points of view as valuable for academic research. They recognized the research's potential to raise awareness about ELRU within academic circles and beyond.

Participant meetings became spaces for mutual reflection due to scheduling challenges. The research brought excitement and reflection to participants' work lives, yet during busy periods, it could be perceived as a distraction, impacting their tasks. Their genuine reactions—expressing both excitement and frustration—highlighted the research's real and balanced outcomes.

My only chance for PAR research focused on assessing ECD support for local pregnant mothers in the Northern Cape and improving education through projects like the Family Community

Motivator (FCM) and ECD Centers. Louis, the FCM Program manager, sought my expertise in qualitative research and recruitment for his department due to his imminent resignation, especially for the team in the Northern Cape. These were mainly the ground workers, stakeholders, FCM practitioners and community workers that enabled the work to function there.

It involved fifteen team members, including myself (researcher, facilitator and recruiter for the project), Thokazani (researcher, facilitator, recruiter and second in command after Louis for the project), Louis (head of the project until his resignation at the end of that year 2021), Vanessa (head of fundraising), Millicent (administrator/assistant for the project), Mark (Operations lead and our head for the project with Louis, particularly when Louis left) and Stacy (Director of ELRU) and stakeholders like the Mayors of Danielskuil and Posmasburg, the head nurse, ECD fundraising organization members, a community leader, a police officer, and a high school principal. This method emphasizes shared concern, initial action ideas, and collective involvement in planning, implementing, and disseminating the research.

3.3.2 PAR application

Each stage of the PAR process, members are involved in what data will be used and in what ways decision making is actioned and results disseminated (McIntyre, 2008). Each participant played a specific role in the project. The principal acted as a community liaison, providing insights on education challenges, alcoholism, unemployment, and community issues. He facilitated logistics and advertised our survey efforts through the school newsletter. The chief police officer in Danielskuil coordinated local meetings, aiding with logistics and community engagement. Representatives from the funding NGO monitored spending and established relationships post-Louis. The mayors sought ways to benefit their communities and improve ECD environments, addressing concerns of unemployment and education.

The hospital nurse highlighted healthcare challenges, like limited ambulances for both towns separated by a highway. Danielskuil has about 14,000 people, while Posmasburg has over 30,000. This information set the context for our analysis. A community activist leader from Posmasburg aided in recruiting, training, and household permissions for the project.

All participants, including 30 recruited fieldworkers, contributed to a situational study using a questionnaire agreed upon by the team. Fieldworkers used Kobolt tools on smartphones for data collection, which we assessed daily. Northern Cape members collaborated to analyze findings, identify ECD funding needs, engage stakeholders, and interpret the results. I selectively used project information in my research, considering the outcomes for future community development strategies.

PAR was implemented when the above collective for this Northern Cape project agreed to help me use this situational analysis as a means for it. We all met at one of the public halls in Posmasburg and agreed the main goal for implementing it was to strengthen the situational analysis study in the Northern Cape, whether it be for this project or projects in the future. The start of the week, Monday, Thokozani and I would present the aims for the week, and confirm how each other member was contributing to their role. At the end of the week, Friday, we would have a group reflection looking at criteria's related to how well communication between members during the week went? The success of each members task related to the study? What the hindrances were that we encountered? Any opinions to change some of the questions, focus or methods used for the situational analysis? These sessions were done verbally, and each week different persons took turns leading the meeting and recording the meetings minutes. Action steps from each Friday meeting, were actioned for the start of the following week.

3.3.3 PAR findings

The need to avoid reinforcing dominant social structures, as highlighted by Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, and Sookraj (2009), was emphasized in interactions with Northern Cape community stakeholders. McTaggart (1997) emphasizes the evolving nature of researchers, participants, and their environments. Power dynamics, per Collins (1998), Kemmis (2001), and Bell (2001), must be acknowledged in research theories and practices, particularly in racial, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Despite attempts, the use of Indigenous Methodologies didn't entirely resolve these power dilemmas. Nevertheless, efforts were made to introduce and emphasize the value of diverse perspectives in addressing issues facing young children, pregnant women, mothers, and the state of ECD in Posmasburg and Danielskuil.

Another key component of this research method was the idea of reflexivity. Reason (1993) suggests a successful PAR process is one where "... self-reflection, investigation, critical reasoning, dialogue, generative activities, and a determination to take action about issues under exploration, contributes to the development of a project that is judged not against the criterion of an objective truth but against the criterion of whether the people involved are better off because of their experiences as participants in a PAR project" (Reason, 1993: 1268). Being reflexive was also to see how in relation we were to each other (Kearney and Bradley, 2020: 29).

Reflexivity was crucial for this methodology to avoid personal biases from childhood experiences influencing the research. It was vital to present findings accurately through PAR with ELRU's employees. Challenges between my team member (Thokozani) and me, exacerbated by internal issues at ELRU, caused tension. Despite this, we worked together with stakeholders and funders, striving for success in the project. The community and women leadership played a pivotal role in overcoming obstacles, steering the project forward. This proactive approach aligns with positive critical action in PAR (McIntyre, 2008).

Kemmis (2001) and Wilkinson (1996) notices that success it not wholly about the completion on whether all action steps were completed, or problem completely solved, it is about having a strong sense of development and evolution that makes an impact on PAR members and community stakeholders. The positive from this PAR exercise particularly for this Northern Cape project, was that all participants were forced through the objective of gaining the situational analysis to better the community, because the effects were so apparent to the colleagues and stakeholders there, including the fieldworkers, we were determined to sort out obstacles from our various employable and living backgrounds to make the project work.

We were not able to diminish the dominant social structure, but in fact, welcomed it, because it was through this difference of perception of it that we could make the Northern Cape project a success because we needed such disparity for the situational analysis to enable us to look at ways of improving the community through ECD. The honesty and transparencies about each individual challenges as stakeholder, team member, and funder meant we could

have empathy for one another, show concern where concern was needed, and look for solutions for the problems the community was experiencing through the lens of ECD. PAR was therefore a success for this project because it needed us to all work together, and the challenges we faced was welcomed for the incentive of coming up with solutions to help the community.

3.3.4 Interviewing (structured and unstructured)

Participants' busy schedules often made scheduling challenging, leading to reliance on structured and unstructured interviews to manage the research process. Understanding participants' contexts is crucial for interview success (Gray et al., 2012). Initially focusing on exploring participants' views on childhood and its connection to ECD, the aim was to grasp their individual definitions and how these shape their ECD perspectives for curriculum design. Formal interviews were scheduled in advance, lasting around sixty minutes, while unstructured ones varied in length. Recordings were conducted with participant consent, either via voice recording on a cellphone or with notebook/laptop, without hindering the conversation flow.

A) The formal interview questions incorporated some of the following:

i. What do you consider childhood to be?
ii. Based on your experience as an educator and thinking about your own childhood, what considerations do you have regarding educational practices such as Waldorf, Montessori, or any other type, that you think may benefit children between the ages from birth to age five?
iii. Do you think it is better for an ECD practitioner to be a woman and why?
iv. How does your conception of your own childhood inform you about your ideas of childhood education and regarding your beliefs on gender difference as a whole?
v. In your current practice is there a conscious improvement to or adjustment of aspects to your own early childhood experience?

B) The unstructured interviews were either within a group setting with participants or individually with them during a workday break or a moment of us passing each other to-and-from our workstations, asking questions such as:

i. How are you doing, any developments, challenges or celebrations with the project?
ii. There are potential retrenchment and people resigning, what's your feeling on how this is all going?
iii. What do you think of Louis resigning and its impact on how Stacy is pushing all the programs to a more business-minded approach?
iv. How are you feeling and how has the week/day been going so far?
v. I noticed that you used this technique or approach when conducting your task, can you explain why?

Kvale (1996) recommends fostering spontaneity during interviews while minimizing potential shock for involved parties. Williamson, Karp, and Dalphin (2012) advocate for conversational, close communication and spontaneous decision-making in interviews. Unstructured interviews, mostly one-on-one, involved casual, contextual questions about participants' backgrounds, ideas, and observed techniques, tailored to the conversation and context.

3.3.5 Interviewing findings

Interviewed participants felt valued and appreciated for their contributions to ECD at ELRU and their communities. They saw the interviews as opportunities to share opinions and engage in informal discussions, sometimes resembling "skinner" sessions. The confidentiality of these talks encouraged open conversations about office events and concerns, occasionally leading to planning sessions to enhance work processes. The sessions also served as a platform for conflict resolution among colleagues and generated ideas used in training and funding proposals for ELRU. An example of this was disputes with some colleagues in another programme (team) they had, I was at times used as a go between, an intermediary to make peace between colleagues through the sessions. Another time, ideas from one of the trainers, resulted in Sarah and me, using information shared within the interviewees training sessions with practitioners as ideas to push forward for funding proposals as well as an alignment to take back to Stacy and Mark to use as suggestions for ELRU work policies.

Edwards and Holland (2020) argues ‘qualitative interviewing as a method of practice has to do with the interviewed and knowledge about the world, an epistemological consideration between what is asked and what is answered between interviewer and interviewee, for example in neoliberalist environments, there is a 'regime of austerity associated with it'. The formality of the interview meant there is an impression that the sessions were regarded as needing for their responses to be professionally correct. I noticed this when during normal office time and conversations outside the workspace, a side from an interview time, the conversations had less of themselves in it, and more a professional version where a response was always referred to either the ECD curriculum manual they used or what someone else said. This indicated that perhaps they were under the impression that these sessions could be used to test their ability of their work performance, which it was not.

Participants occasionally inquired if the information was shared with specific colleagues and requested confidentiality. I was even asked at times by participants if I am using this information to give back to Stacy or Netta, or ‘please don’t tell Netta, Stacy, Louis or Mark’. The need to sound professionally correct during the interviews could have also been a result of the intimidation of our different education levels. The diverse education levels between the participants and myself might have affected how questions were interpreted, especially complex ones. Most of the interviewee’s education level were usually just up to matric level, with an ECD training course. Only the programme managers had higher education levels, and Masters degrees was only had by Louis and Stacy. Clarifying questions for mutual understanding became crucial during interviews to ensure comfortable and genuine responses aligned with their own perceptions.

The interviews revealed various challenges in their roles, highlighting the lack of cohesion between program departments. They emphasized the prevalence of heroes and women leaders across positions, emphasizing education as a tool for community empowerment. While remuneration mattered for some, the key to success and fulfilment lay in passion for ECD work.

3.3.6 Forum discussions

This method was used for open-ended discussions. Used collaboratively for exchanging ideas and to have multiple responses of views and responses to other ideas. It was led primarily by me or other participants. This was to build our knowledge and understanding of the discussion points. The discussions were based on some of the interviewing questions and potential points raised by participants that were of interest.

The forum discussions were used to set-up additional cross-over meeting times for the research, to find out schedules and where I could assist team members with their work for participant observation, observation, points of concern that different departments raised and used as a build -on from the interview sessions to create synthesis for communication with the different departments (programmes) within ELRU. It became a construct to build team member cohesion and understanding between each member, rather than a primary research method activity. However, it was good that this method was used for the purposes of synergy, upliftment, points of concern, and a solution driven gathering for the employees to create a better work-environment. Great excitement was had when a time was set-aside for participants to come together for this, because it was time-out from their work demands. It was producing solutions to challenges they faced with each department. Even if it was somewhat resolved or had the great potential to be resolved in these sessions.

3.3.7 Journaling

Dreyer (2015) advocates journaling as a tool to be consciously reflective, enabling professional, personal and research growth. It was supposed to be used by each participant for data for thoughts and activities relating to educating their involvement with ECD during the research period. However, all participants were reluctant to use it because it was seen as an ‘additional and unnecessary work load‘. Therefore, I used it for my thoughts relating to any of the methods or questions they had.

Picca, Starks, and Gunderson (2013) suggest the act of journaling is "pedagogically appropriate for increasing reflexivity and conscious awareness of one’s environment" (Picca et al., 2013). This means that it helps in recognising social constructs such as the impacts of race, social class or gender that comes into the research practice. This was an important source of data to analyse their relationship with each other and stakeholders, the

environment, contexts, atmosphere, and other related and seemingly unrelated textures prior to engaging in activities such as interviewing, participant observation and forum discussions of the participants, especially points not raised openly by them in the other methods. This was useful as a tool of reflection to consider more focused all the hidden aspects of what is not revealed by the other methods.

At the end of each week, I created a summary of what was shown through these methodologies' active engagement. This encouraged themes about the activities to be drawn out as a means for driving interviewing questions, forum discussions and the like.

3.3.8 Participant Observation

It is argued that the method begins as soon as one enters the field, and the basis of which is to become familiar with the context and environment of the field, but also to be able to record observations as immediately as possible and with intricate details without being too focused on data collection when in the field directly (Jorgensen, 1989). Berthelsen, Lindhardt and Frederiksen (2017) discuss differences of two grounded theory approaches in participant observation. Classic grounded theory methodology by Barney Glaser versus constructivist grounded theory methodology by Kathy Charmaz. 'Grounded theory, is grounded in data through a systemic and inductive process. However, how one deduces this is not clearly set out, only confirming that the theory is derived from empirical data. However, in qualitative research pure objectivity is rejected for intersubjectivity. Constructivist grounded theory is guided by a philosophy whereby social interactions explain reality, and this method is most used by qualitative researchers. Symbolic interactionism is the belief that people develop meaning in interaction, drawing on an emphasis of meaning, action and an active actor. It advocates for a relative epistemology because of drawing from social production, multiple viewpoints from research participants and engaging with reflexivity for actions and contexts from all field participants.'(Berthelsen et al., 2017).

I was an employee, volunteer, and master's degree researcher there. This meant my primary research method was participant observation. I was actively involved as a participant in the methodologies described above, also engaging with all staff and stakeholders with activities related to ELRU and ECD. This technique gave me the best viewpoint of the research

experience, as it was the first time, I was involved with activities relating to ECD work. Thus, the new experience rendered new and different considerations for the research. Having not only first-hand analysis of what the participant activities involved, but also how these activities could be linked to much broader interpretation to the primary themes of the research.

Jorgensen (1989) elaborates, it is a research method appropriate for human existence, including, processes and relationships amongst people and events, particularly from the standpoint of participants. The participant observation involved participating in ECD working and related activity. At ELRU, I was part of the Research and Mobilisation Programme department. This meant I had to be involved in all the programmes as funding for each programme (department) was essential for the survival of ELRU. Engaging in participant observation requires consideration into participant values, politics and ethics when embarking on its research (Jorgensen, 1989).

At least three times per week I was there between the times of 8:30 am until 4:30 pm, doing work for my respective department there, and navigating this between conversing and interacting with staff through other duties such as tea and lunch breaks, where I would get to know staff members more closely. Aside from these work tasks I was also assisting other departments with their tasks, to gain a first-hand experience of their duties. Such as visiting ECD centres with the trainers and spending time observing and assisting them with their teaching tasks with their practitioners. This included presenting some of the teaching material and leading group tasks for discussive points. With the FCM workers, I went with them on their daily work routes, this included going to places such as Lavender Hill, Khayelithsa, Gugulethu, Manenburg and other areas within the Cape Flats region where we would go and check in on the households, the mothers that were ECD practitioners for the families. I would also assist with research endeavours, such as discussed above for Louis, and other departments, travelling, to areas such as the West Coast region and Northern Cape, to conduct situational analysis and training. My time in this duty and recording data whilst a participant observation was beyond my six-to-eight-week time period for Masters thesis. It was approximately fifteen months. The data for this method was recording through a notebook, scribed by pen, and then after the day, recording findings back onto my personal

computer. I did not find a disruption of flow through the note taking processes when doing participant observation.

3.3.9 Participant Observation findings

This method was the most strenuous and the most time-consuming method. Organizing facts by breaking -up, dissembling and separating to sift through the data and then placing these into themes such as types, processes or patterns, in other organizing facts to provide an explanation or interpretation, otherwise known as a theory (Jorgensen, 1989). I had to think not only as a researcher but also as an ECD worker within the various departments, particularly the resource mobilisation department. However, this is where the strings holding the themes of what was found in the field took form. Building the rapport with participants to a more professionally intimate level. Finding out about the intricacies of the research projects and work at ELRU. Being a worker there also meant that I was part of the same fabric and experience my participants were also going through. This method also allowed for the other methods to take form, as this is where the trust and time to observe and partake in this and other methods were granted. At times there was a deep sense that I was either too much involved at the happenings of ELRU as an employee and volunteer, that I would forget and not see how my research was also a part of this process.

In much the same way being a researcher meant that at times I would not be serious about my work duties there and use my research as a masters student as an excuse to work with less intensity and vigour as a staff member. Often, there were some voices of concern that I was given more leeway with my work tasks because of being an anthropology researcher in the field, and other times, I was being put under more pressure for it. At times other staff raised concerns or tasks were being pushed back whether through my fault or the fault of others or processes outside of our control.

3.4.1 Ethnographic Vignette Snippets on Trainings and Staff Meetings

These below ethnographic snippets allude to the environment of the staff meetings and trainings for ELRU staff projects within their ECD capacity. These portray the environments of the locations where these events took place. These are primary, first-hand accounts of

scenes from descriptive data on a 'typical day' to provide a more granular context for the reader whenever discussions and mentioning of the words training/s or meeting/s are mentioned. These are visceral atmospheres that myself as writer attests to when allowing the reader entry within this thesis's research world. Particularly here, in relation to Trainings and Staff Meetings.

3.4.1.1 Northern Cape Ethnographic Training Snippet

"These cell-phones, that we have here in the box are going to be given out to each one of you. These will be for your work purposes only. Darrin and I have spent the better part of yesterday evening after yesterday's training session with you all matching the serial numbers of each cell-phone box and a sim card that is linked to each one. When I call your name please come up and collect your box from myself and Darrin. Please do not open the box yet until either myself or Darrin opens it with you after we verify the contents of the box and everything inside it. You will then sign for cell-phone and be responsible for its operation. As we spoke about in our first meeting you all were chosen because you all live in Posmasburg and know and live around multiple homes with pregnant women. Through your interviewing with us at the local library near Danielskuil, your experience with similar fieldwork, for most this was the census program that you were involved with is mostly the reason we have chosen you to conduct these fieldwork interviews. The other reason was that all of you are unemployed. This means there is no excuse for late coming or not going to training. As you know we have paid a taxi driver to fetch you at your house in the mornings before training. Everyone's name was given to Molambo and through the messages we saw that you all agreed to the times he will fetch you. " Thokazani, now visibly overwhelmed by what I imagined to be the result of the last few days interviewing fieldworkers for this position, preparing all admin, equipment and training for today's session and it was of course the chaos of organizing this project mostly between the both of us for the last three months. I, sitting on a chair at a table in the front of the room, Thokazani in front of that table looking at our hopeful fieldworkers. All walks of life and ages, mostly black women and just two barely out of school men who all have been unemployed for six months or longer. I stepped up and took front and centre, twenty-nine in the audience, at a hired room at the local government department centre, most of the room was empty besides us bundled up at the front, with ample empty space at the back of an echoing large

government room. “Another thing, we have booked out this room from the department for a set amount of days only, if we miss out on training, we lose out in the field! This is why we need to be on time, this includes lunch times. As you know lunch is at 12:30 and I drive to KFC before the time to fetch our meals to ensure everyone eats on time. Oh, on that, I need a volunteer to go with me to the shop for cooldrink, while I get the KFC, do I have any volunteers?” “Thanks Darrin, I think you and should get going to KFC now, I will start setting up the phones with everyone”

3.4.1.2 Snippet of a Typical Online Staff Meeting

For a large part of the research, Covid restrictions were still implemented and so all staff meetings at the time would be done online. The Fundraising Department, I was working with, had been tasked with setting up a better system for data transparency between departments, because when it came to yearly reports, project reports, project analysis and funding queries relating to project budgets, gathering this information from each department required the availability of the programme managers and their accessibility in retrieving reports from their teams or stakeholders. Usually, the fundraising department when required to writing a proposal or report had great challenges with retrieving necessary information from staff. Stacy, the director “There is a great problem with staff, here at ELRU we work in Silos, and always this great battle to gain the information you need from the relevant department. The Training’s Team are out in the field, the Finance Team is awaiting final numbers from the Wholecentre Development Team and you get sent from pillar to post because they not sure whether they have it or someone else should have it. Our way forward is to set up a digital shared database system, where the data can be uploaded from the person responsible for the data, and can be accessed by any relevant persons in the team. This task I am giving to the Fundraising Team to help build these necessary structures” .

Meeting Minutes:

Attendees: Luigi (FCM Head), Stacy (Director), Mark (Head of Operations), Bavuma (Head of Finance), Precious (Head of Playgroups), Paulina (Head of Whole Centre Development Team), Trevor (Fundraising), Darrin (Fundraising), Levita (DataCom)

Date and Time: 15 October 2022

Location: Online

Meeting Minute Transcriber: Trevor

Agenda: Levita from DataCom's proposal to build a customized digital database for ELRU

Summarised Discussion: Levita advises input from all stakeholders and meeting with each to produce the system and discusses the benefits, such as time saving and worker accountability. Mark, suggests we are limited by budget and that is his main concern. Precious and Paulina is apprehensive about working with computers and having to learn a new way of recording data, she does not see where there will be time.

Luigi thinks it's a great idea in theory but in practise thinks most staff are either too computer illiterate or not willing or not able (due to age, and many years of a particular way of compiling their information) to adapt.

Stacy unhappy about the enthusiasm about gaining this system as there have been many years of running around to gather information for project analyses and proposal deadlines and many funders, and opportunities have been lost because of "uncooperative staff".

Conclusion: Ria suggests another meeting once all staff are on the same page. Darrin will set up the next date and all queries can be directed to either him or the fundraising team. If there are any problems in the fundraising Team setting this up, Stacy advises Darrin to let her know.

3.4.1.3 Reflexivity of Myself as Researcher, Colleague and Person

Being an ELRU representative, who had been tasked with equally as much responsibility, as the next employee, who at the time was considered part of the more senior group. I say this because of the responsibility of the tasks that I had to perform for my role there. When from the very first meeting as a member of the Fundraising Team, emphasis on the organisation as a non-profit and that "funding is "what keeps the lights on", this saying used word for word by staff including Stacy, Mark, Luigi and other senior employees. This was further emphasised by Stacy "Our relationships with our donors and networks are important, this is why when they ask us for reports or follow-ups it should not take us a week to get them the information they need. It should be a matter of minutes." Forecasts, Budgets, and Objectives, relied on funding, and the budget number to keep the organisation and projects afloat each year, according to Mark, was around 20- 23 Million Rand per year. I was new to fundraising, new to NGO work, I just barely understood ECD. When I started at ELRU and I needed to still conduct a research and organise my research participants along with mobilising them to get on the same page with their roles in alignment with my work duties, I was routinely overwhelmed by the burden of feeling 'overwhelmed' and anxious about being able to perform what I considered equally two-important roles. I was both committed to my role as an ELRU team member and equally committed to my role as a Master's student.

On reflection I believe not only now but then, I realised that there was not an equal balance of these tasks on my life. Some days my role as an employee was more important than my role as a Master's student, and other days I would consider my role as a research student more important than my role as an employee. However, whenever I was within the field of ELRU, being at the head office in Lansdowne, or at another location where their fields of operation took place, my obligation to be an ELRU employee trumped most of my obligation to be a research student. This was my perception of the expectation that the I believe was a kind of peer pressure by fellow employees, and why would it not be? They were not doing an anthropological Master's degree, they did not have, what I considered to be a privilege of going to staff for not purely ELRU related business and taking time off 'normal work' to be concerned with my own 'personal project'. And there were at times feelings of guilt for having this 'privilege'.

Biases and personal viewpoints that arguably would be seen in this thesis writing, and that I feel shows my adherence at times to this worker/student researcher dichotomy are perhaps emphasis on portraying ELRU as a marvellous model of ECD phenomena in South Africa, and its great work in areas, such as the Cape Flats, an area that I, myself am very passionate about, having lived there and have a history and emotional connection to the area, being a person of colour, coloured person, whose family and some friends have a deep connection too. My intention was to be as diplomatic when it came to writing up my analysis, although subconsciously there may have been certain employee and personal perspectives that may have been more lopsided on the diplomacy of emphasising the need for socio-economic assistance within he Cape Flats and the great work ELRU has been doing and some of the struggles the organisation faces in reaching its objectives.

3.6 Methodology Conclusion

The study's scope was constrained because I couldn't achieve the collective thesis production that PAR would have facilitated. This led to an analysis reflecting more of my viewpoint, potentially favouring certain perspectives. To mitigate this, I used various viewpoints from different methods during discussions with participants. Additionally, I would paraphrase participant input back to them to ensure accurate interpretation before sharing it with others.

Amidst these challenges, the engagement with participants, particularly in the Northern Cape project, illuminated the true essence of PAR. The collaborative effort involving various stakeholders—ranging from community leaders to fieldworkers and funders—exemplified the essence of collective commitment and action. Each member played a distinct role in contributing insights, resources, and perspectives crucial for a comprehensive situational analysis of ECD in the region.

While the challenges in implementing PAR were evident, particularly within the ELRU head office in Cape Town, the commitment of stakeholders and team members to juggle multiple commitments underscored the adaptability and value of the PAR approach even in challenging work environments.

The research interviews, using structured and unstructured methods, showcased a balance between control and spontaneity. Despite scheduling challenges, structured interviews provided a detailed understanding of participants' views on childhood and ECD. These sessions, meticulously recorded, facilitated comprehensive discussions to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the data.

The informal interviews, held in relaxed settings, facilitated open and candid discussions, often touching on current office events. These sessions served as a mix of personal exchanges and confidential "skinner" sessions, allowing participants to address workplace issues and seek resolutions. The trust in confidentiality and the use of these conversations to enhance work processes highlighted the significance participants attributed to these interactions.

However, the formal nature of structured interviews sometimes led to a perceived need for professional correctness among participants, especially evident in their responses during office conversations outside of interview settings. The disparity between casual and interview discourse revealed a potential impression that the sessions were evaluative, creating a sense of professional scrutiny.

Moreover, the complexity of questions posed sometimes posed challenges in interpretation, particularly considering differing educational backgrounds between the interviewer and participants. Despite this, the discussions revealed inherent challenges faced by participants in their roles, highlighting issues of departmental cohesion, the pivotal role of education in empowerment, and the intrinsic value of passion in ECD work.

Notably, these interviews uncovered the intrinsic motivations of participants, showcasing how passion and dedication played a significant role in their sense of fulfilment and success within the ECD domain. The impact on practitioners, caregivers, and communities reflected the ripple effect of dedicated efforts, fostering empowerment and community responsibility.

In essence, the interviewing phase illuminated the multifaceted nature of professional exchanges, from structured sessions to more informal dialogues. It brought to light the

intricate balance between professional expectations and the personal motivations that drive meaningful work in the realm of Early Childhood Development.

Forum discussions, though not the main research method, were crucial for collaborative knowledge exchange and problem-solving at ELRU. These open sessions allowed diverse viewpoints to be shared, fostering mutual understanding and addressing organization-wide issues. Led by various participants, these discussions enhanced our understanding of interview points and organizational concerns, promoting teamwork across ELRU's departments.

These forums acted as a break from daily work demands, engaging participants in brainstorming solutions for organizational challenges. While immediate resolutions weren't guaranteed, these discussions laid the groundwork for potential solutions, fostering a constructive problem-solving environment.

Their significance lay in serving as a hub for collaborative problem-solving and team cohesion, highlighting the importance of dialogue, collective ideation, and cultivating a positive work environment. These sessions promoted shared responsibility in addressing challenges and enhancing ELRU's overall work environment.

Journaling, intended for ECD, was mostly utilized by me due to participant reluctance over perceived added workload. Despite this, I found journaling, aligned with Dreyer's (2015) advocacy, crucial for introspection and growth. This method, though underutilized by participants, helped uncover hidden aspects, fostering a deeper understanding of social constructs influencing research practices.

My journal served as a foundation for insights, refining questions and shaping subsequent activities. While participant engagement was limited, the researcher's journal became vital in revealing nuanced participant experiences, enriching the understanding of ECD and the research process.

Though participants didn't fully engage, my journaling provided invaluable insights, enhancing overall methodologies and offering a comprehensive view of Early Childhood Development's complex dimensions.

Participant observation formed the core of research methodology at ELRU in Early Childhood Development (ECD), blending roles as an employee, volunteer, and researcher. This approach, emphasizing understanding from participants' perspectives, involved active engagement in ELRU's programs. Spending around fifteen months immersed within ELRU allowed firsthand insights into their needs and challenges, participating in various initiatives and community visits while meticulously recording data through note-taking.

However, this immersive approach posed challenges in managing vast data and balancing dual roles, occasionally blurring lines between research objectives and ECD responsibilities. Despite challenges, participant observation fostered rapport, providing insights into ELRU's dynamics and participants' experiences. It contributed to uncovering themes and perspectives within ELRU's projects, even though navigating the delicate balance between researcher and active participant roles presented complexities. Overall, this method significantly enriched understanding of the complex interplay between myself as researcher and participant roles in the ECD domain.

CHAPTER 4: ECD IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE PARTICULARITY OF EDUCATION CHALLENGES ON THE CAPE FLATS

The educational scene in the Cape Flats reflects a complex history influenced by colonial and apartheid legacies. These historical echoes have shaped a challenging environment marked by social issues like poverty, unequal opportunities, and significant educational and economic gaps.

At the core of this discussion is the vital role of ECD services, particularly championed by ELRU. They aim to tackle various social challenges faced by children aged birth to five years old. ELRU navigates this landscape, working to counter prevailing adversities with strategic interventions for a more equitable future.

This study delves into the historical ties of ECD in Cape Flats, tracing its evolution from colonial and apartheid eras. It highlights ECD's pivotal role in ELRU's mission, aiming to address deep-rooted social challenges through education's transformative potential.

Crucial to understanding ELRU's place within the Cape Flats is an exploration of its symbiotic relationship with the environment. Here, the institutional justification for ELRU's endeavours is unearthed, uncovering the profound nexus between the organization's objectives and the intricacies of the Cape Flats' ecosystem. The complexities surrounding remuneration for community service take centre stage, illuminating the dichotomy of ECD work, transcending mere monetary compensation to embody a profound sense of duty and service to the community.

Furthermore, this discourse probes the multifaceted themes of altruism, remuneration, and vocation within the realm of ECD service and community duty, unravelling the layers that encapsulate the operational challenges faced by nonprofit organizations like ELRU. These entities operate within constrained resources predominantly fuelled by donor support, oftentimes exceeding the bounds of stakeholder expectations to provide services that transcend conventional remuneration metrics.

Integral to the examination is the application of Bourdieu's theoretical framework, which serves as a lens to comprehend the intricate dynamics between the Cape Flats and ECD. Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic power, social and economic capital, and the interplay between remuneration and essential community services are adeptly employed to decipher the contextual landscape and participants' relationships with ELRU. ELRU, an NGO entrenched in the complex milieu of the Cape Flats, serves as a microcosm that mirrors the deeper underpinnings of Bourdieu's constructs—social and economic capital—especially concerning altruism versus remuneration, and their profound influence on ECD initiatives.

Drawing from Bourdieu's conceptual framework, the passage unveils the intricate interplay between social and economic capital. It aligns social capital with altruism, portraying it as a reflection of cultural ethos and ethical obligations transcending mere obligation. Altruism is presented as the zenith of social stature, exceeding societal expectations in fostering communal advancement—an ethos ingrained within ELRU's altruistic mission.

Contrarily, economic capital aligns with remuneration, encapsulating material acquisition and productivity. Bourdieu's paradigm situates economic capital as the foundation for material possessions, often associated with privileged echelons atop the societal hierarchy. However, the passage challenges this divide by highlighting the intrinsic value of ECD education in cultivating both social and economic capital.

This chapter culminates in a rich tapestry of Cape Flats' educational challenges, ELRU's instrumental role in ECD, the nuanced complexities of remuneration and service, and the invaluable insights gleaned from Bourdieu's theories. Amidst the constraints of limited resources, the unwavering significance of quality ECD services in ameliorating societal woes emerges as a beacon of hope and progress within the Cape Flats' educational context.

4.1 Factual and historical outline of ECD in South Africa

In South Africa, children suffer due to limited access to healthcare, education, social services, and nutrition, despite constitutional rights advocating for these basic needs (Atmore, 2013: 153). This lack of access leads to neglect, abuse, and exploitation, especially in disadvantaged areas like the Cape Flats, deeply affected by the country's apartheid history. ELRU targets the

Cape Flats due to the pressing need for quality ECD in these areas to address these inadequacies in children's rights.

South Africa's history is marked by trauma, especially due to the legacy of apartheid and colonial oppression. Salo, 2013, speaks of the hauntology of apartheid where social webs of persistent violence, both physical and societal, leading to poverty, inadequate housing, education, healthcare, and substance abuse issues are re-spun. Here where the spatial location of the Cape Flats “used to devalue human life” encourages newer meanings to emerge such as identity, personhood and the like (Salo, 2013: 347). These challenges, rooted in historical injustices, continue to impact childhood experiences in these areas, perpetuating inequality and lack of resources.

Apartheid significantly impacted childhood adversity in South Africa, perpetuating socio-economic inequality and neglect, especially for non-white children. Atmore (2013: 160) highlights the damaging effects of apartheid on education, with only a small percentage of black children attending ECD centers. Segregation policies led to fragmented resources and lack of coordination among departments, worsening the disparities between population groups (Atmore, 2013: 160). The result in developmental imbalances made international organisations such as the United Nations intervene to ensure the SA govt regulate initiatives "to encourage early childhood development and care for all", producing 30 policies and law into affect for this, with an emphasis on children from historical disadvantaged communities, those of colour (Gumpo, 2015:39).

Even though ECD initiatives, such as education, healthcare and nutrition promote better outcomes for children from disadvantaged communities, only 80% attend ECD programmes at the age of six years old (Atmore, et al, 2012). Government is responsible for child supports grants where the need exists from particularly the more poorer areas like the Cape Flats and its shown that 73% of children who need it are provided with it (Atmore, et al, 2012).

It is shown that children from the poorest households such as within the Cape Flats are less likely to be living with both parents, and of these they are more likely to be living with their

mothers, children from these areas account to approximately 66% that live in poverty (Childrens Institute, 2012)(Streak, Yu, & Van der Berg, 2009).

Participants, including Mabel from ELRU, have been deeply affected by the lasting impact of past adversities, directly or through their family histories. Mabel, residing in Lavender Hill, narrates the threats her family faces, including gang violence and unemployment due to an injury. Tragically, her son fell victim to a gang-related stabbing, revealing the harsh reality of their circumstances. These stories echo similar struggles faced by other participants in different Cape Flats neighbourhoods, fostering a shared understanding among colleagues and stakeholders of the challenges present in their work. However, these challenges are what drives them to make a difference in their work roles. “Darrin, government doesn’t help us, other people don’t help us, we are left with no choice but to help ourself. We love our families, our communities and friends, we believe we can make a difference and want to create a better future for our children”.

The local approach to ECD emphasizes community survival and growth, while the universal approach focuses on preparing children for success in a modern urban environment. In South Africa, ECD programs, defined by the National Integrated ECD Policy (2015), provide care and development opportunities for children from birth until just before formal schooling (Baloyi and Makhubele, 2018: 10773). Young children typically attend ECD schools from birth to five years old, preparing them for primary school starting at age six. Conversations with Netta, head trainer at ELRU and part of the national ECD committee, reveal that local ECD programs aim to create conditions for children's success in formal schooling from grade one onwards. This contrasts with the global perspective of ECD, which aims to develop children to fit into the modern global system, emphasizing skills for future economic participation.

The clash between globalized early childhood development (ECD) approaches and local Cape Flats traditions is evident in several ways:

i. **Learning Environments:** Cape Flats communities have rich, hands-on learning experiences within local environments, involving extended families or communal

support. Globalized ECD emphasizes formal classroom-based learning, detached from these local contexts.

ii. **Cultural Practices:** Local customs involving storytelling, cultural rituals, and community involvement in child-rearing clash with standardized global ECD approaches, potentially weakening community bonds.

iii. **Language and Communication:** Cape Flats communities have diverse languages and communication styles, but globalized ECD often promotes standardized languages, devaluing local languages and hindering effective communication.

iv. **Traditional Learning vs. Modern Education:** Historical learning from local elders contrasts with current ECD centers that prioritize formal education, neglecting rich local knowledge and practices.

v. **Community Engagement:** Community involvement in child-rearing within the Cape Flats contrasts with the more individualized and institutionalized approach of globalized ECD, potentially undermining community ties.

4.1.1 ECD on the Cape Flats and Symbolic Violence

The South African ECD sector informs the memories, histories and livelihoods of the research participants. The two opposite polars of oppression and liberation are not only explored through ideas of colonialism and apartheid but also through ideas of gender.

Unterhalter and North, (2011) addresses the importance of gender equality and the role education plays in the development goals for countries such as South Africa. Gender roles are constructed in the early years and this phenomenon also plays out the social impacts that gender differences in society have shown, for example hegemonic masculinity and its role in gender violence. Netta, and her Training team had brought up the role men have had on violence within the households from their experience. However, addressing these violences within ECD centre class interactions were not considered as Netta said “Ourselves or the practitioners would speak to the mothers of families directly if we have heard of such cases of violences within the household. But we can’t teach this or train children about their gender in the classrooms. You know this isn’t our main focus for the classroom. What we do though is show that the boys go to the toilet there and girls go to the toilet by the picture of the room with the girl. You know what I mean? From what I know no ECD Trainings are addressing this”

Thus such gender acknowledgements or un-acknowledgements are something to be considered for ECD in South Africa ~~going forward when it comes to questions of gender.~~

The relationship between violence and colonialism, and questions involving violence and colonialism has been considered in the conversation between Fanon and Bourdieu (Burawoy & Holdt, 2018: 91).

Their conversations speak of symbolic violence and physical violence and its relationship to each other, particularly through the dynamics of social change where within a state such as South Africa, relationships between the state, the law, community violences, symbolic violence is multi-layered. (Burawoy & Holdt, 2018: 91). Burawoy & Holdt (2018) draw on the 'social change dynamics in South Africa, where the latter is discussed through the country's physical violences. Physical violences such as xenophobia or community protests, that have stood out as popular violences inflicted by South Africans within the country on foreigners or with each other, particularly in communities such as the Cape Flats, according to Bourdieu is because of a symbolic dimension of symbolic violence (Burawoy & Holdt, 2018: 91). This symbolic dimension of violence is conditioned through the neglect experienced in the past through apartheid and colonialism and at present because of poor government assistance to address their disadvantage.

'Studies within community protests within South Africa, show that this violence is a last action when authorities of the state have failed in responding to community grievances' (Burawoy & Holdt, 2018). These community grievances within the Cape Flats and majority of places in South Africa are due to the lack of access to education, healthcare, social services and nutrition. These are violences on people that are believed to not be addressed in an appropriate way. Burawoy & Holdt (2018) goes on to say that "Violence then becomes a refusal to accept symbolic violence of marginalisation and lack of voice, and an assertion of popular agency and the right to have grievances to be heard" (Burawoy & Holdt, 2018: 92). This is people showing symbolic power of their own that challenges the symbolic authority of the state. An example of this is gangsters controlling the Cape Flats communities through fear and physical violence where police have little control over their power there. This is gangsters within the community challenging the symbolic authority of state with their own symbolic

power' (Burawoy & Holdt, 2018: 92). An example of this was a story Masi, the FCM leader shared with me and a colleague, when popping in to the offices "…They murdered my son, stabbed him to death outside of our house…You see they wanted him to join their gang and he refused countless times… Now this all started in prison, him and this gangster did not get along and he had been hurling threats to our family and my son, saying that he will get my son one day…The police do nothing, even though we have made many call outs to the police…They even said they would (the gangsters) put my daughter on a table, you know what that is? Gang rape her." These violences affect education in the country because it stops educators and pupils from being allowed to be taught and to learn due to fears of their lives to even just make it to school.

Bourdieu's theory of state, particularly in relation to concepts of symbolic capital, symbolic violence and symbolic domination is critiqued according to ideas of other symbolic forms which portrays the state as a monopoly of violence. In South Africa, failure of the state to provide basic needs as formulated by their own Bill of Rights and through a history of abuse by the state in the form of apartheid and colonialism, along with other structural violences demonstrates well how the government can be seen as a monopoly of violence.

Here in South Africa, these could be seen as racist and classist classification, segregation due to classist and racial hierarchies. Broad spectrum of governmental departments and bodies overseeing their function such as the DoH (Department of Health) or DBE or DSD each could assist with ECD functions, could pass on the responsibility of care for the sector to another department and the duty of care could get lost in the bureaucracy of departmental agendas.

However, in terms of its relation to ECD in South Africa and within the Cape Flats, I argue that the idea of the state is well understood to be departments of government that are required to address functions within the communities that it overrules. Research bolstering this critique of the concept of the state not being understood or clearly explained could be challenged through an ethnography of a community's ideas relating to perceived state governance and duty.

The long-lasting impact of apartheid and colonialism deeply influences South Africa's ECD landscape, notably in the Cape Flats, manifesting in various ways and profoundly impacting individuals engaged in ECD initiatives.

- Historical injustices from apartheid persist, creating social, economic, and educational gaps in accessing vital services, especially in disadvantaged areas like the Cape Flats. The resulting poverty, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure still affect present-day challenges in ECD centers.
- Education historically served control and indoctrination purposes, leading to tension between globalized educational curricula and local community-based learning, eroding cultural identities.
- Symbolic violence persists due to historical neglect and socio-economic disparities, resulting in both symbolic and physical violence within marginalized communities, challenging the state's authority.
- Bourdieu's theoretical framework highlights governance complexities, perpetuating classist and racial hierarchies, impacting ECD service delivery.
- ELRU, an NPO in the Cape Flats, addresses these challenges by integrating local cultural practices into ECD programs, acknowledging historical adversities while striving for socio-economic progress. Their approach aligns global ECD concepts with local needs, aiming for ethical leadership and empowerment despite systemic challenges.

This research underscores how education, tailored to respect cultural identities and community bonds, empowers women and drives positive change despite historical and systemic obstacles, aiming for a brighter future for South Africa's children.

4.2 Complex Transactions: Altruism - Remuneration – Vocation

Bourdieu (2013: 293) discusses social agency and the formation of groups. It explores the interplay between economic and social capital, especially concerning perceptions and roles of participants within an organization reliant on donation funding. The focus is on how their perceived knowledge influences their effectiveness and remuneration in benefiting the community. This is very much akin to what Bourdieu (2013) shows to be "…knowledge of scarcity and of the competition by producing individual and collective divisions that are no

less objective than the distributions established by the balance sheets of social physics" (Bourdieu, 2013: 293).

ELRU participants view themselves as active contributors in their environment, reflected in their social language indicating perceptions and class distinctions. This encompasses their perception of ELRU as an NPO and its conceptual significance, as well as their identity as employees and how they are perceived by the community they serve. These distinctions align with Bourdieu's ideas on the differentiation between their group and individual identities compared to the Cape Flats community, reflecting a perceived privileged class despite many originating from the same area.

4.2.1 Ethnographic vignette illustrating Bourdieu

"Thank you, have a good day further", I shut the door of the uber and quickly put my laptop bag on my shoulder. Immediately covering my head with my hood because it was raining and going to be a bitter cold day. This grey and gloomy winters day highlighted my anxiety about what staff were calling "departmental retrenchment". The uber leaves and I duck away from the cars passing me on the pavement by the road to the electric gate that now stands in my way, which is a short industrial, lumber and steel scrapyard that boxes ELRU in this very shady and microcosmic industrial area on the Cape Flats. I begrudgingly signal with a raised hand to Mandy, the receptionist to open the gate and thought to myself "Its raining outside, why does no one see me trying to get in". I walk the long path outside between the gate and entrance and duck yet again when passing the directors window on my right before reaching reception to sign in. "Morning Mandy, how are you?" "Hi Darrin, ooh, management are tight lipped and I'm stressing whether I need to look for something else". "Sorry to hear that, Mandy, from what I have been hearing there was only talk of programme reshuffling". "Hiya , Mr Grey!". "Netta, how are you doing on this day?" "Darrin, there is so much work to do for the training preparation, plans that have been in place since last year, however we have just heard two of our major funders are planning to pull out". Suddenly, Tessy appears like a flame from the tension. "Darrin, do you know how much work we have put in, and the late hours we have worked this week alone. Here at 6am everyday…" "Ya, Darrin, the Trainers are actually the life and blood of ELRU…but.. " Spoke Mandy. Now, they mos wana stop our funding and let us go! Can you believe it" Said Netta.

The conversations with ELRU staff, notably Neta and Tessy, emphasize concerns about recent management direction and staff discontentment, affecting goal achievement. They highlight the tension between social capital (altruism) and economic capital (remuneration), a central debate within the organization.

The discussion delves into Bourdieu's (2013: 295) perspective, relating social capital to altruism surpassing ethical duty and economic capital to remuneration and material production. It explores how altruism, akin to social standing, surpasses elite economic groups by focusing on social development despite limited material possessions. ECD education is highlighted to build both social and economic capital within communities, fostering potential for higher social classes and community development.

The literature on Social Capital versus Economic Capital (here shown as altruism versus remuneration) is prolific. However, most of the contexts are drawn from the United States and Europe. It says social capital is the cultural conditions that govern the ideas people have about their relationship to their objective physical environment shown as symbolic representation, whereas economic capital is the capacities for material appropriation that are seen as instruments of material production (Bourdieu, 2013: 295). They relate to each other through both a collective rendering of their meaning from the groups of people and from their own personal agency as to what this representation means to them (Bourdieu, 2013: 295).

4.2.2 Relevance of vignette and chapter conclusion

The vignette portrays staff hierarchy, feelings of vulnerability about job security, and the sense of altruism versus remuneration at ELRU. It highlights the Cape Flats' industrial location as a metaphor for the challenges faced in that area. Staff, especially in key programs like Training and Fundraising, perceive their roles as vital, despite fears of retrenchment.

i. **Concerns about management direction and funding cuts**

- Neta expresses worry about major funders planning to withdraw support, indicating potential funding challenges.

- Tessy highlights the substantial effort and late hours dedicated to their work, emphasizing the team's commitment to ELRU despite impending funding threats.

ii. **Tension between altruism (social capital) and remuneration (economic capital)**

- Staff members like Neta, Tessy, and Mandy display dedication and passion for their work despite the uncertainty about funding and potential retrenchments. This exemplifies their commitment to social development (social capital) beyond concerns about remuneration.

iii. **Application to Bourdieu's Perspective**

- The actions and conversations of ELRU staff members, such as their dedication and emotional investment in their work, showcase the tension between social capital (their dedication and altruism) and economic capital (their concerns about funding and job security).

These examples from the conversation among ELRU staff members illustrate the real-world manifestation of the tension between social and economic capital within the organization, aligning with Bourdieu's theoretical framework as discussed in the analysis.

Anxiety and shame over job security are evident, rooted in critical theory's concepts and neoliberalism's shortcomings, where funding is reliant on for-profit donors. Neoliberal paradigms impact decisions about remuneration and retrenchment at ELRU**:**

i. Anxiety and Concern over Job Security

- Staff expresses anxiety over "departmental retrenchment," reflecting a fear of potential job cuts.
- Mandy's worry about management's silence and potential retrenchment is evident. She's contemplating seeking alternative employment due to the uncertainty.
- Netta and Tessy's distress over major funders planning to withdraw support intensifies their anxiety. They highlight the intense effort invested in their work and the impact of potential funding cuts on their jobs.

ii. Critical Theory and Neoliberalism's Influence

- Neoliberalism's emphasis on for-profit donors impacts ELRU's funding, as seen by the major funders threatening to pull out. The reliance on these donors for funding creates instability and fear of job loss among staff.

- The vignette underscores how financial considerations and funding threats influence decisions related to remuneration and potential retrenchment. The anxiety expressed by the staff reflects the precarious nature of employment in a neoliberal paradigm where funding sources dictate organizational stability.

iii. Shame and Precarity Rooted in Neoliberal Practices

- The shame and frustration among staff at the prospect of losing funding or facing retrenchment illustrate the impact of neoliberal practices. There's a sense of vulnerability and insecurity, leading to feelings of disempowerment and dependence on external, profit-driven forces for survival.

iv. Critical Theory's Lens

- Critical theory's lens helps unveil the power dynamics at play within ELRU, emphasizing the unequal distribution of power between the organization and its funders. This unequal power relation perpetuates a sense of precarity among the staff, leading to anxiety and distress over job security.

Employees like Netta demonstrate a strong vocational belief, going beyond their duties, while others, like Mandy, view their work more transactionally. The interplay of symbolic power, social, and economic capital within the Cape Flats' ECD context shapes staff perceptions and their commitment levels. Future research could explore community stakeholder perspectives on social and economic capital, as well as the community's expectations of ELRU's role. These expectations, along with the Cape Flats' context, influence ELRU's actions and define its institutional limitations.

CHAPTER 5: HOW HAVE HISTORIES OF RACIAL VIOLENCE SHAPED THIS CONTEXT? HOW DOES THIS CONTEXT AFFECT OUR WORK?

This chapter delves into the impact of historical racial violence on Cape Flats' stakeholders and ELRU staff. It emphasizes how this violence shapes challenges, guiding ELRU's aims and prompting cautious navigation. Explored through concepts like Critical Race Theory (CRT), post-colonialism, and intersectionality, an ethnographic vignette provides a contemporary example of this impact, informing readers about its effects on research participants' work in the area.

CRT is a framework for examining the intersection of power structures and systemic racism in society. It shows how racial hierarchies are created and maintained in legal, institutional and social systems and offers ways to challenge it. Post-colonialism is a study of the effects and legacies of colonisation on the previously colonised. It explores ideas of identity, power and culture after being colonised. Intersectionality is a concept acknowledging the intersection of ideas such as race, gender, class, sexuality and shape experiences of social structures. It recognises the interconnectedness between these create forms of discrimination and privilege.

5.1 Education and trauma: from colonial to neoliberal subjects

South Africa’s education system has its roots in a colonial and apartheid past and is linked to ‘South Africa’s transition to democracy in more recent years (Sehoole, 2006). Key to this period was the idea of advocating for white people’s dominance over other peoples of colour. It speaks of a ‘convoluted, disjointed and bloodshed story. Sehoole (2006) and Komo (1991) states, its beginnings are one of subjugation and the cause and protraction of racial partitioning in the country, as well as the development of the mining industry, particularly educating the black miner. The education system of the country was, and still is, based on European history of education (Sehoole, 2006: 4).

The first formal Western School based in South Africa, established in 1658 was intended for instruction of slaves imported from West Africa, based on Dutch system, was intended to

educate slaves imported from West Africa (Sehoole, 2006: 4). The classes were based on the Dutch education system, it was taught in Dutch and pupils had to learn it (Sehoole, 2006: 4). Later, when the British took over the occupancy of South Africa, in 1795, the British educated the colonists in English and Latin, English then became the primary taught language.

South Africa's education system from the onset was based on an international system because of this Dutch and English influence. The offset of this was that the national dialect on the country because of education became English and Dutch (later this became Afrikaans, a mixture of Dutch, German, and local South African dialect) (Sehoole, 2006: 5).These European education systems were brought to colonies such as South Africa to assist with the development of unjust racial hierarchies and shaped the structures for the apartheid system, where industries such as mining and other service jobs such as gardening, and house cleaning were reserved for the indigenous peoples, or slaves from other parts of the world brought to the country who were not of white skin colour. It was from this beginning that education became a primary site of struggle against apartheid (Komo, 1991: 736). A great example of this was the 1976 shooting of pupil Hector Petersen, who was shot and killed and others who protested about having Afrikaans as a compulsory school language, a direct confrontation between African people and the apartheid state (Abdi, 2002: 1). To commemorate this day, South Africa celebrates youth day on the 16th of June.

Certain subjects during apartheid were reserved for certain persons of colour, where black skinned people were only taught basic subjects related to the jobs such as mentioned that were primarily reserved for them. For the colonists, and later the apartheid state, 'education became a double-edged sword; it helped feed into the white supremacy rhetoric, however it grew an 'inspired and emerging African people'. Persons such as Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, Walter Sisulu, to name a few. It was through education that persons such as Mandela, was able to overthrow the apartheid government through tactics that were more passive aggressive than previous violence that ended in bloodshed. It was through these new passive and intelligent tactics that South Africa was able to turn the tide into democracy.

For South Africa's children, Apartheid stymied child development through "…poor service delivery, lack of learning materials and resources, minimal funding, lack of quality teachers,

poor toilet and security facilities at ECD centres" (Atmore et al, 2012). Atmore (2013) show that only six percent of 'black' children attended an ECD centre. During this time, 'pupils were segregated due to apartheid policy, fragmented between departments and bodies, inversely proportional to need- most resources provided to most advanced statutory population group, lack of co-ordination and co-operation' amongst other problems (Atmore, 2013: 160). Although improvement in this sector in contemporary times, unfortunately that period in history continues to haunt citizens in the country at present, especially those that have suffered because of living in areas such as the Cape Flats. The result of which challenges the work ELRU does to produce quality ECD education in areas such as the Cape Flats.

5.2 Ethnographic vignette anchors: The High jacking in Philippi and the baby in Lavendar Hill

5.2.1 Scene A: The High jacking in Philippi

While driving colleagues Carmen and Thando home, we encountered an attempted hijacking. Approaching Philippi's Rampaphosa Street, I noticed two men walking suspiciously. As they approached, one signalled for me to stop, but I accelerated through, narrowly avoiding a brick thrown at the car. We drove to a safer area due to the danger of the neighbourhood.

Feeling unprepared, I contacted my father for advice, as ELRU hadn't briefed me on such situations. The company's unresponsiveness led me to decide to head to the police station for a case number. We eventually reached Langa police station due to safety concerns. Despite the broken windshield, I had to drive the damaged car back as getting assistance in that area was challenging. Thando had to take public transport home.

5.2.2 Scene B: The baby in Lavendar Hill

FCM leader Mabel shared a troubling incident where a drug-addicted mother endangered her newborn. Despite Mabel's intervention, the community's plea for immediate action from social workers was delayed. Eventually, the mother's distress escalated, leading to an attempt to harm the child. Mabel intervened again, leading to the child being removed and the mother receiving mental health treatment. The child was placed in adoptive care thereafter.

5.2.3 Vignettes Analysis

These contexts discuss a complexity that considers the theory of Intersectionality because of how mutually constitutive forms of social oppression, multiple identities, relationality of people, social context, power relations, social justice and inequalities all intertwine within the Cape Flats (Hopkins, 2019). There is a link to poverty and lack of social services in the area, along with overcrowding, violence and trauma, issues of gangsterism, alcohol and drug abuse, child neglect, poor educational and health facilities, to name a few. This social atmosphere could even be termed as a 'culture' of violence, poverty, lack of social neglect that was brought about by a history of racial prejudice.

Through these experiences culture and the self are linked by activities of colonization, body, emotions, gender, to name a few (Bhatia & Stam, 2005). Psychology movements have elaborated on the role of culture and history in constructing ideas of the self and personal identity (Bhatia & Stam, 2005). Ideas of the self within the Cape Flats often is shown to be one of powerlessness and yearning. Bleek personal aspirations due to circumstance without the correct educational impact of mentors or teachers, left unchecked could cause situations where individuals become criminals as in the hijackers above, or as delinquent substance abusers causing havoc on their own community and children, they have a relationship with, as the case with the woman in the second ethnographic vignette. I argue the reality of the Cape Flats disposition is because of the infrastructure and racial prejudices resulting from apartheid most recently and colonialism formerly. Persons on the Cape Flats, generally people of non-white heritage, live in a world unknown to what most white people ever experience or fully can comprehend by their cultural legacies.

It has been noted that a fuller spectrum on non-white persons racialized worlds is needed, seeking interdisciplinary perspectives to help heal from multiple forms of racialized trauma with regards to their mental health and wellness (McGee & Stovall, 2015). Me experiencing a hijacking trauma related to being a 'racialized foreigner' in Philippi, remembers that I experienced post-traumatic stress disorder and flashbacks of the event months after it. The same with my colleague and participant Thokozana, where she became more cautious and more frightened to travel and take public transport even from within her own area. We both became more aware of our racial and living differences and noted the fear we encounter is

based on our perception of what we believed the racial demographic and notoriety of the specific Cape Flats area we were in affected our work and research duties. ‘Long-term physical, mental, emotional and psychological effects of racism and living in a society characterised by white privilege and dominance, can be termed "weathering". This is a concept put forth by Arline Geronimus and colleagues (McGee & Stovall, 2015).

Physiological effects of weathering diminish a person’s health and ability to respond to their environment in a healthy manner, causing both corporeal and mental wear and tear. This encourages physical and psychological trauma and its affects plays a role in the academic experiences and outcomes of students, it is highly probable similar affects can be shown in young children and their experiences of ECD performance (McGee & Stovall, 2015). The woman who wanted to rid herself of the responsibility of her child, in the second ethnographic vignette, similarly to the trauma Thokozana and I experienced, will also influence her young child in a similar way. Potentially leading to trauma of child abandonment, neglect and labelling associated with her race and social circumstances. From the perspective of the hijackers or the mother in the two ethnographic vignettes, living in the Cape Flats means that they often experience the results of the negative effects of white privilege and dominance as being the victims of it. Due to multiple forms of oppression and social context can culminate in the generational weathering of victims in similar circumstances that can play out in self-harm and harm of others as shown above. I argue all these negative factors affecting persons along the Cape Flats are because of racial oppression. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is noted for being a counterspace for scholars to challenge racial oppression (Cabrera, 2018).

CRT initially developed as a critique of colour blindness within Critical Legal studies "It is about studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism and power", (Delgado & Stefancic in Cabrera 2018). CRT retains a primacy for racism in three keyways, namely empirical primacy, political primacy and personal primacy (Gillborn, 2015). “Empirical primacy as a central axis of oppression in the everyday reality of schools, personal primacy as a vital component in how critical race scholars view themselves and their experience of the world and political primacy as a point of group coherence and activism” (Gillborn, 2015).

Citizens, including participants from the Cape Flats area often must go through similar experiences described above. These are common occurrences on the Cape Flats. In the above two ethnographic vignettes, there are two different scenes of violence and trauma happening in two different locations within the Cape Flats. There is a notoriety about the Cape Flats, where violence is a normal occurrence and fear for any traveller foreign or local their lives with a constant anxiety and paranoia about their surroundings. 'Foucauldian theory of power can re-examine postcolonial, coloniality and colonization contexts as opposed to structural and hierarchical theories of understanding power that are used to theorize colonisation' (Rivera Santana, 2018). This is also how ideas about 'Intersectionality can be used to disrupt oppressive vehicles of power' (Dhamoon, 2011). However, persons such as ELRU workers who see themselves as community uplifters, going through this dangerous terrain to help a fellow person is motivated by sheer willingness to do good. Wherever that belief comes from, God, a higher-power, or merely doing morally good, somehow that altruistic instinctive is more powerful than the danger they may face.

5.3 Conclusion

The South African education system has a deep-rooted history tied to colonialism and apartheid, shaping present challenges in marginalized regions like the Cape Flats. Education, once a tool for reinforcing racial dominance, also sparked resistance and empowerment during apartheid struggles, showcasing its potential for change. Despite progress, inequities persist, hindering child development and perpetuating disparities in historically marginalized areas. ELRU and similar organizations strive to counter these legacies by providing quality early childhood education, navigating the enduring scars of apartheid.

The Cape Flats' complexities reveal intersecting oppressions, historical legacies, and societal dynamics, shaping a culture marked by trauma, violence, and systemic neglect. Racism and entrenched biases deeply impact individuals' sense of powerlessness and opportunities, perpetuating cycles of marginalization and personal struggles, affecting mental health, wellness, and academic outcomes, especially for non-white communities.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) challenges these oppressive structures, highlighting racism's pervasive influence on societal systems. Intersectionality offers a means to disrupt these

power dynamics by understanding interconnected forms of oppression faced by marginalized communities. Narratives from the Cape Flats depict normalized violence and fear, yet individuals and organizations like ELRU work tirelessly to uplift communities through early childhood development, driven by altruism and a desire for positive change.

These narratives underscore the need for multidimensional approaches that address systemic inequalities, challenge prejudices, and foster resilience within communities. Such efforts are crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive educational landscape, essential for the nation's healing and progress. ELRU's efforts exemplify a commitment to overcoming these challenges within the Cape Flats context.

CHAPTER 6: HOW DO WE AFFECT THIS CONTEXT THROUGH OUR WORK?

6.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the experiences and challenges faced by ELRU employees in Early Childhood Development (ECD) within South Africa, especially in the Cape Flats communities. Through vignettes featuring practitioners like Buhle and trainers like Netta, it explores the significance of ethical leadership, emancipation through education, and women empowerment.

The discussion highlights the importance of play in children's learning, contrasts ECD teaching with traditional schooling, and emphasizes early stimulation and parental involvement. It also delves into the socio-political landscape, linking South Africa's educational struggles to its apartheid history, showcasing educators' role in reshaping the narrative.

It follows diverse experiences, touching on shifts in the Department of Basic Education's involvement in ECD and personal stories like Netta's transition from practitioner to trainer. Memory's influence on teaching practices due to past oppression is emphasized.

Additionally, the narrative explores themes of women's empowerment in ECD leadership roles, challenging societal norms for social justice and equal representation in education. Overall, it presents a comprehensive view of challenges, aspirations, and transformative efforts in South Africa's post-apartheid ECD landscape.

6.2 Insights from ECD Practitioners: challenges, passions, and transformative stories

In the heart of South Africa's educational landscape lies a dynamic and often overlooked domain—Early Childhood Development (ECD). Within this realm, a tapestry of narratives weaves together, threading the challenges, fervent passions, and transformative tales shared by the practitioners themselves.

Embedded in the vibrant conversations with these ECD professionals is a mosaic of experiences that paint a vivid picture of their world. These conversations echo the profound dedication and unwavering commitment these practitioners hold for shaping the tender minds of young children.

The discourse highlights the multifaceted challenges faced within the ECD space. It unfolds the complexities of managing diverse classrooms, navigating limited resources, and wrestling with the dichotomy between imparting education and instilling the essence of play in learning—a pivotal aspect of early childhood education.

Amidst these challenges, a palpable passion surges through their words. It's a passion that transcends mere employment—a deep-rooted love for nurturing young minds, an unyielding belief in the power of education to transform lives, and a relentless drive to make a difference despite financial constraints and societal pressures.

Intertwined with these discussions are transformative stories—testimonies that embody resilience, innovation, and the sheer determination of practitioners carving pathways for change. These anecdotes reflect the triumphs of individuals who, against all odds, have established their own centres, transformed shacks into spaces of learning, and ignited educational revolutions within their communities.

The journey unravels a tapestry where each thread bears the weight of aspirations, challenges, and triumphs, illustrating the intricate mosaic that defines the world of Early Childhood Development practitioners—a realm pulsating with dedication, passion, and an unyielding commitment to sculpting the future.

6.3 Snippets of trainer interviews

6.3.1 Snippet of Buhle

Buhle:

"Molo Boetie, Kunjani! I am very excited Darrin" exhumed Buhle. "Darrin, I can't complain, we have great work to do, and I am happy that someone, you, are taking an interest in the work we do! You know life is hard, funding is tight, and we must advertise what we do to new

funders. But I am certain having you part of the crew will help get this going!" It was clear She felt exhilarated about this research project because it is not often, they (the trainers and practitioners, including her) is interviewed about her role and the ECD space. This was immediately before we proceeded with our planned interview, she mentioned "Practitioners are on different levels; some are experienced in this work, whilst others are beginning their journeys as educators. Some have left the centres, others are growing the seeds of education and learning within these young children. When ECD practitioners leave their centres (schools), they must then start over as they can't experience the seed grow. A great idea would be to train the principals, so they will be able to pass on the info to their practitioners. However, it is usually the case that these principals are engrossed with work."

During Buhle and my self's conversation she spoke briefly about her practitioners being on different levels. Some that were struggling and having difficulty managing their classrooms. This difficulty in supervising children centred on the idea that children need to play. It is through playing that children learn. Therefore, their methodology involves how to plan and incorporate play in this teaching. This aspect of ECD teaching is completely different from the school system of children from usually six years old onward or who start grade one. Even from the ages of birth to two years old they need to be stimulated. According to Buhle, 'the research suggests school 'drop-outs' start at an early age. Another example is that bad handwriting starts from the fine motor skills that children develop at an early age, even as young as from five months old. Not only is it necessary to train the practitioners, sometimes we wish to even have training with the parents. Such as when at the shop, incorporate the children in the activity, calculating how many items of a particular grocery product, helping them count to boost the children's mathematics or basic numeracy. This is to show that many parents must do the same for all their children as well'.

Snippet of the interview:

Below are some of the questions and answers, mostly paraphrased from Buhle.

Note: Question = Q

(Q): Can you describe the process of the new training season for this year (your preparation, the new practitioners, your hopes, and how the last few weeks have gone? 'Last few weeks were great, firstly in terms of attendance and training trying to combine both trainings, even

at the level, almost like an ECD centre, (for example child cutting). Some didn't know anything about ELDAS (Early Learning and Development Areas), (however they know the terminology, but were doing it). Otherwise, the training is going well, from both sides.'

Q) As a trainer what do you hope to see happen within the next sessions? 'The important things are, they are learning from the implementation, and they are engaging more if they are taking part, and if they take, 'part' (an active role) in the centre. They must teach the others there at the centre. Showing them what they have learnt in the day, if there are challenges, then there must be solutions. One can't leave the training room when there is a challenge that must be solved. Because in a classroom environment they need to solve it.'

Q) In your opinion can any person become an ECD practitioner? 'In my opinion yes. If you are eager to learn, and tell yourself you can do this, there is no way to say you can't. Some know the theory, but here we do the practical, they struggle to implement at the centre, but here in the training they learn about the practical.'

Q) Due to the high levels of unemployment in the country and specifically within disadvantaged areas in Cape Town, do you feel there is a real passion to become an ECD practitioner or is the passion more so to become employed? 'People are just doing it for employment Darrin. People are less interested in ECD sector because they are not earning a lot. Some are leaving for greener pastures, especially for the unregistered ECD centres. They only getting money for the fees. They are always frustrated when it comes to the salaries they earn. I always tell them; everything is not all about money. Always do it wholeheartedly. At the end of the day if this is what you love you can do your own thing, have you own centre, and...'.

Q) Can you describe the background and characteristics of the new practitioners? 'Some are young or old, mixed. The old ones have experience working with children. The older ones have the passion for the children. All of them are women'.

Q) What is your understanding of ECD pedagogy, what besides the ECD curriculum framework informs your understanding? 'For me the way you, teach your children. In that teaching you

need to develop the skills around that. Need to take into consideration, ages and stages of ECD practitioners. When dealing with the age group you need to develop accordingly. Personal experience I believe is what I can use. Here at ELRU, employed as an administrator, without an ECD background. Always using personal experience is something that I encourage. For children, they must learn about things that are around them. Without using the NCF (National Curriculum Framework) or whatever. I started in a Langa ECD centre in 2015 without an ECD background.'

Q) Are ideas about childhood and your childhood ever come into play when you are teaching new practitioners about educating the very young? 'Yes Darrin, for instance I grew up in the Eastern Cape, I knew the village in the Eastern Cape, you couldn't for example tell me about Table Mountain because I don't know about Table Mountain (She applied that analogy for this consideration)'

Q) At day one for this year's practitioner training, how responsive were these learners and did they understand the concepts? 'The responses were positive for both groups that I taught. I mixed them (the learners in the groups) even if they were not on the same level (level in terms of their practitioner experience and practitioner knowledge). They were performing the activities in a practical way. Sometimes the terminology they used describing the concepts confused them at times. They did however understand what was being taught to them. I tried to not focus too much on the terminologies or examples that they did not understand.'

Still excited, some questions she is not sure if she is answering it right. Recording made her feel nervous.

6.3.2 Snippet of Netta

Netta, the Head Trainer at ELRU, expressed regret about missing me at an ECD conference and shared her weariness due to changes in the education sector. She generously offered support for my research, showcasing her willingness to assist beyond the norm. Reflecting on her background, she revealed her initial desire to become a social worker but found her calling working with children at ELRU. Her journey, influenced by family needs and circumstances, led her from being a practitioner to a trainer. She found pride and inspiration in the success

stories of practitioners she trained, citing an example of a woman who started an ECD center at 40 years old and faced challenges in registering it. Netta highlighted her experience teaching grade R in Houtbay, stressing the equal curriculum despite differences in socioeconomic backgrounds among the children.

Both Buhle and Netta exemplify ethical leadership, empowerment through education, and women's agency in different ways:

Ethical Leadership

- Netta's Generosity and Support: Netta's readiness to support Darrin's research project beyond the ordinary showcases her ethical leadership. Her willingness to go the extra mile exhibits a commitment to nurturing academic interest and extending support, a crucial trait in ethical leadership.
- Buhle's Guidance and Encouragement: Buhle, as a trainer, emphasizes the importance of learning and problem-solving, stressing the need for practitioners to actively engage and teach others. Her commitment to addressing challenges directly within the training sessions demonstrates a sense of responsibility and leadership in guiding practitioners.

Emancipation through Education

- Buhle's Training Philosophy: Buhle's training methodology focuses on the significance of play in childhood development and the importance of practical learning for ECD practitioners. Her approach emphasizes the emancipatory potential of education by advocating for a hands-on approach to teaching, enabling practitioners to empower children through learning.
- Netta's Empowering Stories: Netta shares stories of individuals who've found success through education and empowerment. By highlighting examples like the woman who started an ECD centre at 40 years old despite challenges, she underscores how education can emancipate individuals and communities, transcending barriers.

Women Empowerment

- Representation of Female Practitioners: Both Buhle and Netta acknowledge the presence and importance of women within the ECD sector. They recognize the mixed

demographic of new practitioners, highlighting the experiences and passion of older women and their contribution to nurturing young minds.

These narratives reflect a shared commitment to education, ethical leadership, and women's empowerment within the ECD sector. Buhle's emphasis on practical teaching and Netta's inspirational stories collectively illustrate the transformative power of education and the role of women leaders in driving this change.

6.4 Emancipation through education

Buhle and Netta's conversations above demonstrate emancipation through their ideas in the following ways. Playing being an essential component of ECD practice, as mentioned by Neiwenhuys (2011) and Rogers (2021) amongst multiple others, is an emancipatory activity, in that it shows freedom of creativity and expression, uncontrolled and unguided by a viewer or ruling body. This type of learning has within it the fundamentals for emancipatory thought and expression. Vital components for a belief in the idea of emancipation through education. Buhle was excited about research being done with her, her programme and the institution because as an individual she believes in the upliftment of the individual and emancipation of the learner. The dissemination of the research as seen here can garner further interest and further drive emancipation of communities not aware of ECD concepts, thereby promoting collective emancipatory thought and action. This research can even grow newer training and educational ideas to liberate the minds of both young and old. From what they have both said, they have come from a background impeded by circumstance, and now find themselves liberated through their vocation by passion and belief. Stories that can help encourage others to liberate themselves from their current challenges. Their willingness to help others, such as myself for this research and the children and communities they serve show what Friere (2000) meant by 'love cultivating emancipation within oneself and for others'.

The above ethnographic vignettes also show how trainers such as Netta, Buhle and others are at the forefront of the ECD resurgence, particularly in the poor and marginalised areas around the Cape Flats. It shows snippets of a day in the life and conversation regarding their roles in ECD there. Most of the trainers and practitioners, that ELRU has been involved with are from a lineage of oppressed people because of being persons of colour in South Africa that

experienced racial prejudice and oppression. Initially these people were educated in ways that harboured their aims to be active and equal participants in the opportunities that were reserved for mainly white persons. Now they are being the real pioneers of teaching that aims to alleviate poor educational and structural deficiencies that the past educational system produced. "...South Africa's educational struggle has passed from the hands of the oppressor to the hands of the oppressed" (Nkomo, 1990: 735).

Education has the power to enable students to become subjects of action and responsibility through emancipation and empowerment (Biesta, 2019). Emancipation as a learned trait enables the user to challenge orders and enable them the power to speak and act that could ultimately lead to new modes of being in the world (Biesta, 2019). Empowerment on the other hand allows individuals to have the power to operate within a particular order (social order, cultural order or political order) (Biesta, 2019). Since the start of the South African post-apartheid state, there was substantial hope that education reforms would culminate in a reversal of the stagnant education systems of apartheid education and help build the new non-racial democratic nation, however in comparison to this ambition little progress has been made (Nkomo, 1991: 737).

The past educational system enforced a culture and tradition of schooling that demarcated the roles necessary for the apartheid system to flourish and was paramount to oppression. An example of this was the roots of segregated schooling in the development of the mining industry and was an attempt by the state to “…foster a black migrant work force and a stable white working class" (Nkomo, 1990: 735). The system was a cornerstone of apartheid and remained pivotal to fighting against it, also from its mechanism “…produced docile teachers and apolitical, obedient students, as mentioned by Penny Enslin who discussed ‘theoretical discourse in South Africa Teacher Education’ (Nkomo, 1990: 735.). Today the goal can be said to be “People’s education for people’s power” (Nkomo, 1990: 736). An emancipatory slogan. The origin of the emancipatory slogan "Peoples Education for Peoples power", was a result of the 1985 formation of the National Education Crisis Committee and expresses the relationship between emancipation and education (Nkomo, 1990:736). The current struggle in education today strives to diminish institutionalized racism and support greater equality through structures such as education. Equal access in education has begun, however, the same

structures have largely remained the same (Nkomo, 1990). It is within this that there is validation for why education is a political site.

Multicultural education programs are shown to be one way where a transformed educational system and non-racial democratic system can increase (Nkomo, 1990: 337). Presently, education demands that learners help invigorate the South African economy in this post-apartheid state. Science education has been earmarked as quintessential to this step, along with practical education that will help learners to be productive at work, occupationally trained and academically trained for their professional labour after 'schooling. In ECD, one can look at the STEAM (Science, Technology, Art and Mathematics) curriculum which looks at combining practical learning activities that focuses on improving science and maths for the young which involves art practical's including technology fundamentals that can be learned by the very young. ELRU in their learning methods for ECD, have included STEAM teaching and regard this as a form of play based learning. An example of this is learning through playing with Lego pieces. The Lego pieces focus on aspects of maths through counting the Lego blocks, science and technology through how the blocks are placed in relation to the surface and how shapes are formed, and art is practiced through the way in which creativity showcases the child's unique design.

My interactions with Trainers and ELRU contingent evoked a sense of optimistic hope for South African society, where conversations with senior staff such as the head trainer herein referred to as Netta and the organisations female director herein represented as Nancy, kept reiterating the point that 'investment in the very young, specifically along the Cape Flats, has long term positive economic and social benefits for society (Jenkins, 2014). Within the context of ELRU, my research participants were on the poor receiving end of apartheid and that aspects of colonial education were and remain paramount to educative processes within South Africa and acknowledging the extent to which this Is the case in the present. This includes showing how their work predominantly with children who come from similar backgrounds, speaks to their present professional roles.

Oppression here is considered as a big factor and is the connection tying both the present state of ECD education and past oppressive trauma in the memories of my participants. Friere

(2000) had warned that the 'oppressed through time become the oppressor by adapting an attitude of adhesion'. I show through current teaching practices and ECD pedagogy how much weight this idea holds in my research. "At this level, their perception of themselves as opposites of the oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradictions, the one pole aspires not to liberate but to identification within its opposite pole" (Friere, 2000: 43). In this case, Friere (2000) magnifies teaching to be the model that stimulates the paradigms of the minds of the young, for this reason teachers are also able to empower the young through understanding their role in how their experience of oppression have an influence on the people that are taught by them. This is empowering and liberating to those students that develop and learn within the social struggles that are dependent on oppressed structures (Friere, 2000). The idea about memory is that it serves as a key understanding about how learning and memory are part and parcel of ECD pedagogy. It shows how certain conceptions, like habits and customs from historical trauma's such as apartheid (which was a colonial offspring) was either developed as a resistance to it, if you were not a white person and especially if you have experienced systemic effects of the system in the present day. Education, however, in the way it is showcased both locally in South Africa and internationally in modern times as a system carry with it colonial ideas transferred to a general population. Particularly within South Africa. This also means this research would assist unpacking the past into better relinquishing the grips of it as it is experienced in the present. This then shows how it becomes influences for liberation or emancipation.

What this section concludes is that the development of the young through practitioners, teachers or caregivers, is that they have the power to either enslave through what can be termed oppression of the young. Who grow into adults being oppressed people. Or information imparted to them through teaching and learning could be a means for practising their creativity in delivering their own interpretations of the constructs (social-constructs, mental-constructs, political -constructs, to name a few). This expression of assisting and adding to the development of 'eco-psycho-social-political-constructs' enables the learner with a determination to become empowered, and it is through this empowerment that they can draw on their right to speak and act, enabling new modes of being in the world'. Buhle, Netta, described above and others, showcase their agencies of empowerment and through their actions and willpower within ECD create a platform for the very young through the teaching

of practitioners, caregivers and young children to create a sense of emancipation for their own lives and the lives of others. Part of this entails the leadership of these children's teachers. Freedom can be dangerous if the path to it is not guided by ethical leadership.

6.5 Growing ethical leadership

Below is an ethnographic vignette showing Riatta and her class of FCM workers and caregivers from Lavender Hill and Gugulethu.

Riatta, was a white person, with a bright yellow throw coat, black dress, wearing smart open shoes. The rest, eyes of hardship, some visibly stressed, touching their faces, sighing, breathing in heavily, whilst doing so. They were listening to Riata, however, visibly withdrawn from the activity, obviously deep in some other place (a memory, a current situation, worrying, trying to figure things out. They listening to her very attentively).

Riatta: "Alles bly confidential", showing them the focus group participant consent form. Within the group there were other clear leaders (interchangeable through everyone), one of them passed around the consent forms to be handed on by this person. On speaking about what the FCM's do Mabel answered very confidently, 'it entails the first 1000 days (zero to two years old) monitoring children to see if the children's family is on drugs as an example, to see what their situation is in good health have their inoculations, vaccines (inspytings, etc).

Role playing questions for Riatta's group:

Q: How did you hear about the programme?

A: I was not working and had heard about the opportunity.

Q: How was the training taught?

A: "Four modules, very difficult at the beginning but became easier. Shown how to collect data and to see who needed it the most. To look for those families who cannot afford ECD care. Caregivers are the Ma (mother), Pa (father), Aunty, Ouma (grandmother), etc."

Riatta then wanted to have the focus group with the caregivers alone, and so the FCM's walked out, and this I wanted to take as an opportunity to have a one on one with Mabel.

I introduced myself to Mabel who was very keen on giving me her story of becoming a FCM member and very vivid and emotive tales from the field, that describes well the setting of ECD within the areas ELRU operates in.

The above ethnographic data showcases a group of coloured (mixed-race) and black (indigenous African Women) from very poor townships within Cape Town, such as Lavender Hill and Gugulethu. They are employed by ELRU as FCM (Family Community Motivator) workers. They are paid through funding from donors such as The Nelson Mandela Childrens Fund and Aurora to monitor, assist and train parents on the health and education of their children. It also entails a method of documenting their social struggles in surviving and its impact on their children's developing lives. These are brave women who are dedicated to uplifting their communities, they are clear leaders and in turn are led by 'warriors of women', such as Riatta and Massi who are strongholds that keep the group motivated and able to deliver on their duties regardless of the challenges that they face. Challenges such as drugs, gangsterism, poverty and ridicule. Riatta, never lived in a township, comes from an upper middle class white background, however, has gone into areas within the Cape Flats to support and educate these women for more than a decade. Massi, on the other hand, is from the Cape Flats and lives with the struggle these women and families along these areas face. She is the clear leader of the group. The above scene on one of their training days, clearly illustrates the hierarchy and roles of the leadership of Riatta, Masi, and the rest of the FCM group'.

Within an organisation specific ethical policies, procedures and practices need to be consistent and shared amongst staff members, these in turn form perception of the institution's ethical climate' (Reichers & Schneider, 1990 in Kuenzi, Mayer & Greenbaum, 2019: 43). An organisation's moral identity is based 'tested at an individual level', thus growing ethical leadership and is therefore dependent on leadership's moral traits and how it affects colleagues and stakeholder ethical beliefs and behaviour (Kuenzi et al, 2019). Riatta not only in the above example, but part of her duty is to ensure she leads the FCM team members to conduct home based interviews and the correct way to conduct themselves to the community. In this example it shows how Mabel, being an experienced FCM worker, knows the correct procedures for performing her work. Through the leadership of Riatta, and her knowledge of the Cape Flats community, in Lavendar Hill where she stays, she has displayed heroism in

various challenges with community members, such as the example with the drug addicted woman and her child in the previous chapter. The FCM's in turn look up to Mabel and look to her for aspiration for their own lives and duties within ECD. Their leadership individually is on constant display promoting ELRU and ECD work within the communities. Their effect on their communities displays hope and encouragement, instilling beliefs that a spirit of togetherness, comradery and family can be shared within the community, especially promoting the idea that 'it takes a community to raise a child'. ELRU's principles are shown through its ECD work by promoting ethical leadership through programmes such as FCM by leaders such as Riatta and Mabel.

There is a link between what institutions such as ELRU presents as their organisational identification through values instilled through ethical leadership behaviours that builds on organizational behaviour theory and cue consistency theory. This is about how beliefs on behaving ethically are observed from leadership and how tasks such as ECD aims through programmes at ELRU identify what their socially responsible behaviours (SRBs) should entail (De Roeck & Farooq, 2018: 923). Findings indicate a need for consistency between employee's perception of social ethical and responsibility behaviours and ethical leadership (De Roeck & Farooq, 2018). From a stakeholder standpoint these could present for ethical leadership within the sector to promote and be responsible for what is believed to be ethical and moral behaviour in the communities. This is demonstrated well through programmes such as FCM. Almost all the leadership within ELRU and communities involved with ECD are orchestrated by women. ELRU also believes in the empowerment of woman, believing that women are looked at to be nurtures of society. An idea brought about by the concept of motherhood.

6.6 Agents of change: women empowerment

Women's empowerment has been linked to improved child health and development outcomes for children under five-years of age, showing a direct link between women empowerment and early childhood development. This could be because women are generally in most cases the nurtures of children, and this is also why most ECD practitioners tend to be women for similar reasons (Ewerling, Lynch, Mittinty, Raj, Victora, Coll & Barros: 2020). Women empowerment can drive down inequality between men and women and thus progress economic development, secondly societal progress is on track when unfair

discriminations and policies halting individual and community goals are curbed, as in the case of previous unequal disparities between men and women in society, where men have historically dominated over women (Duflo, 2012: 1051). Professional support systems such as FCMs leads to family empowerment and socio-emotional well-being, this includes less feelings of despair, exhaustion or uncertainty when it comes to childcare (Bagur, Paz-Lourido, Rossello & Verger: 2022). These FCM's are women from the neighbourhoods and communities in the areas. They operate as a support network to young mothers and their children, particularly in the Cape Flats, where often they require support. One such example, as told by Camila, an FCM member, is of a single mother, in Lavender Hill, who was unemployed and was not sure what the best method of feeding her child should be. One of the women from the FCM support group heard about her through conversation with another lady from the community on their usual visible walks through the area greeting everyone they usually meet. Camila, the FCM worker, advised she would make herself known to the young mother, and provide the necessary information to her about breastfeeding, and nutrition. She said she would go to this mothers home, and go with her and child to the clinic, and helped in attaining key nutritional packs for her and her child.

To speak about women leaders in ECD, I introduce critical feminist theory because not only are all ECD practitioners and Trainers almost all women, roughly 99% within the Cape Flats area that ELRU operates in, it also assists in identifying and showing the relationships between socio-cultural, systemic and institutional power (Le Roux, 2022). 'Also, the tenets of critical feminism provide a milieu for understanding women's leadership praxis and empowerment of women' (Le Roux, 2022).

The interrogation of power within society, specifically feminist and critical theory challenge traditional patriarchal systems and are in turn emancipatory in nature by contesting the unequal power dynamics that have caused unique disparities on the grounds of race and gender (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993)(Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012)(Mpofu, 2019).

According to Villaverde (2008) critical feminism within education espouses Freire's critique of the banking system of education, with the aim of curtailing social injustice and the transformation needed to have an equal and free democratic state, as South Africa aspires to.

South African Women in education contend with external and internal barriers, including stereotyping, systemic gender discrimination to leadership and patriarchal culture, it is a unique context as it differs from International and Pan African contexts due to the South African apartheid legacy (Edwards & Perumal, 2014)(Uwizeyimana & Mathevula, 2014)(Greyling and Steyn, 2015)(Zikhali & Smit, 2019).

'Marais & Van Wyk (2015) states that the challenges women in education are faced with as well as their social context is due to the legacy of apartheid in South Africa'. 'The effect apartheid had on education was the normalising and legitimising of oppression and "constructing the social identity of Black South Africans" (Crane, 2016).

'Greyling and Steyn (2015) suggest that South African women educational leaders navigate challenges by displaying democratic and cooperative relations as a counter narrative to discriminatory apartheid-era leadership practices'. "Edwards and Perumal (2014) assert that women educational leaders in South Africa often enact social justice by adopting relational leadership modes, disregarding hierarchical power conditions, harnessing emotional and social intelligence, and using the curriculum to foster social transformation" (Le Roux, 2022). ELRU workers, particularly the practitioners and FCM staff, are at the forefront of women empowerment through ECD. This is because they provide hands on training to children and practitioners by dealing with each child, caregiver or practitioner with a unique pedagogical approach. Empathy and experience are triggered from their own memories of their specific contexts as children or ECD workers. Here their knowledge is transmitted to the specific context of the individual child situation. Knowledge, advice and care is mostly relayed from woman to woman. In this way it is seen how women hold the key positions as nurtures of the young, and thus nurture the seeds of a developing society in this way. The knowledge, advice and care through teaching, assisting and listening to community stakeholders empower other women and themselves because they are regarded as agents of positive transformation for other women and themselves. Although since apartheid, progress was made to have equal distribution of resource to schools, including ECD centres, great disparity still exists (Ndimande, 2013). However, having empowered women involved with ECD fulfils the role of care and nurturing that mends the lack of resource experienced by ECD centres and communities involved with it.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter delves into the profound impact of Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners and their transformative agency within society. It underscores a pivotal truth: the influence wielded by caregivers, educators, and teachers can either confine or emancipate the minds they nurture.

The narratives of Buhle, Netta, and others serve as a testament to the power embedded within ECD. They exemplify the potential for practitioners to transcend mere instruction and instead cultivate platforms for the young to shape their destinies. This empowerment isn't merely about imparting knowledge; it's about fostering creativity and enabling the blossoming of young minds, enabling them to craft their interpretations and construct their social, mental, and political frameworks.

Central to this empowerment lies the ethos of ethical leadership. ELRU, through its programs and values, embodies this ethical paradigm, driving social responsibility and ethical conduct within communities. The involvement of women, who are considered society's nurturers, forms a cornerstone of this transformative process.

Drawing from experiences, empathy, and a unique pedagogical approach, these women impart knowledge and care. Their role extends beyond teaching; it's about empowering others and themselves as agents of positive change. They fill the voids left by resource disparities, stemming from the legacy of apartheid, by nurturing communities and ECD centres with care and wisdom.

The involvement of empowered women in ECD becomes a catalyst for societal transformation. It stands as a beacon of hope, stitching together the fabric of a society where care, knowledge, and empowerment transcend limitations, laying the foundation for a more equitable and nurturing world for generations to come.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Learnings

The thesis focuses on ELRU, an NPO in Cape Flats, within the context of South African education's challenges, particularly for young children. It explores apartheid's lasting effects on education, highlighting present-day social issues like crime and unemployment. The study emphasizes ECD's structure, mostly led by women, and ELRU's role in this landscape.

It addresses ELRU's struggles, including bureaucratic obstacles, financial limitations, labour disputes, and stakeholder conflicts. These stakeholder conflicts include internal and perceived obstacles to support offered by ELRU and government for their need, as well as crises of expectations not met, and the reality of the constant and long struggle of community needs not being addressed. Despite these hurdles, ELRU remains committed to providing crucial ECD education in disadvantaged communities.

The research uncovers insights into pedagogy, historical traumas, and the NPO sector's impact on community well-being. It acknowledges the limitations in comprehensively addressing all aspects while discussing opportunities for future research in NPO spaces. The study emphasizes the need for better planning and adaptability in uncertain community settings.

Throughout, the thesis reflects my learning curve in understanding the complexities of ECD NPO work and its impact on the initial research proposal.

The central chapters (4, 5 and 6) convergence of ethical leadership, emancipation, and women's empowerment within ELRU and the Cape Flats' context is apparent.

The vignettes illuminates the tension between altruism and economic concerns among staff, showcasing their dedication to social development despite funding uncertainties. This tension mirrors Bourdieu's perspective on the interplay between social and economic capital, aligning with critical theory's critique of neoliberalism's impact on job security and funding sources.

The historical backdrop of South African education, entrenched in colonialism and apartheid, shaped present challenges, perpetuating disparities in marginalized regions like the Cape Flats. ELRU counters these legacies by providing quality early childhood education, aiming to break cycles of marginalization and trauma.

Narratives from the Cape Flats underscore the pervasive influence of racism and oppression, challenging through Critical Race Theory and intersectionality. ELRU's work reflects a commitment to uplifting communities within this complex context.

These chapters emphasize the transformative agency of ECD practitioners, portraying them as catalysts for societal change. Ethical leadership within ELRU, especially embodied by empowered women, drives social responsibility and positive change within communities, filling voids left by historical disparities.

Ultimately, empowered women in ECD become agents of societal transformation, nurturing communities, and paving the way for a more equitable, nurturing world. The narrative highlights their role in transcending limitations and fostering a future built on care, knowledge, and empowerment.

7.2 Limitations, methodology and central chapters

The research methodology centred on participant observation and Participatory Action Research (PAR), conducted both onsite and offsite at ELRU's head office and areas within the Cape Flats and the Northern Cape. Challenges arose from balancing roles as an employee, volunteer, and researcher, blurring lines between active participation and research, impacting data management and research objectives.

Despite these challenges, participant observation provided rich insights into ELRU's dynamics and contributed to uncovering key themes and perspectives within the organization. Triangulation of findings from various methods like interviews, focus groups, and journaling strengthened the thesis, revealing connections between employees, stakeholders, and the community, emphasizing the significance of ECD as a cohesive force within this nexus.

These findings intertwined with chapters Three to Six, intricately weaving ELRU's dynamics within South Africa's educational landscape. Vignettes highlighted class dynamics, economic realities, and societal powers, reflecting historical injustices mirrored in the complexities of the Cape Flats.

The challenges faced, echoing systemic inequities rooted in colonial legacies and apartheid, underscored ELRU's commitment to counter these histories through quality education and transformative agency demonstrated by staff and stakeholders.

Ethical leadership and the involvement of empowered women emerged as pivotal forces in nurturing communities and shaping young minds. The discussion integrated concepts like Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, emphasizing the need to confront oppressive structures and interconnected societal inequalities.

The thesis culminated in showcasing ELRU's dedication to creating an inclusive future and highlighting ECD's profound impact in nurturing minds and fostering equity within society. These findings underscored the significance of ethical leadership, societal transformation, and the pivotal role of ECD in shaping a more equitable world.

7.3 Literature review and further research

The literature review offered a comprehensive exploration linking ECD, NPOs, and South Africa's historical context, underlining the enduring influence of colonialism and apartheid. It notably highlighted trauma's significance in shaping experiences and futures, a theme deeply entrenched within ELRU's community engagement. These findings lay a strong foundation for future research by spotlighting memory's impact on pedagogy and trauma histories, calling for additional situational analyses in regions like the Cape Flats, and advocating for anthropological tools within NPO research.

The review's amalgamation of gender dynamics within ECD and societal norms echoed ELRU's goals of challenging oppressive norms and empowering women, reflecting the need for reshaping educational pedagogy. Additionally, the examination of schoolification's drawbacks

emphasized the necessity of inclusive and participatory educational models, resonating with ELRU's approach to balance academic performance with holistic child development.
Insights into NPO operations and the complexities they face, particularly ELRU, highlighted the critical link between financial sustainability and community well-being. This underscores the gap in ethnographic studies within the NPO sector, inviting further exploration to enrich the academic discourse around NPO dynamics and aspirations.

The discourse on neoliberalism's influence on NPOs, including ELRU, underscored the tensions between business-like approaches and maintaining democratic governance and community-centric agendas. It aligned with ELRU's aspirations to counteract negative neoliberal forces through quality ECD initiatives.

Overall, this literature review informs the ongoing research by offering a nuanced understanding of complex societal dynamics affecting ECD and NPOs. It paves the way for enhanced situational analyses and more comprehensive ECD practices, potentially contributing to global advancements in quality child care. The South African context serves as a poignant case study, offering valuable insights and methodologies applicable to similar challenges faced by disadvantaged communities worldwide.

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