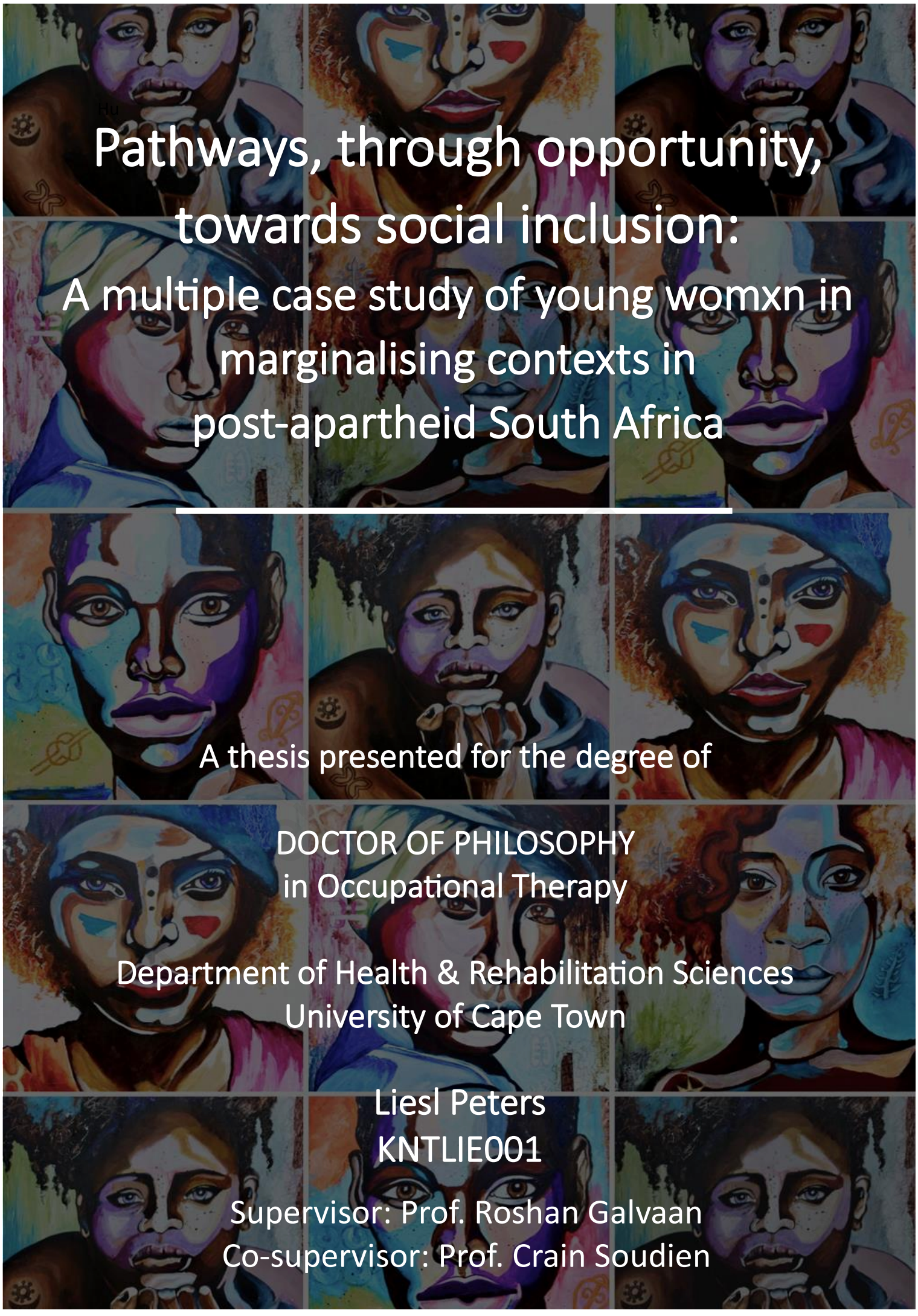

Pathways, through opportunity, towards social inclusion:

A multiple case study of young womxn in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa

A thesis presented for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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Liesl Peters
KNTLIE001

Supervisor: Prof. Roshan Galvaan
Co-supervisor: Prof. Crain Soudien

Dedication

For Karlee, Nomlanga and Mayan

Who invited me in, so that I might see for myself.

I am forever in your debt.

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Plagiarism Declaration

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend it is my own.

This thesis is my own work. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work.

I have used the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition referencing guide for citation and referencing.

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This accomplishment belongs to many people.
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Abstract

Background

Post-apartheid South Africa promised a born-free generation, but young people are not always able to participate in ways that allow them to live freely. Race, class and gender continue to be designated markers of particular life trajectories as young people operate from historically oppressed race, class and gender positions. Young womxn from and in such marginalising contexts experience an array of challenges that place them at risk of an experience of waithood and social exclusion.

Various iterations of South African youth policies have suggested that certain kinds of opportunities could play a pivotal role in contributing to more prosperous futures for young people. Previous research concurs. However, the solutions offered through these policies have not resulted in an experience of different futures for young womxn at risk of social exclusion. An exploration of relevant literature on key concepts and related studies in occupational science, and other aligned disciplines, revealed the fragmented and static understanding that existed at the inception of this study about opportunity as a phenomenon that contributes to just and equitable outcomes. As such, critical and socially transformative occupational therapy and occupational science, as the broad grounds for the scholarly work presented in this thesis, have not contributed sizeable solutions to the problems of exclusion facing young people in South Africa.

Notwithstanding, young womxn from and in marginalising contexts are capable of agency, demonstrating a responsiveness to social conditions that defies a victory of structure in conclusively predetermining their experiences of everyday life. Examples exist of young womxn who have opened and walked their own pathways towards social inclusion. The need to learn from and with these young womxn was the focus of this research study. The aim of this study was therefore: To explore and describe how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards experiences of social inclusion, through opportunity, in post-apartheid South Africa.

Methods

A merged theoretical perspective, including decoloniality as a form of critical social theory and the theory of structuration, oriented the understanding of the praxis of living for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in South Africa. Such a perspective was central for apprehending the relational aspects of agency and structure in young womxn's lives, and how these played out in a context heavily shaped by apartheid and coloniality. The phenomenon explored in this study was defined as the movement of young womxn towards an experience of social inclusion, through opportunities.

A qualitative, multiple case study design was applied, drawing on narrative inquiry as a key approach. Using purposive sampling and guided by selection advisors, three young womxn from different communities in the Western Cape Province of South Africa - who believed they were experiencing a more prosperous life that they likened to an experience of social inclusion - were selected to participate in the study. These womxn were willing to offer up their life histories as individual cases that we could explore and learn from. An array of data sources and data generation methods were used to construct each individual case narrative, utilising multiple perspectives. These included life history interviews, in-depth interviews and focus groups with people who were part of each young womxn's life, document analysis and observation. Participants also introduced artifacts which complimented and developed the understanding of their life trajectories.

A narrative analytic approach supported the interpretive process to develop within-case inferences about the phenomenon, as it had manifested within the unique circumstances of each case. Following this, a cross-case analysis was conducted to develop an explanation of the phenomenon. Trustworthiness was assured through a range of methods, the most important of which included multiple triangulation approaches, reflexive journaling, and a process of member checking that ensured the veracity of the individual case narratives. Further, data was generated over a prolonged period. These methods provided the foundation for a credible cross-case analysis. The study received ethical approval from the Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town. Strategies that ensured the ethical conduct of the study were applied throughout,

with minimal risk to participants. Of central importance was the maintenance of confidentiality, since intricate and in-depth details were part of participants' life histories. This risk was mitigated by changing minor details that did not adversely affect the credibility of the data and protected the anonymity of participants. All participants expressed the benefits associated with having been able to share their experiences through the data generation processes in the study.

Findings and Discussion

The analytic process led to the development of an overarching intuition, comprised of a set of inferences, that illustrated that the way young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards social inclusion, through opportunity, is through the process of *making-a-life*. *Making-a-life* was understood as a uniquely crafted political praxis that is given impetus through a meshwork of lifelines, co-creating the likelihood of young womxn reaching towards social inclusion. Theorising this notion generated the key thesis in this study: that *making-a-life* is an ontogenetic praxis of correspondences that is routed within the meshwork. *Making-a-life* improvises with opportunities as possibilities-in-the-making, that must cohere within the context of young womxns' everyday lives to contribute valuably to this praxis. The cumulative result is the evolution of transgressive and generative agencies that operationalise a different social positioning for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts, making it possible to subvert the intentions of the modern/colonial post-apartheid context.

Taking up these insights within the disciplines of occupational science and occupational therapy will require us to think relationally about agency, structure, opportunity and occupation in ways that are acentred from the individual. The idea of *making-a-life* calls for a more explicit grasp of the relational and co-creational flows of doing over time.

Conclusion and Implications

The conceptualisation of pathways towards social inclusion, as acentred from young womxn as individuals, offers a new way to think about the focal point in youth interventions and

policy options. This creates a space to reorient our practices towards understanding how to protect the integrity of the meshwork and create the coherence between opportunities and young womxn's everyday lives. Such actions/approaches have the potential to generate new vistas for the social inclusion of young womxn from and in marginalising contexts.

Definition of Terms

Agency: Agency operates in relation to structure and is a natural human disposition (Sewell Jnr, 1992). It refers to people's capacity to exert "some degree of control over the social relations in which [they are] enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree" (Sewell Jnr, 1992, p. 20).

Coloniality: Coloniality is a concept used to refer to the continued patterns of power that were constituted during colonisation, but that prevail despite its "end" (Quijano, 2007). Western imperial modes of knowing and doing were centralised and cemented during colonisation to ensure the continued domination of colonised peoples (Quijano, 2007). These patterns of power continue to underscore "…culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production" in these places (Ndlovu & Makoni, 2014, p. 5).

Critical occupational therapy: Critical occupational therapy is a form of occupational therapy practice which invests both in understanding and transforming the sociopolitical conditions that shape people's lives (Hammell & Iwama, 2012). The practice involves engaging actively with these conditions to transform people's capability to engage in occupations that support an experience of prosperity in everyday life.

Everyday life: "Everyday life is a space-time in which the subject, individual, or collective, immediately and not always consciously, accesses opportunities and resources, facing adversity and limits, making decisions, adopting mechanisms of resistance and inventing new ways of being, living and doing" (Galheigo, 2020, p. 15).

Hegemony: The idea of hegemony is drawn from the work of Antonio Gramsci and is conceptualised as the dominant ideologies that frame how societies are governed (Bates, 1975). Gramsci linked these dominant ideas to those of the ruling class, showing that these ideas are often taken for granted and instituted through various structures in society, thereby constituting and keeping a status quo in place (Bates, 1975). This keeps power in the

hands of the ruling class. In this study the ruling class is constructed by the ideals of modernity/coloniality within the South African context.

Marginalising contexts: Marginalising contexts are created because of the sociopolitical and socioeconomic histories – and consequent hegemonies – that govern the experiences of people who hold certain intersecting target social identities. These marginalising contexts orchestrate repressive and oppressive experiences of everyday life that can contribute to social exclusion and intergenerational multi-dimensional poverty. Race, class and gender are dominant markers in the construction of marginalising contexts in South Africa. Individuals can come from marginalising contexts and continue to exist within them, depending on how their target social identities are constructed and shift during their lives.

Modernity: Modernity "…names a historical period and a set of norms that defines socioeconomic organisation as well as particular subjects and subjectivities" and is often used as "…a descriptor of the spirit of Western civilisation" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 117). Its rhetoric is "progress", drawing on the universalising ontologies and epistemologies of the West, but its underside is domination (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). In decolonial terms it cannot be separated from the concept of coloniality, hence the descriptor **modernity/coloniality** is used to signal these inseparable logics (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

Multidimensional poverty: Multidimensional poverty includes deprivations across several different areas of life (Statistics South Africa, 2014). These include education, health, the living environment, and economic opportunities (Statistics South Africa, 2014).

Occupation: Occupation is a form of social action that reflects the continuous transaction of habit, context, and creativity (Cutchin et al., 2008). It incorporates both the ordinary and extraordinary activities that people engage in (Watson & Fourie, 2004).

Occupational engagement: Participation in occupation that moves beyond a focus solely on performance and includes multiple ways of becoming engaged (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007). Occupational engagement is a concept used to describe the "doing" of occupation, and manifests in diverse ways in different contexts.

Occupational science: A discipline that focuses on, and advances the understanding of, human occupation.

Opportunity: A personally identifiable and viable possibility that reflects the various social arrangements situated within a particular socio-historical context (Alvarez, 2009).

Occupational justice: The term occupational justice, and its associated concepts ("occupational alienation, occupational rights, occupational balance, occupational deprivation, and occupational marginalisation"), have been used within occupational science and occupational therapy to account for the ways in which individuals, groups and societies' capacity to participate in and perform occupations is either supported or compromised by their social contexts (Serrata Malfitano et al., 2016, p. 167). Occupational justice "…necessitates fair allocation of resources to enable the equitable distribution of rights and privileges that can result from participation in occupations, while recognising the unique occupational needs of individuals" (Durocher et al., 2014, p. 421). Occupational injustice is thought to occur when the freedom to participate in desired and needed occupations is curtailed (Wilcock & Townsend, 2009).

Political: In this study, the idea of politics or, "the political" refers to the concept of power and its relational facets (Selg, 2018). Power can manifest both interpersonally and structurally.

Re-existence: Re-existence can be understood as the restoration and renewal of life that allows for revival and continuation despite being subjected to dehumanising conditions (Walsh, 2021). It is a process through which existence and hope can simultaneously manifest, despite experiences of de-existence (Walsh, 2021). It "…is made possible by women's [people's] ability to background the structures of modernity/coloniality within which they live" (Schubert, 2022, p. 172).

Social exclusion: Social exclusion has multiple dimensions and is often characterised by problems that reinforce one another (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). This may include low income and unemployment, poor education, poor health, poor housing, and collapse of the

family (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). Social exclusion has a structural basis because it is produced by the actions of social role players and institutions (Millar, 2003).

Social inclusion: Social inclusion is both an ongoing process and an outcome (Whiteford & Pereira, 2012). It is reflected in a form of social citizenship that engages youth as active agents in dignified social, economic, and political participation, with access to the necessary duties and rights to make this a reality (Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009). It creates future opportunities and advances the capabilities required to take advantage of these (Millar, 2003). Whilst it is possible for social inclusion to contribute to social transformation this does not occur by default.

Social transformation: In the context of this study, social transformation is linked to decoloniality and implies a radical reconfiguration of the power structure advanced by modernity/coloniality.

Socially-transformative occupational science: A socially-transformative occupational science seeks to enact a transformative agenda, embracing critical knowledges to construct a discipline that responds effectively to the social issues shaping human occupation (Peters et al., 2023). Embracing critical knowledges means, according to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, to explore the possibilities for, and of, knowing outside of what is already "given" (Galheigo, 2020). Socially-transformative occupational science can also be referred to as socially-responsive occupational science.

Structure(s: The combination of virtual schemas and material resources, specific to particular contexts, that together have the potential to influence the actions of agents (Sewell Jnr, 1992).

Target social identities: Those aspects of a person's social identity that connect them with social groups rendered invisible and made susceptible to oppression by structural obstacles (Harro, 2000). These oppressive experiences are a consequence of the hegemonies in a particular social context that marginalize these identities (Harro, 2000).

The Quintain: The Quintain is a term developed by Robert Stake as part of multiple case study methodology (Stake, 2006). The term refers to the phenomenon that is being explored in multiple case studies and that 'binds' the set of cases together (Stake, 2006). The researcher is focused on uncovering a broad understanding of the Quintain as it exists across all the cases that are part of the multiple case study (Stake 2006).

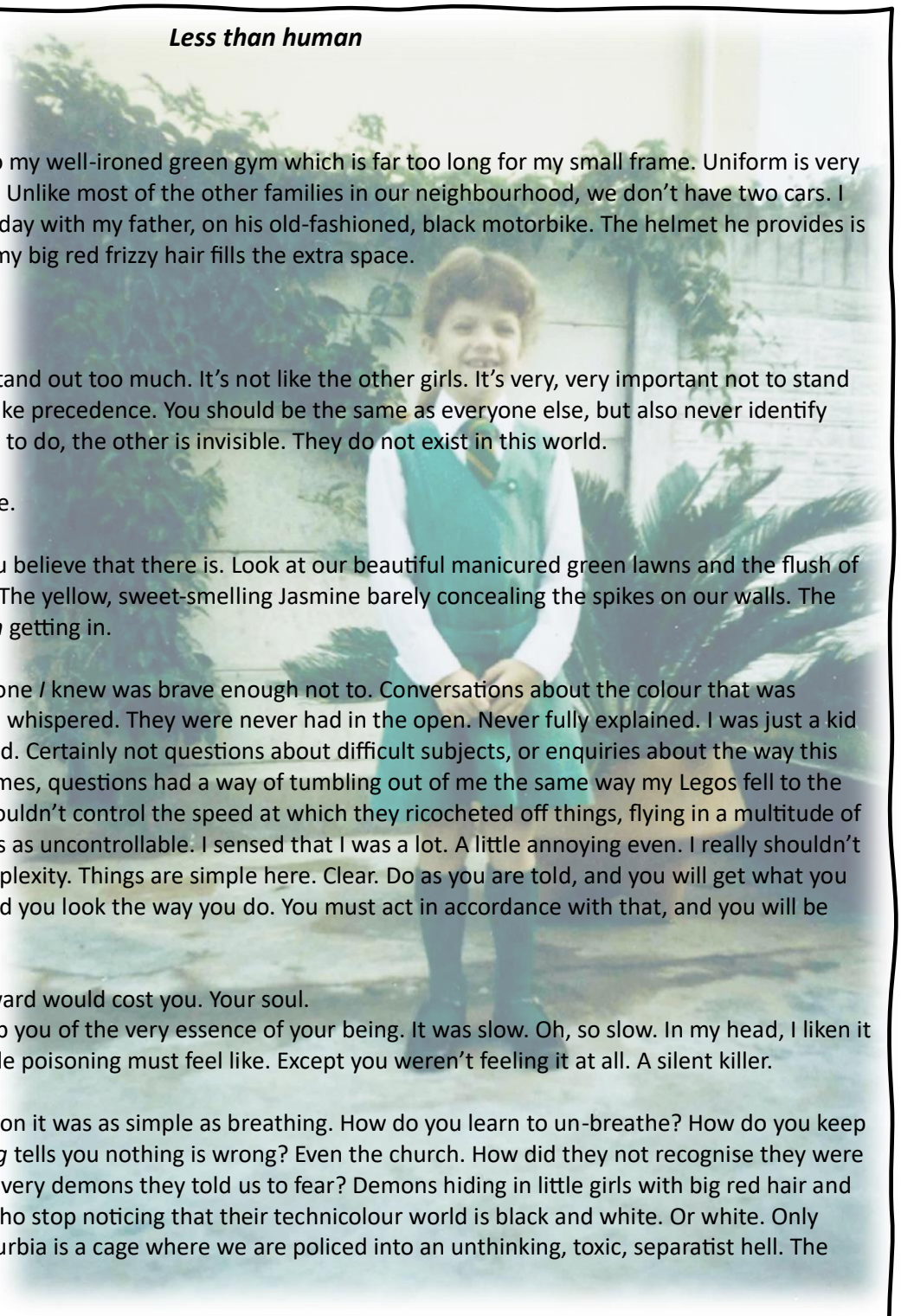
Womxn: I use the term womxn in this thesis, rather than woman/women, to reflect the use of a decolonial and feminist perspective that is intersectional, acknowledging that understanding the experience of womanhood can extend beyond the dominant ways it has been categorised and understood through patriarchal, colonial views of gender (Khan, 2017; Peters & Galvaan, 2021).

Youth/Young people: In South Africa, "youth" is an inclusive term used to denote the broad age category of 14-35 years (De Lannoy et al., 2021). However, Statistics South Africa disaggregates the data it produces on youth to reflect two age categories, which include a period between 14-24 years and 25-35 years (De Lannoy et al., 2021). This reflects the different needs that youth may have, dependent on the age category they find themselves in. In this study I use the terms "youth" and "young people" interchangeably to refer to the later part of the transition between childhood and adulthood, but includes the earlier parts of adulthood where young people are focused on obtaining the markers that are constitutive of it.

Preface

Dear Reader

As we embark on this journey together, you deserve to know whose voice speaks to you through these pages. So, before we begin, let me take you by the hand and lead you back to the beginning, to my beginning.



Less than human

The year is 1986.

My mother is helping me slip into my well-ironed green gym which is far too long for my small frame. Uniform is very important. It's important to fit in. Unlike most of the other families in our neighbourhood, we don't have two cars. I must travel to school for my first day with my father, on his old-fashioned, black motorbike. The helmet he provides is far too big for my tiny head, but my big red frizzy hair fills the extra space.

I don't like my hair.

Its texture and colour make me stand out too much. It's not like the other girls. It's very, very important not to stand out here. Being the same must take precedence. You should be the same as everyone else, but also never identify with "the other". That's not hard to do, the other is invisible. They do not exist in this world.

Everything is black and white here.

There is no colour. They make you believe that there is. Look at our beautiful manicured green lawns and the flush of red roses surrounding our gates. The yellow, sweet-smelling Jasmine barely concealing the spikes on our walls. The armored defenses that stop *them* getting in.

Everyone went along with it. No one *I* knew was brave enough not to. Conversations about the colour that was missing in this world were always whispered. They were never had in the open. Never fully explained. I was just a kid and questions were not welcomed. Certainly not questions about difficult subjects, or enquiries about the way this world was. Unexpectedly sometimes, questions had a way of tumbling out of me the same way my Legos fell to the floor when I emptied the box. I couldn't control the speed at which they ricocheted off things, flying in a multitude of different directions. My questions as uncontrollable. I sensed that I was a lot. A little annoying even. I really shouldn't be so brazen as to ask about complexity. Things are simple here. Clear. Do as you are told, and you will get what you deserve. You are who you are, and you look the way you do. You must act in accordance with that, and you will be rewarded for it.

They didn't tell you what this reward would cost you. Your soul.
Nobody told you that it would rob you of the very essence of your being. It was slow. Oh, so slow. In my head, I liken it to what dying by carbon monoxide poisoning must feel like. Except you weren't feeling it at all. A silent killer.

And yet we were still alive and soon it was as simple as breathing. How do you learn to un-breathe? How do you keep asking questions when *everything* tells you nothing is wrong? Even the church. How did they not recognise they were allowing us to be turned into the very demons they told us to fear? Demons hiding in little girls with big red hair and small green gyms. Automatons who stop noticing that their technicolour world is black and white. Or white. Only white. And that middle-class suburbia is a cage where we are policed into an unthinking, toxic, separatist hell. The zone of the walking dead.

It would be many years before I realised that I was walking around less than human.

This research is part of my own lifelong journey of trying to recover my humanity in the context of a dehumanising history. It was, and will remain, a deeply personal experience. Just as you will see how the participants in this research, namely Nomlanga, Mayan and Karlee, had to continuously navigate their reaching towards social inclusion, so I had to continuously navigate my own intersectional position – and the power and privilege that came with it – during this research journey.

It is becoming standard practice to declare aspects of one's identity as a researcher to situate oneself in relation to the scholarship being conducted. The practice both adds and subtracts from understanding the researcher, not merely as a conduit of knowledge generation, but as a fellow human being. I identify as a white, cisgendered, middle-class womxn who is an Afrikan[1] occupational therapist. But I am also so much more than these identities. The participants in this study were also so much more than the categories of their identity. Declaring these as if they can ever be neatly ascribed and contained somehow takes away from how they seem to dance with one another. During this journey, I had to learn to take account of mine and my participants' social positions, without using the logics that had been so-often attached to them in South Africa. Eventually, I found me in them and them in me, without reducing either of us to the other.

It is this voice – my voice *renewing* – that speaks to you through these pages. I end by borrowing the words of Antjie Krog[2], who poetically captures the sentiments of my heart and my gratitude to the three remarkable young womxn who shared their own experiences for the sake of my (and your) learning:

"…because of you
this country no longer lies
between us but within

[1] I am intentionally choosing to use a 'k' in spelling the name of the continent I call home. In doing so, I join others who resist the colonial imposition of naming through the use of the English language. I align, instead, with the vernacular of many Afrikan languages where the sound associated with the letter 'c' does not make an equivalent sound to that of the letter 'k'. As Tutaleni Asino suggests, this is one way for Afrikans to come back to themselves (https://tutaleniasino.com/why-i-write-afrika-with-a-k/).
[2] This piece is taken from Antjie Krog's poem "Country of Grief and Grace". Available at: https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/country-of-grief-and-grace/.

it breathes becalmed
after being wounded
in its wondrous throat

in the cradle of my skull
it sings it ignites
my tongue my inner ear the cavity of heart
shudders towards the outline
new in soft intimate clicks and gutturals

I am changed for ever I want to say
forgive me
forgive me
forgive me

you whom I have wronged, please
take me

with you…”

Liesl

Chapter 1

The dynamics of using opportunity to build a life in post-apartheid South Africa

1.1 Introduction

In this first chapter, I introduce the background to this doctoral work, framing the key issues that resulted in its conception. I begin by describing my personal and professional histories, showing how the key analytic frame within this thesis – the relationships between agency, structure and opportunity – first occurred to me as being of consequence for the practice of a critical occupational therapy with young people who originate from and exist in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa. I follow by directing our attention to how this analytic has been both framed, and understood, with respect to the challenges that face young people – and young womxn in particular – as they try to build a life within the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa. Taken together, the first parts of the chapter describe the backdrop for the study, demonstrate how the problem was conceptualised and illustrate how the research question, aim and objectives were constructed as a result. I conclude the chapter by sharing the purpose of the study and how it intends to contribute to knowledge that can inform a critical occupational therapy and socially transformative occupational science, as well as youth development interventions in South Africa.

1.2 The personal and professional histories shaping the development of this study

Early on in my career as an occupational therapist and academic, I began working with young people in Lavender Hill, an area on the Cape Flats[3] in Cape Town, through a University of Cape Town practice demonstration site known as Facing Up. My work experiences led me

[3] The Cape Flats is an area that can be defined both geographically and politically. Geographically, it is a large flat, sandy sect of land on the outskirts of Cape Town incorporating a diverse array of communities. Politically, it is known as the "dumping ground of apartheid" where people of colour were forcibly removed as a consequence of the Group Areas Act of 1950. Consequently, these communities experience a high degree of poverty and a number of social ills (www.capeflats.org.za/modules/home/overview.php).

to become very concerned with how, given the social realities faced in this context, young people were expected to construct their futures. Facing Up provided an opportunity to explore how occupational therapy could contribute differently, and more effectively, to these social realities, by honing in on the ways in which contexts, themselves, create marginalising conditions (Galvaan, 2004). At the time, this was an unexplored area of occupational therapy practice. During the early years of my tenure, I started to notice the patterns of occupational engagement that, within the constraints imposed by the context, would likely make it increasingly difficult for young people to build their lives. For instance, some adolescents as young as 12 years old simply stopped coming to school and quietly dropped out (Peters, 2011). Others remained in school, but found it increasingly difficult to excel, with few avenues through which to explore alternative occupational choices (Galvaan, 2015).

I took up various scholarly projects through which I could contribute towards understanding these issues and find solutions to help young people build lives of prosperity. One of the first projects was a biographical inquiry into the participation of young men after they had dropped out of school. I had found that so much research focused on preventing dropout, with little attention paid to how those who dropped out fared after this occupational transition (Peters et al., 2016). This was surprising because many authors proposed that dropping out could result in adverse consequences that prevent the building of prosperous lives (Peters et al., 2016). However, this inquiry found that it was still possible for some young men to live lives that they value after dropping out, and the focus of the findings articulated some of what was thought to make it possible to do so (Peters et al., 2016). The concept of opportunity and its careful negotiation emerged as central to this possibility.

Thinking about the opportunities that could prompt a different life course was not new. Another project that I worked on during my initial years at Facing Up involved a group of young adolescent girls who, through the project, were exposed to opportunities that were unique for young people living in Lavender Hill. One of the participants went on to become an occupational therapist. As part of an additional research endeavour, we conducted an autobiographical inquiry to explore the contribution that this project had made in her life (Francke et al., 2019). Participating in the project, itself, emerged as a critical opportunity, but the research threw up additional questions about how this opportunity related to and

interacted with other facets of her life story. Both these studies hinted strongly that understanding opportunity *and* its negotiation may be critical for uncovering how different lives might be built within adverse circumstances.

Occupational therapy scholars have suggested that unequal opportunity for oppressed groups is the root cause of social exclusion (Hammell, 2015b) and that equal opportunities are critical in achieving occupational justice (Durocher, Gibson, et al., 2014; Durocher, Rappolt, et al., 2014; Stadnyk et al., 2010; Whiteford & Townsend, 2011). Whilst the research conducted affirmed these views it also, together with experiences of working with youth in different communities, confirmed that young people "…remain agents capable of interacting with their social circumstances. They retain, simply because they are human, a capacity to intervene and make choices. Their destinies are never entirely scripted by the social forces which characterise their societies" (Soudien, 2012, p. 238). Therefore, the idea of opportunity – and its relationships with personal agency and social structure in contributing to social inclusion – emerged as a key analytic frame of this work. It will arise repeatedly as a motif in this thesis because, as I will show in the rest of this chapter, it is critical for understanding the challenges that young people from communities like Lavender Hill might face in building lives that depart from that which has been socially preordained for them. The complexities and contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa (Soudien et al., 2019) complicate this motif and I explore these in the next section.

1.3 Young people building a life in post-apartheid South Africa: Complexities and challenges

1.3.1 The failure of the Rainbow Nation

Apartheid was, fundamentally, a "policy of separation" (Simpson, 2021, p. 131), writing into law the systematic exclusion of black[4] people. As a historical-political moment it marked the

[4] In this thesis I use the term "black" to refer to any person who, as a consequence of apartheid ideologies and racial categorisation, has an experience of "blackness". This would include people who were racialised as African black, coloured or Indian during apartheid.

recognised and permissible curtailing of civil, political, and economic rights for black people under South African law. Hierarchies of 'blackness' were designed to further divide and control people, based on racial categorisation. Whilst it was a particular moment and period in South Africa's history, its evil extent was made possible by the long colonial history that prefaced it (Simpson, 2021). As theoretically distinct, the post-apartheid moment marked a shift in this legislated policy. However, given apartheid's design, post-apartheid life has not been able to escape the way the policy of separation had ingrained itself as continued ideological and material separation based on the hierarchies of racial difference. This has set up differential conditions of everyday life for those that were designated as 'black', and 'white', under apartheid law. Further, markers of class and gender, in intersection with race, continue to shape the everyday lives of South Africans. Manifestations of these markers can block or promote access to kinds of geographical spaces that offer opportunities for the development of prosperous livelihoods. Therefore, whilst the same political freedoms are technically available to all (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), the way these freedoms are translated into gains in everyday life is not the same for everyone. For instance, black womxn from low-socioeconomic backgrounds often face the most obstacles in building their lives, since apartheid sought to discriminate against people primarily on the basis of race, in combination with gender (Phaswana, 2021). Black womxn were excluded from social life in ways that impoverished them and their families (Phaswana, 2021). Class attributions hold a relationship with race and gender because of this. In other words, those discriminated against during apartheid because of race and gender are also often economically disadvantaged, resulting in an experience of poverty.

The Rainbow Nation was constructed as a discursive tool at the post-apartheid moment, aimed at bringing South Africans of different races together. It operated as a discursive 'promise' that all South Africans would enjoy the same entitlements regardless of their racial designation. The idea of the Rainbow Nation came to reside in our collective consciousness as South Africans and we came to initially believe that, in its embrace and protection, South Africans could come to experience a harmonious reality where all people could live side-by-side and share in the benefits and prosperity of the nation. In line with the sentiments of the Rainbow Nation, the rhetoric of a 'born-free' post-apartheid generation of young people began to gain ground in the early days of democracy in South Africa (Barbarin & Richter,

2001; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014). These young people, it was thought, would be free from the shackles of apartheid and its implications. Their futures would no longer be differentially shaped along the lines of race, class and gender. Most importantly, young people would have access to the necessary opportunities to build their lives in helpful ways (Brown-Luthango & van Rooyen, 2022).

However, in stark contrast with the goals of the Rainbow Nation, young people in South Africa who identify with a mix of certain target social identities continue to experience marginality (National Youth Deveopment Agency, 2022). Many stories of young people act as diverse exemplars of this struggle (Fassin et al., 2008; Maseti, 2018; Ramphele, 2002; Ryklief & Neves, 2017; Wa Azania, 2014). It is therefore possible to agree with the sentiment that "…much of the youth experience takes its character from the country's history and has much – although not everything – to do with race, class and gender and with permutations of these in the form of language, culture, religion, and so on" (Soudien, 2012, p. 225). The twin histories of colonisation and apartheid, together with the ongoing impact of the processes of globalisation, continue to challenge the country's aspirations for a born-free generation (Branson et al., 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2015; Spaull, 2015).

1.3.2 Challenges shaping the contours of youth development in South Africa

Overall, levels of poverty remain high in South Africa (Smith, 2018) and young people are disproportionately affected by this (De Lannoy et al., 2018). A staggering 54,4% of youth lived below the poverty line in 2010/2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Limited progress has occurred since then with various metrics illustrating little in the way of positive gains. For instance, in 2022 estimates of income poverty were high (National Youth Development Agency, 2022) and the General Household Survey showed that 51.6% of households identify as poor (Statistics South Africa, 2024). Post-apartheid South Africa's capitalist society therefore requires that young people have access to economic opportunities to mitigate against this experience of poverty. The nation, however, faces serious challenges in this regard. Current analyses of youth unemployment suggest that, while the total unemployment rate in South Africa since the 1990s has remained consistently high at around a quarter of the total labour force, this number is, in global terms, significantly

higher for most comparable economic and social contexts (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2021). Previous estimates show that in the age bands of 15-24 and 25-34 years, unemployment levels have been as high as 59% and 37% respectively (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2021). Whilst young people in the younger age band could be in education or training, this is often not the case. For instance, in the second quarter of 2023, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey showed that 43.4% of young persons between 15-34 years were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) at the time of collecting the survey data (Statistics South Africa, 2023). The education system in South Africa is a significant contributor to this situation, facing challenges like the low quality of basic education, high dropout rates and the high costs associated with tertiary education (Spaull, 2015; Statistics South Africa, 2011). This issue is further complicated by the rise of 'opportunity markets' (Grusky et al., 2019) which very much exist in South Africa and is particularly prominent in the arena of education. Opportunity markets make it possible to buy the kind of academic experiences that make privileged young people eligible for further educational opportunities and better work opportunities (Spaull, 2019). Most young people in South Africa have little option to buy their eligibility, since most children and adolescents who herald from marginalised communities continue to experience learning in severely constrained educational contexts (Spaull, 2019).

Whilst low quality education is a contributor to both unemployment levels and accessing further educational opportunities, it certainly is not the only aspect that matters where unemployment is concerned. Through a systematic literature review that focused on the intractability of youth unemployment in South Africa, De Lannoy et al. (2020) describe the multiple micro-level factors at play that influence young people's continued experience of unemployment. These include subjective factors such as available social capital, young people's aspirations, their perceptions of available opportunities, a lack of available information regarding the process of looking for and securing employment; and structural factors such as apartheid spatial planning, the costs of looking for work, and employer preferences and practices (De Lannoy et al., 2020).

Given this worrying situation, the solutions to these challenges are unsurprisingly framed from the perspective of preventing exclusion from education and work opportunities for

youth (Brooks & De Lannoy, 2021) as a way of contributing to the overall development of young people in South Africa.

1.3.3 The experience of waithood for young people in South Africa

Youth are positioned both as the villains and heroes in the South African narrative (Resnick & Thurlow, 2015). Consequently, post-apartheid South Africa has an ambivalent relationship with its young people, where historical discourses have constructed them as both our greatest hopes and our deepest fears (Makgetla & Graham, 2021). This ambivalence is evident in both analytic and discursive framings of the youth challenge and, importantly, the country's youth policy platform (De Lannoy & Langa, 2021). Referencing this ambivalence, youth scholars such as De Lannoy and Langa (2021) and Honwana (2012) describe young South Africans as finding themselves in a sort of twilight zone which has been referred to as "waithood". Honwana (2012) theorises the concept of waithood as a transitional period that comes into effect at the end of adolescence, when young people are left to struggle alone as they fight, and often fail, to attain the markers of adulthood. Waithood is "…representative of the contradictions of modernity" where opportunities have been both broadened and constrained by "technology", "globalisation", "unsound economic policies, epidemics and political repression", resulting in a marginalised experience of citizenship for youth (Honwana, 2012, pp. 4-5). During waithood, most young people are forced to deal predominantly with matters of survival in the present moment, which forecloses the possibilities for their futures (Honwana, 2012).

Although the challenges forcing an experience of waithood are understood largely from a structural perspective, Soudien (2012), in attempting to tease out how structure shapes the youth experience, asks: "…does this level of 'determinativeness' definitively point to a 'victory' of structure? …Where is the agency of young people in response to this?" (p. 230). Contrary to what might be expected, waithood is *not* a passive experience, with young people consistently demonstrating their personal agency by seeking out opportunities and aspiring to something different (Brooks & De Lannoy, 2021; De Lannoy et al., 2018). However, the identities and subjectivities of young people are argued as central for understanding how young people make choices within such constraint (Honwana, 2012). For

instance, young womxn can experience waithood, and the potential routes out of it, very differently from young men (Honwana, 2012). This could be related to the fact that a high proportion of households with young children are headed by young womxn (Honwana, 2012). Patriarchy and racism are also interwoven ideological processes in post-apartheid South Africa (Soudien et al., 2019). For instance, young womxn have been shown to be disproportionately affected by unemployment, postulated to be a consequence of both the discrimination of the labour market, and the patriarchal norms and gendered expectations associated with domestic activities in South Africa (De Lannoy et al., 2020). Budlender (2019) has illustrated that the care burden attributed to young womxn in the transition to adulthood appears as a key instigator of this situation. This puts black young womxn and gender non-conforming individuals at an increased risk of waithood. Brooks and De Lannoy (2021) emphasise that the structural contours of youth development in South Africa prolong an experience of waithood for young people and, therefore, "…become a predictor of their opportunities and life chances" (pp. 418-419). Consequently, it is important to understand the relationship between an experience of marginality and personal agency in situations of waithood (Honwana, 2012).

Despite the development and implementation of a series of national youth policies that attempt to provision opportunities for young people to mitigate against waithood, it would appear, based on the descriptions provided in section 1.3.2, that these strategies are not necessarily working effectively. In the next section, I unpack the discursive construction of the idea of opportunity within youth policy in post-apartheid South Africa. I argue that the failure of current solutions to address the challenges facing young people may be partly attributable to the ways in which South African youth policies have not fully appreciated the complexities associated with opportunities for young people, and how they might be created and used to contribute to their lives.

1.3.4 The discursive construction of opportunity in post-apartheid South African youth policy

In South Africa, post-apartheid youth policy consists of five different iterations: National Youth Policy 2000 released in 1997 [NYP 2000]; The National Youth Development Policy

Framework 2002-2007 [NYPF] released in 2002; National Youth Policy 2009-2014 [NYP 2009-2014] released in 2008; National Youth Policy 2020 [NYP 2020] released in 2015; and the National Youth Policy 2020-2030 [NYP 2030] released in 2020 (Makgetla & Graham, 2021, p. 98). Each policy presents a slightly different internal logic, but all share similar goals. The intention of these goals appears focused on attempting to realise the aspirations of the Rainbow Nation and include:

- building social cohesion;
- building young people's contribution to nation building through "patriotic citizenship";
- promoting "opportunities for youth to engage in the development of the country and community";
- promoting "an effective, integrated and coordinated approach to support the development of young people."

(Makgetla & Graham, 2021, p. 105)

Additional goals incorporated in the NYP 2009-2014 include:

- to "curb the marginalisation of youth";
- to "create a wider range of learning pathways"; and
- to "design and implement interventions that provide a range of opportunities for youth in need."

(Makgetla & Graham, 2021, p. 105)

A further goal in the NYP 2030 includes the need to "promote and advocate for young people's access to quality services to facilitate their transition into independence" (Makgetla & Graham, 2021, p. 105). Dominant strategic priorities across all policies are focused on "economic participation and empowerment, education and training and health" (Makgetla & Graham, 2021, p. 106). Whilst each policy outlines the critical context faced by youth in South Africa underlying the availability and use of opportunities, the proposed interventions do not appear to line up effectively with the complexities of this context. This was criticised in a review of the NYP 2020 (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015), but the focus and interventions proposed in the NYP 2030 were not altered in any substantial way.

A full review of South African youth policy is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, since opportunity is a central motif in this thesis, I explored the content of these policies to understand how it has been conceptualised within them in relation to youth development. This was informed both by a close reading of the various policy iterations (National Youth Commission, 1997, 2002; National Youth Development Agency, 2009; Republic of South Africa, 2021; The Presidency in the Government of South Africa, 2015), as well as various critiques of these policies (Budlender, 2019; Makgetla & Graham, 2021). Makgetla and Graham (2021) demonstrate that the discursive construction of the concept of youth within youth policy gives an indication of how the State might approach this population group and develop interventions to support their development. By corollary, the discursive construction of opportunity within these policies can also give us clues as to how opportunity might be provisioned and taken up by young people. This revealed the expectations of the State with respect to how opportunity *should* be used by young people in building their lives.

1.3.3.1 Neoliberal presumptions about opportunity

Although opportunity is not necessarily an overt concept within South African youth policies, the goals and strategic priorities of these policies demonstrate that the idea of opportunity is seemingly emblematic to them. From what I can infer, opportunities are conceptualised predominantly as a means of *preventing* the exclusion of youth, rather than facilitating their inclusion. This is because opportunities appear to be implicitly defined as things that young people 'should have' and appear to be consistently referred to as the end goals of education and employment. This line of thinking frames the youth challenge as being related almost exclusively to poor educational outcomes and unemployment. Whilst opportunities can be legitimate ends in themselves, where the social inclusion of young people is a desired goal, thinking about opportunities mostly as ends could limit the possibilities for this inclusion. For example, the NYP 2020 noted that often the particular interventions and programmes that young people take part in do not lead to the desired outcomes (The Presidency in the Government of South Africa, 2015). This results in a kind of 'revolving door syndrome' where countless opportunities are taken up without necessarily leading to anything.

In a critique of youth policy trajectory since 1994, Makgetla and Graham (2021) describe the various iterations of policy as tending towards a paternalistic tone. I also found that the language used in each policy suggests that young people are not taking responsibility for their situations, and proposed interventions are aimed at equipping them more effectively to do so. In other words, much of the language used in these policies proposes that opportunities are simply there for the taking, if young people choose to use them. This issues forth a judgement of young people as irresponsible, since opportunities are understood as being readily available for use. This is unsurprising, given the internal logic of the different youth policies. In the most recent iteration of the National Youth Policy there is a heavy emphasis placed on equipping young people to deliver on what is referred to as their demographic dividend (Republic of South Africa, 2021). Consequently, national youth policy appears to reduce young people to the machinery responsible for programmatic ends, mostly as part of using the opportunities that are provisioned through economic interventions (Makgetla & Graham, 2021). For example, the NYP 2030 describes young people as 'national assets' who can be empowered to cope with shocks, by taking advantage of opportunities (Republic of South Africa, 2021). This appears to be the product of a neoliberalising discourse that seeks to produce young people that can meet the country's demands by becoming more resilient and applying their agency in productive ways.

Following from this, the proposed interventions in policy are constructed with respect to making young people eligible for the opportunities that already exist. These include providing information and knowledge and building appropriate skills. NYP 2030 emphasises the need to ensure this eligibility, but simultaneously reconstitutes the idea of eligibility in terms of 'deservingness' (Republic of South Africa, 2021). In other words, young people are deserving of an opportunity only if they already demonstrate their eligibility to use it by either having the necessary academic skills, or other talents, or showing success in terms of school performance. The inferred message is that working hard or having/acquiring skills automatically makes it possible for 'deserving' young people to use potential educational and work opportunities to build their lives.

1.3.3.2 The heterogeneity of young people complicating how opportunity is positioned as a means for youth development

I found that the priorities in the various iterations of the national youth policy intended to guarantee appropriate opportunities for youth to realise their demographic dividend did not explicitly take account of young people's heterogeneity. For instance, there is only cursory attention given to the different age bands that exist within the period of 15-34 years (Makgetla & Graham, 2021) and only some recognition of the historical disadvantage experienced by black, working-class young people. Further, Budlender (2019) has analysed the significant changes that exist with respect to the care burden in the transition to adulthood. She shows that the national youth policy available at the time of her analysis (NYP 2020) appeared to have a blindness to gender-related issues, indicated by its limited reference to "…the gendered roles of young womxn and men, and how these roles increase over the course of this period" but without "…mention of the situation of young people – whether male or female – after children are born" (Budlender, 2019, pp. 17-18). Budlender's (2019) analysis reveals that young womxn may carry the bulk of this labour, which is unrecognised in discourses of productivity. The provision of appropriate contributions to youth development is therefore complicated by the fact that youth are essentially treated as a homogenous group when they are not (De Lannoy & Langa, 2021). If the heterogeneity of youth is poorly considered in national youth policy, then the heterogeneity that may be required in terms of making opportunities available for *different* young people may also not be well considered.

1.3.3.3 Limited understanding of the negotiation of opportunity within young people's lives

Overall, there did not appear to be attention paid to how young people might engage with opportunities towards the kinds of ends that could build their lives. This tension arises from conceptualising opportunity, itself, as an end, without a view to how this might be situated to contribute towards social inclusion, and is an indication of neoliberal presumptions of youth policy prioritising broader development and economic needs from a top-down perspective. Young people's ideas, values, and desires with respect to the opportunities that

would make sense to them does not appear to be considered. Consequently, national youth policy seems to 'disconnect' opportunities from young people's lives. Therefore, while poverty and inequality have continued to grow in democratic South Africa, without signs of reprieve, the various national youth policies do not seem to have made the intended difference. The forerunning iteration of youth policy was criticised for its lack of specificity regarding interventions that can effectively promote youth development (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015). This should be enough for us to pause and consider: what might we take better account of in the issues facing our youth, and how should we think about opportunity, and its negotiation, in relation to this?

1.5 Summary of the presenting problem

Brooks and De Lannoy (2021) bring their anthology *Youth in South Africa* to a close by making the argument that "…interventions to assist young people in South Africa and to facilitate their exit from waithood must understand youth in context and must be linked to their structural and social environments and to wider social settings" (p. 419). Although education and employment are undeniably important as opportunities within capitalist societies, broadening our view beyond these aspects is important as we consider how to contribute more effectively to building young peoples' futures in the South Africa they have inherited. This means that we must develop an understanding of what will allow young people to live *freely,* as opposed to focusing only on what keeps them in situations of structural exclusion. Whilst these are often conflated, they are not the same thing. However, without a more intricate knowledge of how exactly young people's agency correlates with structure, or how opportunity is negotiated effectively towards building different lives for young people, this goal will remain an unattainable aspiration, just like the fallacy of the Rainbow Nation.

Youth scholars have emphasised that the role of agency in shifting the social realities faced by young people in South Africa is poorly understood (De Lannoy et al., 2015) and more substantial insights about the interrelationships between agency and structural constraints is crucial for opening new possibilities for youth (De Lannoy et al., 2015). Clearly, multiple

facets and aspects must work in correlation with the opportunities associated with building lives to contribute to social inclusion, otherwise the strategies at our disposal would have already made a difference. Youth policy responses are also not specific enough to cater for different young people's potentially different needs. This means that certain young people, such as young womxn, for instance, who can experience waithood differently (Honwana, 2012), would not necessarily have their needs met through current national youth policy responses.

The limited knowledge about the relationship between agency and structure – and as I have demonstrated above, opportunity – therefore poses a serious problem for policy makers and other professionals working in youth development (De Lannoy et al., 2015). Further, the analysis of the problem as presented in this chapter highlights the concept of occupation, through which agency, structure and opportunity can manifest simultaneously as part of a coherent interchange/transaction (Cutchin et al., 2008). Therefore, occupational therapists who wish to contribute to a critical occupational therapy practice are well-situated to consider how the development of disciplinary knowledge can be orchestrated to understand the complex interrelationships between agency, structure and opportunity. It is with the totality and complexity of this problem in mind that I developed the research question, aim and objectives for this doctoral study, which are provided in Section 1.6.

1.6 Research Question, Aim and Objectives

1.6.1 Research Question

How do young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards experiences of social inclusion, through opportunities, in post-apartheid South Africa?

1.6.2 Research Aim

To use a critical perspective to describe and explain the processes of moving towards social inclusion, through opportunities, for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.6.3 Research Objectives

1) To describe the patterns of occupation that support social inclusion for these young womxn.
2) To explain how patterns of occupation that support social inclusion emerge within these young womxns' lives.
3) To describe how opportunities are provided, created, used, and negotiated, relative to occupational engagement, over the course of these young womxns' lives.
4) To explain the potential influence of the constitution of opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa on the social inclusion of these young womxn.

1.7 Research Purpose

Understanding the ways in which young womxn from and in marginalising contexts have moved towards experiences of social inclusion, through opportunities (the phenomenon in this study) makes it possible to contribute to disciplinary understanding regarding the relationship between agency, structure, opportunity and occupation. This can contribute to developing new insights for enabling occupational justice – delineated as an important aspect for a critical occupational therapy practice (Hammell, 2017) and socially transformative occupational science (Farias et al., 2016). The complexity of South Africa, with its history and ongoing struggles for decolonisation, provides an important context for the situation of the study. This is because it opens the possibilities to consider different responses to the problems of young people in the developing world, where the majority of the global population lives.

The study is also positioned to offer insights for the youth development sector, given the challenges for young people that have been outlined, and the limited knowledge about how young womxn's agency is operationalised in relation to opportunity in situations of structural constraint. Exploring how this has occurred for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts holds the potential for uncovering new and different solutions to the problems of exclusion that have been highlighted throughout this chapter, and is important for ensuring that future investments in youth development can strategically deliver on what they

promise. This may assist with mitigating against spending large amounts of money on structural interventions that fail to have the desired effect in definitively curbing social exclusion (Whiteford, 2003).

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to describe the background and contribution of this study in providing necessary knowledge to open new possibilities for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts to build different lives, mitigating an experience of waithood and promoting their social inclusion. In the next chapter, I outline the position of occupational science and occupational therapy concerning the phenomenon that was explored in this thesis and, in doing so, I describe how the study will contribute to our disciplinary knowledge base.

Chapter 2

Understanding the negotiation of opportunity towards social inclusion

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents key literature that has framed how opportunity is understood in relation to social inclusion and occupational justice within occupational science. I focused my exploration of relevant concepts and knowledge within occupational science because the discipline theorises human occupation in context, without having to link knowledge generation efforts directly to occupational therapy practice. Whilst part of the purpose of this study is to contribute towards understanding how to practice a critical occupational therapy with young womxn in South Africa to facilitate their social inclusion, the research question does not seek an end point in practice.

At the inception of this study, there were no known studies in the discipline that focused on this phenomenon – *how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards experiences of social inclusion, through opportunity* – as a concerted whole. This resulted in my decision to extrapolate what is known by using the concept of opportunity, as it relates to social transformation, as an important reference point. I led the execution of a scoping review that focused on how opportunity had been theorised within occupational science (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). This provided important insights about the facets that may be at play in the phenomenon being explored and the findings of this review therefore provided a lynchpin for this chapter. This directed my consideration of further disciplinary scholarship that might add to what is known about the phenomenon and its elements.

Whilst I remain close to disciplinary understandings, I also draw on empirical studies from different disciplines towards the end of the chapter to focus more specifically on young people and articulate further initial insights about the phenomenon. I conclude the chapter by emphasising the scholarly space that I will inhabit in this thesis, as a move towards filling

the knowledge gaps concerning how opportunity is negotiated towards social inclusion in young womxn's lives, where high poverty and inequality are the reality.

2.2 A scoping review exploring "opportunity" in occupational science

The scoping review I referred to in Section 2.1 focused on how opportunity had been conceptualised within occupational science at that point in time (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). This was a co-authored review, but in this chapter I will share my perspectives as the lead author. The review focused on work within the discipline of occupational science because I was interested, specifically, in how opportunity had been theorised in relation to human occupation. Notwithstanding, the exploration of relevant literature was extended across occupational therapy texts, since discussions about human occupation may be located within occupational therapy sources, given the interrelated development of these disciplines (Frank, 2012). The review question was "How has the concept of opportunity been theorised within available occupational science literature with respect to social transformation?"; and its intent was "…to enable us to explore, document, and interpret any current or emergent insights about opportunity within occupational science, whilst simultaneously discerning how such knowledge might relate to issues of transformation" (Peters & Galvaan, 2021, p. 251). To appropriately select texts that would enable the development of an answer to the review question, a set of criteria guided the selection process. These criteria were:

1) Texts that theorised "opportunity(ies), occupational opportunity(ies) or capabilities[5] as distinct theoretical concepts"; or
2) Texts that theorised "frameworks, models or ideas related directly to the concepts in the first criterion"; or
3) Any text that "puts forward provisionally related elements or components of the concepts in the first criterion and theorises these elements or components" (Peters & Galvaan, 2021, p. 254).

[5] Capabilities were intentionally included because of experiential knowledge of how this term was being used and taken up withing occupational science as aligned with the concept of opportunity(ies) (Galvaan & Peters, 2021).

2.2.1 Description of the findings of the scoping review

Three themes emerged as part of the interpretive synthesis that generated the findings of the scoping review (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). The first two themes described how the notion of opportunity appeared to be formulated within occupational science literature ["Opportunity conceptualised as synonymous with capabilities" (Peters & Galvaan, 2021, p. 258) and "Occupational opportunity conceptualised as an opportunity to participate" (Peters & Galvaan, 2021, p. 260)], whereas the third theme focused on the way in which opportunity had been implicitly theorised in relation to social transformation ["Implicit theorisation of opportunity couched within social transformation" (Peters & Galvaan, 2021, p. 261)].

With respect to how opportunity might be understood as a concept, there was an indication that opportunities are often viewed as being synonymous with capabilities and that occupational opportunities appeared almost simply as option(s) to participate, with access to equal occupational rights purported as securing equal occupational opportunities (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). In a response to the scoping review, Pereira (2021) raised that capabilities are much more complex than the way they had been articulated in the review findings. I concur with this view that, indeed, capabilities are not synonymous with opportunities, but at the time the review was reporting on an apparent view within the occupational science literature on the topic. The description of capabilities as being synonymous with opportunities was limited. It is important to more fully grasp how capabilities and opportunities align with one another in discussions about inclusion and justice and this will be the focus of Section 2.2.2.1 below.

Further, it was unclear as to why certain authors used the term occupational opportunity, as opposed to opportunity (Peters & Galvaan, 2021) within the papers included in the review, as none provided an indication as to how occupational opportunities were distinct from opportunities. Seemingly, occupational opportunities were simply options for participation (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). This revealed the lack of conceptual clarity with respect to occupational opportunities, and Pereira (2021) agreed in his response to the review that this was something that required further attention. For the purposes of this chapter, then, I

consider the authors referenced in the scoping review (Hammell, 2016, 2017; Pereira, 2017; Peters et al., 2016; Rivas-Quarneti et al., 2018; Stadnyk et al., 2010; Sterman et al., 2019; Sterman et al., 2018; Townsend, 2012; Whiteford, 2003; Whiteford & Pereira, 2012; Wilcock & Hocking, 2015) to be referring to the concept of opportunity more generally, whether they used the term opportunity/opportunities or occupational opportunity/opportunities, since they made no theoretical distinction between these.

As evidenced through the third theme in the scoping review findings, the relationship between opportunity and social transformation was not explicitly theorised in the papers included (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). Rather, papers in the review focused on social transformation (including related ideas about social inclusion and occupational justice) and positioned opportunity as a core part of this theorisation (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). Overall, opportunity was described as a precursor for/contributor to occupational justice and social inclusion, and both opportunities and capabilities were recognised as being needed to realise these. As signalled in the review, this understanding demonstrated "…the potential complexity that exists in the relationship between opportunity and other concepts and provides a starting point for exploring these relationships further" (Peters & Galvaan, 2021, p. 261).

Since this theorisation was revealed as implicit (Peters & Galvaan, 2021), I recognised that the phenomenon being explored in this study – which focuses on the negotiation of opportunity towards social inclusion for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts – had not been explicitly theorised prior. However, the review signalled the potentially important concepts and relationships that were part of this phenomenon (Peters & Galvan, 2021). I therefore evaluated which concepts and relationships had been represented in the review findings and in the theoretical response to it (Pereira, 2021) in order to discern what might already be known about these.

2.2.2 Concepts that support an understanding of the negotiation of opportunity towards social inclusion

Social inclusion is a contested concept, with scholars recognising the complexity in defining what is actually meant by it (Riffi Acharki & Spaaij, 2021). Work in the discipline on understanding what social inclusion entails has recognised the concept as a political construct, aligning ideas about social inclusion with "…notions of human flourishing" (Pereira & Whiteford, 2022, p. 1703). This is in line with the view of a higher level of social inclusion, which transcends social assimilation and focuses on social justice and the achievement of human potential (Gidley et al., 2010). Notwithstanding, the idea of social inclusion can be problematic, in that it does not necessarily result in a change in the dynamics that lead to the oppression of certain societal groups. In other words, including individuals or groups who are excluded into the systems and structures that are designed to marginalise them can, inadvertently, promote assimilation into these systems, rather than resisting or changing them. As such, further disciplinary work is required to examine these problematic aspects of social inclusion, but this is beyond the focus of this thesis. Considering this acknowledgement, however, it is important to treat all contributions or proposals towards thinking about social inclusion with a healthy degree of scepticism, examining the ways in which they might promote social assimilation. To do so requires us to hold in view the relationship between social inclusion and social transformation, whilst examining how opportunity is related to social inclusion.

Since the Capability Approach has been forefronted as important in considerations of social and occupational justice (Bailliard, 2016; Bailliard et al., 2020; Drolet et al., 2020; Hammell, 2015b), understanding how opportunities are *converted* to reach towards social inclusion and realise just outcomes is important (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). That is, the process of the negotiation of opportunities is brought to the fore by focusing on this conversion process. In the sub-sections that follow, I review how these concepts, and their relationships, have been understood in the discipline drawing, where necessary, on the body of work offered by the Capability Approach.

2.2.2.1 Capability and opportunity

Capability/capabilities is a concept that arose from the work of development economist Amartya Sen and political philosopher Martha Nussbaum as a way of finding a more holistic way of to evaluate Human Development and its outcomes (Robeyns, 2003). This offered a critical departure from the solely economic means that had previously been used to measure human development (Nussbaum, 2011). Robeyns (2003) indicates that the core concepts in the Capability Approach include capabilities and functionings that are related but also distinct. A functioning "…is an achievement…" while capabilities "…are notions of freedom in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead" (Sen, 1987, p. 36). In this school of thought, capabilities are therefore more aligned with the notion of possibilities, where a person's capability, as a whole, is a consequence of a 'set' of freedom(s) to direct their lives in one way or another (Sen, 1995). In Pereira's (2021) response to the scoping review he provided some further clarity on the distinction between capabilities and opportunities (Aldrich, 2021), as a contribution towards demarcating these concepts as distinct within occupational science. Pereira (2021) indicated that "…key elements of capabilities… involve the following: (1) opportunities, (2) freedoms, (3) living a life that one has reason to value, and (4) linking capabilities with occupation as an outcome of having capabilities, expressed through 'being able to do and be'" (p. 270) [referred to in the Capability Approach as functionings]. This line of reasoning demonstrates how capabilities are much broader than opportunities and is supported by definitions of key concepts within the Capability Approach. Correctly then, Pereira and colleagues indicate that both capabilities and opportunities are worthy of attention in scholarship focused on social inclusion within occupational science (Pereira et al., 2020).

The concept of opportunity could be understood as couched within the notion of capability, which is referred to "…more as a positive notion of overall freedom" (Robeyns, 2003, p. 13). Robeyns (2003) indicates that "…It could be useful to pay attention to the different ways in which the word 'capability' has been used in the theoretical literature. In Sen's original terminology, a person has only one capability (or capability set), which consists of a combination of possible or reachable functionings… A person's capability is best thought to be the equivalent of a person's opportunity set…" (p. 15). Robeyns (2003) goes on to

describe that some scholars drawing on this original terminology often use the plural form of capability/capabilities. This "more straightforward and less technical" way of understanding capability departs from Sen's original articulation (Robeyns, 2003, p. 15) and may explain the often-synonymous use of capabilities and opportunities in occupational science. This could have had the effect of muddying the waters concerning the clear theorisation of these different, but aligned, concepts within the discipline.

Pereira's (2017) position that capabilities and opportunities are distinct originates within scholarship informing the development of an inclusive occupational therapy practice, named the Capabilities Opportunities Resources and Environments (CORE) approach. In the CORE approach, capabilities, opportunities, and resources exist in a nexus with one another and are grounded within particular environments (Pereira, 2017). The CORE approach has been more fully explicated in more recent publications (Pereira et al., 2020; Pereira & Whiteford, 2022) where there has been an attempt to make the distinction between capabilities and opportunities clearer. According to Pereira and Whiteford (2022) "…opportunities occur when options and choices for equitable and dignified participation in occupation are offered, accessed, discovered, or made available, resulting in freedoms being exercised together with opportunities for empowerment, control, and capacity building" (p. 1709). Opportunities, therefore, have the potential to contribute to a person's choice and control in living a particular life, and are therefore central attributes of a capability set that could promote social inclusion and occupational justice (Pereira & Whiteford, 2022).

The discussion of the findings in the scoping review raised the potential to consider different opportunities within a typology (Peters & Galvaan, 2021) as a potential way to represent the different 'kinds' of opportunities that might result in change in different contexts. Capabilities, too, are reflected in the Capability Approach as different 'kinds' to articulate how they may coalesce to contribute towards different functionings. Nussbaum (2011) frames these different capabilities as internal capabilities and combined and intersecting capabilities. Similarly, I imagined that the different kinds of opportunities in this typology would not be internal to individuals but would function as part of combined capabilities to contribute to relevant functionings. This is because types of opportunities would always relate to individuals in different ways, dependent on both their internal capabilities and

social positioning. As Alvarez (2009) indicates: "…having an opportunity, as normally understood in terms of justice and equality, implies there exists a social context of human relations and that the accomplishment of some goals is socially conditioned" (p. 548). This signals that demarcating different types of opportunities would not be able to, on their own, tell us much about how they are translated within the contexts of everyday lives. In line with this sentiment, the Capability Approach draws attention to the conversion factors that are responsible for converting a set of vectors (the means and freedoms to achieve certain outcomes) into realised functionings (Robeyns, 2003, 2005b).

2.2.2.2 Processes of conversion

Dréze and Sen (2002) indicate that "…the crucial role of social opportunities is to expand the realm of human agency and freedom, both as an end in itself and as a means to further expansion of freedom…" (p. 6). These authors suggest that "individuals and their opportunities" cannot be viewed "in isolated terms" because "the options a person has depend greatly on relations with others and on what the state and other institutions do" (Dréze & Sen, 2002, p. 6). The way in which opportunities are understood through this quote signals their relationship with agency and structure and demonstrates the reciprocal and potentially complex relationship that exists between these concepts in the realisation of potential functionings. For instance, in an earlier text, Whiteford and Pereira (2012) indicated that "…broader environments and contexts facilitate or provide opportunities" but that opportunities also simultaneously "…enable individuals to use their capabilities and resources to participate as they choose" (p. 194). This generates a view of the negotiation of opportunity as a process-oriented phenomenon, through which social inclusion may be experienced. Since the Capability Approach has occupied an evaluative space in discourses of human development (Robeyns, 2005a) it has focused mostly on articulating the concepts that would have an impact on the processes of converting capability into functionings, rather than on the processes themselves. I turn, next, to these concepts.

2.2.2.2.1 Conversion factors: Personal, social and environmental factors

Conversion factors include personal, social, and environmental factors (Robeyns, 2005b). This resonates with the idea of 'resources' and 'environments' in the CORE approach which, in a nexus with opportunity, can influence the realisation of social inclusion (Pereira, 2017; Pereira et al., 2020; Pereira & Whiteford, 2022). In the CORE approach, resources refer to both personal (emotional, spiritual, physical) and environmental (social, physical, cultural) aspects (Pereira, 2017). The scoping review findings illustrated that both capabilities/opportunities and resources can be impacted by the mechanisms associated with global and local governance (Peters & Galvaan, 2021) because these shape how and where participation in occupations can occur (Whiteford, 2003). This directly impacts how capabilities might be enabled (Pereira & Whiteford, 2022) within processes of conversion.

Sociopolitical histories appear to complexify how the processes of converting capability into beneficial outcomes occurs. The Capability Approach calls attention to such by indicating that "…functionings can also differ over individuals. Some of these differences will be individual, while others will be structural differences in society, related to gender, class, race, caste, and so on…" (Robeyns, 2003, p. 18). These "…group-dependent constraints (eg: prejudices, social norms, habits, traditions) can affect the conversion of commodities into functionings" (Robeyns, 2003, p. 18). Whilst the CORE approach does call attention to the entrenched disadvantage (Pereira & Whiteford, 2022) that complexifies the processes of conversion, it does not articulate how the negotiation of opportunities occurs in enabling capabilities to realise an experience of social inclusion.

2.2.2.2.2 Freedom, agency, choice and autonomy in processes of conversion

Agency and freedom are central points of focus in processes of conversion (Garcés, 2020), as is (constrained) choice (Robeyns, 2003). Choices between different options are seen as an important aspect of freedom in the Capability Approach, and how such choices are made – through agency – becomes an important area of concern (Robeyns, 2003). Whilst rational choice theory has often enjoyed primacy in economic discussions, and extended its reach to the social sciences, it has been shown as insufficient for understanding processes of

conversion within the Capability Approach (Garcés, 2020). Primarily because agency entails notions of both subjectivity and objectivity (Archer & Tritter, 2001), the Capability Approach forefronts a situated and reasoning 'agent', that operates reflexively, rather than rationally (Garcés, 2020). The autonomy to choose is therefore underscored structurally (Garcés, 2020). This understanding shares a resonance with theory in occupational science where Galvaan (2015) has eloquently demonstrated that choice cannot be rational. Instead, occupational choice is framed as inhabiting a space that is orchestrated through historical, social, and economic facets, rather than the simple act of an individual's rational decision-making processes. Other authors have followed suit, demonstrating that occupational choices are indeed governed through system-related devices (Murthi & Whalley Hammell, 2021). Galvaan's (2015) empirical work demonstrates that because occupational choice is contextually embedded it has a dual character, where agency and structure are intricately intertwined and iteratively influence one another. This is reflective of the iteration expressed in processes of conversion in the Capability Approach, where achieved functionings, and other aspects involved, feed back into processes of conversion, such that they influence reasoning, motivation, autonomy, and choice in complex ways (Garcés, 2020).

Conceptions of autonomy also appear within occupational justice theory, but are mostly underdeveloped (Durocher, Rappolt, et al., 2014). These conceptions have largely focused on Western, neoliberal, and decontextualised interpretations of the concept, where a rational agent calculates their decisions towards individual gains/ends (Durocher, Rappolt, et al. 2014). Alternative interpretations of autonomy have not been considered in depth (Durocher, Rappolt, et al. 2014). This seems at odds with engaging the Capabilities Approach in theorising occupational justice, since *how* trajectories of beings and doings come about is a matter of justice, particularly considering the concepts related to conversion that have been outlined so far in this section. Durocher, Rappolt, et al. (2014) suggest that taking a relational view of autonomy would better serve our thinking about how to enable occupational justice. A relational view of autonomy considers individuals as embedded within complex sociopolitical contexts which have a profound impact on how their agency can be exercised and is indicative of the role that social position can play in governing autonomy (Durocher, Rappolt, et al., 2014). Certainly, both Sen and Nussbaum, in theorising the Capability Approach, call attention to such through their careful deliberations of gender

equality and the need to consider this in processes of conversion (Nussbaum, 2011). This was brought to life in one of the papers included in the scoping review which shed light on how agency might be demonstrated in complex social settings (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). Rivas-Quarnetti and colleagues' (2018) work focused on immigrant womxn's occupational struggles in Spain, as they attempted to navigate life in a new context where their marginalising race, class and gender positions played a significant role. This study demonstrated that immigrant womxn struggled against the status quo, resisting it, whilst simultaneously creating opportunities for their participation on the margins (Rivas-Quarnetti et al., 2018). This study expands the notion of how autonomy and choice may play out in restrictive circumstances. These womxn were able to reassert their agency, although they were not able to markedly shift the status quo (Rivas-Quarnetti et al., 2018). Nonetheless, their capacity to do this contributed to how they were able to navigate contextually-embedded occupational struggles and recraft their experience of everyday life.

Whilst disciplinary knowledge is limited within the field of study, the idea of the reasoning, reflexive and relational agent was made apparent in other papers in the scoping review that articulated the role that agency played in relation to the conversion of opportunity towards different functionings (Peters& Galvaan, 2021). This agency was embedded within social relationships and social capital was an important aspect of these (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). Social networks and their configurations shaped the ways in which agency might be demonstrated in relation to available opportunities in creative ways (Peters et al., 2016; Rivas-Quarneti et al., 2018; Sterman et al., 2019). How agency played out here was often unexpected, illustrating that comprehending the reasoning, reflexive and relational agent in processes of conversion is a difficult-to-apprehend variable.

2.2.3 Enabling occupational justice through processes of conversion: Occupational rights as a key discourse

The scoping review findings highlighted that the kind of social inclusion that must be operationalised through enabling occupational justice should be capable of resolving capability failure and occupational deprivation (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). This parallels thinking in the Capability Approach where fertile functionings contribute to generating

further capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011). This scoping review finding was drawn largely from two texts on occupational justice (Peters& Galvaan, 2021) which had specifically forefronted the conceptions of opportunity in occupational justice discourse (Stadnyk et al., 2010; Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). In other texts, occupational justice has been positioned as a rights-based conception of justice that assumes that, should people have access to delineated occupational rights, there would be an experience of occupational justice for all (Hammell, 2008, 2015a, 2015b; Hammell & Beagan, 2017). But this is not necessarily so, particularly when accounting for the conversion processes related to enabling capability and that capability failure does, indeed, exist. Both Sen and Nussbaum have articulated the capability failure that is often the consequence of poverty and differential social positioning and that fundamentally shapes how basic entitlements can be taken up (Nussbaum, 2011). Therefore, although rights discourses are well-intended, they don't always take into consideration the drastically unequal world in which they take effect and thus might be limited in their contributions to justice. For instance, in an older paper, Mutua (1997) utilised the situation in post-apartheid South Africa – where we have one of the most progressive constitutions (Francis & Webster, 2019) – to describe how fair rights for all, in an already unequal situation, will not necessarily result in equal outcomes. He describes how black people who were disenfranchised and oppressed during apartheid were not necessarily able to take their rightful place as citizens through the implementation of their constitutional rights at the dawn of the post-apartheid era (Mutua, 1997). Instead, rights discourses have predominantly protected the interests of the privileged white minority (Mutua, 1997). In an unequal situation, there will be conflicting interests for different groups (Mutua, 1997).

Mutua (1997, p. 113) quotes Karl Klare to illustrate: "Rights discourse does not and probably cannot provide us with the criteria for deciding between conflicting claims of right. In order to resolve rights conflicts, it is necessary to step outside the discourse. One must appeal to more concrete and therefore controversial analyses of the relevant social and institutional contexts than rights discourse offers; and one must develop and elaborate conceptions of and intuitions about human freedom and self-determination by reference to which one seeks to assess rights claims and resolve rights conflicts". Whilst Mutua's argument was framed at a very early stage of our new democracy in South Africa, there is little to suggest that much has changed. Soudien et al. (2019) indicate that poverty and inequality remain

intractable problems for the large majority of black South Africans and inequality has a pervasive character. This should make it clear that rights-based discourses alone are not enough. Knowing how opportunities and freedoms are turned into capability is critical in a situation where inequality prevails and many of the same basic entitlements are 'technically' provided to all.

The association of occupational justice with occupational rights has become almost embedded in work on the concept in the discipline (Durocher, Rappolt, et al., 2014). However, the focus on rights appears to be applied somewhat uncritically "…on the enablement of occupations selected by individuals, without considering whether or not participation in these occupations is in the best interests or the public good" (Durocher, Rappolt, et al., 2014, p. 432). The problem with this uncritical application is raised again more recently by Drolet et al. (2020) through their proposition for an intergenerational occupational justice that considers both current population health and well-being, and that of future generations. The occupational right "to exert individual or population autonomy through choice in occupations" (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004, p. 80) therefore requires a nuanced interpretation in relation to justice-based thinking and its relationship to both enabling capabilities and mitigating against capability failure.

2.2.3.1 Recognition as precursor in processes of conversion

As an offering towards deepening our disciplinary discourse about processes of conversion and their relationship to occupational justice, Pereira (2021) draws on the work of Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition (Honneth, 1992, 1995, 2001) as a potentially important reference point. Pereira (2021) proposes that the Theory of Recognition provides a way to move "…beyond basic and equitable entitlements for meaningful participation and social inclusion" because it recognises that "…a human rights agenda may potentially limit what it means to be recognised as a person" (p. 271). Honneth's work, instead, values the concept of equal recognition "across interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels" as a precursor "to being given, or being able, or being worthy of, exploring opportunities to do and be" (Pereira, 2021, p. 271). Whilst this offering contributes towards beginning to flesh out the

potential “intrinsic and interpersonal” preludes to conversion (Pereira, 2021, p. 271), it has yet to be taken further within occupational science.

2.3 Disciplinary conceptualisation as a point of departure

This chapter has so far presented a review of relevant concepts related to understanding how opportunity is negotiated towards social inclusion, directed by the critical analysis undertaken in the scoping review described in section 2.2. At this point, it would be remiss of me to fail to comment on my own limitation in that I could only include literature published in English in this review of disciplinary knowledge. The failure to seek to comprehend and translate ideas available in other languages seems a consequence of epistemic injustice in the discipline where ideas published in English and in Euro-American centered publications are prioritised above others. It remains quite possible, and likely, that ideas published in other languages might have offered further critical theoretical perspectives to understand how opportunity is converted in processes that aim towards social inclusion. I acknowledge this failure as a contributor to the discipline’s advances in this area and believe that, what we have available to us as ideas in the English language, have only taken us so far. In doing this I do not seek to undermine the significance of these advances in articulating knowledge about opportunity and its relationship to social inclusion. However, what is currently known is only capable of alerting us to the concepts that might be important in such processes, without making it possible to fully explain the conversion of freedoms and opportunities into just outcomes for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts. As disciplinary understanding continues to mature, empirical work must focus on further articulating these processes. I agree with Pereira and Whiteford (2022) that applying a critical occupational therapy approach is urgent and this is therefore a current gap in our disciplinary knowledge base in English. It is necessary to know much more about these processes to more effectively understand how to enable them, and a keen analysis of the relational complexities of these concepts would be important. Understanding how opportunities are negotiated towards an experience of social inclusion has therefore been represented as an important theoretical endeavour throughout this chapter.

Further, although some empirical studies have been drawn on, the majority of disciplinary contributions have been theoretical. Next, I consider: what might be known about the processes of negotiating opportunities from the perspective of other relevant disciplines? And how might this knowledge enable the piecing together of the complexity of the processes of converting opportunity into beneficial and just ends for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts? In attempting to respond to these questions, I take the discussion back to youth in the last part of this chapter, since occupational science has not focused on this issue in relation to young people specifically.

2.4 Studies from other disciplines

A full review of all studies that illuminate the factors associated with promoting the social inclusion of young womxn was beyond the scope of this chapter. In this section I therefore focus on studies in other disciplines that could further develop the insights about the relationship between opportunities and the facets in the conversion process that have already been introduced above.

A broad search that focused on opportunity, youth and social inclusion revealed a range of papers, with only some that were relevant for further explaining aspects of the motif I was exploring (for the parameters of the search see Appendix A). Whilst this doctoral work focused specifically on young womxn, I intentionally kept my search terms broad, focusing on all youth in the process of searching for helpful studies to ensure I had a good chance of sourcing appropriate literature. However, in selecting papers that could assist me with developing the necessary knowledge to support the development of this study, I ignored papers focused only on men. Instead, for papers that referred to young people more broadly I tried to ascertain how the insights presented would be helpful to understand the issues for young womxn. The broader country contexts of different studies were varied and not all of them had a predominant experience of poverty and inequality (as is the case in South Africa). However, I focused my attention on whether the study targeted individuals' or groups' experiences of marginality as a way of discerning their utility for my understanding of the phenomenon in this study.

Papers that were initially selected at the outset spoke to three broad categories of youth:

1) Young people in different geographical contexts who experienced marginalisation as a consequence of both the complexities of navigating the transition to adulthood and various aspects of their social identities (Dreher et al., 2013; Flynn & Sumberg, 2018; Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010; Issahaku & Adam, 2022; MacDonald et al., 2005; Morgan et al., 2020; Thomson et al., 2002; Zembe et al., 2013);
2) Young people who were youth offenders (Barry, 2010); and
3) Young people who were immigrants (Canizales, 2023; Correa-Velez et al., 2010; Gladwell, 2021; Mansouri & Jamal Al-deen, 2023; Zaami, 2015).

After some consideration, I strategically selected the studies from the first category that may be able to shed light on specific attributes related to the conversion process. This was because I reasoned that empirical work related to immigrants and youth offenders diverged from the potential experiences of a broader pool of young people who found themselves within marginalising contexts as in the focus of this study.

Whilst none of the studies provided a full perspective of the conversion process, those deemed relevant highlighted some of the factors that appeared pertinent for considering why and how some young people are, or are not, able to generate or take advantage of opportunities that would allow them to experience social inclusion. This provided a further window into the conversion process. The findings from selected studies focused mostly on forms of capital and personal agency, which had only been addressed in cursory ways in the theoretical work in occupational science.

2.4.1 Different forms of capital shaping the negotiation of opportunities

Different forms of capital were critical in contributing to young people's relationship with and navigation of opportunities across a diversity of contexts. A qualitative anthropological study in Durham in the United Kingdom (Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010) illustrated that the kinds of capital that young people from disadvantaged contexts possess can influence how they interpret opportunities and take them up. Hampshire and Matthijsse (2010) focused on

exploring the impact of a community arts project for young people, intended to build their social capital. It found that few children made use of the opportunity provided. In their analysis, the researchers found that the opportunity unknowingly privileged children with particular cultural and economic capital, catering for those with specific dispositions and competencies that were the products of the stratified society they lived in (Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010). The opportunity provided through the programme thus became redundant for many whom it intended to reach (Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010).

Whilst different kinds of capital are relevant in different situations, social capital was shown to be a key contributor to social inclusion in other studies and operated in complex ways. Two further United Kingdom studies illustrated the different facets of social capital and their interface with the utilisation and impact of certain opportunities for young people. The first, earlier study (MacDonald et al., 2005) found that while youth who grow up poor in the United Kingdom find themselves socially excluded in the broader economic and social context, they feel socially included in their own communities because of the inherent bonding social capital available. This encouraged them to build their life trajectories within places that often deny them access to the bridging/linking social capital required to be included within the broader social system (MacDonald et al., 2005). The second study focused on the ways in which social capital may be enhanced (Morgan et al., 2020), exploring what was referred to as the "diversionary activity-social capital nexus" (p. 328). In this study, Morgan et al. (2020) focused on a community-based sports and arts-based intervention programme in the United Kingdom which aimed to work with youth at risk of exclusion. The programme focused on developing participants' bridging and linking social capital reserves by "broadening their relational networks" and argued that relationships that were safe and accepting played a role as a "'building block' for social inclusion" (Morgan et al., 2020, p. 329). Using a qualitative approach to engage multiple perspectives from all stakeholders involved, the researchers used real-time observations, and individual and focus group interviews, as data collection methods. The data was analysed using a grounded-theory approach and revealed two themes: 1) "recognition and acceptance as a foundation for social inclusion" and 2) "accumulating (social) capital and acquiring employment" (Morgan et al., 2020, p. 334). Programme staff placed emphasis on informal structures of recognition first, which later allowed participants to respond to the more formally

recognised aspects of social inclusion. This recognition and acceptance thus created a platform through which human and social capital could accrue to support pathways into employment, more formally recognised as legitimate expressions of being socially included. Human capital was significant for developing the skills and attributes of employability, but "…the findings revealed that it was the accumulation of social capital that had the most significant impact on developing participant employability prospects" (Morgan et al., 2020, p. 337). Bridging and linking social capital worked in complementary ways since forming bridging social capital allowed participants to challenge the assumptions that they held about others, and they were open to the potential to form relationships with those people whom the project facilitated contact with and who could provide access to employment opportunities. The researchers caution that while these kinds of diversionary activity programmes have positive benefits, they should not be interpreted as the ultimate solution for remedying all the social issues facing young people who are marginalised (Morgan et al., 2020). Instead, they suggest that we view the potential that forming trusting relationships might have for young people at risk, and how these relationships can operate as a catalyst for both personal and social change when they embody recognition and self-worth (Morgan et al., 2020).

The importance of the relational aspects of social capital were echoed in a recent study in Canada (Issahaku & Adam, 2022) that focused on how young people connect with their communities as a way of becoming socially included. Issahaku and Adam (2022) explored how young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years old in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) use opportunities for social inclusion within their local community contexts. Whilst there were some limitations to this study's findings in that the sample was one of convenience and was not representative of the broader youth population in NL, it shed light on how community-based institutions, in the form of informal groups and non-profit organisations, offer ways for young people to connect with others who introduce them to opportunities to experience inclusion. These opportunities were, however, often in the form of instigators for personal development (human capital) and, as one young person in the study pointed out, "…they were not big enough…" (Issahaku & Adam, 2022, p. 7). Unfortunately, the researchers did not explore what would constitute big enough opportunities with this participant. Notwithstanding, the study demonstrated, in line with

other work on social capital, that social support networks indeed acted positively to contribute to an experience of inclusion and well-being, since opportunities for positive gain are mediated through these networks (Issahaku & Adam, 2022).

Whilst it is evident from the above that the relationship between different forms of capital have relevance in navigating opportunities towards social inclusion, social capital appears to play a pivotal and mediating role. Depending on how it manifests it can have both positive and negative repercussions for the inclusion of young people into the broader social system.

A study conducted in a low-middle-income country, namely Brazil, demonstrated the complex relationship between aspirations for a higher social status and the perceived value of opportunities that could generate the appropriate social capital to achieve this (Dreher et al., 2013). In this study, conducted in Blumenau, Dreher et al. (2013) sought to answer the question: "how do young people from low-income families perceive and take the opportunity of having professional education and the chance to work in the touristic organisations?" (pp. 281). In Brazil, as in South Africa, youth unemployment is high, and many young people find themselves without opportunities to participate in appropriate educational opportunities that can transition them into employment (Dreher et al., 2013). However, tourism in Blumenau is a sector with a surplus of available jobs and, consequently, a local government, university and social foundation partnership began looking to provide opportunities for young people in public schools to access training and, ultimately, employment in this industry (Dreher et al., 2013). A qualitative approach was used to generate and analyse data that involved all actual and potential stakeholders in the programme. Contrary to what was expected, the young people targeted were reluctant to take up the opportunity, citing the relatively low status of this kind of work within Brazilian society (Dreher et al., 2013). Some young people in this study indicated that they would rather remain unemployed than participate in such work (Dreher et al., 2013). Whilst teachers could see the benefits of the programme, since they were already part of the labour market, most young people in the study could not (Dreher et al., 2013). These findings highlighted the notion of social status and its implications for how young people think about which opportunities might be worthy of their attention. The social positioning that can be attained through a particular opportunity, and the desired social capital that

might come from it, was highlighted as an important aspect of concern for young people in this study as they made decisions about using these opportunities (Dreher et al, 2013).

The reviewed studies demonstrate that social and other forms of capital are clearly multifaceted, and how capital operates does not appear to be clear-cut. Its operation within processes of negotiating opportunities towards social inclusion requires a prudent approach when attempting to articulate its contribution(s).

2.4.2 The situated relationship between personal agency and opportunities

The role of agency was emphasised as a salient feature in the study by Hampshire and Matthijsse (2010). Here, there were some participants who managed to utilise the arts-based opportunity being provided, despite being from backgrounds that did not predispose them to do so. The authors attributed this to "individualised systems of social capital" where "young people, embedded within complex webs of social relationships, demonstrated agency in resisting, negotiating, innovating and accommodating those relationships" (Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010, p. 713). The way young people might use their agency in relation to relevant opportunities seems to bear a potential "uniqueness". This was highlighted in an older study that documented transitions to adulthood for over one hundred young people from different backgrounds in the United Kingdom, where the timing of opportunities appeared to influence youth's agency over the life course (Thomson et al., 2002). In their findings, Thomson et al. (2002) described that the right resources and opportunities had to compliment an individual's choice, control, and agency for them to successfully negotiate transitions in their lives, highlighting the situatedness of the relationship between agency and opportunities.

A study conducted across African countries showed how young people evaluate how best to use available opportunities that would enable them to realise an experience of social inclusion (Flynn & Sumberg, 2018). In this study, Flynn and Sumberg (2018) conducted qualitative interviews with 57 young people who were part of different savings schemes in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Ghana to make sense of the ways in which they had utilised these savings schemes to support their income-generating activities. The study

demonstrated that "…there is a disjuncture between the claims that are made about the links between financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and income generation on the one hand, and the experience of many savings group members on the other" (Flynn & Sumberg, 2018, p. 53). This disjuncture was due to the limited entrepreneurial opportunities available in many African contexts, that make it difficult to transform young people's livelihoods, even when savings schemes are available to support this. Further, what was particularly interesting in this study was how participants navigated their everyday experiences and made decisions about how to use the savings schemes available to them in relation to these. The combination of the opportunity to access funds to support their income-generation activities was not separate from thinking about how this opportunity might be helpful in other aspects of their lives – for instance to support "…household expenses such as groceries, children's education, land (for housing), and home improvements such as metal roofing sheets and furniture, especially mattresses" (Flynn & Sumberg, 2018, p. 59). This signalled that opportunities need to be thought about in terms of their relationship with other parts of daily life, since young people will use their agency in relation to both the opportunity and their everyday realities. For instance, an earlier study in South Africa showed that obtaining the means necessary to qualify as experiencing a higher social status influenced the choice to engage in transactional sex for black young womxn in a township community who experienced socioeconomic disadvantage (Zembe et al., 2013). Using qualitative focus groups, Zembe et al. (2013) demonstrated how young womxn utilise available opportunities (in this case transactional sex) to generate the economic and cultural capital that was necessary for their everyday lives. The opportunity to engage in transactional sex was seen as an important strategy to obtain this capital but was also risky, potentially compromising young womxns' health. This study demonstrated how young womxn can use their agency to engage in risky opportunities, when this shows a potential social benefit for them through inclusion into the prevailing capitalist and consumerist social structure.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion(s): The need to move from a static to a dynamic understanding of young womxn's negotiation of opportunities

This chapter has used a variety of literature to piece together what is currently known within occupational science about the phenomenon being explored and centred on the process of negotiating opportunities towards social inclusion. This was referred to, using the language of the Capability Approach, as the conversion process. Studies from other disciplines, that were focused on young people, provided further insight into two key aspects of this process: the role of different forms of capital, and the contribution of personal agency. Whilst the participants in these studies were not only young womxn, the insights gained were relevant for understanding the phenomenon. However, it is important to operate with some caution in terms of declaring what can be definitively known about this phenomenon because multiple perspectives were melded together to produce what has been shared here. What is apparent is that, even with the perspectives of other disciplines complementing the understanding in occupational science, our knowledge of how opportunities are negotiated towards social inclusion seems 'static'. The potentially dynamic nature of this process – hinted at in parts of this chapter – has not been a central focus of previous theoretical or empirical work. Specifically, how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts use opportunities to move towards social inclusion has not been fully explored. This study is thus well positioned to generate appropriate disciplinary knowledge(s) that can contribute towards a critical occupational therapy practice and socially-transformative occupational science.

Chapter 3

Constructing a theoretical framework to decipher the 'praxis of living' in post-apartheid South Africa

3.1 Introduction

Scholars in occupational science have increasingly drawn on theories from the social sciences to uncover and explain the complex nature of human occupation [see for example Aldrich, 2008; Cutchin et al., 2008; Galvaan, 2015; Rudman, 2010]. The use of social theories is therefore an acceptable way of orienting perspectives on human occupation in context. The focus in this study (how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards an experience of social inclusion, through opportunities, in post-apartheid South Africa) demanded a theoretical frame that could deal with the 'everyday' manifestation of social action (occupation), but also provide a platform for theorising the relationships between agency, opportunity and structure. In other words, an explanatory reference point for deciphering the 'praxis of living' for these young womxn, within the South African context, was needed. This reference point needed to decipher the grammar of this praxis, so to speak.

Anthony Giddens (1984) has developed a **theory of structuration** that conceptualises the dialectic of structure and agency through a nuanced and complex lens. This theory avoids over- or underplaying the roles of the individual or the contexts of action. To do this, Giddens positions this dialectical relationship as a 'duality' (Giddens, 1984), linking agency and structure to other concepts that allow us to comprehend society (Held & Thompson, 1989). What made Giddens' theory of structuration particularly attractive for contributing to the theoretical framework in this study, is his understanding of social (re)production as it relates not *either* to agents *or* to structures, but to *both simultaneously*. Thompson explains: "What must be grasped is not how structure determines action or how a combination of actions make up structure, but rather how action is *structured* in everyday contexts and how the structured features of action are, by the very performance of an action, thereby

reproduced [emphases author's own]. The theory of structuration is thus inseparable from an account of social reproduction, that is, from an account of the ways in which societies, or specific forms of social organisation, are reproduced by the activities of individuals pursuing their everyday lives" (Thompson, 1989, p. 56). The theory of structuration therefore attends to the conditions that govern both the stasis and transformation of structures and, consequently, pays attention to how social systems are reproduced through the agency/structure dialectic (Giddens, 1984). Using Giddens' views as a grounding for understanding the phenomenon that was explored in this study therefore seemed appropriate.

I had doubts, however, as to whether the theory of structuration could offer a full enough grounding for apprehending the grammar of the praxis of living in a context that bears the historical marks of colonisation and apartheid. Giddens is a modern social theorist, meaning that the theory of structuration was formulated within a historical period that prioritised the experience of life in the Global North (or the 'developed world[6]'). His view of social life was constructed from the dominant perspectives of imperial/colonial powers and theorised from 'inside' Empire, leaving the impact of colonialism and modernity relatively unexamined in his theory (Bhambra & Holmwood, 2021) [although he does articulate arguments related to how modern capitalism shapes structuration (Giddens, 1971)]. Mignolo and Walsh (2018) refer to "Giddens's missing chapters" to highlight this conceptual limitation (p. 140). I simultaneously recognised that the purpose of the study meant that I was interested in finding ways to unlock opportunities for social inclusion for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts. This was an indication that it would be important to engage critical social theory as an overarching paradigm to understand how social inclusion could be realised in a context like South Africa. But traditional critical social theory fell short, in my view, because, as Medina (2020) indicates, it is possible to use it without a critique of "social structures designed to organise society around Euro-white, heteronormative, patriarchal,

[6] The "developed" world is often considered to be those parts of the world that control the rhetoric of progress and link this to their prowess in terms of wealth, global power, and technological advancement. Consequently, the "developed" world is characterised by those nation states that are considered high income countries and have accrued considerable global power. Here I place the word developed in quotation marks to signal that, these markers do not necessarily constitute a country's capacity to promote the development of all its peoples in ways that are equitable or just.

and Eurocentric notions of what it means to be human" (p. 4). This paralleled the key conceptual limitation of the theory of structuration, and so I turned to **decolonial theories** as an option to overcome this. Decolonial theories offered the possibility to fully engage with the impacts of modernity and have been viewed as sharing resonances with critical social theory (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), aligning with its goal to challenge the ideological and material power differentials that continue to oppress different social groups because of their marginal social positioning (Medina, 2020). Decolonial perspectives focus on confronting these structures more overtly when sense-making the participation of different groups in an (ex)colonised context through using the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) as an analytical lens (Mignolo, 2007). Decolonial thinking analyses 'what is' but also opens up 'what might be' because its theories are intent on the "…undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality, and thought" as these are "…intertwined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western modernity" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 17). This way of thinking is powerful when attempting to make sense of lives that are built in the present moment, whilst aspiring towards a decolonial future.

These arguments provided impetus for the use of the **theory of structuration *and* decolonial theories as joint theoretical lenses** through which the praxis of living for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa might be understood. Chapter Three focuses on spotlighting the utility of both theoretical reference points for this study. I provide a synthesis of the pertinent aspects of decolonial thinking and the theory of structuration, as these may be understood *alongside one another*, acting as an explanatory platform for the analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon being explored. I focus on the necessary linkages that co-constructed a view from the complementarity of these theories. I have drawn predominantly on Giddens' seminal work on the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) and on a key text by two decolonial authors – Mignolo and Walsh (2018). These authors demonstrate a remarkable capacity to integrate perspectives in and of decolonial thinking that carefully explain the concepts, analytics, and praxis inherent in decolonial work (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). I also utilise other decolonial theories/thinking, such as theories of Black Feminism(s), to further deepen the chosen theoretical lenses, where necessary.

3.2 Synthesis: The theory of structuration and decolonial concepts

The synthesis of pertinent concepts and ideas from both the theory of structuration and decolonial theories illuminated three important focus areas:

1) Accounting for what has become 'Instituted[7]' in post-apartheid South Africa;
2) Agency as 'structured' and 'structuring'; and
3) Decolonial agencies.

As will be described in what follows, these focus areas created the opportunity to determine how modernity/coloniality, as a historical structural node, underscores the **properties and dimensions of social systems** (Giddens, 1984) that are orchestrated through and by the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) (Section 3.2.1). The **Colonial Matrix of Power** (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) keeps subjectivities "in place" in these social systems through the instigation and perpetuation of the **'invention of the human'** (Wynter, 2003) during and post-colonisation. This reinforces a **matrix of domination** (Collins, 2009) heavily weighted in favour of those who enjoy intersectional positions that privilege them within the CMP. However, the understanding of agency as both 'structured' and 'structuring' in the theory of structuration offers the possibility to view **structure as the 'rules' and 'resources'** that **operationalise power** (Giddens, 1984) within the relationships between agents and their action within everyday lives. Since coloniality is an inevitable part of everyday life in an (ex)colonised context, Section 3.2.2 addresses how various **epistemic regulatory devices** (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) shape how agents can respond, reproduce, or resist these rules through **practical and discursive consciousness** (Giddens, 1984). Thinking about how these agencies might be constructed from a decolonial perspective involves engaging the concepts of **delinking and epistemic disobedience** (Mignolo, 2007), **re-existence** (Walsh, 2021) and **decolonial love** (Galvaan, 2021a; Erasmus, 2017) as a way to make sense of how agents navigate **the dialectic of control** (Giddens, 1984) that is a product of the CMP that governs social systems (Section 3.2.3).

[7] Following Siba Grovogui, Mignolo & Walsh (2018) use the term Instituted and write it with a capital letter to signal the power held by the domains of the modernity as an ordinary and everyday embedded part of social life – a reflection of the perpetuation of coloniality in (ex)colonised contexts.

Each of these focus areas will be discussed in more detail below to construct the theoretical basis for conceptualising how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards experiences of social inclusion. The reader should keep in mind that, though they are presented separately, the focus areas are linked to one another.

3.2.1 Accounting for what has become 'Instituted' in post-apartheid South Africa

Thinking in this study *from* the perspectives of decolonial theories meant taking account of modernity as a historical process that continues to control what is Instituted (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) in (ex)colonised contexts like post-apartheid South Africa. The three domains of modernity – a "field of representation" and "a set of rhetorical discourses" which together support "a set of global designs" – provides the basis for the ongoing perpetuation of social practices that serve its agenda (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 139). The global designs associated with modernity are based on the cosmologies of Western ideologies and institutions that emerged during the European Renaissance and that colonisation and Empire universalised. That is, the "Western Christian version of humanity, complemented by secular de-Goding narratives of science, economic progress, political democracy, and lately globalisation" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 139).

Whilst the rhetoric of modernity insists that it is responsible for all the world's development and progress (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), it has a "darker side": coloniality (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 138). Coloniality names what is invisible in modernity's rhetoric and persists beyond the historical period associated with colonisation (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Consequently, it is "…maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience" (Ndlovu & Makoni, 2014, p. 5). The regulatory devices that ensure the enactment of coloniality's logics (and the maintenance of modernity's designs) are, then, largely epistemic, but also economic and ontological (Mignolo, 2018). These devices can invoke social practices that mediate the experience of social life within post-apartheid South Africa.

In the theory of structuration, social practices that are intertwined and "link persons across time and space" (Sewell Jnr, 1992, p. 6), constitute the social systems that are the medium and outcome of these practices (Giddens, 1984). The principles governing social practices – understood as structure(s) – characterise these social systems and result in their patterning over time (their properties) (Giddens, 1984). The properties of social systems in post-apartheid South Africa are infused with modernity/coloniality given our colonial and apartheid history (Christie, 2020). This supports the (re)production of social life according to western (or hegemonic) ways of thinking and doing.

The concept of coloniality is seen as shorthand for the "Colonial Matrix of Power" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 141), because when coloniality is expressed in everyday life it reflects how colonial forms of power are operationalised in the (re)production of social life. The Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) is an important analytic for understanding what is Instituted because of structural properties formed through the historical structural node of modernity/coloniality. It also demonstrates how social (re)production may be mediated within modern and (post)colonial contexts like post-apartheid South Africa. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the levels, domains, flows and pillars of the CMP.

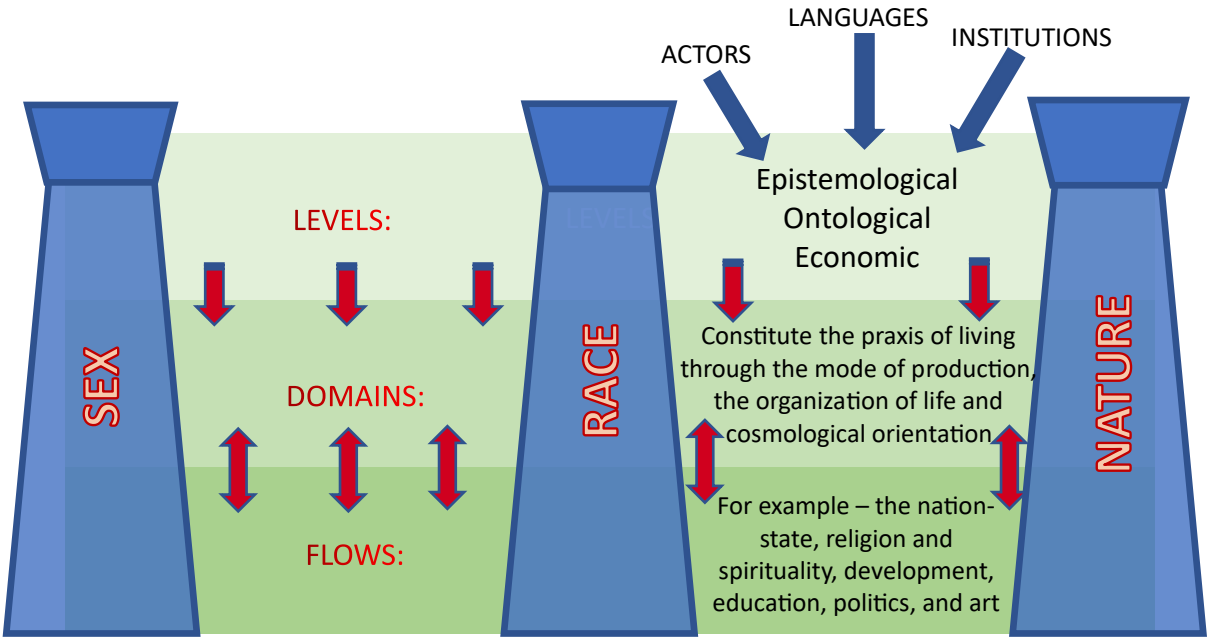


Figure 1: Visual representation of the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP)

It is the levels of the CMP that are responsible for holding its domains together (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). These levels create the experiential and material outcomes of the coloniality of knowledge, power, and being, evidenced within the CMP's domains and flows (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) – the constitution of a (colonial) praxis of living and its continued (re)production. Each broader level is made up of "actors, languages, and institutions" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 143) that dictate and control the rhetoric of modernity. The epistemological invention of "the Human" is a rhetorical device that served to construct the colonial difference and its discourses (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 153). Sylvia Wynter (2003) provides a cogent account of how white European men, across different historical time periods, constructed themselves as 'human' and simultaneously defined all 'Others' who did not fit this self-definition as 'non-human'. Drawing on Quijano's work, Wynter indicates that the idea of 'Man' was the basis for modernity, inculcating the colonial difference on which modernity was to institute itself (Wynter, 2003) and silencing any other mode of self-identification of Homo Sapiens (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). This is "…how it came to be the self-definition of certain praxis of living taken as model and horizon of all (e.g., universal) praxis of living" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 154) and supporting the subjugation and domination along the lines of the colonial difference that was part of modernity's desires (Bhambra & Holmwood, 2021). The colonial difference was consequently responsible for "building, managing and controlling the CMP", held up by its three pillars – race, sex, and nature that operated as the "axes" around which domination was organised and legitimated during colonisation (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 153).

In the context of this study, two of the pillars of the CMP – race and sex – are central for understanding the historical situation of young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa. The ontologies created through the invocation of the idea of the Human are primarily responsible for current struggles that exist as a consequence of the inequality, injustice, and oppression that is connected to race, class and gender (Wynter, 2003). As the Combahee River Collective indicated, these categories of identity are linked because gender and class are also racial categories (Nash, 2019). The concept of intersectionality that originated and was developed through theories of Black Feminism(s), offers the opportunity to deconstruct our understanding of how these ontologies shape the lived experience of those constructed as non-Human through the colonial difference.

Intersectionality focuses on how structures (the rules and resources that result because of the domains and flows of the CMP) tend to render *certain* identities vulnerable (Crenshaw, 2016). The consequence is a matrix of domination where the power to act is enabled or constrained through the arrangement of interlocking systems of oppression related to different social identities (Collins, 2009). This makes sense if we consider how intersectional positioning is constructed because of the pillars, domains and flows of the CMP, resulting in multiple oppressions for those constructed as different across multiple axes of the colonial difference. Nash (2019) draws on other black feminists' work to illustrate the potential experience of multiple jeopardy that arises for black womxn as result of the intersections of race, class, and gender.

The drawing together of these theoretical perspectives indicates that the CMP has power in dictating the grammar of the praxis of living for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts. It is through the domains and the flows of the CMP that "the rhetoric of modernity is enunciated, transformed, legislated and authorised" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 144). This makes it possible to imagine the process of structuration as existing *inside* the CMP, remaining subject to the desires and goals of modernity/coloniality, but also potentially altering certain aspects because of how the duality of structure may be understood as encompassing agency as both 'structured' and 'structuring'.

3.2.2 Agency as 'structured' and 'structuring'

Structure(s) are understood as 'rules' and 'resources' within the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984). Rules are transposable and are applied in the (re)production of social life, operating as the "tools of thought" that guide social action (Sewell Jnr, 1992, p. 8). Rules are therefore responsible for sanctioning social conduct, whereas resources are the "media through which power is exercised" in that conduct (Sewell Jnr, 1992, p. 16). Resources can be allocative, authoritative, or both (Giddens, 1984) and are the modes through which the (re)production of social life is enacted (Giddens, 1984). Whilst the intent of this study was to explore how opportunity operated in pathways towards social inclusion, imagining opportunities as located within the structural realm of resources was a helpful theoretical starting point. In the theory of structuration rules and resources are "both the medium and

outcome of the practices they recursively organise" (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). This means that they are implicated and bound up in young womxn's agency. Understanding how young womxn participate in the (re)production of social life, and its social systems, through their agency, is necessary to fully grasp how the process of structuration operates inside the CMP.

Giddens (1984) indicates that "all social systems, no matter how grand or far-flung, both express and are expressed in the routines of daily life" (p. 36). Social actors make such routines happen through "reflexive monitoring" (Giddens, 1984, p. 191). Individuals, as social actors, "routinely and with little fuss monitor the grounds of their actions" (Giddens, 1984, p. 5) because of their practical consciousness. Practical and discursive consciousness are both psychological modes of engagement used in the context of social action (Giddens, 1984), but rules operate most perceptively at the level of practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). This means that the majority of these "…are only tacitly grasped by actors: they know how to 'go on'" (Giddens, 1984, pp. 22-23). Practical consciousness is therefore best understood as a natural and inevitable human disposition. Human agency is characterised by this practical sense/knowledge that individuals possess (Giddens, 1984) and is 'caught up' within the domains of the CMP, contributing to what becomes Instituted in post-apartheid South Africa. This is because, in places (like South Africa) where coloniality is "…inscribed in our bodies and sensibilities" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 140), coloniality is an inherent part of our practical consciousness.

Importantly, then, to understand how practical consciousness operates in the context of human agency we need to consider the idea of motivation differently. Giddens (1984) suggests that "…we have to understand the term motivation to be a processual one. What that means concretely is that the unconscious only rarely impinges directly upon the reflexive monitoring of conduct. Nor are the connections involved solely dependent on psychological mechanisms within the personality of the individual actor; they are mediated by the social relations which individuals sustain in the routine practices of everyday lives" (p. 50). This is because "practical consciousness consists of knowing the rules and the tactics whereby daily social life is constituted and reconstituted across time and space" (Giddens, 1984, p. 90). Therefore, the rationalisation and motivation of actions in the reflexive monitoring of social conduct are "treated as an embedded set of processes" (Giddens, 1984,

p. 3). Actions, then, always have unacknowledged pre-emptors, but also have consequences that are not always intentional (Giddens, 1984). Although intentionality is an important part of understanding the idea of agency, intentionality on its own is not solely responsible for enabling social actors to do certain things. Rather, we must understand how intentionality operates alongside social actors' "capability of doing those things in the first place" (Giddens, 1984, p. 9). Power always features in the agency of social actors as a consequence of mediating this capability. The power to do in a situation, or the influence over particular modes of doing through invoking certain powers, is either constrained or enabled by the structural properties of the social systems in which social actors are embedded (Giddens, 1984). It is possible then, for agents to contribute to reproducing their positions at the 'centre/periphery' by consequence of the (limited) power they have to do otherwise. "Centre/periphery distinctions tend frequently to be associated with endurance over time. Those who occupy centres 'establish' themselves as having control over resources which allow them to maintain differentiations between themselves and those in peripheral regions. The established may employ a variety of forms of social closure to sustain distance from others who are effectively treated as inferiors or outsiders" (Giddens, 1984, p. 131). Varied intersectional positions within the matrix of domination that operates because of the CMP means that, whilst all social actors in a context may be bound through rules that are shaped by modernity/coloniality, actors have different power(s) to act outside the mandate of these rules. Given this analytic, shifting practical consciousness has the power to constitute social life differently, albeit within social systems that potentially constrain 'otherwise' modes of social conduct.

But the boundaries between practical and discursive consciousness are also permeable and so the interplay between motivation, rationalisation, intentionality, and power becomes critical for understanding the operationalisation of agency as 'structuring' within the context of everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa. Poks (2017) refers to those people who have been disavowed according to the sub-human and sub-ontological categories of modernity/coloniality as the 'damné'. She suggests that: "Her [the damné's] agency needs to be defined by a consistent opposition to the paradigm of war and the promotion of a world oriented by ideals of human generosity and receptivity" (p. 260). This forefronts the decolonial view that, whilst young womxn's agency may be largely 'captured' by the

narratives of modernity and its logics of coloniality, it is possible that their practical consciousness might be simultaneously shaped by a resistance to these logics. Decolonial theories thus enable the exploration of the structuring contribution of 'decolonial' agencies to understand more critically how structuration might be occurring inside the CMP. The myths/fictions of modernity create the need to 'delink' from its rhetoric and logics (Mignolo, 2007). There would be no need for decoloniality to exist were it not for modernity/coloniality (Mignolo, 2018). Hence, these concepts can be understood as a conceptual triad that operates as a historical structural node (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), with each concept calling on the other.

3.3.3 Decolonial agencies

The phenomenon that was being explored in this study was one that required a way to understand how young womxn stare inequality and injustice in the face because of the CMP, but are also able to create something 'otherwise'. I wanted to understand how a decolonial praxis that could support the realisation of a different world (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) could be invoked in the process of structuration.

The concept of the dialectic of control within the theory of structuration allows consideration of how agency might be operationalised in different ways (Giddens, 1984), particularly when power is not evenly distributed within the CMP. It is important to recognise that there are many situations where "…sanctions are imposed upon actors whose commitment to those norms is marginal or non-existent. The forms of enclosure and disclosure which allow agents to deviate from, or flout, those norms are important features of the dialectic of control [within social systems]" (Giddens, 1984, p. 127). The dialectic of control exists because of, on the one hand, "regularised relations of autonomy and independence between social actors or collectivities" which cement relations of power within social systems (the CMP), and, on the other hand, the always-present possibility that those who occupy marginal positions within social systems can challenge their subordination, thereby influencing the "activities of their superiors" (Giddens, 1984). To challenge this subordination, decolonial scholars encourage a process of 'delinking' from the logics of modernity/coloniality and a 'dwelling in the borders' (Icaza, 2017; Maurício, 2023;

Mignolo, 2007). Dwelling in the borders provides unique vantage points for seeing, being and doing "otherwise" (Erasmus, 2017). But to do so demands an epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2011) to enact decolonial agencies.

Whilst epistemic disobedience has the power to disrupt, it is equally important to consider what should, or could, emerge in and through this 'disrupted' space. Galvaan (2021a) argued that to imagine the generative potential of disruption it is important to embrace the notion of a 'decolonial love' as praxis. Decolonial love offers the possibility of both troubling what is *and* moving towards more liberatory ways of being and doing (Galvaan, 2021a). It is therefore capable of both disrupting and generating simultaneously because it is "…infused with emergence in motion through, along and athwart boundaries, and with beginnings. It loosens, thaws, and moves ways of seeing and becoming" (Erasmus, 2017, p. 146). This offered a way of understanding how young womxn's agency might be constructed 'decolonially' whilst taking account of the potential complexity of decolonial forms of agency as these are embedded within modern/colonial contexts like post-apartheid South Africa. The otherwise ways of knowing and being that can emerge through decolonial love support the construction of a world of relations, rather than oppositions (Erasmus, 2017). The coloniality of power can be resisted and challenged through this process, thereby shifting the dialectic of control within the process of structuration.

3.3 Conclusion: Grounding this understanding in the context of everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa

Using the theoretical syntheses that have been described in this chapter have made it possible to construct a theoretical framework that not only critiques how the CMP constructs a particular grammar that controls the praxis of living for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa, but simultaneously crafts alternative 'grammatical rules' for this praxis. Using decolonial theories alongside the theory of structuration allows me to "unveil this logic and these processes [of modernity/coloniality]" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 140), and to consider how delinking might occur through decolonial love, becoming capable of crafting decolonial agencies.

Chapter three has demonstrated the preferred theoretical reference point that has been adopted to articulate how the routinisation of everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa is constructed, as young womxn from and in marginalising contexts attempt to craft pathways, through opportunity, towards social inclusion. I move from and through this reference point, but the chapters that follow also provide an opportunity to move beyond it, as we learn about the complexities of doing so from those young womxn who have travelled these paths.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the selected research approach, study design and methodological process followed in this study. The selected research approach and design – a qualitative multiple case study - had to be grounded within the ontological and epistemological positioning of the study within critical social theory and decolonial theories (Chapter Three). This meant taking account of how the selected research design could enable, or constrain, the development of emancipatory knowledge towards social change. Further, the ways in which knowledges were produced in the study needed to resist the dominant logics of modernity/coloniality that so often govern what can be considered legitimate and appropriate techniques for producing these knowledges. It also required paying attention to how my own and various participants' voices shaped the knowledge generation project and an ongoing critical reflexivity regarding the mechanics of modernity/coloniality in shaping the interpretive process. Whilst a qualitative case study does not ordinarily, or automatically, orchestrate liberatory and participatory ways of generating knowledges, I was careful to engage with the opportunities and tensions of the design to align these with the selected epistemological positioning. In what follows I focus first on detailing the rationale for the selected blended design and describe its utility for exploring the phenomenon. Next, I describe how the phenomenon was bounded and the process of selecting participants. I then proceed to explain how the research process was carried out, including the procedures for data production, data analysis and interpretation, and ensuring trustworthiness. I conclude with a description of how the ethical integrity of the study was ensured.

4.2 Research approach

Qualitative research was the selected paradigm for this study. This was a strategic choice because qualitative research enables the reporting of "…the metaphoric and figural

interpretations that inform activity" (Clark et al., 1997, p. 315) and is well-suited for generating knowledge about the complexity of human occupation in context (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006). It also enables the exploration of "messy" and complicated issues (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 5) which was necessary given the contextual situation and epistemological positioning of this research.

The selected qualitative approach needed to account for the relational aspects of agency and structure in young womxn's lives, given the issues raised about the phenomenon in Chapter One and Two. I therefore believed that the best qualitative study design was a **qualitative case study** because of the way it lends itself to the development of verstehen (Mills et al., 2010). Verstehen is distinct from explanation and deters from developing a view of a phenomenon as an explainable set of different or predominant aspects influencing it (Mills et al., 2010). Rather, it is aspirational, aiming at opening "…the phenomenon with all its horizons…" to "…gain knowledge from the participatory, first-person, humanly felt perspective" (Mills et al., 2010, p. 963). This approach, therefore, was suitable for describing and understanding both the "particularities" (Grandy, 2010, p. 2; Stake, 1995) and the complexity *in* context (Schoch, 2019; Simons, 1996) that seemed to be part of the phenomenon at the outset.

Further, Simons (1996) has asserted that "…by focusing in depth and from a holistic perspective, a case study can generate *both* [emphasis my own] unique and universal understandings" (p. 226). Universal understandings are insights about the complexities and ambiguities of life as it is (Flyvbjerg, 2006), and are not generalisations. Both unique and universal understandings were important in this study because how young womxn construct pathways towards social inclusion seemed to share a relationship with the praxis of living that is oriented through the Colonial Matrix of Power in South Africa (see Chapter One and Chapter Three).

4.3 Multiple case study design

A case study is essentially "…a choice of what is to be studied" (Stake, 2003, p. 134). Since my intent was to study a phenomenon that could plausibly manifest differently within the diverse experiences of young womxn's lives, in the same geopolitical social context, an **instrumental, multiple case study design** (Stake, 2006) appeared suitable for this task. This required that I utilised a set of individual cases that were bound together through their connection to the phenomenon being explored within a specified context (Stake, 2006). In this study, the context was the post-apartheid South African context, within which young womxn from and in marginalising contexts are expected to develop their life trajectories.

Stake (2006) refers to the phenomenon in a multiple case study as the "Quintain" (p. 6). Although the phenomenon is provisionally defined at the outset of the study, the Quintain provides a slightly broader view of this initial articulation of the phenomenon (Stake, 2006). In other words, the Quintain approximates the articulated phenomenon, but also relies on the exploratory nature of case study work to explain how the phenomenon exists within everyday life. The Quintain thus existed as a broad area of focus in this study at the outset, without being restrictive, as an understanding of it was developed iteratively throughout the research process.

4.4 The Quintain and its Cases

The research question in this study delineated how the Quintain and its cases needed to be determined and studied (Stake, 2006). The Quintain was defined as: ***the process of young womxn from and in marginalizing contexts in post-apartheid South Africa, moving towards social inclusion, through opportunity***. The bounded context in which the Quintain was to be studied was determined based on its potential manifestations in context and is represented in Figure 2. The development of these potential manifestations was constructed through understanding the possible experiences required to shape social inclusion, as well as my experiences of working with young womxn from and in marginalising contexts (See Chapter One). Further, work on multidimensional poverty of young people in South Africa (Frame et

al., 2016) also provided insight into some of the realms of participation that may be required to counter an experience of these different dimensions of deprivation.

Figure 2: The boundaries of the Quintain

The single cases that were part of this multiple case study had to offer instrumental value for understanding the Quintain (Stake, 2006) by having these boundaries in common. Prior to beginning to look for relevant single cases, I developed a set of criteria that I used to consider the potential variations in the patterns of activity (Stake, 2006) between cases (Table 1), further relying on my previous experiences of working with young womxn in marginalising contexts. This offered different 'windows' into the Quintain, in line with the intent to develop verhesten.

Potential Variations	
1.	Different family histories and situations.
2.	Identification with different target social identities.
3.	Demonstration of different, but in all cases dignified and valued, participation in occupations across a range of diverse contexts.
4.	Different levels of presence within different public spaces through their occupational engagement.
5.	Variation in the kinds of opportunities that might have been available or used within the course of their life trajectories.

Table 1: Variations of the Quintain

Each single case therefore constituted the different life trajectories of individual young womxn, through which the Quintain had manifested. In the sections that follow I refer to these young womxn as the primary participants.

4.4.1 Single case selection

I used critical-case sampling (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) to select each of the single cases that became part of the study. There was value in selecting unique cases that would offer rich opportunities to learn about the Quintain (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake, 2006), but I also paid attention to the ease with which new cases could be accessed to prevent influencing the timeframes of the research negatively (Stake, 1995).

As a multiple-case researcher who was also a doctoral candidate, I held the roles of director and coordinator of the overall study, as well as the role of the field researcher (Stake, 2006). I was responsible for producing, analysing and interpreting the data that was part of constructing each individual case (Stake, 2006). Since the single cases and the overall multiple case study presented a high degree of complexity in managing these different roles, I only had the capacity to deal with the complexity presented by a few cases (Schoch, 2019). Therefore, three cases were thought to be manageable, but also sufficient (Schoch, 2019). To ensure I was selecting appropriate cases that could add knowledge about the Quintain I developed an engaged and collaborative approach for the selection of cases that aligned

well with the epistemological positioning of the study. This will be described in the sub-sections that follow.

4.4.1.1 Using selection advisors to access the single cases

To select appropriate cases, I approached key individuals who might know young womxn whose lives included an experience of the Quintain. This resulted in the selection of the three primary participants, who were the primary reference point in each case. The selection advisors were either already known to me, or their names were provided to me by colleagues and other professionals whom I approached to assist me. Their role was similar to that of a key informant, but was focused on the selection process and was multidimensional. They were gatekeepers, assisting with access to potential primary participants, but also contributed their perspectives and views about the manifestation of the Quintain within proposed primary participants' lives. This occurred through their participation in a conversation prior to meeting with a potential primary participant, where the recruitment of potential cases was discussed. Further, some selection advisors made themselves available to participate in the initial conversation with a potential primary participant, once this young womxn had agreed to be contacted by me. Each selection advisor gave their consent to participate in the study so that their views could be recorded as data, should the proposed primary participant agree to participate.

Since case selection, data production, analysis and interpretation were an ongoing, merged and iterative process, I learnt about the Quintain and its possible variations as the study progressed. This meant I had to work more strategically with my selection advisors to select cases with potentially rich variations that would allow me to further explore the Quintain with its different variations (see Table 1).

Figure 3 presents a visual representation of the trajectory of working with the selection advisors.

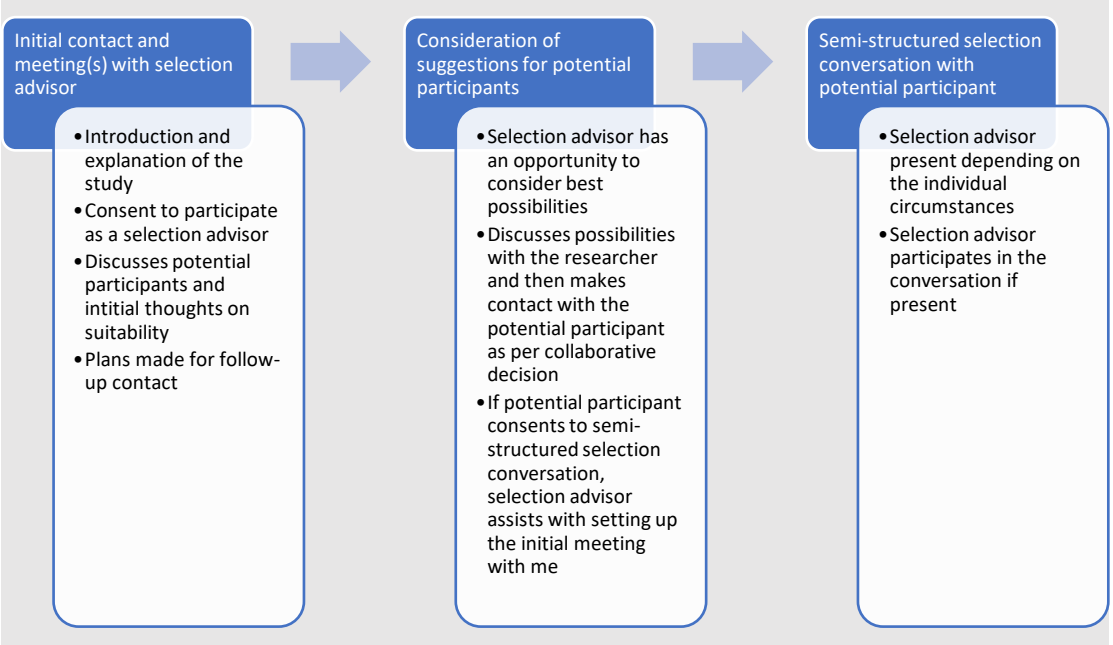


Figure 3: The process of working with selection advisors

4.4.1.2 Collaborative selection of participants through semi-structured selection conversations

As indicated in Figure 3, selecting the primary participants occurred through a collaborative process with the selection advisors and each potential primary participant, whom I viewed as partners in the recruitment process. Epistemologically speaking, this was important to ensure that selection advisors and participants were part of the knowledge generation process from the outset. This included navigating how the phenomenon itself was understood, as well as what potential examples constituted it. This made it possible to give voice in ways that legitimately enabled knowledges for liberatory social change. This methodological decision also made it possible to counter the dominant ways in which researchers relate to key informants during the research process, where they are substantially directed by the key informant who is positioned as the 'expert' (Marshall, 1996). Instead, I used my knowledge of building relationships in community contexts and navigating the power dynamics within those relationships (Galvaan & Peters, 2017b), strategically approaching selection advisors who were positioned as colleagues 'alongside' me in the professional realm and whom could be partnered with to develop a shared understanding of the phenomenon and potential cases that might 'represent' it. As such, the

use of and work with selection advisors in this study aligned closely with how key informants are seen and worked with in community-based research (McKenna & Main, 2013).

Using a semi-structured selection conversation with the potential primary participant as a purposive selection tool also promoted confidence in their selection for inclusion in the study. This is because it allowed me to expand my knowledge of the case beyond an initial set of descriptors about the potential primary participant as we collectively evaluated their candidacy for inclusion.

The semi-structured selection conversation provided an opportunity for discussion with the potential primary participant that ensured:

1) That I was selecting a primary participant whom we *both* believed complied with the boundaries of the Quintain;
2) That the primary participant was willing to share their story and that this story could contribute to the understanding of the Quintain;
3) That there were distinct variations in their story in comparison to the previous case selected, providing an opportunity to develop a slightly different perspective of the Quintain through the exploration of their case.

I utilised a set of pre-structured questions that were designed to offer a glimpse into potential primary participants' lives whilst simultaneously opening up what I saw as important conversational avenues for beginning to build an understanding of the Quintain. I was fortunate in that all the semi-structured selection conversations led to the admission of potential primary participants into the study and these conversations therefore acted as a launch pad for the generation of the further data that constructed each case. The plan for the semi-structured selection conversation, including the questions used, is presented in Appendix B. Figure 4 illustrates the process of selecting primary participants.

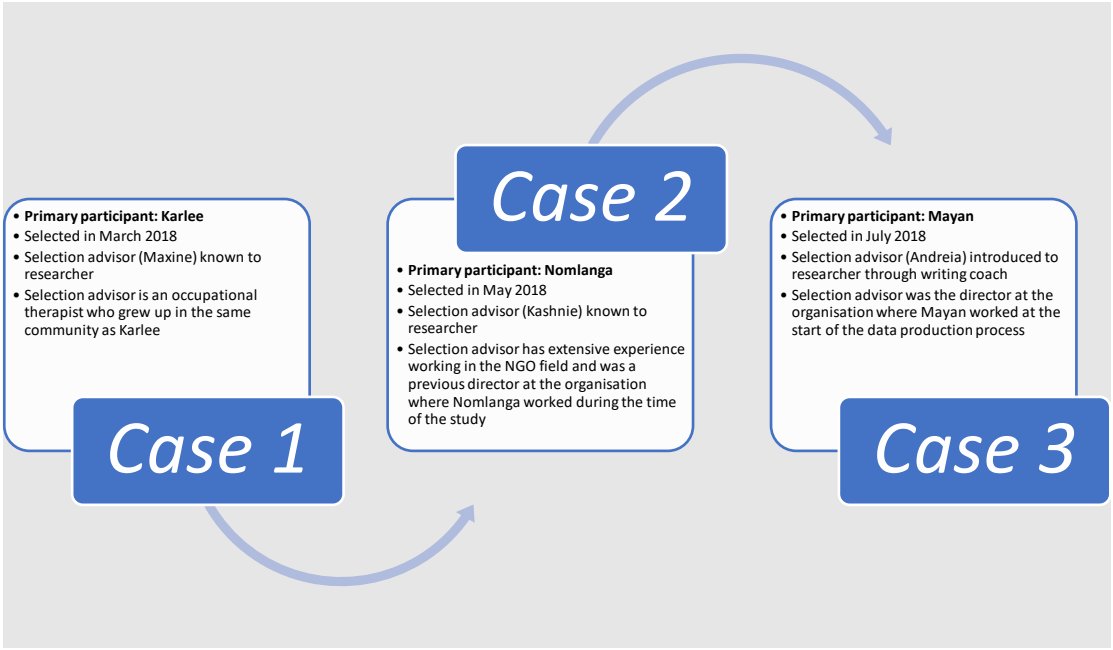


Figure 4: The process of selecting primary participants

Figure 5 provides an overview of the three primary participants who agreed to become part of the study. These brief descriptions illustrate some of the variations in the Quintain that each case was able to offer at the outset.

Case 1: Karlee	Case 2: Nomlanga	Case 3: Mayan
•29 years old •Identifies as a cisgendered coloured womxn •Grew up in Lavender Hill in the Western Cape •Single •No children •Grade 6 Intermediate phase teacher in Cape Town	•30 years old •Identifies as a cisgendered black African womxn •Grew up in a small rural village in the Eastern Cape •Single •One child •Has a media and journalism background •Works in the fundraising department at a large NGO in Cape Town	•27 years old •Identifies as a cisgendered coloured womxn •Grew up in Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape •Worked as a domestic worker in Johanessburg •Married •Two children •Studying teaching through UNISA •Works as a youth coach at at a youth development organisation in Cape Town

Figure 5: Basic attributes relevant to each of the primary participants evident at the time of being admitted to the study

4.5 The research process: Blending narrative inquiry with the case study method

Case study demands a "progressive focusing" on the case so that its issues can be fully explored and clearly articulated (Stake, 1995, p. 9). Any data production methods can support this progressive focusing (Grandy, 2010). When a case study aims to understand a complex process that emerges across time, it can be effectively combined with narrative inquiry to support the process of progressive focusing (Sonday et al., 2020). While the case study design structures the bounding of the Quintain and offers the opportunity to use multiple data sources to study it, narrative inquiry offers the opportunity to understand a process as a 'whole' – with multiple, complex, and interrelated 'parts' – resulting in a particular outcome (Sonday et al., 2020). The use of narrative inquiry in combination with case study was also important considering the epistemological positioning of the study. This is because narrative work offers the opportunity to tell stories not previously told (Plummer, 2001), opening perspectives previously obscured and offering these as an opportunity for alternative possibilities and ways of being in the world to come to light. I therefore resolved to use this blended approach because of this alignment, as well as its utility for developing breadth and depth about each case that would support the progressive focusing on the Quintain within each. Combining narrative inquiry with case study also offered the chance to retrospectively understand human agency (Sonday et al., 2020), because narrative methods typically use stories to describe human action (Polkinghorne, 1995) and experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f) in the context of linked macro and micro perspectives (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). This was important given the orientation of the research aim and objectives in this study (see Chapter One).

In the next sub-sections I report on the research processes of data production, analysis, and interpretation separately. In reality - and as mentioned in section 4.4.4.1 - these were interwoven parts of the research process.

4.5.1 Data Production

The data production process produced the necessary materials to generate the story of each single case. This involved the use of multiple data sources. A similar process was followed for

each case, with some minor differences that were attributable to the ways in which different primary participants engaged, the availability of ancillary participants (additional people identified by primary participants as being part of the story of the case), the timing of data production, and the specific issues emanating within each case.

4.5.1.1 Data sources

Table 2 presents an overview of the different data sources that were used across cases, stipulating my rationale for including each of these. The table also stipulates the stage of the research process at which they were included.

Stage of research process	Data source	Rationale for inclusion
As part of selecting the single cases	**Meeting with selection advisor**	• Selection advisors shared their perspectives on the Quintain in the primary participants' lives
	Semi-structured selection conversations	• Primary participants began sharing about their lives and this data could be used in generating the life history. • Selection advisors were present in some instances and provided additional perspectives on the primary participant's story that added relevant data.
As part of generating the single case narratives	A series of **narrative life history interviews**	• The historical unfolding of processes across primary participants' lives were essential for understanding the Quintain. • Developed a full picture of primary participants' lives across time, not only a snapshot of certain events.

	Focus groups, group interviews, individual interviews (or a combination of these) with ancillary participants	• Added additional insight into building the life history.
	Review of **photographs, artifacts and/or other documentation** related to understanding the life history	• Offered an opportunity to see the life history from different perspectives and prompts the construction of new questions.
	Observation of primary participants in selected contexts and across **social media platforms**	• Enabled a strategic building of the life history narrative.
	Dialogical correspondence interviews	• Offered a space through which the developing case narrative could be openly reviewed, discussed, and further developed with each primary participant.

Table 2: Data sources and rationale for inclusion

Data sources were composed as field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b) to prepare them to contribute to the generation of each individual case narrative. I describe the process of composing these field texts in the sections below.

4.5.1.2 Composing the field texts

Composing the field texts was a collaborative process with primary participants. This approach was consistent with the process of narrative inquiry which has been described as a relational space, enfolding the researcher and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000d). This occurred within a "three-dimensional narrative inquiry space" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f, p. 49). The three dimensions of this space were "temporal", "personal and social" and "place" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f, p. 49) and directed the development of questions with participants that moved us in different directions to explore their emergent life stories, and

open up “imaginative possibilities” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000d, p. 89) to see and think about different aspects of the case from different perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f). Since I have already explained the composition of field texts that were part of selecting cases for the study, below I cover the data production methods that were used to compose the other field texts.

A. Narrative Life history interviews

A series of narrative life history interviews were conducted with each primary participant. Most of these interviews were one-and-a-half to two hours long. Some interviews extended to three hours long. The length of each life history interview was determined by an array of factors, including what had come before, the kind of storyteller each participant was, and the pragmatics surrounding each interview. I tailored my approach as I came to understand how each participant engaged, and the time required to generate each life history was moulded in accordance with this. All the interviews occurred in a venue that was suitable for the interview, but also convenient for the participant in question.

Each narrative life history interview was open and unstructured to obtain an unrestricted perspective of each life story (Plummer, 2001). Whilst life history has been noted as often removing, in part, the participant’s voice (Atkinson, 2012), I circumvented this by using the method in a way that was more consistent with generating life stories, where the voices of participants are forefronted[8] (ibid.). The format for all interviews were developed using the idea of conversation, rather than interviewing. The word conversation means ‘to turn together’ (Jandernoa & Gillespie, 2007). As we developed the best ways for participants to share their stories, we collectively ‘turned towards’ the development of a deeper understanding of their lives. The idea that conversations have value in narrative work has been previously illustrated (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2012). As described below, I also engaged certain tools to ensure that the full life history of the primary participant could be uncovered through the interview series.

[8] Given this selected orientation in this mode of data production, I use the terms ‘full life history’, ‘life story’ and ‘narrative life history’ interchangeably in this text. This is consistent with the blended approach to using case study with narrative inquiry in this study.

Originally, I thought I would develop a framework, through the semi-structured selection conversation, that would guide the series of interviews (Denzin, 1989). This proved difficult since I did not leave each conversation with a full idea of the primary participant's life trajectory. As such, I opted to utilise the idea of collaboratively developing this framework with primary participants during the series of interviews with each of them. This framework looked different in each case, since each primary participant chose different ways of reflecting on and retelling their life story. For instance, Mayan developed her own timeline and constructed this as she developed the different narratives along this timeline. Karlee preferred for me to guide the different aspects of the telling in a more directive way by constructing particular 'periods in time' that we would work through sequentially during each of the interviews. Nomlanga preferred a much more unstructured approach and was guided by what she was moved to share at the start of each interview. The framework for each of the interview series was thus constructed in situ and provided room for the "…reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story…" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000a, p. 71) to come to life.

I used my understanding of the temporal narrative space to work with the construction of each life history. I was alert to the idea that moving backwards and forwards across each primary participant's life trajectory could help to ensure that the necessary details of their lives were being brought forth. This developed a sense of the chronology of each life history and the transitions that were part of it. We were constructing what Clandinin and Connelly (2000b) call "annals" and "chronicles" (p. 112). Annals were the list of dates and memories of events that allowed the shaping of the timeline, whereas chronicles were the threads of living and experiencing that constructed a particular memory, event, or story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b).

I started the first life history interview with each primary participant by using the question **"Where would you like to begin in sharing about your life?"** This question allowed me to be broad enough to invite an unencumbered telling of the life story that was directed by each primary participant. To facilitate the processes of engagement in subsequent interviews I was guided by the idea of funnelling in narrative work (Plummer, 2001). This involved using the content of a previous interview to identify what are referred to as 'grand-tours' and

'mini-tours' to structure the interview that followed (Plummer, 2001). Grand-tours focused on specific issues and areas of exploration identified in the previous interview, whereas mini-tours focused on specific questions related to aspects of the grand-tours allowing further in-depth exploration of what was seen as key aspects (Plummer, 2001). Questions were therefore developed on a case-by-case basis.

The issue of memory is always a concern in narrative work (Denzin, 1989). Memory had to be operationalised to construct the retelling of events to produce the account of the life history, since primary participants had not written down an account of events, thinking, and experience at the time of their occurrence (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f). Emotion also plays a role in what is remembered and why (Denzin, 1989). What was remembered was a product of where the primary participant found themselves at the time of data production. However, since I was interested in the subjective account of the participant and how they had thought about the past construction of their pathways towards social inclusion, I did not see this as a problem in terms of the credibility of their account. Personal truth-making was the goal (Kathard, 2009) in the construction of the case.

The life history interviews were personal and intimate (Atkinson, 2012). A natural consequence of this was that we came to enjoy each other's company and this led to an ease that supported the ongoing storytelling process. The partnership approach used with selection advisors was a precipitator for the development of trust between each primary participant and myself. Primary participants were trusting of me and my intentions, given the relationship that we both shared with the selection advisor, a trusted figure in primary participants' lives. This provided an initial platform through which intimacy in the participant-researcher relationship could grow. This bond of trust was also promulgated because of our shared identification as womxn. Although my background was significantly different to each of the primary participants who participated in the study, we shared some similarities in our roles and perspectives as womxn and this helped to connect us, both during the semi-structured selection conversation and at the start of data generation, before we had had a chance to develop the deep relationships that grew because of the data production process.

The use of additional field texts offered the opportunity to move between this intimacy (necessary for the veracity of the data generation) to a position as an 'observer' where I could also examine the data from a relative distance using different perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b). This contributed to the data triangulation necessary to construct each single case. The other field texts selected also helped us to "…fill in the richness, nuance, and complexity of the landscape, returning the reflecting researcher [and participant] to a richer, more complex, and puzzling landscape than memory alone [was] likely to construct" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000d, p. 83). In what follows, I account for how the composition of other field texts enabled this.

Whilst the use of additional field texts may initially seem at odds with my epistemological choices framing the study, I mitigated this concern through adopting a particular approach to generating and/or evaluating these for their contribution, in collaboration with the primary participant - the primary reference point in each case. These additional field texts thus served the purpose of raising different perspectives and opportunities for discussion. We considered how they shaped what the primary participants and I finally came to settle on as the necessary interpretations to respond to the research question.

B. Focus groups, group interviews, and/individual interviews with ancillary participants

Focus groups or group interviews were used with ancillary participants – people in the primary participants' lives who they felt would be able to speak to aspects of their life histories, with reference to the processes through which opportunity had featured within their movements towards social inclusion. The pragmatics of arranging different people from diverse spaces of life to join in a single focus group for each primary participant proved challenging. In some instances, we wanted certain ancillary participants to be part of the data production, but this wasn't always possible because of geographical proximity and availability to attend. Some of the ancillary participants we invited did not always respond to the invitation, particularly when they had been part of the primary participant's life a long time ago. I therefore took pragmatic decisions with the primary participants to proceed with the ancillary participants who could contribute to the construction of each case, given its

emergent story at that point in time. This is in line with the pragmatic approach advocated for in case study methodology where it is understood that there is always more to know about the case than can be known (Stake, 1995). Using a combination of focus groups, group interviews, and individual in-depth interviews also accommodated the availability of ancillary participants. Although each of these is methodologically distinct with respect to how they are facilitated and the number of participants involved, the intention of using each was aimed towards the same end. That is, to offer different/alternative perspectives into primary participants' engagement with opportunities, and to collectively negotiate what these meant in the context of the emergent story of each case. In the case of group interviews and focus groups this was possible through the collective sense-making that each method could offer. Therefore, whilst group interviews constituted a smaller number of participants, they were methodologically similar to the focus group process where the goal is to collectively examine an issue through the multiple perspectives that different voices might surface. Primary participants were invited to join in these interviews, since the story of the case was being constructed primarily from their perspectives. Focus groups and group interviews were preferred because the interaction between primary and ancillary participants offered the chance to co-construct meaning about the case through their interaction (Morgan, 2012).

Most of the ancillary participants were comfortable conversing in English/Afrikaans, which I am fluent in. In one of the group interviews in Nomlanga's case, one of the participants preferred to use a combination of isiXhosa and English and Nomlanga played the role of translating where necessary, so that it was still possible to co-construct meaning.
I made decisions about how to facilitate each interview based on its composition, and the kinds of questions that would be most helpful (Morgan, 2012), to build knowledge about the case and the Quintain. I created the opportunity to share, compare, organise, and conceptualise participants' knowledges in an interactional way (Morgan, 2012). It was best to embrace a 'reverse funnel' approach in the group space, moving from more-structured to a less-structured format (Morgan, 2012). This meant that in each instance I began with some structured questions in mind, whilst allowing the group and its interaction to conceptualise and propose the direction for the session, with my questions being shaped by this interactional process. Whilst each focus group/group interview had slightly different

questions, given that they were focused on data generation about different primary participants' lives, these questions were all structured around similar directions that would allow the Quintain to be explored within the context of each case. These directions included:

- Exploring **key opportunities and other facets that had contributed to the achievement of valuable outcomes in the primary participants' lives** at the time of the interview.
- **Ancillary participants' thoughts on how the primary participant had used these opportunities,** and what had made it possible for them to do so in the ways that they had.
- Exploring **ancillary participants' views about opportunities that they thought might have been missed by the primary participant**.

I did not aim for the agreement of the views of participants, but instead the facilitation of interaction in each group made it possible to develop shared meanings about these directions, as well as other aspects of participants' lives that were unique to each case (Morgan, 2012).

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with ancillary participants when they could not attend a focus group/group interview. The in-depth interviews used the same directions as that of the focus group/group interviews to structure specific questions. Each interview was approximately one-and-a-half hours long, exploratory, and drew on a conversational approach with the participant (Johnson, 2001). Only a few questions were planned and expanded on as required during the interview process (Johnson, 2001). As with the focus groups/group interviews, having the primary participant present deepened the data generation process by offering opportunities to collectively explore views on the participant's life from different perspectives. The participant was able to agree or disagree with these views and this led to enhanced understanding of decisions and directions within their lives. Except for one instance of an individual interview in Karlee's case, all the primary participants were part of these interviews. In the case where Karlee was not able to attend this individual interview, I shared what had emerged with her and we discussed her thinking regarding this, compensating for her absence.

C. Observation, in-person and through social media

Although observation occurred in different ways in each case, all observation episodes had in common that they were used as a way of generating additional detail about experiences that had already been introduced. It was therefore only used if it appeared relevant for constructing the case and did not occur for all primary participants. I generated field notes from each observation episode which became the field texts. When I took photographs as part of the episode each of these photographs acted as a kind of field note (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b).

Observation of past and current participation also occurred through observing each primary participant's participation on social media. During the process of generating the data I observed past and current participation on the social media platforms that the participants indicated they used and jotted down particular insights that I thought may have relevance for understanding the issues that were presenting themselves as part of each case. I discussed these insights with primary participants in subsequent life history interviews. The primary participants, however, did not participate extensively on these platforms and this form of observation did not contribute substantial insights.

D. Selecting photographs, artifacts, and documentation for inclusion

During the life history and other interviews, references were made to artifacts or experiences that were part of primary participants' lives. Where artifacts were introduced as part of telling their stories, I asked the primary participants if they would be willing to admit these as data. They agreed in all cases. Further, primary participants often brought their own photographs and artifacts into the process as certain memories were triggered through generating the life history.

Documents were introduced by the participants at times when these had been generated through the private spaces of their lives. I also selected publicly available documents if these pertained to experiences and opportunities that were referenced in the case, and where I believed these could make a difference in understanding the Quintain.

E. Dialogical correspondence with primary participants

Dialogical interviews are situated practices and aim "…to be egalitarian and flexible, allowing exploration of issues perceived by researchers and participants as important…" (Farias et al., 2019, p. 239). These interviews are loosely structured so that they can take the form necessary to sufficiently explore issues that arise for both parties (Farias et al., 2019). I paired this understanding of dialogical interviews with ideas in narrative work around correspondence (Riessman, 1993). Correspondence involves taking narrative interpretations back to participants for validation or contestation throughout the process of constructing the final narrative (Riessman, 1993). Dialogical correspondence interviews were an approach to generate the final version of each single case narrative. The method straddles both data production and analysis and interpretation. The generation of these dialogic interviews acted as field texts, because while they offered the opportunity to critically contribute to the analytic process, they simultaneously composed a field text that was part of data production, offering insights that were used as both additional and confirmatory data.

Each interview followed a conversational format where I shared my thinking about the developing interpretations and invited further thinking, agreement, or disagreement from each participant. At this point of the process, we had developed ways of working together where I felt secure that participants would contest the developing interpretations as was necessary. I also shared the developing case narrative with participants prior to these interviews so that they also had an opportunity to prepare any points of discussion that they wanted to raise.

These interviews included:

1) Presenting the plot lines in the developing case narrative through a story map and collaboratively dialoguing about these interpretations
2) Dialogue about the contributions of ancillary participants to the developing plot lines
3) Dialogue about the presentation of the full life history to add or confirm data, or contest interpretations, where necessary

The content of dialogical correspondence interviews was unique for each primary participant because the content pertained to their specific stories.

Throughout the data production, analysis, and interpretation phases I communicated with primary participants over the social media communication platform – WhatsApp – and through e-mail correspondence. This kind of conversation with participants also acted as a kind of field text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b). It supported the process of prolonged engagement with each participant and the emergent verhesten in the construction of the single case narratives.

Table 3 provides details of how these field texts were composed within each individual case.

	Case 1: Karlee	**Case 2: Nomlanga**	**Case 3: Mayan**
Life history interviews	Three interviews	Five interviews	Four interviews
Interviews with ancillary participants	Focus group with family members (mother, father, sister and Godmother) In-depth interview with her mother's previous employer	Group interview with her two paternal aunts In-depth interview with her cousin	Group interview with the director of the youth development organisation she worked at previously and her childhood best friend In-depth interview with her husband

Observation	Tour of Lavender Hill Visit to her uncle's shop where she worked Visit to her childhood home	None[9].	Participation in a training event at youth development organisation
Social media	Personal Facebook and Twitter platforms	Personal Facebook platform	Personal Facebook platform
Artifacts	Script of a speech/presentation done at a church youth group event	Own sketches A fictional novel titled *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers and published by Multnomah Publishers	A set of letters from her mother A 2005 American comedy/drama film titled *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* written by Tyler Perry and released by Lionsgate Films
Photographs	Childhood memories and pictures of extended family	Childhood memories and pictures of extended family	Childhood memories and pictures of extended family
Documents	Online resource – webpage of community organisation profiling activities for youth in Lavender Hill	Report of the Ministerial Committee on the Review of the National	Annual reports (2011 – 2018) for the youth development

[9] Given the emergent story of the case Nomlanga felt that potential opportunities for observation would not serve to build understanding further and I agreed with this view. Other field texts had already contributed sufficiently to the construction of the story of this case. Further, Nomlanga had some concerns about certain people knowing about her inclusion in the study and thus felt it would be better for her to omit these episodes given that they would not necessarily add substantial further value.

	The Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Implementation Evaluation. Policy summary, executive summary, and summary report. 31 March 2016. JET Education Services. Accessed through: https://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/evaluations/514	Student Financial Aid Scheme (Department of Higher Education and Training of the Republic of South Africa) Research report titled *The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and its impact: Exploring the absorption into employment of NSFAS-funded graduates* (Wildschut, A; Mncwango, B; Rogan, M; Rust, J; Fongwa, S. The Human Sciences Research Council and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme)	organisation Mayan worked at. Publication profiling success stories of youth that the organisation has served or whom they employ (Mayan was one of these success stories). Instagram and Facebook business profiles Business website
Number of dialogical	Three interviews	Three interviews	Two interviews

correspondence ***interviews***			

Table 3:The composition of different field texts within each individual case

All the field texts in this study were utilised to generate "…contextual reconstructions of events…" and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b, p. 118) that could be used to piece together the 'memory fragments' supporting the construction of the full life history representing each single case.

4.5.1.3 Managing the data

All interviews were audio-recorded using a Phillips portable digital audio recorder. All audio-data was transcribed verbatim to generate transcripts that could be used as the final field text. Field notes that were generated in hard copy during observations were typed up into an electronic format after the observation episode and stored in both formats. Artifacts, photographs, and documents introduced as field texts were managed by:

- creating a visual record of the artifact captured with the participant's permission; and
- copies of photographs or documents were made with the participant's permission.

All field texts for each case were stored in clearly labelled and systematically organised individual hard copy and electronic folders, which facilitated a smooth analytic process.

4.5.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

It was important to think about how I would negotiate the complex transition from field texts to research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000c). This demanded multiple transitions as I aligned my analysis and interpretation approach with both narrative inquiry and the case study method. In these different transitions the different methodological approaches vied for my attention (Sonday et al., 2020). I intentionally forefronted narrative inquiry in the first phase of analysis, and then the case study method as the data transformation occurred.

Different research texts were produced at different points in time, including:

1) A single case narrative that (re)presented each single case that was part of the study;
2) A co-constructed visual representation of what was thought to be the central emergent 'theme' constituting each individual case narrative; and
3) A set of inferences about the Quintain as a product of the cross-case analysis.

The single case narratives were a product of the first phase of analysis and interpretation and the set of inferences was a consequence of the second phase of analysis. The visual representations occupied what I saw as an in-between space in this process. They emerged through the ongoing construction of the single case narratives but also reflected this process, influencing the individual case inferences being made. Simultaneously they spoke into the cross-case analysis, shaping understanding of how these central themes might operate across cases. The role of the visual representations was to sustain a conversation between the multiple parts and transitions in the conversion of field texts to research texts, offering an alternative way to make sense of the knowledge being generated about the Quintain. The visual representations are presented as art works within Chapter Five.

4.5.2.1 Phase 1: Generating the individual case narratives through single case analysis

A narrative analysis was used to construct each single case narrative. The result was an emplotted narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995) that could stand as the case narrative and could be easily used within the cross-case analysis. There was continuous recursive movement between the field texts and the plot to account for possible discrepancies and different interpretations (Polkinghorne, 1995) that were emerging within each case. The analysis of each single case was supported using analyst logs which tracked my developing thinking about the manifestation of the Quintain within each individual case. I approached the analysis one case at a time to ensure that my attention was focused on that particular case and its issues, and not influenced by what I was seeing in the other cases. This encompassed a series of steps as I attended to each case in turn:

1) I immersed myself in all the field texts generated within each case.
2) I did not impose any definite way of thinking about what the outcome in each case should be, since I wanted to allow the case to define the 'different state' that each participant had actualised. Broadly, I was looking for the outcomes in each case as these related to representing a life where participants experienced well-being in the present, but also demonstrated a potential future that was pregnant with possibility.
3) I identified the contributing processes, events and opportunities that led to an outcome by uncovering different story fragments embedded in the field texts, and pieced these together (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f), using narrative cognition (Polkinghorne, 1995). Asking questions like "how did this happen?" or "why did this come about?" supported this part of the process (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). In line with my third objective, I focused on how opportunity had been provided, created, used, and negotiated, and how this was shaping movements towards the evident outcomes.
4) Chronological arrangement of actions, events and happenings occurred first, after which I determined which experiences, in particular, contributed to the outcome (Polkinghorne, 1995). Whilst narrative smoothing was helpful in determining how to exclude data that did not have a bearing on each plot line (Polkinghorne, 1995), this technique was applied cautiously (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000e). This was because human experience is often incoherent and inconsistent and understanding these complexities was important for the development of a plot that was a faithful reflection of reality (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000e). This analytical approach allowed me to uncover the multiple processes occurring over each primary participant's life trajectory, whilst simultaneously accounting for the temporality and sequencing of the movements towards the outcomes in each case. This made it possible to understand how various processes were related to and dependent upon one another.
5) Each time I identified what I saw as a contributing plot line in a participant's life, I analysed it in detail. I found that Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was a helpful tool in the narrative analysis because it provided a way to think about each primary participant's life as an ongoing and developing activity system, with its own zone of proximal development (Engeström, 2005). This was representative of the

everyday lives of the primary participants, emerging as a process-as-a-whole, shaped by historicity, contradictions, and tensions as potential sources of change, as well the possibility of expansive qualitative transformations (Engeström, 2005). The idea of expansive transformations was particularly helpful in thinking about the concept of opportunities, and resultant possibilities, within each participant's life, because it made it possible to ask questions about how the zone of proximal development operated in relation to these opportunities and the movements towards social inclusion. This is because I wanted to understand what had made it possible for each of these young womxn to (re)imagine their everyday doing to "…embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities…" than was previously thought to be possible (Engeström, 2001, p. 137) within the course of their life trajectories. This focused attention on how tendencies to think and act in particular ways were established for each of the primary participants in this study.

Following this analytical procedure resulted in the description and explanation of plot lines that were linked – both to one another and the overall plot – within each case (Polkinghorne, 1995). These plot lines were represented on a story map which was taken back to each primary participant for discussion during the first dialogical correspondence interviews. This discussion resulted in the identification of the ancillary participants who contributed to the further composition of field texts. An example of one of the case's story maps is presented in Appendix C.

I wanted to construct a full life history that could represent each case before winnowing it down to the research text that could be accommodated in this report. This was important to ensure that the final individual case narrative was a truthful representation of each case. The first and second dialogical correspondence interviews illuminated the within-case interpretations that could be made about the manifestation of the Quintain within each case. These within-case interpretations were used as important markers for the winnowing process that resulted in the final case narratives. I acknowledge that there is always more to say about each case than there is room to share about it within this kind of research reporting (Stake, 2006). However, both the primary participants and I are satisfied that the

versions of the final single case narratives offer a thick description of each case for readers to evaluate the interpretations made (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Whilst fulfilling these obligations I was mindful of upholding "…the duty of care feminists owe the women who populate the archive – and those who may yet enter [it]" (Msimang, 2021, p. 15). I thought about how my portrayal of each case shaped and contributed to how the primary participants were being (re)presented. I understood that this representation could influence the discourses regarding womxn, particularly womxn from and in marginalising contexts, and that this held power to both (re)produce this discourse and shape it differently. This did not mean I crafted fictional accounts, only that I balanced the stories needing to be shared with an understanding of how these *should* be captured in their final reporting.

4.5.2.2 The in-between space: using art to co-construct a visual representation of each case

I was intrigued at the ways in which the different cases were being 'brought into being' through our collaborative efforts during data production and analysis. As Yob (2003) suggests, 'to know' is an active verb, involving a consistent working with, through and towards *knowing*. Whilst there were multiple plot lines emerging in each case, there appeared to be this almost central theme that was part of each young womxn's trajectory, and that was working its way into our consciousness. This central theme seemed to relate to the other processes shaping the movements towards social inclusion.

I realised that a visual representation could provide us with an additional way of *coming towards knowing* each case. As academic researchers we can be conservative in our approaches to knowledge generation (Ehn, 2012), limiting the kinds of thinking that can come through employing other methods. For instance, artists often use playfulness and emotion as they "try to see the ordinary as something out-of-the-ordinary" (Ehn, 2012, p. 11). This can serve theorising processes where emotion and intuition can constructively shape knowledge generation (Knorr Cetina, 2014). Understanding that knowledges can be embedded and represented in and through alternative forms outside of the academe is a central facet in decolonial thinking, embracing what has previously been disregarded a

legitimate knowledge (Pérez, 2019). I was therefore prompted through my use of decoloniality as a theoretical framework to consider how I might use an alternative way of coming to know each of the cases. The process of (re)presenting each case visually therefore grew organically through the data production, analysis, and interpretation processes. It was a product of these processes, but also a tool for them, occupying a kind of in-between space that acted generatively.

With each primary participant I discussed the kind of images that came to mind when thinking about their trajectories during the dialogical correspondence interviews. Thinking visually was easier for some participants than for others, but each was excited by it. I shared my interpretations, and we collectively designed a reference image for what we saw as the central theme within their case. I then worked with an amateur artist to develop three distinct art works to represent this. A process of analogical theorising was used that supported the development of each final case narrative. Analogical reasoning is a "cognitive process of structural alignment" where we experience different things as being related to one another "in a flash of recognition" (Vaughan, 2014, p. 61). Engaging the idea of metaphor and analogy through the generation of the artworks acted as an important avenue for theorising because it enabled the transfer of schema from one realm to another (Yob, 2003) to see the case in new ways.

The work of art was gifted to each participant to honour their contributions to the study. A copy of each work of art is presented at the start of Chapter Five[10]. The idea that art can be used conceptually in this way as a mode of knowledge production "…creates a reflexive knowledge, but its implications need a recipient in order to be realised" (Mersch, 2020, p. 10). I acknowledge the role that perception plays when we use art as a mode of coming to know (Ehn, 2012). Through the use of these pieces I present an opportunity for the reader to engage in a reflexive process "…that begins with perception, seeing and hearing and, moving *through* perception and its media, ultimately encompasses the entire phenomenal sphere" (Mersch, 2020, p. 12).

[10] To note: Nomlanga selected to have her piece display an actual representation of her. To protect her confidentiality, I needed to blur out sections of this artwork to obscure her identity and it is this modified image that appears in Chapter Five.

4.5.2.3 Phase 2: Generating the set of inferences about the Quintain through a cross-case analysis

The cross-case analysis had to implore a "Case-Quintain dialectic" (Stake, 2006, p. 39). This generated a set of inferences that could respond to the research question. These inferences were assertions about the Quintain (Stake, 2006) and captured the qualitative intonation of the claims that could be made about it. They represented the interpretations I reached because of in-depth, prolonged and situated reasoning about the Quintain that was connected to the persuasions about it within each case narrative. These inferences are not representative of the sole truth about the Quintain, nor do they constitute hard conclusions (Nolen & Talbert, 2011). Instead, the set of inferences intend to open a new conversation (Nolen & Talbert, 2011) about the Quintain.

To invoke the Case-Quintain dialectic, I had to consistently acknowledge the "Case-Quintain dilemma" (Stake, 2006, p. 7). This dilemma is a consequence of the difficulties attached to concurrently paying sufficient attention to both the unique manifestation of the Quintain within the individual cases, and to its interpretation in a more general sense. This was a complicated endeavour but aided the search "…for patterns, for consistency, for consistency within *certain* conditions" [emphasis my own] (Stake, 1995, p. 78) with respect to the operation of the Quintain.

Stake (2006) provides a sophisticated approach for conducting the cross-case analysis, emphasising the need to find the form of analysis that works for the researcher. The process is seen less as a technical exercise and more as a choreography-in-action (Stake, 1995, 2006). I therefore grounded the analytical process I followed in the thorough knowledge I held of this study, the data it had evoked, and an immersion in Stake's (2006) method. I outline the steps I followed below.

1) Developing thematic questions to ground the cross-case analysis

First, I needed to consolidate the within-case interpretations that were captured in each single case narrative into 'sets' of within-case findings. Each set of findings was then used to

discover and develop the cross-case inferences. Reading and re-reading the final case narratives allowed me to generate a concisely worded list of findings from each case that could be used in the cross-case analysis.

During the initial parts of the cross-case analysis I needed to relinquish some of the attention to the individual cases and focus on the Quintain. I used the research question, aim and objectives as reference points for the various facets that were relevant to understand the Quintain. This assisted me to develop thematic questions that would be used to focus the development of the inferences. These thematic questions are captured in Table 4.

	Thematic Question
Theme A	What can be learnt about how movements towards social inclusion are constructed?
Theme B	What can be learnt about the constitution of opportunities that could lead to social inclusion?
Theme C	What can be learnt about the strategies that might be utilised in negotiating these opportunities towards different ends?
Theme D	What can be learnt about how agency and structure are related in such processes?
Theme E	What can be learnt about the challenges to and possibilities for experiencing social inclusion for young womxn from marginalising contexts?

Table 4: Thematic Questions

The sets of findings for each case allowed me to remain grounded in the specificities of each, whilst taking account of how these findings corresponded with the thematic questions (Stake, 2006). I asked myself: how does each set of within-case findings allow me to craft a response to each of the thematic questions, considering the unique conditions and experiences of each case? I documented my responses in analyst logs (Stake, 2006) allowing me to get a sense of the utility of each case in responding to these broader thematic

concerns that were relevant for the Quintain (Stake, 2006). This prepared me to engage in the second step.

2) *Development of a matrix to represent each case's relationship with the thematic questions*

I developed a matrix that could be used to organise each case in relation to one another and to plot each cases' findings in relation to each thematic question. A copy of this matrix is included as Appendix D. The visual organisation of the matrix allowed me to consider all the within-case interpretations at once, together with how each interpretation related to each thematic question. At a single glance I was able to evaluate which individual case findings would allow me to generate potential cross-case inferences in response to the thematic questions, keeping alive the conceptual orientation of the findings of each case, and of the Quintain (Stake, 2006).

3) *Generation of the cross-case inferences*

Following the construction of the matrix I worked through each thematic question systematically and sequentially to account for which case findings offered insight into each. I also took account of how the various case findings that were grouped together under each thematic question could relate to one another. I printed each theme on a large card and then printed out 'findings strips'. Each strip indicated a single case finding. I clustered the relevant case findings for each theme around the theme card. This provided a powerful visual to examine these. An example of this clustering exercise appears in Appendix E. At this point, the analytic process became less one of technical skill and more a process of composition (Stake, 2006) and intuition (Knorr Cetina, 2014). I used the analytic advantages I had accrued through producing the data, and generating each individual case, to support the development of the cross-case inferences. After spending time analysing the thematic clustering of findings, I constructed what I thought were the most suitable words to generate what became a list of tentative inferences (Stake, 2006). Some additional inferences were also developed through a process that Stake (2006) calls "assertions by bypass" (p. 55).

These kinds of inferences were possible because of my in-depth knowledge about each case and the ongoing critical reflection I was doing about the Quintain.

Once I had finalised the list of cross-case inferences I used the process of converting this list into a research text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000c) to further refine and develop these. Whilst doing this I questioned and re-questioned the legitimacy of each inference. The description of each inference appears in Chapter Six, followed by a discussion of these in Chapter Seven, where I articulate an explanation of the Quintain.

4.5.3 Establishing trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative studies ensures that the research findings can be taken as an accurate description of the lived experiences of the phenomenon that is explored (Stahl & King, 2020). I used a combination of approaches to ensure trustworthiness that focused on the credibility and dependability of the methodological processes and the findings that were constructed. The blended study design demanded that I use a combination of approaches from general qualitive research, the case study method and narrative inquiry. Given that this study was exploratory in nature, and bounded within a particular context, I did not explicitly aim for transferability or confirmability of these findings (Stahl & King, 2020). However, the thick description provided in Chapter Five allows the reader to evaluate how these findings may be applicable in similar contexts.

4.5.3.1 Ensuring credibility

Ensuring credibility involves developing congruence between the findings and the reality that is being represented (Stahl & King, 2020). This involved using different sources of information and different procedures to "…repeatedly establish identifiable patterns" (Stahl & King, 2020, p. 26) that constructed an appropriate explanation of the Quintain. Ensuring credibility involved triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and data saturation.

4.5.3.1.1 Triangulation

I applied three different triangulation processes in this study: data source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and correspondence (Stake, 1995).

A. Data source triangulation

As was described earlier, different data sources were used to construct a faithful account of the events, circumstances and actions shared as part of the life history constituting each case. This is important in narrative inquiry and case study where different data sources offer different accounts and perspectives of the same story (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995; Stake, 1995) and served to deepen the understanding of the Quintain within different primary participants' lives. Further, since participants' memory played a role in constructing each case it was important to validate the chronology, events, and happenings in the stories through different sources (Plummer, 2001).

B. Methodological triangulation

Methodological triangulation was used by engaging different methods for generating the data (Stake, 1995) to provide different perspectives of the Quintain as it existed within each case. The diverse methods were outlined within the data production section.

The use of a multiple case study provided the opportunity to triangulate the inferences about the Quintain across varied and different circumstances (Stake, 1995). After selecting and producing data for three single cases I had generated a substantial amount that could be used to learn about the Quintain and had begun to understand its multifaceted complexity. This triggered the realisation that three individual cases would be an appropriate and manageable starting point for theorising the Quintain. This is because adding additional cases would have made it too complicated to manage the Case-Quintain dialectic (Stake, 2006) that was invoked during the analysis process.

C. Correspondence

Correspondence is a triangulation approach that required that the situation of the cases, the data collected, its reporting, and the reading thereof corresponded with one another in a synchronous way (Stake, 2008). The process of drawing connections between these different aspects was important for the developing understanding and portrayal of the Quintain (Stake, 2008). I moved iteratively between these different aspects, making adjustments to ensure the necessary correspondence. I carefully considered the sequencing and presentation of this dissertation report to make this evident for the reader.

I was cautious, however, to avoid sanitising the understanding of the Quintain. Correspondence was more about a way of making sense of complexity, rather than simplifying it. This was supported by drawing on approaches for ensuring correspondence from narrative inquiry. I tracked the internal consistency of the stories that were part of the life histories, focusing on their coherence and plausibility (Riessman, 1993) and their contribution to the overall life history that constructed the individual case narrative. I was seeking to understand these elements in the context of narrative complexity (Polkinghorne, 1995). This meant that even where actions within the context of everyday life were confusing, it was possible for these events and happenings to make sense within the situations in which they had emerged. This approach prompted difficult questions about the contributing factors shaping the manifestation of the Quintain and I was able to further explore and develop certain aspects of the narrative during the dialogical correspondence interviews.

4.5.3.1.2 Member checking

Member checking was used to check my interpretation of the data, and its presentation, with the participants (Stake, 1995). This occurred with both the primary and ancillary participants, but in different ways. I member checked with ancillary participants by e-mailing them a copy of the interpretations that I had drawn from their contributions to the aspect of data production that they had participated in. This was sufficient given the reliance of the single cases on the life history approach where the primary participant's subjective account

was paramount (Plummer, 2001). To protect the privacy of the primary participants I did not share the full case narrative with the ancillary participants, and I checked the interpretations with the primary participants prior to sharing them. Ancillary participants were asked to share any concerns they had or to let me know if they wanted to further discuss any of the interpretations made. I indicated that if I did not hear back from them, I would take it to mean that they were happy with how I had understood their contributions. Some of the ancillary participants responded in writing to acknowledge their agreement.

The case narratives generated were presented to the primary participants for verification and further development during the dialogical correspondence interviews. This was by far one of the most important methods for establishing trustworthiness, given the epistemological foundations of the study. Rather than validating an 'objective' truth, the dialogical correspondence interviews enabled the subjective exploration and finalisation of issues related to understanding the Quintain in each case. Since the Colonial Matrix of Power demands that we understand agency and individual actions in light of it, centering the views of primary participants was a key way of 'decentering the centre' (Narayan and Harding, 2000) in the overall data production processes. After I had conducted the cross-case analysis I took the set of inferences that had emerged back to each primary participant during one final member checking interview. In this interview I shared with each participant how their case had contributed to the development of each cross-case inference and offered them an opportunity to share their perspectives on these interpretations. This further refined the final set of inferences.

4.5.3.1.3 Prolonged engagement and data saturation

To add credibility to the data production process and the generation of the case narratives, this study involved a period of prolonged engagement with participants over a period of approximately four years. This meant that primary participants' lives developed and changed over the course of the study. This development is illustrated in the individual case narratives.

As a consequence of this prolonged process of data production, data saturation was not thought about as the repetition of ideas being shared in interviews (Alam, 2021). Rather, it

was considered in relation to the developing verhesten about the Quintain and its contribution to theoretical saturation. Using the opportunities provided over time by the dialogical correspondence interviews, member checking and peer scrutiny served to fully flesh out the developing ideas about the Quintain within each case. Using prolonged engagement therefore made it possible to develop the deep insights that emerged.

4.5.3.2 Ensuring Dependability

Ensuring dependability of the research findings involved using approaches that allowed for a high degree of trust to be placed in these findings (Stahl & King, 2020). Approaches included reflexivity and reflexive journaling, keeping an audit trail, thick description, and peer scrutiny.

4.5.3.2.1 Reflexivity and reflexive journaling

Journal writing was a way to make sense of ordinary and puzzling experiences, acting as "spaces for struggle" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000b, p. 104). The reflexive journal was composed as an additional field text and was utilised as a way to work through and deliberate about emergent ideas and issues.

Prior to data production, it was also important to locate myself as a researcher, given that researchers enter stories that are developing (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000a; Craig & Huber, 2012). I used the space provided through the reflexive journal as way of engaging with my own biographical experiences and the ways that these related to stories embedded within each case, and the broader understanding of the Quintain. I had to acknowledge that I had an experience of living in South Africa that had been demarcated through my privileged race and class positions, that had implications for how the opportunities in my own life shaped my own experiences of social inclusion. My biographical writing allowed me to explore some of what I knew, as I engaged with my participants during this study and came to understand their own stories in relation to my own. In life history work the necessity of considering the inter-subjectivity of the researcher and the participants is emphasised (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). I had to acknowledge that I was "…part of the parade. [I] have helped make the world

in which [I found myself]" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000f, p. 61). This required that I documented my developing understanding of my own social position and interrogated how my experiences influenced and interacted with the analysis and interpretation of the data. Through the space afforded by reflexive journaling, I engaged with my privilege and the anxiety I felt about being able to reach across the narrative space to find meaningful connection with my participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000a) in a (still often) divided South African context.

4.5.3.2.2 Keeping an audit trail

The audit trail was a tool to keep account of the research process and the decisions made (DePoy & Gitlin, 1998). I used an audit trail throughout to document and describe my pragmatic and conceptual decisions in detail. This was particularly pertinent in relation to how each case was selected and the processes of data production, as well as the methods employed, and decisions made throughout the analysis, interpretation and presentation of the findings.

4.5.3.2.3 Thick description

Thick description was used in the construction of the findings of the study as a way of providing readers with a chance to accurately evaluate the interpretations made (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This involved ensuring that the findings provide a detailed and honest description of what I heard and saw during data production (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

4.5.3.2.4 Peer scrutiny

During the process of converting field texts into research texts, I presented iterations of the findings to my doctoral supervisors. This acted as a form of peer scrutiny. My supervisors had experience in this field of scholarship and thus held knowledge about the Quintain (Stake, 1995). Through a process of deliberation, we agreed on the final propositions about the Quintain.

4.5.4 Summary of research processes

Figure 6 represents a visual summary of the research process that has been described in Section 4.5 of this chapter. It shows data production, data analysis and interpretation, and approaches related to ensuring trustworthiness, illustrating the interrelated and iterative nature of these various aspects as an emergent process that resulted in a credible set of findings. This process occurred with each single case, culminating in a final set of findings that was the outcome of the cross-case analysis represented in the last part of the figure.

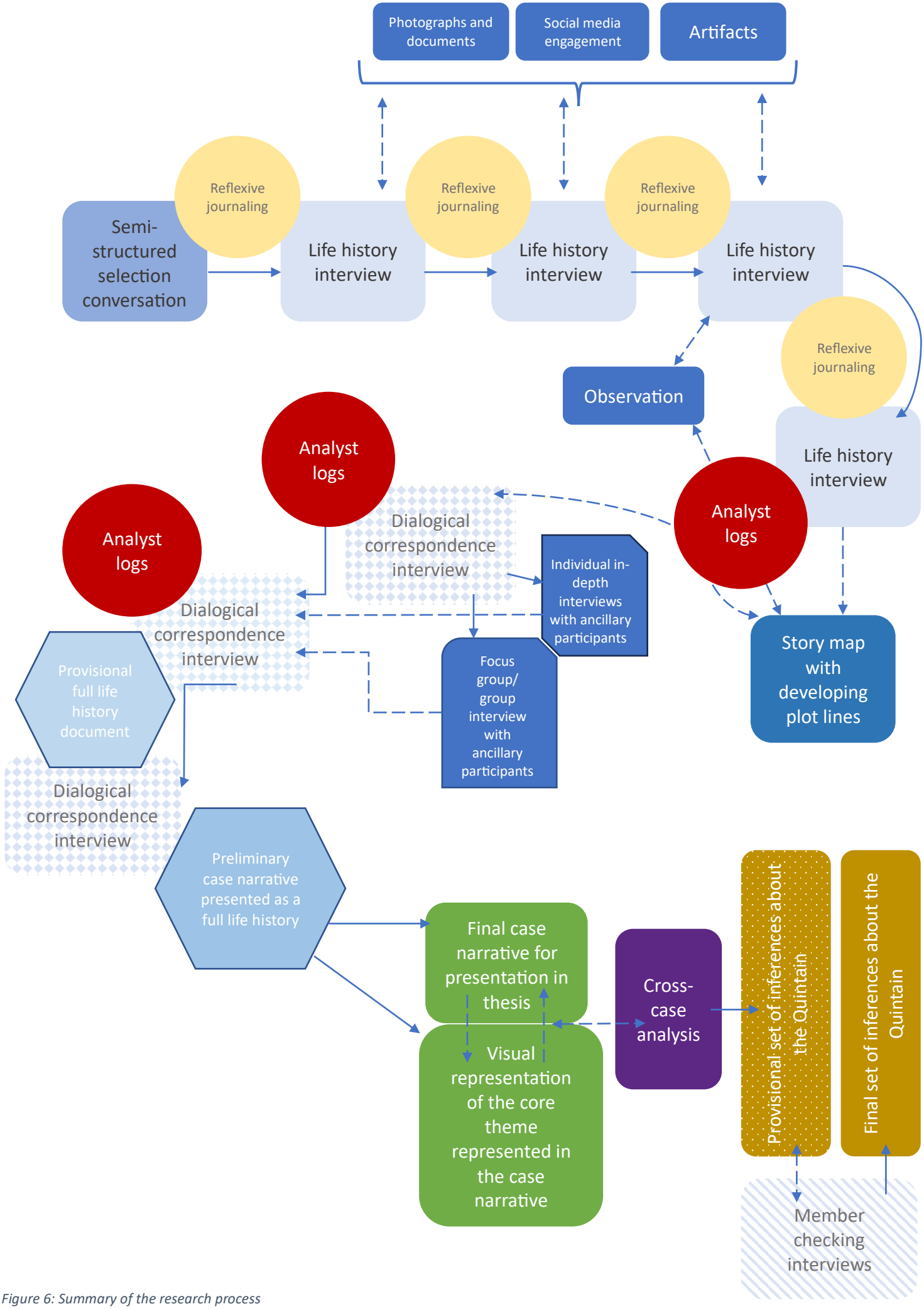


Figure 6: Summary of the research process

4.5.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was granted ethical clearance by the Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town (HREC Ref: 400/2017). The approval letter is available in Appendix F. I upheld the ethical principles of autonomy and informed consent, as well as privacy and confidentiality, in conducting this study. I also managed any known risks and facilitated benefit for the participants as far as was possible. I was guided by the Declaration of Helsinki (World Health Organisation, 2001) in applying these principles. I outline how I did so in the sub-sections that follow.

4.5.6.1 Autonomy and informed consent

Upholding the principles of autonomy and informed consent occurs through ensuring participants' right to voluntarily choose to commit to participating in a research study, after carefully considering all necessary information related to the implications of this decision, including the associated risks and benefits (World Health Organisation, 2001). The practices that were used to uphold these principles were tailored for different participants in the study, as indicated in what follows.

4.5.6.1.1 Selection Advisors

Selection advisors were known to me, and in two of the three cases we shared a mutually beneficial relationship. In the third case the selection advisor was someone who I had been put in contact with. I was confident in their ability to assist with the selection of primary participants in ways that would not force potential participants to choose to participate. Selection advisors were also capable of ensuring confidentiality and managing the recruitment of participants sensitively.

I sent them a written information letter about the study, inviting their participation in it (see Appendix G). Thereafter I met with each of them to discuss their participation if they showed an interest in assisting. Each selection advisor was genuinely excited about the

epistemological value of the study and was keen to contribute. Each selection advisor signed a consent form and confidentiality agreement that acknowledged their obligation to hold any information about primary participants' identities confidential (also available in Appendix G).

4.5.6.1.2 Primary participants

Since each primary participant was approached to participate in the study through a selection advisor who was known to the participant personally, care was taken when briefing selection advisors regarding avoiding coercion of potential participants. Selection advisors understood that they should not force any potential participant to participate against their will. The selection advisor only obtained the primary participant's permission to be contacted by me. This ensured that I had some control when contacting potential participants and ensuring that they were genuinely interested in participating and did not feel compelled to do so. Once I had contacted primary participants, I sent them all the necessary information about the study (see Appendix H), giving them sufficient time to go through this information and ask any questions they may have had. We communicated with each other in writing.

The consent process occurred in two steps:

1) Each primary participant agreed to participate in the selection conversation with the researcher. At the commencement of the interviews, I gave each participant the opportunity to ask any further questions that they had and to confirm whether they were still happy to proceed, bearing in mind that it did not mean that they would enroll as a participant in the full study. It was important that the participant consented to this interview and its recording (see Appendix I) because it revealed personal details about their lives.
2) Each primary participant's involvement in the full study was confirmed by having a frank conversation to confirm their suitability. All three primary participants that were approached were suitable candidates, but it was important that they did not

feel obliged to continue their participation. I focused on primary participants' autonomy to choose to participate during the semi-structured selection conversation and made sure that they understood that they were not disappointing me in any way if they chose not to participate. I emphasised that it was possible for them to withdraw at any time if they so chose, without negative consequence. I also clearly explained the minor risks attached to participating during this selection conversation. Each primary participant signed an additional consent form to indicate their agreement to participate in the full study (see Appendix J). No primary participants withdrew from the study.

4.5.6.1.3 Ancillary participants

As indicated in Section 4.4.1 (see Table 3), different ancillary participants were approached to become part of the study. Each of these individuals had full autonomy in their decision to participate. Care was taken in approaching these individuals to avoid them feeling obliged to consent. The relationship that the primary participant in each case held with each ancillary participant determined how this needed to be done. In some instances, it was better for me to approach potential ancillary participants, and in others, it was better for the primary participant to approach them. A decision was made together with the primary participant regarding the best way to do this to avoid coercion. If an ancillary participant agreed to consider participating, I shared an information sheet (Appendix K) with them and gave them an opportunity to ask any questions that they had. When they agreed to participate, they provided consent prior to data production (Appendix K). They also signed a confidentiality agreement that outlined their commitment to hold the primary participant and other ancillary participants' identities in confidence (see also Appendix K). Whilst they understood that they could withdraw at any time, they also knew that if this withdrawal occurred after data production, it would be difficult to exclude the understanding that they had contributed to. However, they knew that should they withdraw their names and the actual data they had shared directly would be excluded. None of these provisions were necessary because no ancillary participants withdrew their participation.

4.5.6.1.4 Observational spaces

When relevant and feasible, the primary participants and I collaboratively identified potential observational contexts that contributed to building an understanding of their life histories. Two contexts were selected for this purpose in Karlee and Mayan's cases. In these cases, both primary participants negotiated the observational episode on my behalf, as this was seen to be most appropriate. The information sheet about the study and the place of the observational episode was shared with necessary parties who were to be involved. Some of the episodes involved multiple people, and we could not always account for who would be present. However, as per the study approval from the Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee I was not required to seek individual consent from all who might be involved because the purpose of observation was not to comment on the identities and actions of those who were present, and the emergent data would not compromise anyone in any way, nor identify them. I thus ensured that all those who were necessary to liaise with regarding the observation (seen as the gatekeepers influencing access to the space) were well-briefed and had an opportunity to indicate if they were not happy to proceed or if they thought the observation would compromise any person who may be present. All parties, however, were very happy to go ahead with the observation and understood its purposes well. Appendix L includes the information letter that was used to negotiate the observational episodes.

As was indicated in the section on data production, Nomlanga chose not to include observation. She was concerned that her exposure as a participant to acquaintances, particularly in her work context, may reveal details about her life that she was not comfortable with revealing. To uphold Nomlanga's autonomy to choose how data production occurred I therefore excluded the generation of this field text in the construction of the story of her case.

Permission to observe the interactions that occurred on the primary participants' social media accounts was granted by each of them and they consented to this as part of their overall participation in the study (see Appendix J). Since these are viewable because of the primary participant's permission it was not necessary to obtain permission from others who

may make contributions to these. This did not compromise anyone concerned as the intent was not to code this data or reveal other people's identities. Rather it was to build an understanding of each primary participant's life.

4.5.6.2 Privacy and confidentiality

The protection of the identity of participants required careful consideration due to the use of narrative methods (Plummer, 2001). Every effort was made to change details of the primary participants' stories, without mitigating the truthfulness of the data. This included using pseudonyms for all people identifiable within the data and changing certain names of organisations and details of events where possible. In certain cases, the geographical location was an important element of the story and was difficult to change since it would compromise providing a thick description. In these cases, we changed other names and inconsequential details to obscure the identity of participants. Primary participants were part of the process of assigning pseudonyms and changing these details. Prior to the interviews with ancillary participants, I conferred with each primary participant as to the proposed content that we would cover. This served to ensure that all primary participants were in control of any information shared and they alerted me to any details about their lives that they did not want shared in these spaces. This served to protect the primary participants' privacy, since each case was primarily focused on their lives. The process of dialogical correspondence ensured that primary participants were part of all decisions related to how the final case narratives appear.

All ancillary participants were required to sign a confidentiality agreement regarding the primary participants' participation and their obligations towards upholding confidentiality (see Appendix K) and all selection advisors indicated on their consent form their agreement to hold the identities of primary participants in confidence (see Appendix G). A confidentiality agreement was also signed by the person I employed to transcribe the raw interview data, the artist I commissioned, and a writing coach that supported my development of the full life histories and case narratives (see Appendix M).

All data produced in this study, including its copies, and the various consent forms were stored in hard copy in a locked location to which only I had the key. All electronic data was stored in password protected folders to which only I had access. Any copies of electronic data that the data transcriber had access to were erased from their device upon completion of the transcription.

4.5.6.3 Managing risks and benefits

The time-consuming nature of the data production processes posed a potential inconvenience to all primary participants in the study. The information sheet clearly outlined this at the outset of the research, and I ensured that primary participants fully understood what they were consenting to before making the commitment to participate. To minimise the inconvenience to primary participants I prioritised their needs in the negotiation of times, space and venues for data production (Atkinson, 1998). Despite the time-consuming nature of the study all primary and ancillary participants appeared to enjoy our interactions together and seemed satisfied by their contribution to this knowledge-generation project. Upon concluding the member checking process with ancillary participants, some indicated their satisfaction with having been involved.

I always checked with participants about any costs that they had incurred in meeting data production commitments and, where necessary, provided reimbursement for these. This was not extensive and often took the form of giving participants a lift somewhere. I saw this as an advantage as it provided me the opportunity to engage further with my participants and get to know them in ways that supported data production. I always arranged to have refreshments available for participants when we met. However, many of my primary participants saw the research as a partnership and sometimes they insisted on providing the refreshments. In these cases, I saw it appropriate to allow them to contribute in these ways as it was part of building a relationship that served the research process well.

Although it was possible for the recounting of participants' experiences of vulnerability to cause them distress – and this did happen on occasion – I was always careful to provide space during the interviews for participants to share their emotions and vulnerability freely. I invited

any emotions into the process of data production and provided ways to unpack these. This provided a supportive space and some of the primary participants commented on the healing nature of the research process during the dialogical correspondence interviews. None of the participants wished to seek further opportunities for support thereafter, using other resources. This confirmed the benefits of narrative research for the primary participants through the approaches I used because "when it comes to telling and sharing a life story, no other interview could be more personal, more intimate, for the person doing the sharing" (Atkinson, 2012, p. 116). All the primary participants indicated that the research provided an opportunity to validate their experiences and evaluate what they had achieved in their lives (Atkinson, 1998).

Even though every effort was made to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants there was still some minor risk to confidentiality associated with participating in the study. In narrative work participants are often easily identifiable given that their life story might be known to others when disseminating the research findings. All participants were fully aware of this risk prior to consenting to participate. As a trusting relationship was built with each primary participant, they chose to share certain experiences off the record. This provided me greater insight into participants' life histories, and I managed the exclusion of this information carefully, ensuring that it did not influence the knowledge generation process substantially, but also upheld my ethical obligation to the participants.

Whilst there were no direct benefits promised to any of the participants within the study, the process of data production gave rise to documenting each primary participants' full life histories and the artworks that offered a visual representation of each case narrative. Each primary participant was presented with a full personal digital copy of the case narrative that documented their life history with all names unchanged. Each participant was also presented with their artwork, framed in a style of their choice. Each participant found this valuable and appreciated it.

A potential broader benefit of conducting this research included the ways in which the findings could be used to support the development of policy for youth and critical occupational therapy interventions that create opportunities for the social inclusion of young womxn from

and in marginalising contexts. Whilst the material benefits to all participants in this study were limited, this larger, societal-oriented benefit supported the need for the study to be done.

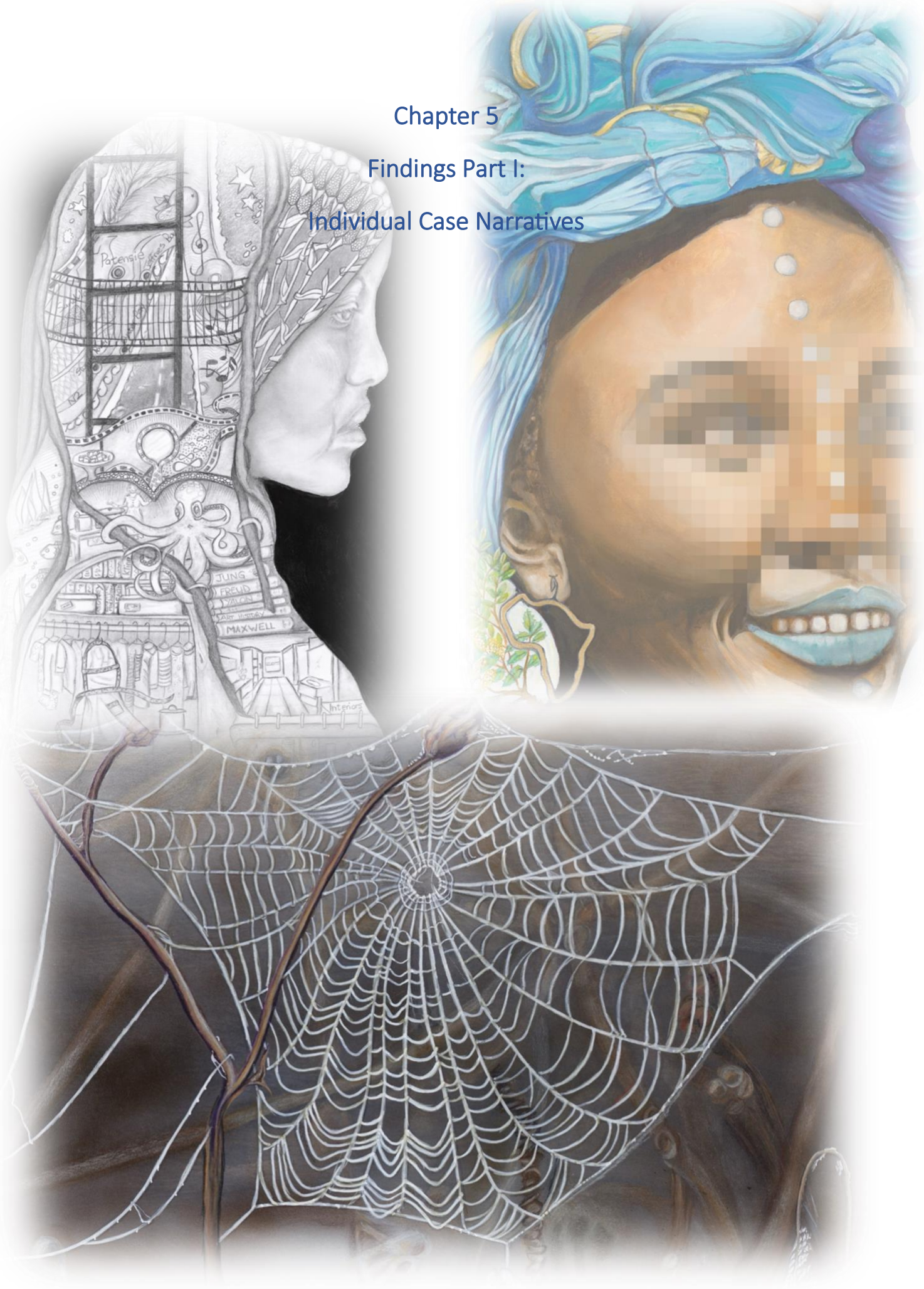
4.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has detailed the selected research methodology, demonstrating its appropriateness for exploring the phenomenon and showing the care that was taken in implementing the research process that generated the necessary data for this study. Chapter Five and Six follow, sharing the outcomes of the different phases of the analytic process. Given the rigorous research process applied, the reader can be certain that these findings are a faithful representation of the manifestation of the Quintain within young womxn's lives.

Chapter 5

Findings Part I:

Individual Case Narratives



Karlee's Story:

The collective agency of a web of connectedness

Chapter 1: Being invisible and getting 'seen'

Doing the 'headwork'

As I grew, I learnt to be noticed 'just enough'. I am an introvert, so it came natural to not want to stand out *too* much. The old-fashioned ways in which my grandmother raised me made this way of being feel comfortable, so it kind of became instinctual.

In school I avoided peer pressure as much as possible and didn't become 'naughty'. I learnt how to develop friendships that allowed me to have friends, but not *best* friends. I always had my group of friends, but I didn't see them outside of school. You *had* to socialize with your best friends and participate in what they were doing without reservation. It's usually the negative things that get you noticed in Lavender Hill. As early as primary school, some of my friends wanted to be noticed for doing wrong things, like bunking or coming late to school. I think it was then that I decided to rather not have close friends.

Making it possible to not have to stand out: Kristin

Growing up, my sister, Kristin, and I were each other's other halves.

> "There goes the big one and the thin one," people would say, when they saw us walking.

They would expect to see us together because that's how it was. If it came to her last breath, Kristin would give that to me.

I understood that, in Lavender Hill, I should know how to stand up for myself and, when provoked, how to fight. But this was not who I was in the world. Kristin made it possible to let go of that expectation because she was always there to fight *for* me. Kristin left school at the end of primary school and started to work when she was sixteen. Life was tough and she didn't want that for me, so she always pushed me to work hard and focus on school. My granny wove a kind of safety net around us so when she passed, Kristin almost naturally fell into the role of making sure I was okay.

Marked as different and deserving

From primary school I was a top achiever, first or second in my class. When it came time for it, the decision about which high school I should attend was carefully considered. The deliberations were around *which* school I should attend and not *whether* I should attend. There was nothing stopping me from going to high school and my grandma was all for it. Although there was a high school in Lavender Hill, my parents and my grandma felt there were a lot of stories going on there. I ended up attending Strandvlei High, a school just outside of Lavender Hill.

In high school, I continued to achieve academically. I just wanted my certificates every year. I approached my schoolwork with a fierceness that was not matched by many around me. I was a teacher's pet for always doing my homework. This made me stand out just enough to be noticed and awarded for it. I became a prefect in primary and high school.

Over some time, an expectation developed that that was just the way things were. Although my younger brother was awarded for just passing, I was never rewarded for any of my achievements. People expected me to 'just do well'. *I* expected me to always do well. My mother noticed how this way of being stood out compared to what the other kids did. My father could see I was striving for something.

Being offered 'life-lines': Mr. Coetzee & Mr. Abrahams

It felt like a huge catastrophe in Grade 9 when I failed Maths one term. I cried a lot of tears.

Then, in Grade 10, I met Mr. Coetzee who started to develop my love for Maths again. He'd take us to his house on Saturdays or after school, a whole group of us on the back of his bakkie and he would give us extra lessons for free. My marks improved again, and I would always compete for first place in the top ten with my rival Natalie.

In Grade 11, one of the teachers called us top achievers together. She asked us if we wanted to study teaching and spoke to us about the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme (FLBP):

> *High-achieving students are given generous full-cost bursaries to undertake initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in priority phases and subject areas to address both supply and quality issues in the education system. In return, recipients of the bursary are expected to teach in public schools for a period equal to the number of years they have received funding*[11].
>
> *The FLBP is an important mechanism to address shortages in teacher supply in South Africa… it is an appropriate tool for meeting the policy goals of an increased supply of high-performing ITE graduates for the education system*[12].

That time, teaching was actually my second choice. Thinking about the money, I thought I should be an accountant. The teacher referred us to Beta Primary's[13] principal because he had the forms for the bursaries. Three of us from Strandvlei went to the school to see him and he gave us the information we needed. Mr. Abrahams, our principal at the time, helped us to complete the necessary forms to apply to study teaching at Stellenbosch University. But when my application came back, I was unsuccessful because I didn't have three subjects on higher grade. Mr. Coetzee couldn't understand how they could have refused me. When I had made my subject choice in Grade 9, I had been thinking about what I was good at, not about what the requirements were for university. I decided then to change my biology to

[11] Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Implementation Evaluation. Policy Summary, Executive Summary and Summary Report. 31 March 2016, Prepared for the DPME and DBE by JET Education Services. Quote drawn directy from p. 10.
[12] Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Implementation Evaluation. Policy Summary, Executive Summary and Summary Report. 31 March 2016, Prepared for the DPME and DBE by JET Education Services. Quote drawn directy from p. 8.
[13] Beta Primary was a school nearby in an adjacent geographical area.

higher grade[14] in matric so I could meet the requirements. I wasn't really into biology, but I thought I will do it because I *have to* get in somewhere. At one point I said to my mom,

"I think I'm seeing myself at home next year."

"My kind os het 'ie geld'ie[15]," she replied sadly.

That time it was after my father lost his leg and my sister was unemployed. When our matric[16] results came out, Mr. Abrahams said he's going to write a letter to the university to explain that my previously unsuccessful application was because of the higher grade issue and that this had now been rectified. He sent them my matric certificate to appeal to them to accept me. I got an sms on the same day to tell me that I was successful in my application for the FLBP! I thought that it also meant I was accepted into Stellenbosch.

My family saw this as huge because it was *the only* opportunity for me.

Chapter 2: 'Being positioned' and 'positioning'

Early days and grounding ways with my grandma

My granny was the centrepoint of our family. Kristin, my granny, and I were always a tight, little family all on our own. We had a special kind of closeness. Even though my sister and I had our own place to sleep we would go sleep behind my granny's back every night. As I grew up, I realised that my granny was a phenomenal woman and that she was raising us for the better. I could really see the way she struggled to make things work for us. She had made the decision to take me and my sister to live with her when we were very small. My father was a kind of Casanova at that time and my parents weren't in such a good space. There was a time when my daddy was drinking a lot and got himself into some dangerous situations. I

[14] In the past, in the South African education system, subjects could be taken either on Higher Grade or Standard Grade. A certain number of subjects on Higher Grade were often required for entry into certain degree programmes.
[15] Afrikaans for "My child we don't have money."
[16] Matric is the final year of secondary school in South Africa.

just understood my grandma's part and that she had wanted us to be in a stable house to protect us. Our house was small, but inside there was a lot of love.

My granny had very strict boundaries. When my cousins came over to play, we used to stand on the fence and look out into the street. That was the closest we could get to the outside world. Luckily, we had quite a big yard. We used the space to play kennetjie[17] and school-school. I was always insistent that I be the teacher.

When I started to see the bad things that were happening for my cousins, I started to think it's better to endure that way of raising me than end up like that. I knew what to do, knew right from wrong. My granny always used to say that the children in the neighbourhood were ougat[18]. I believed that was the truth and I knew that wasn't me. So - I was *always* very in my little box.

In the year I turned sixteen, my granny passed away on my birthday. It was the same as losing a mother. And I kept wondering, "What's going to happen to my sister and me?"

Hinting towards the future

In Grade 9, Next Generation, a local community organisation in Lavender Hill, had sent a notice out to our school about recruiting volunteers for their holiday programme. My friends and me thought that we would check it out. Reluctantly, my granny let me do it. The holiday programme is where my passion for teaching really started and I think it's then that I thought about being a teacher. It was amazing for me to see that the children were actually interested in spending their time there during the holiday. It was also a time when I adapted to becoming more talkative because I had to work with children. We did academic work, like maths and spelling, we did painting, and we played lifeskills games that were about making the right choices, protecting their bodies, and knowing when to say no. There were learners

[17] "A children's game where a short stick is flipped into the air by a longer stick, batted and hopefully caught by 'fielders'" (https://www.yourdictionary.com/kennetjie).

[18] "A child that acts older than their age; has sexual inclinations" (http://capeafrikaans.blogspot.com/p/cape-flats-dictionary.html).

there who had problems at home, and I would spend time speaking to them. Even though I was a child back then, I felt very mature.

Self-reflective 'positioning': Using everyday opportunities to support myself and becoming my own best friend

In Grade 11 and 12 I decided to be a working girl on weekends at my uncle's tuckshop in Lavender Hill. I knew I would need to pay to go on my Grade 11 camp. My parents couldn't afford that. I would take my homework with me and study between helping the people who came to the shop. The extra money meant that I could pay for my camp and buy myself a school tracksuit. I also saved up to buy me Buccaneers[19] school shoes and a Karrimor[20] school bag.

I didn't have much guidance, but the little that I got I made use of. I was very focused, and I knew I wanted to do something with my life. It's hard to say whether I was doing this intentionally, but I do remember dreaming of the future. My mommy recalls a day when I was watching a movie about university students. I told her that I was going to go to university one day. She always wanted something more for me, and she wanted to make that happen, but she didn't always know how.

I considered myself my own best friend in a way. At my twenty-first birthday party I had an awards theme. These birthdays are a big deal in our community. We like to celebrate things like that, and we go big. If you considered pure, that is, like you haven't had children and you not messed up as they would say. I qualified because I had those markers of 'purity' that indicated I was on the right path as a young person.

I printed out certificates and carefully wrote out the different awards for people as part of my theme. After presenting my late granny and my parents with their certificates, I said:

[19] A particular brand of school shoes considered 'cool' in the community.
[20] A particular brand of school bag considered 'cool' in the community.

"This award is for my friend, for my best friend."

"Oooh," I heard people whisper, "It's gonna go to Ruby."

Ruby was one of my friends when we were studying teaching, but even she had not come through for me in our last year when we had to find and travel to our teaching practicals together. She had said she would be able to help me but in the end she let me down.

"No, no!" I said quickly. "This award is for myself!"

People giggled and I know I was really savage[21] to do it, but it really was my truth. I *am* my best friend. I give myself my own advice, helping myself to think through things.

Chapter 3: Leaning into and improvising with and through the web of connectedness

Finding ways into *the only* opportunity through relationship: Mommy, other Carly and Mr van Rensberg

My mom was a cleaner and one of her employers was a private psychology practice owned by Mr. van Rensburg. Another psychologist – 'other' Carly – was part of the practice. Carly and Mr. van Rensburg seemed to take an interest in me. I would visit the practice with my mother during school holidays and both liked to ask me things. Like how it was at school and how exams went. They asked about what I thought my future held for me.

My mom had formed close relationships with her employers. Standing with broom in hand and ready to clean, other Carly and my mom would have fat chats about anything and everything. My mom always spoke about my potential, took my school reports to show them, and told them about how my teachers saw something in me. Mr. van Rensburg helped out with my school fees in high school and always said I could apply for a bursary one day.

[21] A colloquial term used that approximates the idea of 'being mean'.

My mom and I were always really lost when it came to how to make sure I could study further.

"Oooh my kind[22], I don't know anything about this," she would always sigh.

So, my mom would take all the university and bursary application paperwork for Carly and Mr. van Rensburg to look at and the three of them would figure things out together. They explained a lot to my mom about how the different bursary options worked.

Feeling my way: Making *the only* opportunity work and keep working

On the day I heard I had gotten the Funza Lushaka, I went with my 'top ten' rival – Natalie – to Stellenbosch. Her dad had a bakkie and he took us to go register. I didn't realise I hadn't been accepted but they were probably allowing walk-ins for registration if they had space. I'm not sure if that *was* the case, but that's how it worked out in the end. I just followed what Natalie and her dad did.

That Monday they looked for space for us in residence and on Tuesday I moved in and started orientation. It happened so fast it seems crazy that it all fell into place. My mom was amazed at how I sorted myself out, going without her and with somebody else's parent. I didn't even ask her and my dad because they couldn't help me with registering. She beams with pride whenever she tells the story of how I walked that path open for others in our family.

Watching and adjusting

When our classes started, Natalie and I had to look at our maps and find our first lecture room. We had missed the part of orientation where we see where our classes are. I was freaked out in my first lecture. I had so many questions running through my head. Do you

[22] Afrikaans for 'child'.

put your hand up to ask a question? Why are people on their cell phones? Isn't that wrong? Why are people eating their lunch in class? I didn't have anyone in my family who could tell me what this is about, what you need to do and all that. This was an opportunity that was so foreign to us.

I really had to come by with little at varsity, but it didn't always feel like that. I spent a lot of time in my room with my books, continuing the trend of working hard and thinking about how I would (or would not) socialize with my friends. My mom really struggled to give me money for clothes and toiletries, but she did what she could. I think she always wondered if the reason I stayed in my room was because I had so little compared to the other students.

The first year of FLBP funding didn't cover everything I needed, so at the end of the first year my mom had to ask Mr. van Rensburg to lend her the money to cover the deficit so that the university would release my academic results. The bursary amount increased each year though, so eventually it covered everything with a bit left over for books. Both of my mom's employers continued to be present throughout my degree. It was fortunate that my mom could always go to them when she felt stuck with needing to help me to get something. Behind the scenes my mother gave updates to other Carly and she, in turn, gave these to her husband, Ian. When my mom would say that she couldn't get me something I needed, Carly would talk to Ian and Ian would say:

> "Why you even talking to me about it? Just give her R200 if you can."
>
> "But are you sure?" Carly would ask. "Are we ok?"
>
> "Yes, yes, yes, just do it."

And even when my mom didn't ask, every now and again other Carly and Ian would pop R100 into my mom's account, just to tide me over when things were hard. Other Carly was quite proud that I was going to the same university that she had gone to. It's weird to think that after seeing her at my mom's work as a child, I never saw her in person. She kept in

touch with where I was at first through my mommy, and later by connecting through social media.

Conflicting agendas and navigating bureaucratic inefficiencies of *the only* opportunity

The FLBP said that it would help me to get placed in a teaching post at the end. In our final year of studying, we had to apply for posts for the following year. I applied at Seaview Primary. I got shortlisted and the interview went well, but I never ever heard back from them. I was still focused on applying in and around Lavender Hill, because I was dreaming of all the things I could do to give back to the community. I applied at Deensie Primary too but never heard back from them either. I felt a bit demotivated, although all my friends from varsity were struggling to get posts too.

The FLBP didn't seem to have support in place to ensure that I would get a job. It was the Department of Basic Education's role to place us. This made sense in the context of the FLBP programme methodology because the main goal was to address the critical shortage of teachers in our country[23]. Creating *the* opportunity for me was just an offshoot of this.

In an evaluation report of the FLBP they spoke about the absence of a tracking mechanism[24] and the lack of placement so the experience was not unique to me but it was disappointing:

> *We have noted, however, that in the absence of a tracking mechanism the proportion of FLBP graduates who have fulfilled their service obligation is not known[25].*

[23] Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Implementation Evaluation. Policy Summary, Executive Summary and Summary Report. 31 March 2016, Prepared for the DPME and DBE by JET Education Services. See first paragraph, p. 11.
[24] Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Implementation Evaluation. Policy Summary, Executive Summary and Summary Report. 31 March 2016, Prepared for the DPME and DBE by JET Education Services.
[25] Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Implementation Evaluation. Policy Summary, Executive Summary and Summary Report. 31 March 2016, Prepared for the DPME and DBE by JET Education Services. Quote drawn directy from p. 12.

The collective creates a 'placeholder' opportunity

Before I knew it the new academic year had started, and I didn't have a post. I went through a very emotionally challenging time. It was so difficult to make sense of this situation. I had worked so, so hard only to get to this point where I felt like I couldn't go further. My own hard work couldn't help me anymore. It was a torturous time in my life.

Carly carefully coached my mom about the best ways to help me to cope and get through things:

> "Well, from a psychological perspective this is what you can do, this is what you can potentially say, this is how you deal with someone who's, who's feeling you know, ah I don't know what to do anymore. But the main thing is you've got to speak to her mom-to-daughter, mom-to-friend, whatever works for you. Put it in your language so that she'll know it comes from you. You can't just parrot my words back to her because it won't work."

She really helped my mom to manage her own worry about me. She learnt a lot working at that psychology practice and she almost became 'psychologised' over the years. She seemed to absorb what went on in that place.

My dad had had an amputation of his leg and it had also softened him. After that we had grown closer. He became a father that could encourage me a lot and he was very open and would just listen to Kristin and me. We could talk about anything, and he would give me advice about how to work through things when your situation was what it was. My mom said, 'hy kon die blouter oor enigste iets met ons gesels[26]'!

It was so painful at the time, but looking back now I joke about the time being my 'gap year'. My mom used to work weekends and other Carly and her husband, Ian, came into the office one Saturday. They asked:

[26] A similar saying in English is: 'He could talk the hindleg off a donkey about any subject'.

"Is Karlee working already?"

"No. And I'm still so worried about her because she really isn't doing well."

"Tell her to contact me," Ian said.

He was the manager at a company called IT Solutions, a mobile asset management company that developed hardware and software to assist companies in managing their vehicle fleets. Someone was going on maternity leave, so he asked me if I wanted to help out and keep myself busy with that while she was away.

During my time at IT Solutions, I loved working on PC's[27] and I grew my love for IT[28]. I had met my now-husband Liam during my studies and we were dating at that time. Liam's mommy rented a room to me that was close by to work. When my contract came to an end Ian said he would organize another 6-month contract if I wanted one, but I decided to focus on trying to find a teaching position instead. I wanted to give myself two to three months to look for a post and to prepare for the interviews.

I still didn't find anything.

Chapter 4: Actively positioning within and through an opportunity

Strategically creating the future: Mrs Lewendal

In the January of the following year one of my friend's girlfriends contacted me and said that at the school she was working at there was a Grade 6 teacher going for training and they needed someone to fill her post.

[27] Personal computers.
[28] Information technology.

I helped out at Cedarwood Primary for that year, moving through different roles as they required me to. They kept me on after that.

> “What are your plans for next year, Karlee?” Mrs. Lewendal, the deputy headmistress at that time asked me. She had called me in to talk to herself and the headmaster at the end of 2013.
>
> “Well,” I joked. “It doesn’t look good. I may need to throw my CV in by the liquor store.”

I think they already knew that they wanted to keep me on permanently, but they had to follow the protocols of the Department. I think they were feeling out what I was thinking about where to next. At the start of 2014 I was offered a permanent post. I had to apply for it, but I didn’t have to go for an interview. Two years after graduating there was finally a post that was my own!

Mrs. Lewendal is now the principal and always encourages us to look beyond where we currently are. She believes that the younger teachers should get exposure, to build up experience and to build our CVs. I saw how she would maneuver things to push us to apply for available posts and would often appoint us in temporary roles. She believes it is a way to ‘test’ your CV and see what your strengths are and what aspects you may still need to develop. I have really grown as a teacher at Cedarwood, and I have been given good chances to lead different projects. I have even been asked to act as a head of department for my grade twice, and to be a subject head. Mrs. Lewendal has become a mentor to me. I would sometimes sit with her and do timetables and she’ll give me tips on how to do certain things. She would also give me exposure to different tasks, like presenting the school schedule to the Department of Education.

“Don’t just limit yourself to Cedarwood,” she would say, and I could see how the opportunities she was encouraging me to do was helping me to think that way. Her daughter is also studying teaching and I have been guiding and helping her where I can with her degree.

I recently decided to put my CV to the test and applied for an HOD[29] post at Haven Primary. Although I didn't get it, I learnt valuable things, like how to prepare for an interview for an HOD post and understanding what skills they may require from me.

Collectively making the future: Liam and Julia

Liam and I got married at the end of 2018 and our marriage has brought another support system for me. He encourages me and pushes me beyond my limits. I do the same for him. Our daughter, Julia, was born in 2020. When I found out we were having a girl I was very emotional. I realised the big responsibility it was to raise her in a way that I was raised. Or even in a better way. I really want to pass on the value and things I've learnt from the women in my life.

When I visit my family in Lavender Hill today, neighbours and friends tell my parents how they look up to me and how proud they are of me.

> "It just shows there's something good that can come out of Lavender Hill," says my dad. "There's lots of ladies that talk to me and says, 'We are very proud of your daughter, because she's coming home with a car and you must be so proud!' And they say, 'Yoh, that is *our* teacher!'"

Crafting the 'not-yet'

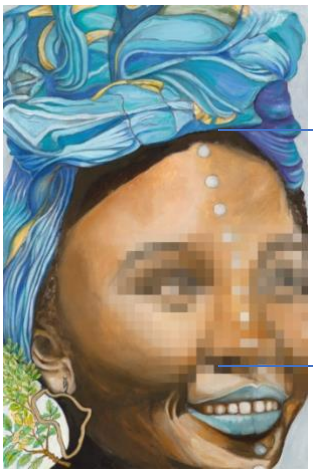
I have been thinking that I might want to do something different going forward. Teaching has become routine, so I am looking at other options. I'm thinking of studying something in IT or starting a business. Or maybe I might combine the two. Maths is becoming a very, very challenging thing at school and parents are becoming anxious because they are unable to help their children, so I just want to try to overcome that obstacle. I'm thinking about

[29] Head of Department.

creating an app[30] with online help for learners so that they can be so independent with maths problems that they don't need help from their parents.

I'm still working on my ideas.

[30] Digital application.



Nomlanga's Story:

Complicitly refusing imposition

Chapter 1: Becoming 'igusha ezibhokweni'[31]

Raised by matriarchs

I grew up in Colosa - a small village in the Eastern Cape. My mother was 17 and my father 20 when I was born. Young parents were commonplace in my village, but at 11 months old my paternal grandmother took me to live with her. Growing up in my grandmother's house I was expected to carry out a hefty proportion of the daily chores. The worst of these, though, *had* to be tending the goats. Those bloody goats were the bane of my life. I hated them with a fierceness that brought out the worst cruelty. My grandmother returned one day after being told by the Headman[32] that I was not taking good care of the goats.

"Nomlanga, what do I hear of the goats eating in other people's gardens?"

Her strong frame towered over my own slight build, an illustration of the undernourishment of my childhood. I tried to answer but, before I could, my grandmother pinched me just above the breast and back bone, turning my skin in opposite directions. I sucked the air into my mouth and tears sprung up in my eyes. My grandmother was old-school. She demanded good sensibilities and an owning of responsibilities. Her love seemed like punishment and I didn't always understand it, but it installed accountability in me for later use. My cousin, Sinako, and I saw my grandmother was strong, and didn't need to depend on a man.

[31] 'Igusha ezibhokweni' is an isiXhosa phrase that means 'the sheep amongst the goats'.
[32] The Headman was the leader in the village.

My father's two sisters, were also an active part of my life. Having been raised by my grandmother, they each embodied a unique strength. Nokwanda - my father's youngest sister - and I share a special bond.

> "They are my products, they came out of these small hands of mine." Nokwanda refers to her part in raising Sinako and me.

When I was much younger, I wanted to find a quicker way to get water rather than having to get it from the river. I attached a long pipe to a tap at my father's house and put two barrels inside the kraal[33] that I could fill up. Girls aren't allowed inside the kraal, especially when you have your period[34]. But I used to go anyway. I didn't care! My grandmother gave me a hard time.

> "Why not? Whose there? The kraal is for cows, and we don't have any cows anymore," I would retort.

Besides, Nokwanda always says that:

> "You don't need a man to be a woman. You don't need anyone, you only need yourself to be a woman."

The value of being 'different'

I always felt like, 'the poor kid' who stood out. When you are poor and bright, people feel sorry for you, but they also kind of like you. Some find you inspiring.

I was an avid artist who loved to draw. When my teachers found out, they called on me across classrooms, requesting the use of my skills whenever a diagram needed to be drawn on their blackboards. I felt special. My high school peers used to call me 'igusha

[33] The kraal is a central enclosure where cattle and sheep are kept. It is usually surrounded by a number of huts in a circular arrangement.
[34] Period is a layman's term for menstruation.

ezibhokhweni' - the sheep amongst the goats. But at some point, as a top student I also felt like I was just too much for the others and they may start hating me, so I did tone it down because I didn't want to lose my friends.

My grandfather had his own room in our house and I found out that there were things in there that I could use. I decided I didn't even need to feel bad about it. After all, this man was an abusive alcoholic and had tormented my grandmother. I stole his Boxer tobacco and sold it to young boys in the village and enjoyed the minor social gains this brought. Sussing out the 'market' was a skill I developed steadily over time.

Chapter 2: Raising the capital to 'talk back'

Playing, and winning, with words

My childhood might have lacked in resources, but the village had opportunities for a young and curious child. Donkey-riding, playing at the river, splashing in the rain and, finding a cow pat to thaw my feet when the icy Winter air had frozen my toes, were always exciting escapades for me. In my early school years I found the treasure of my grandfather's Mills & Boon collection[35] and I started to devour this intriguing discovery one book at a time. Often, I got as far as the third chapter, despite not understanding the stories being told. I poured over the words, sounding them out, becoming familiar with their form and underlining those I couldn't pronounce.

I always loved the idea of learning a new language. Isidubada was a favourite childhood game, involving shifting syllables and calling into existence new words. I was confused as to why others weren't committed to knowing languages apart from those they spoke at home.

"If you don't speak the language of the enemy, how are you gonna stand up against him?" I thought.

[35] The Mills & Boon series includes a large number of fictional romance titles.

'Nothing is for mahala'

I started my secondary school career as a termly boarder at Glesne Combined School[36] in Kamanga Bay, a sleepy coastal village, after one of my great aunts decided she needed to rescue me from the copious adult responsibilities that I was tasked with at home. She feared that I did not have the room to be a child. On my first day at boarding school I looked around me.

"Damn," I thought, "I'm unfortunate."

I lacked in every respect – cheap grooming products, no extra food, no full school uniform. Not in spite of this, but rather, perhaps, *because* of this, boarding school was the perfect place for my ever-developing self-sufficiency to take route, and I evolved into a sharp income-generator. Growing up in my grandmother's house there were always other children who would stay with us. I had to share everything with them, and that made me even more independent because you think to yourself:

"Ok, if I have to share everything, I'm going to have to work for my own stuff."

You actually have to depend on yourself more, especially emotionally, because no one is going to look after you and your emotions.

By the time I got to Glesne's I had learned that 'nothing is for mahala[37]'. So I found ways to make small amounts of money from doing hair. Growing up around my aunts I used to watch them do each other's hair and Sinako provided me with opportunities to practice different styles on her, despite hating it! Word got round and the customers started growing.

Soon I started writing essays for my peers. After I mastered English that is.

[36] Glesne's had grown from a small farm school begun by a local farmer in the early 1990s for the farm workers' children.
[37] This is a phrase which means 'nothing is for free'.

Capturing the enemy's tongue

When I was 13, I started to write poetry and I used to try write in English. My grasp of the language wasn't great, but what I wrote made sense to me. I met Brenda at Glesne's soon after. That girl spoke English like a white person! Brenda approached me one day after listening to me fumbling in English in class:

> "Chommie[38], I realise you are struggling with English."
>
> "Keh, ya, I am, *a lot.*"
>
> "From now on we gonna have any type of conversation in English, okay? The two of us. People are gonna talk, people are gonna hate us for it, they gonna call us names, but it doesn't matter, we not cool anyways. So it won't make any difference in our lives."

I agreed because I was learning not to be one who cared much about what others thought about me.

As I learnt more of the language I slowly mastered its tools. Brenda set me English 'assignments'. I was tasked with comprehending English stories in magazines and looking up words I didn't know in my dictionary. These assignments kept me on my toes. I was so nervous before having to report back on my holiday experiences or respond to Brenda's questions in English. But I responded with determination and slowly it dawned on me:

> "Oh my God," I thought, "This is actually working!"

I started to read more and more in English. It was a pity that there was no library in my village.

[38] Chommie is a slang word for friend.

Working the system

I had one rule when it came to writing for my peers: I would write nothing of mothers. I did not possess the experience to do so. After all, my own mother didn't really give a damn about me. I drew inspiration from what I did know of life and charged two packets of chips for each essay. At some point during this time I realised,

> "Shit! I'm actually really good at writing."

I turned my income-generation into the capital I needed to subsidise my social status. This prompted my transition to being 'cooler' when I was 16. I knew how to work what I had and how to acquire what I needed. One day my Biology teacher exclaimed:

> "You know what, people like Nomlanga, you see them with natural hair and you think they are a trendsetter, when they don't actually have the money to go to the salon."

Chapter 3: Improvising with, and against, expectations

Directed towards 'the right' education

My father was not that attentive, but he had dreams for me that pushed him to action in the early parts of my life. He chose schools for me that he felt would provide something better. He taught me the basics of reading and writing before I started school and told me that he was putting money away for me to become a doctor. It was an expectation as long as I could remember. I believed him about the money. Thank God for NSFAS[39].

With a little help from some friends

At the end of matric I did not do brilliantly. Not enough to become a doctor, but enough to get into university to study for a Bachelor of Science. I thought I could transfer to Medicine

[39] The acronym NSFAS stands for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

later. Young people in my village didn't often go on to study, so the process of applying was unfamiliar. I decided to go to Unitra[40] because it was the nearest school. Just before it was time to start in 2007 my father gave me some money to get to Umtata[41] to apply. It wasn't enough for taxi fare. He told me I was clever and I would figure it out. I ended up hitchhiking.

There were at least 800 people in front of me in that admissions line, but thankfully I met two brothers who were friends from the Amotole School of Progress.

***

I had changed over to Progress after my grade 11 year when my academics had taken a turn for the worst. I had always got awards before that. During grade 10, for the first time, I was processing the abandonment and the neglect in my life. The very first person who *should have* loved me was the first person who abandoned me. Although my grandmother and my aunts loved me I never felt like I belonged because I was 'that' kid who was being done a favour. There were times I felt bullied by some of my aunts because I wasn't even allowed to talk about my mother. I started to feel physically ill in grade 10 and my dad took me to so many doctors until one day one of them said:

"Can't you see that this child is depressed by looking at her face?"

So she called a therapist in town, and I went to see her. I sat down and talked with her and then she called my father and spoke to him. He came out of the rooms a bit later and good Lord! I've never seen him that angry in my life! He asked:

"If you so unhappy, why don't you kill yourself?"

It felt like I vomited my reply.

[40] Unitra was the old University of the Transkei before it was amalgamated with Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon to become Walter Sisulu University.
[41] Umtata is a city in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

"Why don't you kill me? Because you're the main source of my unhappiness."

I don't know where I got the strength because I would never usually think to talk back to him.

Although I got some medication from the therapist I finished it and then didn't continue. When I ended grade 11 on a bad note I wanted to change schools. I think my father's side-chick[42] went to Progress and it was known as a good school. It's a bit blurry how it all came about.

The teachers were younger at Progress so there was a different energy. Most of them weren't qualified and were studying towards their degrees. We felt like we could relate to them. In our culture kids are seen and not heard. We were always scared to ask older teachers questions. If you did, you would get an answer like:

"Where were you when I was speaking? You should have listened!"

***

Luck was on my side the day I went to Unitra.

"What you doing here?" asked one of the brothers. "Didn't you apply? I mean you were one of the bright students."

"Ya, I know, I don't know why I didn't apply."

"Just give us your admission form, make sure that you have it blank."

I didn't even know if I had everything that was needed, but they called me back to write the entrance exam.

[42] The term 'chick' is a slang word used in South Africa to refer to a girl or a woman.

Complications of mismatched expectations

I passed! It was late in January and I still needed to find somewhere to stay. My father paid no attention to these arrangements. Another student was offering places to squat in her room for R150 per month and I took up this chance. Eventually there were six of us in a space made for two. But I was happy. No one was telling me what to do.

What I did not realise at the time was that my freedom would leave a bitter aftertaste. I knew early on that I was pregnant, even before I wanted to admit it. I had the good sense in my denial to exit the party scene, but I also stayed away from school. At least I now had a more legitimate excuse than being hungover or drunk.

My withdrawal from the classroom was unsurprising, but not only related to my pregnancy. The BSc programme was brutal.

> "Lift up your spatulas," my lecturer would command.
>
> "Spatula? Spatula? What is that?" I thought frantically, looking around me and following the actions of my peers so as not to look stupid.

The sheer volume of implements I *should have* known made my stomach turn. I really wasn't coping. The degree didn't match what I was good at, but I was trying my best to make sure that my father liked me forever, because he was the only parent who actually gave a shit about me. Too much freedom coupled with the alienation I experienced provided just the right combination for things to become complicated.

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I felt like my world had come to an end. My father summoned me to return home, which I dutifully did. There was no expectation for young mothers in the village to continue studying after having their child. I felt like *everything* had fallen apart.

Although Nokwanda was hurt when I fell pregnant, she was still supportive.

"Come let's go to Cape Town and you have your baby there," she said one day.

My father tried to stop me going. There's a belief that if you have a baby out of wedlock you have to suffer, you have to be treated differently, so that you learn. Nokwanda was protecting me from this. It was a motherly thing.

Little Sange arrived during 2008. I returned to the village after the birth to continue to experience the difficulties of living in the rural areas. Cape Town wasn't much easier. We stayed in a two-roomed shack[43] together. When it rained water flowed right into our house. We used to joke that we had to cross the Nqabara – a huge river back home – when we went to bed.

When I returned to the village Sinako was there. She would help me with Sange. We shared deep shit together, so for us to sacrifice for each other is not a big deal. Sinako fell pregnant, a year after me. It was much easier to shrug off being judged when the judgement was endured together. Our family don't even discuss black sheep in our presence which means we must be them!

Chapter 4: Negotiating with gatekeepers

Navigating the informal power of private spaces

I despised my father for not letting me go back to school straight after Sange was born. After four months with her, I realised that I loved this little person. But I was still *as* determined to go back to school. When my grandmother asked me why, I spoke my truth:

"This is my only way out of here."

[43] A shack is a term used to denote a small, informal house, usually made out of corrugated iron.

I felt angry and frustrated and I needed to push for what I wanted. That Oprah show I had watched while I was waiting for Sange made me believe that I needed to think positive, that I couldn't keep feeling sorry for myself.

One of my saving graces that year was that my father managed to acquire a small generator so I could charge my phone. Contact with the outside world! Although my life revolved around Sange, I continued with my reading habits. I borrowed books from my grandfather and I used to go to buy some second hand in this store in a nearby town. Books are timeless. They have something to offer no matter when they were written. But I still felt trapped. I didn't know how to broach the subject with my father about returning to school. Feeling I was too clever not to go back, my grandmother intervened.

Towards the end of 2009, my father summoned me:

> "You know, Nomlanga, you should start looking for a school for next year."

A flush of excitement spread over me.

> "And I want you to remember, I'm not doing this because I love you or anything. I'm doing this so that you can be off my payroll."

Jumping bureaucratic hurdles

My stepmother came up with the surprisingly good suggestion that I enrol for a Media and Journalism diploma. I began the frantic search for a new school.

After a botched application process to Rhodes University where I almost submitted a photocopy of my application form because I didn't understand the technicalities of the process, I applied to study Media and Journalism at Walter Sisulu University in East London. If I got in, I would be able to live in East London with my stepmother. Despite my trepidation, it was my best option. I would easily be able to send money and food home for Sange, who would stay with my grandmother.

The day I heard my application was shortlisted I was ecstatic. I was required to write two tests and do an interview. I realised when I got there that I might not have the necessary knowledge to succeed. I smelt like nervous sweat and I was hungry. My breasts were starting to tingle as they filled with milk.

The door to the venue opened. A smart looking dude came out. Wearing a R20 yellow t-shirt from Jet Stores and a faded pair of jeans, I could feel my confidence plummet further. I managed to keep steady and focused though. This guy was saying to everyone that would listen how tough the interview had been. I took my chance:

"What did they ask you?"

"They asked about Media Ethics."

"Ethics," I thought, "What the fuck?"

And then it slowly started to make sense as the storyline about a journalist in one of the Mills & Boon novels came back to me.

"How did you answer?" I asked.

He regaled me well. I hung on his every word, thinking,

"Just keep positive, I am not going to be nervous and scared of these people."

***

In the interview I chose honesty.

"Why should you be admitted to this programme?" one of the members of the panel asked.

> "I'm from the gamadoelas[44] where we get news three weeks too late. We have no electricity, our TV's are decorations. If your phone battery dies you have no chance of knowing what's going on. So I really understand the importance of getting the news to the people, and having the peoples' voice heard. I want to be part of that."

They seemed to appreciate my frankness, but the rest of the interview was gruelling, peppered with terminology that I had not heard before.

> "What does it mean if someone is remanded in custody? When someone is dead, are they deceased or diseased?"

Luckily, I remembered seeing my late aunt's ID with a stamp saying 'deceased' across it. Walking out of the interview I thought how ill-prepared I had been for it. My brain was rusty from the nearly two years I had not been in school. If I had to do it all over again I would do my research. But then again, if I had wanted to prepare more, where would I have gone to do that?

Using powers of persuasion

I was so happy when I received the notification that I had been granted a place. My grandmother had developed my love for stories and so I knew I had chosen a good fit for me. But returning to study again was not easy.

In my first year back I had no money for registration costs upfront. I went to see the Dean and asked her to keep my space open. She agreed. But each year there was no money until March. I had no other way around the situation other than going to the student leaders.

> "Comrade, you know I want to study but I don't have money for registration. What are you going to do?"

[44] Gamadoelas is a colloquial term that is used to refer to a place that is secluded and very far in geographical distance from any of the luxuries of modern living.

And then his hand was on my leg. I knew the drill. My registration depended on it. I had to give this guy hope that he could screw me or I would be back home - the laughing stock of the village.

Never stop hustling

I finished my journalism diploma in the June of 2013 and registered for an additional year at university to convert my diploma into a BTech degree. I no longer enjoyed the financial freedom of the Zuma fund[45].

I took up an internship at a small newspaper in East London. That job was the shittiest job ever. I had a boss who displayed a penchant for sexual harassment and describing the money as peanuts would have been generous. Most of the staff were new graduates to save costs. The internship was supposed to help me establish a position in my field but it was really about cheap labour. I stuck it out because I knew it would be good in the long-run and I was also questioning myself. What kind of an adult would I be if I quit on my very first job? I needed the money because I had a fallout with my father and he would no longer provide any financial support. I had crossed a line by calling him out and he wasn't speaking to me.

I needed to keep studying so I could stay in residence. But I was *so* tired. I wrote the exams, despite never being in class. As suspected, I failed. My life felt like a mess. I decided to drop out, leave my job and head for Cape Town, after Nokwanda agreed that Sange and I could stay with her. I would build a better life for us there, where there were definitely more opportunities.

Weren't there?

[45] The Zuma Fund is a colloquial term for a NSFAS policy which states that "Students who apply at their institution's Financial Aid Office to be on the NSFAS Final-Year Programme have their final-year loans converted into a 100% bursary if they pass all of their final-year courses and qualify to graduate. If they do not pass all subjects, the conversion applicable to general loans is applied" (http://www.nsfas.org.za/content/faqs.html).

Hunting for access points

Being back in the township was not easy, and I soon realised that I had overstayed my welcome.

> "At least you have a diploma, that makes you better off than me," Nokwanda told me.

But I was not sure how *much* better off.

I did aggressively attack the task of finding a job. My weapons were: 1) three library cards so that I could access the internet three times per day; 2) patience in huge amounts to deal with the super slow internet; and 3) a resolve of steel to keep at it when I had applied for so many jobs that I started to get messages back saying they had already received an application from me!

I applied for anything I felt I had a shot at. From housekeeping, to window cleaning, to working at KFC[46]. Whilst having my matric was an advantage, I was careful not to include my diploma. I didn't want them to get any ideas about me being overqualified and thinking that I'm gonna encourage the others to join unions.

I diligently braved the Cape Town rains during my many treks[47] to the library.

> "I'm not going to melt," I thought to myself. "I need to find a job. This is my livelihood."

It was a long six months before anything materialised from this process. I had heard about NGO Pulse[48] from a friend and it eventually came through for me, delivering an option to apply for a job at a large NGO, Nation's Hope. I went into that interview with confidence.

[46] KFC stands for Kentucky Fried Chicken and is a popular fast food chain.
[47] Trek is a colloquial term usually to refer to an arduous journey.
[48] NGO Pulse is a website focusing on issues facing the non-governmental organisation sector. It has a jobs portal that advertises any jobs available at NGO's across South Africa.

Where I lacked in certain skills, I think they saw my capacity to learn and employed me anyway. I have worked for them ever since.

Chapter 5: The never-ending negotiation of re-existence as part of everyday life

I had the good fortune of working for managers at the Nation's Hope who believed in the integrity of other human beings. They found a way to tailor my position for me so that I was able to deliver using my best skills, moving me from a fundraising assistant to a fundraising and communications practitioner, finding the right fit for both me and the organisation. It was a struggle to find this niche, because it didn't immediately exist, but we navigated this path together. I was easy going and went with the flow, but also objected to how things would be done when I saw that as necessary.

People at the organisation saw my strength located in the fact that I will not just accept what you have to say without evaluating things for myself. If you tell me something is a certain way I first want to look and think whether what I'm seeing is that way and not just accept what's in front of me because someone tells me to.

Hurting and healing

Although my job was now better, my life outside of work was not. It was a shitty cocktail of bad relationships and difficult living conditions. I was trying to heal from the way I had learnt to understand love, but I wasn't succeeding. I was raped by one of my ex-boyfriends and I tried to bury it. Refusing to put myself through the humiliation of reporting it, I fell apart at work the next day and admitted what had happened to Becky, my line manager. The Nation's Hope offered to pay for the psychological support I needed. I landed up with a counsellor who was from Zimbabwe. Having someone different worked out really well for me. She didn't focus only on the rape. She wanted to know my background and she sort of unpacked it for me. For the first time I understood what was wrong with me. She recommended a book for me to read called 'Redeeming Love.' Although I was not in the same situation as the main character, I related to problems in the same way that she did. At that time I didn't see

myself as worthy of unconditional love. I was angry at myself for the parts that I've played in the things that I went through. I would ask myself over and over in my head:

> "Why would I let people treat me this way?"

That is why to this day I don't take shit from anyone anymore. I just can't.

Intergenerational 'positioning'

My grandmother used the same approach to raise us as she had experienced as a child. She didn't know any different and neither did I. I felt like we always got the scraps from the elders. I never knew you could choose to put kids first. I learnt from a friend that kids should be our world. Everything is about them. I felt drawn to this way of parenting.

I want to try to protect Sange from some of what I have had to endure. I carefully chose the school she is at now after navigating being rejected by a school that I tried to get her into which had mostly coloured learners. The principal didn't seem to think that we belonged there. She went to the local school for a while, but I decided to take her out and pay for her to go to a private school. It was a big financial commitment, but it was worth it. She was happy there for some time until I learnt that there was some racist bullshit going down there too and I decided to change schools again.

Life's twists, turns and potential trajectories

> "Life is not like a ruler, mos," Nokwanda tells me as we share a drink together. "You go like this in life," she weaves her hands left to right and back and forth, "but you have to be patient, and you have to learn that in every difficulty you learn from life."

In 2019 I had to sell my neat-as-a-pin flat and find somewhere else to live quickly. This meant moving back to the township. I was disappointed at having to do this, but I didn't want to lose on my investment and if I didn't sell it at the time, it would have cost me later. This

decision broke my boyfriend and me. We were both really depressed and he started drinking again. I told him he needed to leave.

I try to remind myself that at least I still have a roof over my head, I still have a job and I'm still able to live my life the way I want. But I don't own a home, which is something I want. I've met a new guy and we've been together almost a year now, but I'm not sure I see a future. I'm always looking for ways to make my life better and he's not as ambitious. I've been poor all my life, so I just can't let myself remain like that if I can help it.

I've decided to go back to school, and I've applied at UNISA[49] for a Bachelor of Arts and Law because it's broader than specializing in one field. I don't want to confine myself. Lord knows how I'm going to pay for my fees though! NSFAS won't pay for a second time.

I'll just have to make it work.

[49] The University of South Africa – a distance learning tertiary institution.

Mayan Ozayo's Story:

Making Magic through Meaning

Chapter 1: Precarity as a prompt to 'figure things out'

My mom had all the faults in the world, but in that she was the most perfect mother because she taught me the *real* life-lessons that I needed to learn. I could not tell my story without her being the anchor of it.

They called my mom Sana. She was sixteen years old when she had me. I never met my father. My mom was going to give me up for adoption, but changed her mind. She decided to take me to live with her family in Patensie[50].

> "No," my grandmother said. "I am not taking this child because I can see history repeating itself. I raised her mother, now her mother is bringing me a baby."

When I was almost two years old, my grandmother and Papa George, her soon-to-be husband, were visiting people close to where my mother and I were living in Missionvale[51]. Papa George saw me, so dirty and playing outside with a grimy doll. He worked on my grandmother, convincing her to take us in.

[50] Nestled Patensie is a very small town which is also called Citrus Valley and is situated at the foot of the Baviaanskloof Mountains, close by to Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (http://www.maphill.com/south-africa/eastern-cape/peddie/patensie/maps/shaded-relief-map/; https://www.sa-venues.com/attractionsec/gamtoos-valley.php#:~:text=Lying%20adjacent%20to%20the%20Garden,of%20cultivated%20fields%20and%20orchards; https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/baviaanskloof-region-eastern-cape).

[51] Missionvale is a township on the outskirts of Gqeberha (https://www.givengain.com/cause/missionvale) , one of the smaller coastal cities in South Africa.

Mama is what I called her. She was actually my mom's aunt. She spoke isiXhosa and gave me a new name upon our arrival – Ozaya[52]. She said she didn't know these strange white people's names. You always knew you were loved by Mama, but you also knew when she was unhappy about something. She reminded me constantly *not* to land up like *my* mother.

When Mama married Papa George, we moved to Humansdorp[53]. He was trying to give us a better life. My aunty decided to come too. She was Mama's only daughter and also like a mother to me. Sana was always in and out of our lives, so I moved between their two houses. My aunty was not as strict and there were less chores to do when I lived there, but there were also less resources. When things got really bad, she would send me back to live with Mama.

A space is carved out for sense-making through reciprocity in relationships

Sana was a huge burden for my family and they made sure I knew it. The weight of my mother's way of being in the world was burdensome, but I did not view *her* as a burden. She provided me with gifts in the form of everyday wisdom and wrote me detailed letters in her absence. The year I turned six, Sana was admitted to hospital for Tuberculosis. You could apply for your child to come and live with you in hospital. On many occasions my mom read to me, planting the seeds of a love for reading. When I started school, my teachers were so impressed! I performed well in primary school, but my family never came to prizegivings.

I met Mrs Lovell when I started computer lessons at school. When she spoke you could just drown in her voice because it was so calming and I would just sit there and think, "Oh, I wish this was my mom." I know that sounds bad, but I was drawn to her because she had so much patience and a caring, gentle nature. She would instinctively know when I needed something. I felt she was like my 'school mommy.' At the beginning of each year, Mrs. Lovell would ask:

[52] Ozaya means 'the one that is coming'.
[53] Humansdorp is a small town in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

"How many prizes are you going to get this year?

"Hmmm, I'm not sure," I would reply.

"No, you need to be sure. Decide how many diplomas you want and for which subjects, and then work towards that."

As I grew older at school, particularly when I was in her class in grade 5, Mrs Lovell had many conversations with me.

"We don't choose our circumstances, but we can choose how we want our lives to be," she would say. "Maybe you don't have control now, but one day you will."

We would talk about the future and how things were at home, without dwelling on what was wrong. She made me feel like I was not a victim and that it was possible to do more.

Making sense of collective ideologies

Those views stood in stark contrast to the views of my family who knew I should go to school but didn't understand the value that I placed on it. In both primary and high school, I was deputy head girl, but I never really felt it was an achievement because my family never mentioned it. When I would sit and read, Mama would get frustrated and say:

"Why are you sitting with your books when you need to be cooking?"

The only time I could do schoolwork was when all chores were done. I would wait for everyone to be in bed and turn on the light. I would hear Mama's voice:

"Why are you wasting electricity?"

Although I might construct a response, I could never voice it. Finding my way around this problem involved asking our next-door neighbour, one of my high school teachers, to speak

to Mama and explain the importance of studying at night. Were it not for the fact that Mama had a deep respect for teachers I might have never been able to continue benefitting from the joy of books that my mother had ignited.

Although I never told anyone about my situation at home, members of my primary school community could sense that I needed help. I would assist Aunty Ronda with preparing the food for the feeding scheme and I would get something extra. I developed a sense of reciprocity in that I would find small ways to give back, like helping clean the kitchen.

A key epiphany brings clarity

My childhood was so noisy. If there was opportunity to be drinking, my aunt would take it and spontaneous parties would spring to life. Drinking was an everyday kind of a thing for Sana. She saw my aunt as a mother figure and she would come home some nights and cause chaos. *Now* I understand that she was looking for attention, but I couldn't comprehend it then. I think I ended up feeling like I needed to be *her* mom.

One night my mom was inside the house going on and my aunt just couldn't take it anymore. She called the police.

> "Sana you need to go, take everything and go!" shouted my aunt, packing my mom's bags.

My mom was adamant she was not leaving without me. As the police pressured her, she pulled me off the bed. I remember holding on and the police were grabbing at her. I don't remember for how long I was being pulled. She kept shouting over and over:

> "You're coming with me!"

I felt like this human shield because Sana knew that her family let her back home because I was staying there. And that's when something clicked in me. I was realising for the first time that *I* needed to be the one to take care of *me.*

I was only twelve years old when I got my first formal job, but I had already been working a long time before that.

Noticing chances for survival

Mama always said there was no such thing as handouts, and it wasn't in my personality to beg. If I needed anything extra, I needed to find that myself. Like other young girls, I liked nice things. Mama had this perfumed body lotion that she had been given as a gift and I used to use from that. One day she said:

> "I noticed that you are using from this lotion, you need to buy your own. You need to eat, to have a bed to sleep, you have to have a roof. That is as much as I am going to do for you. The rest you figure it out my child."

Constantly creating survival strategies was critical so that there was money to go to personal hygiene products, but also to help my aunt with her expenses.

When the new RDP houses[54] were built they were much further away. I was asked by some parents to walk their kids to school and back when I was 11 years old and they paid me 50c per child. I continued with this 'childcare business' throughout my senior years at primary school. During my Grade 7 year I had two girls who I walked to school and then minded in the afternoon. There was often no food at my own home, so when I would make the girls a sandwich, I would sneak one in for myself. One of them told their mother I am eating their food. When their mother cornered me to speak to me about it, I quickly said I would not do it again.

> "No," she said, "I was going to tell you that you can!"

[54] RDP houses were houses that were built by the government as part of the government-subsidised housing programme– a component of the Reconstruction and Development Programme – and provided to qualifying recipients at no cost (https://www.dhs.gov.za/content/government-subsidised-houses#:~:text=This%20programme%2C%20also%20known%20as,electricity%20or%20other%20service%20surcharges).

Aunty Petra lived opposite the girls' house and she approached me.

> "Do you know I run a business? I don't want to walk after people and collect my money, so if I give you a list of people that owe me money, could you go and collect it or drop off orders for me?"

So that's how we started forming a relationship. Aunt Petra would give me a small percentage of her takings. Our business continued into my high school years when I sold fudge for her at school.

Strategically looking for stability through income-generation opportunities

I started to think about how to find a *better* job at the end of grade 7.

> "Just go to town," one of my teachers told me. "Start at the first shop and make your way down."

I was almost at the end, all pink and flushed, when I came to Titbits, a takeaway shop.

> "Listen," I said to the lady behind the counter. "I've been everywhere looking for a job, and everyone tells me I'm too young, they can't employ me. Even if I just clean, or peel potatoes. You can just hide me at the back so no one sees me, but I need a job."

I started working there that weekend. My first two days, I was like an energizer bunny. I kept cleaning the counter and making sure everything is right. At the end of that weekend, the owner told me,

> "You know what, come in on Monday as well. We'll see how it goes."

She told me to come the rest of the week when we closed on Monday. That's how I ended up working there for two months during the holidays before starting high school. I had plans for that money to pay my high school fees and for my school uniform.

Towards the end of that holiday Mama exclaimed:

> "You look like a shadow! You need to get something else."

I asked Aunt Glenda, who used to do Mama's hair, for a job at her small hair salon. But when she fell pregnant I needed to find something else at short notice.

Chapter 2: More than income: An opportunity metamorphosizes

Triggering a love for learning new things in a small community

Mama's son was dating a girl who worked at Arties, a fancy interior design place. She told me they were looking for people in December, so I applied. They told me to start as soon as holidays started. The owners noticed that I was quite capable and asked me to work weekends during school time.

At first, my job consisted of cleaning and labelling all the different stock and running errands. During the school holidays when I had more time, those in charge gave me some other tasks to do. They taught me to do the filing and I worked with Aunty Allison, the bookkeeper, to get the hang of how their markup system worked. After I mastered the manual system, she taught me how to work on the computer. I felt like the excitement was going to bubble out of me!

The uncles who sprayed the furniture at the back would club together to give me lunch money when I didn't have any. When I was struggling with my schoolwork, there was always someone to ask. And it was the most beautiful shop, which really helped my daydreaming about making my life beautiful one day. I ended up staying at Arties for three happy years.

Getting noticed

Usually, I didn't interact with the posh clients, but once I sold a painting to a gentleman.

"Did you sell that painting?" asked Mark, the co-owner.

"I'm not sure, he bought it after speaking to me."

"Let's teach you how to interact," he said.

They showed me how to dress and do sales. Aunt Carol – the main sales lady – was not keen on this. There was a debate as to who the commission should go to, and it was decided that we would split the commission for any big-ticket items. I thought it was unfair, but I didn't want to stir the pot. Later, Aunt Carol and I grew close, and I understood why she acted the way she did. That was a big lesson for me: that it's not a bad thing for people to look out for themselves.

Chapter 3: Collective improvisation as an altering response

Navigating simultaneous pressures and discerning how to respond

In high school my aunt got a divorce. She started drinking a lot and would disappear for days. It was up to me to care for those at home. Up until Grade 11, I had always done well, but my schoolwork started suffering and it was the first time I was not in the academic top ten. I picked up a lot of weight and withdrew. I moved back in with Mama, but her sons left their kids with her and they became my responsibility.

I tried to escape by attempting suicide.

After, I decided I should go back to my aunt. She would not bother me when I needed to study. But the partying and worrying about the next meal became too much. I wanted to try

to put some distance between me and the situation. The school hostel seemed like a good possibility.

Transcending the suffocation of the bureaucracy of possibility

I was given a place in the hostel in Grade 12. Life was bliss. Until they chucked me out after a month. Someone had complained because I lived within a 5km radius of the school. People were saying I was getting favoured because my pastor was the 'koshuis-vader[55]'.

Dejected when I was kicked out, I thought:

> "I just want to pass matric! Why is no-one understanding that?"
>
> "Don't worry," reassured Pastor, "I will find someone who can take you in."

I was so relieved because I had been thinking I can't pull up my socks if the environment is not working for me.

Collectively maneuvering

During Grade 11 our principal called me into his office. He was very poised and spoke in a monotone.

> "Mayan, you are going to fail maths. If you fail maths and physics, you are going to fail. I look at your records from when you started school, you never failed anything. What is happening?"

[55] Translated as hostel master/person-in-charge of the hostel

They thought I had 'muis neste'[56] because of a new boyfriend. I assured him I would work on it.

> "Ok, but let's have a backup. How about you drop Physics at the end of this year? You do Travel and Tourism instead, then you do home economics too[57]."

I thought about it.

> "Are you sure this is going to work?"

> "Yes. You can do it. You *must* do it."

The school organized for us to do extra classes on the weekends and during break times. Mama had raised me to love cooking and I could knead bread by the age of seven! I think she was grooming me to be a wife because I can clean a place for it to get a five-star rating! I was selected as one of the few students who would represent the matrics[58] for the practical part of the final Home Ec[59] examination and the mark would be assigned to everyone. I asked why the teacher had selected me.

> "You are in my class every day during break telling me, show me this, show me that. If I need to bet on anyone, I will bet on you."

For the exam we had to set up our own table like a little restaurant. I was telling Aunt Carol about what I needed to do during one of my shifts at Arties.

> "We will find material offcuts that we not using and make you an apron," she said excitedly.

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[56] Muis neste refers to having mouse nests in one's head which is a colloquial Afrikaans saying used to indicate that a person's brain is fuzzy and unable to concentrate, usually because the person is preoccupied with something else.
[57] By adding an extra subject it would be possible for Mayan to fail one subject and still pass her matric.
[58] Matric is the final year of secondary school in the South African basic education system. It is also called Grade 12.
[59] Home Ec is short for Home Economics.

She made me a tablecloth and napkins and lent me all her cutlery and glasses. My theme was orange and blue. On the day of the exam, we had to make choux pastry and the examiner said she was so impressed with my work. The teacher told me we got the highest Home Ec practical score they had ever received. I thought to myself:

"If you put in your everything and you practice and you have fun, then it pays off!"

I kept that apron because I just wanted to hold on to that memory.

I ended up failing maths as predicted, but the backup plan worked, which helped later on as I slowly figured out how I wanted to contribute.

The collective directing of possibilities

Pastor had arranged for me to stay with members of the church congregation. Aunt Deidre and Oom[60] Mike lived across the road from the church. They had a small house, but Pastor convinced them I just needed a place to sleep. I could do my schoolwork over at the church. He knew I had some money to pay from my work at Arties and that this would help their family because they weren't doing well financially.

Aunt Deidre was not comfortable 'taking money from a child', as she put it. I convinced her it was a much better option than all of us starving. She felt like that older sister you could tell anything to. She never got upset. Home felt healing. Each day, after school, she would prepare me a cup of tea and a slice of bread, and she would ask:

"So how was your day?"

The first time she did it I cried. I was overwhelmed because this way of being cared for felt strange to me. That was the first time coming home that I was not instructed to get busy with work.

[60] 'Oom' is the Afrikaans word for 'uncle'.

"This is not normal," I thought. "Give her time, she will change."

But she never did.

Aunt Deidre worked as a cleaner for a couple from Johannesburg – Meneer en Mevrou[61] Steenkamp – who had a holiday house in Jeffrey's Bay[62]. Mevrou Steenkamp's parents were getting older, and she wanted to find someone to care for them at home. Aunt Deidre planted a seed:

"Would it be an option for you to work for Mevrou Steenkamp's parents as a cleaner and carer?"

"Ja, maybe, why not?"

I did not realise that Aunt Deidre had already convinced Mevrou Steenkamp that I would be a good fit.

Taking opportunities could be about more than survival

I was offered a full-time job at Arties after matric. I declined.

"This doesn't make sense! What are you going to do?" asked Mark.

"I am going to work as a cleaner in Joburg[63]."

Everyone was shocked.

"How can cleaning be better than Arties? At least there you are a sales lady, now you are going to say you are a cleaner."

[61] Mr and Mrs.
[62] A small coastal town and popular holiday destination about 20km away from Humansdorp.
[63] Joburg is the shortened form for Johannesburg, one of the major cities in Gauteng Province in South Africa.

There were so many thoughts racing through my head. But I knew my life would continue similarly to my family's if I stayed.

> "NO!" I thought. "I could not have worked this hard just to have my kids go through this cycle".

The feeling that I needed to protect my mother also came on so strongly. My family's abuse of her had become unbearably painful for me since she was raped by a friend's father. I made a vow. *I* would find a way to take care of her. Staying wasn't an option. I wanted to love my family again, I just needed a break from all the noise.

Chapter 4: Progressive cycles of generative disruption

CYCLE 1: Living within and beyond the racist, paternalistic tropes of those 'in charge'

The plans were made for me to make the trip to Joburg. Touching down at the airport felt surreal. I remember the new smell of the car on the way back to Mevrou Steenkamp's parents' house. We drove up their driveway and I was awe-struck. The house was huge!

"I am going to live in a mansion!" I thought.

It was perfect in every sense. They had a rose garden *and* a vegetable garden. I stayed in a small room that was attached to the main house, with its own garden. I felt like I was in heaven!

They were a nice couple. After a few weeks they said:

> "Listen here this Meneer and Mevrou is not working out for us, call us Ouma and Oupa[64]."

[64] Grandma and Grandpa.

I also started calling Mevrou Steenkamp Aileen. I realised early on that I was her 'project.' She told me to call her if I needed anything and gave me her cell phone number. After informing her that I did not have my own phone she found an old one for me. For the first time, I only had to think about *me.*

When I first got to Joburg, Ouma said:

> "We go to church on a Sunday, and I suggest you do the same. But I don't think you would fit into our church."

She took me church hunting and suggested one:

> "This is your kind of people."

I knew what she meant, but it wasn't from a nasty place. It was just years and years of being a certain way and how do you just unlearn that?

Self-expansion of the boundaries of the opportunity

I decided to look for an extra job. I didn't need the money, but I was staying in a white area and I wanted a bigger network. Although I had church, a lot of the people there were from middle and upper class communities and I couldn't identify with them. When I was in the mall at CUM Books[65], I saw an advert for an assistant. I approached the salesperson to apply.

> "Where is your CV? You need to leave that with me and then I will call you to come for an interview."

> "I didn't bring a CV. I am here now, can I have the interview?"

[65] CUM Book is a Christian bookstore in South Africa.

He hired me! I started working shifts on weekends. The other people working at the shop were from Soweto[66] and I connected instantly. Not because they were black, but because they were speaking things I 'got'.

Taking a nicely-packaged opportunity stitched together by someone else

After six months, Aileen approached me:

> "What is it you want to do with your life?"

The question surprised me because I thought I was doing something already.

> "You can't just want to be cleaning. UNISA is down the road, let's go there and see if we can speak to the career counsellor. You can start studying and I will pay."

My head was swimming with all the possibilities and Aileen spoke to Meneer Steenkamp.

> "Thys said you should study BCom Law[67]."

I didn't know what that was, but I agreed. I really struggled with the coursework, but continued because they were paying for it. I also started volunteering at an old age home because I loved the feeling of just giving of myself.

Not quite part of the family

I returned to Humansdorp for my aunt's wedding at the end of 2008 and met Duwayne during that time. He was fourteen years my senior. He painted himself as this good Christian man and appeared opposite to men I had been exposed to. I didn't take note of the

[66] Soweto is a large township in Johannesburg and is home to many people from working class families.
[67] Bachelor of Commerce and Law Degree.

whispers that Duwayne was with another woman. We had a long-distance relationship when I returned to Joburg.

My aunt sadly passed on soon after and all I could think about was what was going to happen to my mom. Sana had recently found out she was HIV[68] positive. I needed to make sure she had somewhere to live. I decided to ask Aileen if she would lend me R25 000 to buy my aunt's house. I overheard her and Ouma speaking and she was worried that if they lent me the money I wouldn't stay with them, so she refused my request.

I was hurt more than anything. They always talked about how good I am for them but now that they need to be good for me, they were doing this! At the same time I was thinking:

> "Mayan, you do not usually reason like this."

But Duwayne supported my line of thinking and told me to bring my mom and come live with him in Cape Town. My life felt like it was spiraling out of control. It felt like following this man would get me on course again.

We were officially engaged, ring and everything, just after I arrived in Cape Town. The first warning sign came when he was adamant I should not work.

Going around the gatekeepers

The idea of not finding a job felt awkward. I spoke to Duwayne's sister. One day she said to me:

> "I spoke to Mrs. Babu where I buy lunch and told her how lovely you are. She said she is looking for someone and you must go see her. Don't tell Duwayne yet."

[68] Human immune deficiency virus

Duwayne reluctantly let me do it when I got the job. Mrs. Babu cooked and sold Indian food. She taught me how to make curry and how to work the till. She trusted me. I was put in charge of everything, and I felt important.

Now that I had a steady income, I wanted to think about what to study next. Duwayne discouraged me. He policed who I could speak to and how I would speak. When I realised that he might be cheating on me I confronted him. He blew up. I retreated but my mind was going 100 miles per hour thinking this is not the man I fell in love with. Leaving didn't seem like an option. I was only earning R1000 or so per month.

One day I met a lady on the taxi to work who was wearing what looked like a company t-shirt with *'It's your journey'* on it. I mustered the guts to ask her about it. She explained 'Possibility'[69] and I was in awe. I knew I wanted to be part of a movement that changes young people's lives. But I was conflicted because I loved Mrs Babu and Duwayne kept telling me that I was only good enough to be a maid.

But I thought to start somewhere and enrolled for a computer course on Saturdays. I had also given the Possibility employee my CV, but never heard back. I decided that I would start calling the organisation.

"Hello, may I please speak to the manager?" I knew that's how you do things.

"Why did you call?"

'I just want to speak to her' sounded weird. There was always a response that denied me access. Feeling frustrated, I thought,

"God forgive me but I'm going to lie."

[69] Possibility was the pseudonym of the company that the young womxn that Mayan met on the taxi worked for.

I called again and said that the manager was expecting my call and it was urgent. It worked! The receptionist put me through to Andreia, the manager. I panicked!

> "I'm so sorry I lied! I just knew I had to speak to you. I'm looking for a job."

> "Oh my goodness," Andreia said. "Ok. You can come chat to me at 2 tomorrow."

The next day I took off my apron at quarter to 2, washed my face and my hands and ran over the bridge that joined the road between Mrs. Babu's and Possibility. We started our meeting at a minute after 2.

> "I just know I need to work here," I gushed. "I don't know why but I just have this pull in me. Here's my CV. I'm even happy to clean toilets the whole day."

> "This is not an interview, but I'll keep your CV on file and if anything comes up, I'll let you know."

I left feeling completely deflated.

CYCLE 2: Being turned, and turning, inside-out

To my complete surprise, Andreia called a few days later to tell me a position became available! At that time Possibility was filled with buzzing 18 to 25-year-olds. People were always debating and talking about their dreams. It was okay to have an opinion! I started to make friends, although Duwayne did his very best to convince me that these were 'not my people'. But I felt a kind of energy that I had not before. I was almost finished the computer course and I decided that I was going to register for two more modules at UNISA in psychology.

Pulling myself inside out, around and through

In Joburg I had started letting go of the idea that I wasn't good enough or that I couldn't do things on my own. I had started getting myself ready for *this.* When I arrived at Possibility I was open to the messages I was receiving. I was surrounded by so many strong women.

The concept of strength in a woman was not foreign to me. My grandmother demonstrated so much strength every day with her no-nonsense lie-in-the-bed-you-made kind of approach. But this kind of strength was different. It was the kind that said, 'I want to start this movement, it is important and I can do this!'

We were also working with young kids and having to practice all these sessions. The messages really got to me because we were telling kids to look in the mirror and tell themselves how awesome they were and how much they loved themselves.

> "I can't even look in the mirror and tell myself those things, how am I going to be telling grade 7's to do this?" I thought.

I was realising that to live a life of congruence and integrity I would need to be honest with myself. That was the only way I would ever be able to stand in front of those kids and say I actually believe what I'm saying. I had been feeling this way for a while when an expert leadership trainer, Valerie Kat came to do the 'Leadership Metamorphosis' with us.

> "When you grow up as a child," said Valerie, "you don't have control over the messages you are receiving. As you grow older the choices you make are largely due to what was planted in your subconscious mind. So, if you were abused, or neglected, then chances are you would make some choices that are not necessarily good for you, because you are tapping into that."

That was my 'aha!' moment. It was like she was talking directly to me.

> "The good news is," she continued, "you are not your CD[70], you are your CD writer. Whatever has happened in the past, is gone, but there are things that you can start doing that will change those patterns and behaviours."

Although I think I had wanted to break out of the mould for a long time before that, I was still stuck on victim mode. I had been trying to make a better life to prove a point. But that is still being a victim. And I started to realise that maybe I could look at my past a bit differently.

> "In any situation in life," Valerie went on, "you have three choices: be proactive and do something about it; you can accept the situation; or you can choose to get out."

No sooner were the words out of her mouth, and I was running through the options in my mind. I knew I couldn't accept the situation with Duwayne anymore. I also knew I had tried to do something about it. That only left the last option for me…

I had gotten an increase at Possibility and I could move out. No guilt. No anxiety. I was at peace.

Possibility expected us to be excellent, which meant committing to learning, growing and changing. The organisation valued the capacity of those we served and really *saw* them. They saw *me* the same way.

For Andreia, our personal development was very important. We had a trainer – Sam – who used to do this thing that I called 'shock therapy.' He had one of those mirrors that make you look bigger than you are. He would put the mirror up in front of you.

> "Do you love yourself? You say you love yourself, but you don't spend time with yourself. You have to find out what makes you tick."

[70] Compact Disc.

You have to speak to yourself while he is holding the mirror. You can't look away.

> "Hi Mayan, nice to meet you, can't wait to spend more time with you. I love you so much."

Saying those things in the mirror took me to a dark place. It was hard to look at myself in an accepting and loving way. It still took years after that to heal, but those were the first few layers. After Valerie and Sam's training I thought,

> "Ok, so I want to be a leader in my own life. How do I do that?"

I started to read books on leadership and decided I would attend as many sessions as possible with the therapist at Possibility. The realization came slowly. I was not powerless, even in situations I had not created.

The context and content of an opportunity structures sense-making

I will be forever grateful to Possibility because there is a gift that the organisation gives. When I decided to go on the journey to heal myself, I would buy myself flowers or things and I would write notes to myself. It sounds crazy, but I needed to get to a place where I could receive that from someone else. Had I not been at Possibility, I would have felt so silly! There it was normal to hug yourself and to do those things.

I started as a youth facilitator on the lifeskills programme there. Soon after I got a promotion, but I didn't want to accept it at first.

Andreia was shocked. I will never forget the look on her face.

> "Who says no to a promotion? What's there to think about? You have all the skills to be a manager. How do you say no to that?"

She took a couple of months to convince me.

Advantaged through co-creation

All my life I had to think about things on my own. When I found Danny, I had found someone who I could 'tap out' to. For the first time I could say, I am duly tired, I am leaving this to you. That is the biggest privilege of being in this relationship.

Danny and I had met after I left Duwayne. When Ryne was born we needed to rent something cheaper so we could save for our own property one day. My mother never owned a house, so this is something that I wanted to give my kids. When we eventually had enough saved to put down a deposit and get a home loan we were buoyed by our achievement.

"What is the next thing?" we thought.

My mom passed away just before I had my daughter. While all of this was happening, it became clear to me that I wanted to be a teacher. Just as Leia was born, I registered with UNISA. I fell madly in love with teaching.

At the end of 2018 I decided that I needed to take a year to figure out where-to next. I was nearly finished with my degree, and I wanted to be more available to my kids.

Reconceptualizing power while building future opportunities

During my year off I started to develop my work as a life coach. Before leaving Possibility I met June Avella who was a Time To Think[71] coach. My last year at Possibility I was speaking to her about figuring out 'what's next'.

"Come and learn to be a facilitator in the Thinking Environment," she suggested.

[71] Time to Think is a methodology and company developed by Nancy Kline. The methodology focuses on using ten components to facilitate the creation of thinking environments (called 'The Thinking Environment') that produce innovative thinking and solutions (https://www.timetothink.com/).

"I would love to! But I don't have the money."

"Then," she said, "you'll do it for free."

To my surprise I landed up on the course with Andreia, and many other phenomenal women. I was part of a sacred space where people shared their own self-doubt. Through seeing other highly successful women have these vulnerable moments I realised that I could be the most powerful, successful person on the planet, and I would still have doubts and fears. I thought,

"What do I have to lose?"

"And if I have nothing to lose," my thinking continued, "how will I move?"

I was open. Ready. And opportunity was just there! I think it always was, it was just the lens that I was looking through.

Creating shifts beyond dominance and making dreams reality

The Future Academy[72] was born out of a desire provide a preschool where children could lead their own learning. When children do this in a supportive space, they grow in the kinds of ways I only managed to do later in my life. 'Gaps' open for them to become who they would like to be.

Through the work we've been doing I've realised we've been able to shift parents' ways of thinking to parent more positively. This is huge! Everyday I'm living my dream, and everyday I'm healing that little girl who didn't feel loved or supported, or that she wasn't worthy of even owning a business or experiencing this kind of good life.

[72] The Future Academy is the pseudonym for Mayan's business.

Chapter 6

Findings Part II:

Cross-case inferences

6.1 Introduction

Whilst the intent of this study was firmly focused on explaining the Quintain as a whole, the entirety of a phenomenon is difficult to apprehend without an adequate reading of its potential 'parts' (Bohm, 1980). This appreciation informed the approach to offering a descriptive interpretation of the key processes and components that constitute the Quintain's landscape, representing the first layer of the outcome of the cross-case analysis. Acting as a cartographic facilitator (Buckingham & Dennis Jr., 2009) of sorts, I will lead the reader towards an understanding first of the parts of this landscape in this chapter, and then towards a theorisation of its relational aspects – its correspondences – in Chapter Seven. This way of presenting the interpretations and discussion of the findings offers a holistic explanation of the cartography of the Quintain, pulling it apart, before bringing it together again in a coherent way. Simultaneously, this allows us to move between an ontological and an ontogenetic reading of the Quintain. Important, since the Quintain has revealed itself as a unique process of becoming over time, within the individual case narratives. After engaging with Chapter Six and Seven, the reader will leave with a stitched-together story about the Quintain, and an understanding of the possibilities for how it may operate.

To begin sketching an outline of the Quintain's landscape, I start by introducing the overarching intuition about the Quintain, framing the key ideas that contributed to intuiting it. This will involve describing the inferences that emerged through the cross-case analysis to fulfil my methodological responsibility. The three cases in this study presented such different circumstances that they appeared to defy any sort of confining the Quintain to only one, or even a few, ways of operating and so the overarching intuition contends with the possibility that the phenomenon will always show up uniquely within the context of different lives. Whilst some might view this as an impediment to understanding the Quintain, using this as a

constant prompt for engaging with complexity had value in the cross-case analytic process. This is because it pushed consideration of what claims *could* be legitimately made about the Quintain, *without* negating its unique features within different situations. As such the inferences have been collated as the potential patterns and pertinent aspects of the Quintain that we should pay attention to as we move towards comprehending it as a unified whole.

6.2 Overarching Intuition: Making-a-life is a uniquely crafted political praxis that creates the possibility of "reaching toward" social inclusion

The overarching intuition constitutes the Quintain as the process of making-a-life, which is a political praxis. Understood as a uniquely crafted pathway in each individual case, *making-a-life* is constructed as a consequence of multiple micro-processes that collectively generate a different *political positioning* for each primary participant[73]. It is this positioning that realises the power to reach towards an experience of social inclusion. The processes that make this possible are represented as inferences in Table 5, below, and are interdependent. These processes, illuminated through these inferences, acted together in diverse ways creating *the movements of making-a-life* that make an experience of social inclusion potentially possible.

Table 5 names these inferences and is followed by a description of each in the sections that follow. The inferences are organised into clusters to show their relationship to the three parts that make up the overarching intuition. They stand as aspects of the overarching intuition, that cannot be understood outside of the context of the totality of it. These three parts are:

- Part 1: The movements of *making-a-life* have an improvisational and collective character;

[73] In this chapter I refer to the primary participants by their names, or by using the terms 'primary participants', 'participants' or 'cases'. These terms are used interchangeably and do not intend to reduce each case narrative only to the 'primary participant'. I take this opportunity to remind the reader that, whilst each case narrative was a story about the primary participant's life, it included and illuminated the multiple other people and relationships that were part of these lives, and by extension then, part of understanding the Quintain.

- Part 2: Opportunities operate as materials for *making-a-life* within its movements; and
- Part 3: Transgressive and generative agencies enable the crafting of a pathway towards social inclusion, through these movements.

Overarching intuition	**Core inferences**	**Sub-inferences**	**Parts**
Making-a-life is a uniquely crafted political praxis that creates the possibility of reaching towards social inclusion	***Inference I*** The movements that make a life are constructed in infinitely unique ways.		
	Inference II Opportunities are embedded within 'processes of making' in everyday life, realising the kind of 'opportunity' that could prompt a different social positioning.	***Inference II (a)*** Opportunities contribute to the capacity to make a life when they work in concert with one another and everyday life.	**Part 2: Opportunities operate as materials for making-a-life within its movements.**
		Inference II (b) The opportunities that position young womxn to be able to 'make their lives' are possible because of their capacity to prompt the	

		development of desirable attributes and skills that cohere with (the primary goals of) modernity/coloniality.	
		Inference II (c) The goals and administration of constructed opportunities influence the ways in which these opportunities can contribute to the processes of making lives.	
	Inference III Processes of sense-making, embedded within the collective, activate and are constituted through the processes of making-a-life.		**Part 1: The movements of making-a-life have an improvisational and collective character.**
	Inference IV Collective agency, emerging through the meshwork, has the power to intuitively improvise the movements that form the making of a life.	***Inference IV(a)*** 'Being positioned' and 'positioning' are strategies that are part of intuitive improvisation.	
		Inference IV(b)	

		To craft the movements of making-a-life the not-yet has to be activated through imagination.	
	Inference V Complicity and resistance can co-exist and create the circumstances by which a young womxn is able to make her way within imposed systemic constraints.	***Inference V (a)*** Accessing opportunities constitutes a process in and of itself and involves working with and through 'gatekeepers', demonstrating the critical dialectic of complicity and resistance.	**Part 3: Transgressive and generative agencies enable the crafting of a pathway through these movements.**

Table 5: Inferences generated through the cross-case analysis

To explain each of the parts in what follows, I describe the inferences that constitute each of them, and also hint at the connections between them which I will illustrate more fully in Chapter Seven.

6.2.1 Part 1: The improvisational and collective character of the movements of *making-a-life*

The individual case narratives demonstrate that the *movements of making-a-life* occur by virtue of a kind of 'ongoing dialogue' between the participants, other people who were part of their cases, and the opportunities that were embedded in everyday life. To understand this dialogue, we must begin from the premise that the movements of making-a-life cannot be conceptualised as a 'singular' act. In the three cases, *making-a-life* was bound to and bound up in a collective, where everyday life was engaged with through an improvisational posture of sorts. This improvisational posture was informed by processes of sense-making rooted in what could be seen as a 'meshwork'[74].

> *The meshwork is a source of collective agency that intuitively improvises to shape the movements of making-a-life*

The positive contribution of the collective, and its relationships to the *movements of making-a-life*, first came alive in the analysis of Karlee's case, but there is evidence to support this interpretation in the other two cases as well. It is evident that the connections in the meshwork that Karlee was embedded in contributed significantly to the outcomes that were achieved in her case. Examples include, but are not limited to, her connections with and between her sister, grandmother, mother, other Carly, Mr. van Rensburg and Mrs Lewendal. Nomlanga was raised by matriarchs whose lifelines were entangled, and they provided protection and teachings about how to navigate her trajectory as a womxn. Whilst her father was not always the kind of father she needed, his interaction with her early in her life was responsible for contributing to accessing certain opportunities later. Nomlanga's relationship with Brenda shaped her access to a language that allowed her to negotiate the

[74] The meshwork starts from the premise that life is lived *along lines* rather than *at points* and is distinguishable from the idea of a "network" (Ingold, 2015, p. 3). In a network the focus is on the points of connection (the individuals), whereas in the meshwork it is on the connection itself (Ingold, 2015).

tensions of her subjugation. Mayan's narrative exhibits multiple instances where the meshwork had a positive influence. Her mother's 'presence in her absence' and the entanglement of her own life with that of Mrs. Lovell's, were significant in shaping her choices and actions. Further, the various connections she formed during the cycles of generative disruption contributed in marked ways to the outcomes in her case. These examples demonstrate how, as individuals' lives 'knotted' together over time in each case, a form of agency emerged through the meshwork, contributing positively to the momentum of the *movements of making-a-life*. This agency is best understood as a 'collective agency' since it was distributed through the meshwork and emerged as a consequence of its interwoven connections. Primary participants' own actions and responses can be seen as part of this collective agency. The creation and use of opportunities came about predominantly as a by-product of the entanglement of lives within each of the individual case narratives.

The case narratives show that those lives that were knotted together within each meshwork held a variety of diverse intersectional positions and life experiences within the broader South African context. Subsequently, it can be assumed that the knots of each meshwork held diverse understandings of different social fields within South Africa. An intuitive knowledge about what could legitimately contribute to the *movements of making-a-life*, and how to survive within the challenging circumstances that were part of each primary participant's everyday experiences, appeared to characterise the collective agency of the meshwork. This intuition seemed to generate an understanding of *which* opportunities would be necessary and important within the South African context to contest the limitations of marginalising contexts. It was this intuitive improvisation that engendered the *movements of making-a-life* in such a way as to contribute to crafting pathways that had the potential to realise an experience of social inclusion. Consequently, the meshwork held a significant degree of power in contributing to how pathways towards social inclusion could be crafted.

In examining the connections of the meshwork in each case more closely, it was evident that there were common connections that were prominent. Each participant shared a close relationship with their grandmother and the way that they were raised by these womxn

shaped how they thought about the actions they could, and should, take in the world. The primary participants' capacity to take responsibility for themselves was constructed through this entanglement. This appeared to contribute to forming the kinds of dispositions that also positively shaped how they approached and created opportunities for themselves. However, the complexity of lives knotting together must be understood in its totality. We see in each case how the entanglement of participants' lives with that of their grandmothers' meant that their well-being was bound up in one another's. What influenced each participant's grandmother influenced them too. Therefore, understanding the nature of the entanglements in the meshwork is important to pay attention to because these influence young womxn's trajectories in nuanced ways and are difficult to describe either as wholly positive or negative.

While the meshwork was implicitly strategic in its improvisation, it did not operate through consciously coordinated planning. Instead, people that constituted the meshwork in each case functioned both with, and without, awareness of what other parts may or may not have been doing. They would thus not necessarily be aware of the emergence of this collective agency and tended to be focused on their own immediate actions within each case. The collective agency of the meshwork seemed to be characterised by the complex interplay of the intuition of different individuals in relation to the immediate demands of situations in everyday life. The outcomes of this collective agency are thus not necessarily deliberate.

Whilst each case undeniably forefronts how agentic each primary participant is, this agency always appears to be constructed by virtue of its links with the collective. Nomlanga is a strong womxn – but she is this way because of the matriarchs that raised her. She can intuitively discern how to make a situation work for her, but her discernment has been shaped by the multiple relationships with many of the womxn in her life. Karlee works hard and uses the chances she has been given. But her story also proves that hard work on its own is not enough. She needed the lifelines of others to make this hard work 'work' for her. Her own agency cannot be separated from those around her and the ways in which these individuals were constructing opportunities as a conduit for her hard work. Mayan undoubtedly applies herself and uses every opportunity that comes her way. She is strategic

and astute in doing so. But her strategy only works because of others. Their views, beliefs, and actions shape how much and to what extent Mayan's strategic actions can have impact. Each primary participant therefore 'acted' and 'interacted' by virtue of the movements established through the meshwork and its intuitive improvisation. Two key strategies – 'activating the not-yet through imagination' and 'being positioned and positioning' – appeared as part of the intuitive improvisation of the collective agency of the meshwork and were of exceptional importance in situating the life trajectories of Karlee, Nomlanga and Mayan differently.

Strategies of intuitive improvisation: 'Activating creativity through imagination' and 'Being positioned and Positioning'

The role that imagination played in the processes of *making-a-life* emerged as key during the cross-case analysis. Imagination was a powerful trigger in the creative process of improvisation. The activation of imagination occurred in the context of everyday life, through opportunities and in ways that were connected with them. This could occur immediately in relation to the opportunity in some instances, but also at later points in time. Examples in the different cases include Nomlanga's experience of engaging with her grandfather's Mills & Boon collection and learning to speak English; Karlee's participation in the Next Generation volunteers programme; and Mayan's working at Arties and experience of the Thinking Environment™ programme. In these instances, the combination of participation and its triggering of imagination, seemed to have the power to open possibilities not previously seen or considered. While the triggers of imagination were different in each case, they all served the purpose of activating the participants' agency. The experiences built a platform from which participants could imagine the 'not yet'. This activation of imagination seemed to contribute to each participant being able to identify opportunities that followed, as the potential materials for *making a life*, and providing the necessary momentum for its movements.

The strategies of 'being positioned' and 'positioning' allowed the possibility of accessing necessary opportunities to positively shape the movements of making-a-life. We see this clearly at the start of Karlee's life when she was set apart from the dominant ways of

thinking about who young people were, and what they should do in Lavender Hill. She was not, and was not to be, like 'the others'. Because she was positioned in this way, she was predisposed to take advantage of opportunities and she also began to position herself in accordance with this. This shaped her understanding of her identity. For instance, opportunities that she saw as being 'for her' – like participating as a volunteer at Next Generation and competing for a place in the Top Ten academic students at school – were in line with seeing herself differently. Being able to take advantage of these opportunities reinforced the probability that she would continue to be set apart. She was seen as being worthy of being a prefect and was called upon when opportunities were available in the immediate context, such as accessing the Funza Lushaka Bursary.

Mayan and Nomlanga's narratives provide slightly more nuanced examples of the way 'being positioned' and 'positioning' could work. Nomlanga's family was seen as educated in her village and, consequently, her father took it upon himself to teach her to read and write early, positioning her to do well and be seen differently at school. She also had talents which were desirable in her immediate context, such as her talent for drawing and she was seen as '*igusha ezibokweni*'[75] by her high school peers. As a result, she saw herself as different and, where she could, began to position herself in accordance with this difference. Whilst Mayan's family did not see or position her differently, she shared other mutually beneficial relationships in the meshwork through which she was constructed as 'different'. Her school principal and teachers, particularly Mrs. Lovell, viewed her potential as setting her apart and contributed to her own thinking around this. The management at Arties watched how she worked and, as a result, saw that she could make use of other opportunities. They thus created these for her. Aunt Deidre saw that Mayan was hard working and created openings to access other opportunities. Andreia saw her potential for leadership at Possibility and positioned her to take on opportunities in accordance with this. Consequently, Mayan also slowly learnt to position herself differently through the cycles of generative disruption in her case narrative.

[75] The sheep amongst the goats

The actions of 'being positioned' and 'positioning' demonstrate the ways in which those embedded within the meshwork intuitively understand and operationalise the priorities of modernity/coloniality, improvising to create pathways forward for each of the primary participants. The collective agency of the meshwork and its intuitive and improvised strategies seem to be supported by processes of sense-making that were evident within each case. These sense-making processes appeared to activate, but were also constituted through, the *movements of making-a-life*. This sense-making therefore happened *inside* and *along* these movements, demonstrating an engagement with 'what was'. Unpacking how these processes of sense-making worked at individual and collective levels in each case allows a closer approximation of the inner workings of the intuitive improvisation of the meshwork.

Processes of sense-making, embedded in the meshwork, undergirds the intuitive improvisation of the movements of making-a-life

The driving force for the intuitive improvisation in each case is thought to be innate sense-making processes which had different facets. These sense-making processes appeared to allow for survival and limiting ideologies to be navigated. Survival was physical, but also existential and emotional. Examples of individual sense-making occurred in all three cases but were particularly prominent in Mayan's case. Through these processes, Mayan was able to experience a sense of healing because of the meaning that was generated through the praxis of making and growing in her everyday life over a period. This made it possible for Mayan to notice opportunities and to figure out how to take action within the precarious nature of her early everyday life. Critical in this process was sense-making the rules and regulations, ideological and otherwise, that prevented her from participating in ways that she saw as necessary and relevant. Examples include how she navigated looking for a job when she was under the legal age to work and placated her grandmother about studying at night through co-opting the help of a teacher. This was very similar for Karlee, who worked out how to be noticed just enough, to both survive and thrive in Lavender Hill. This enabled her to negotiate her context in such a way as to ensure the possibility of being seen differently and, perhaps more importantly, of being seen in ways that could position her to access relevant opportunities later. Nomlanga also consistently wrestled with the need to

reassert her right to exist and made sense of how to do so within the socio-political realities of the South African context. Her sense-making processes prompted her to craft unique, contextually specific opportunities in response to her ongoing analysis of the situations she found herself in, the dominant views and beliefs shaping these experiences, and the response she needed to construct to adequately engage with these. This involved learning how to 'hustle' through the income-generating activities she created; and through evaluating and challenging how she should operate as a womxn within her culture and in the South African context more broadly.

The individual sense-making processes demonstrated by the participants were grounded in the collective agency of the meshwork, since they appeared to be triggered by the influence of other people in the meshwork who, themselves, appeared to be engaged in processes of sense-making. These individuals appeared to be making sense of what possibilities might and, perhaps could, exist for each young womxn. This sense-making seemed to underscore the acts of collaboration with participants and other relevant people in their lives, making sense of what was required through various dialogical interactions. It was these dialogical interactions that served to trigger the participants' own sense-making processes. The interaction between the agencies of different people in each meshwork made it possible to understand how to support the participants' manoeuvring within everyday life from diverse perspectives, creating and making use of available opportunities deemed relevant as a direct consequence of these sense-making processes. In turn, these opportunities also tended to speak back into the ongoing sense-making process. In other words, the opportunities accessed created the grounds for further sense-making, illustrating the way in which thinking happened during the processes of making-a-life and not as a separate and predetermined process. This was most evident in the ways in which opportunities acted as generative disruptors in Mayan's case, prompting cycles of generative disruption that were intimately linked to her ongoing sense-making processes.

6.2.2 Part 2: Opportunities operate as materials within the movements of making-a-life to realise the opportunity to prompt a different social positioning

All three case narratives illustrated different kinds and combinations of opportunities as significant for participants in making their lives. The cases also highlighted that accessing and negotiating opportunities were *processes* that co-responded with the intuitive improvisation of the meshwork. Depending on how particular opportunities in each case emerged in the life course of each primary participant, these shaped the interpretation of everyday life *and* the interpretation of subsequent opportunities. It almost appeared as if opportunities 'had a conversation' with the everyday lives of participants in the three cases, initiating a generative effect. The emerging inferences show that opportunities could not be understood as singular events but rather as processes that needed to be lived through to positively contribute to an experience of social inclusion. Recognising this, opportunities revealed themselves as legitimate materials for making-a-life. Through their positioning and use as materials, opportunities had the power to transform everyday life through their operation within the movements of making.

While it is evident in the individual narratives that some opportunities may be more significant than others, none of the singular opportunities seen in the context of each of the three cases can, on their own, claim *all* the credit for the shifts demonstrated in each young womxn's life. This demonstrates how we might understand the correspondence of multiple opportunities with the idea of constructing opportunity within each case. The denouement in each single case reflects that each participant reached a point where they were able to notice, use and create viable opportunities for themselves that were relevant to their own lives. Consequently, we could say of each primary participant that they 'have opportunity', reflecting an experience of social inclusion at this point in their lives. This was a consequence of an altered social position that connected to how opportunities corresponded with one another and everyday life within the movements of making. 'Having opportunity' gave participants the power needed to situate their lives differently. This magnified the possibility of reaching towards social inclusion and, to a certain extent, limited the marked effect that marginalising contexts could have on their lives.

Opportunities correspond with everyday life and one another

For opportunities to be considered as the materials for *making-a-life* within the context of each case depended upon the unique and contextually specific set of circumstances inherent to each case. In other words, for opportunities to *become* materials in the movements of making relied on how they were able to converse with the other circumstances of that life. Consequently, the interpretation of an opportunity as potentially significant depended on what had come before it, and what was happening around it, at a particular point in time. This correspondence dictated the power opportunities had to shift the circumstances of participants' lives.

Therefore, while the different ways in which these opportunities emerged and played out in each of the cases demonstrated the ways in which opportunities were translated into a different experience of life for the primary participants, their articulation with the context of everyday life in each case determined *whether* and *how* this came about. For instance, Nomlanga's story indicates how the opportunity to study towards a BSc degree that was mismatched with her expectations and capacities made it difficult to live this opportunity out in ways that could be beneficial for her. Consequently, when she was offered the opportunity to study a degree in journalism the opportunity itself had to provide various attributes that made it compatible with her everyday life, making it possible for it to make a contribution towards a beneficial outcome for her. Mayan's experience demonstrated the positive impact that opportunities that were well-matched with everyday experiences and needs had. This made it possible for opportunities to shape, and be shaped by, the movements of making. For example, living out the opportunity of working at Arties, working for Ouma and Oupa, and at Possibility, shaped the way Mayan began engaging with other opportunities that also contributed to the movements of making.

However, opportunities did not only correspond with everyday life in each case to make a positive contribution as a material *for making-a-life.* They also corresponded with one another in the movements of making over time, contributing effectively when they were able to build *with* one another in the context of a life. Each case demonstrates how earlier opportunities created the basis through which later opportunities were recognised and

then, taken advantage of, contributing to movements of making that made it more likely that participants could progressively reach towards social inclusion. This is particularly salient in Karlee's story where opportunities to play and to contribute through a community organisation's programmes, potentially prompted her recognition of teaching as a viable career possibility. In Mayan's case, the cycles of generative disruption that she experienced in relation to the opportunities she was able to use, were able to disrupt and create a platform for healing because of the way opportunities within these cycles were ordered and conversed with one another. Her previous work opportunities also contributed to how she understood the potential value of later ones. In Nomlanga's case, the opportunities that allowed her to raise the capital to 'talk back' built on one another, allowing her to build the confidence and skills she needed to engage with dominant hegemonies and find a leg up. Later her recognition of media and journalism as a suitable career appears to relate to her love for writing and the opportunities she had to refine and develop this skill through earlier opportunities.

Opportunities aligned with the priorities of modernity/coloniality are effective in positioning young womxn to make their lives

The *content* of opportunities appeared to hold significance in the contribution that they made in the movements of making-a-life. Those opportunities that played a role in developing attributes and identities that are aligned with the priorities of modernity/coloniality appeared to provide the most possibility for shifting participants' social positions and contributed powerfully to the movements of making. This makes sense, given the overriding imposition of these structures in all South Africans' lives. For example, educational opportunities played a significant role in each case because of the way that educational attainment is critically linked with the ability to progress within post-apartheid South Africa. Educational opportunities were, therefore, particularly powerful materials of making in the life trajectories of participants. Each young womxn, at some point, moved through a formal tertiary educational opportunity that led them to potentially guarantee access to career-building employment opportunities. Performing excellently in school served to position each of the primary participants differently to many of their peers. Their educational performance marked them as different *and* deserving of other opportunities

and undergirded the improvisational strategies of 'being positioned' and 'positioning'. As a result, the possibility of accessing further educational opportunities, post-secondary school, was seen as a given for both Karlee and Nomlanga. Whilst accessing the opportunity was not necessarily easy, it was a pre-empted possibility which made a difference in triggering the connections required to make access a reality. For Mayan, the lifelines in the meshwork constructed an alternative possibility for her to finish her matric well when her performance began to suffer as a result of her life circumstances. She was seen as deserving of the intervention required to ensure her success. Although this did not immediately lead to studying further, it built the necessary platform required for her to engage with further educational opportunities later in her life.

The attainment of secure, permanent, and career-building employment was also critical for unlocking a different possibility for the future in all three cases. It provided an enhanced platform for growth in that there was a distinct flourishing for each young womxn after secure *career-building* employment was obtained. Particular kinds of job opportunities were therefore prized and valued because they could offer growth and prestige within the South African context. This was exemplified in Karlee and Mayan's stories. In both cases the job opportunities they secured grew their careers, developing them into professionals who were valued in their immediate contexts. Whilst the career-building job opportunities that Nomlanga was able to access were not always satisfying, nor did they always promote her well-being, these still worked in her favour, providing her some economic capital, and developing her confidence to use these as a steppingstone.

It is the content of these kinds opportunities that made each primary participant more able to take advantage of other opportunities that presented. This is because these kinds of opportunities made it easier (but not always easy) to cope with the socioeconomic realities in post-apartheid South Africa and the survival of everyday life in marginalising contexts. This opened the possibility to focus on other aspects of everyday life that could contribute to the movements of making and enabled a different experience of life. For example, Karlee was able to grow her capacity in teaching, and Nomlanga and Mayan focused on their healing journeys.

The goals and administration of constructed opportunities create a tension that has to be worked with in the movements of making

The way certain opportunities were constructed and made available through organisational frameworks shaped how they could be accessed and used. In Karlee's case we see the ways in which the goals and administration of what she saw as her *only* opportunity created a tension that needed to be managed within the movements of making. While we do not see such strong indications of this inference in Nomlanga and Mayan's story, it warrants scrutiny because of its importance for understanding how opportunities, intended to provide the possibility to cope with the demands of making-a-life within post-apartheid South Africa, are set up to be used as materials within the movements of making.

The acquisition of the Funza Lushaka Bursary in Karlee's case was connected to the chance to take on other opportunities: first, going to study teaching and then, having a full-time teaching position. Even though this close connection existed, the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme (FLBP) did not result in automatic access to these other opportunities. This means that, although the programme indicates that it sees part of its role as aiding students who are financially in need (JET Education Services, 2016), its mechanisms could not fully ensure this access. This seems understandable with respect to access to a tertiary institution as this would be beyond the programme's control, even though one cannot have one opportunity without the other. It seems less understandable that a programme designed to ensure a greater number of qualified educators for the South African basic education system (JET Education Services, 2016), would not be able to follow up on its mandate to place newly qualified FLBP graduates in permanent teaching positions. This is a gap that an evaluation of the FLBP acknowledged existed at the time it was evaluated (JET Education Services, 2016). While it is possible that since then the FLBP may have worked to rectify this, Karlee's experience of accessing this opportunity prompted inquiry into why such a situation arose in the first place and what the experience may help us to understand about the translation of opportunities into materials that can be used to positively shape the everyday lives of young womxn.

A tension appeared to lie in the disjuncture between the overriding goals of the FLBP's programme and its distance from how opportunities had to be navigated within the context of Karlee's everyday life. To illustrate, the FLBP's main goal was to increase the supply and quality of graduates to address a critical teacher shortage within South Africa. While its secondary goal is recognised as the provision of scholarships for those who require these, the ways in which the programme was enacted appears to be indelibly influenced by its primary goal. The construction of the opportunity therefore articulated poorly with the context of everyday life in Karlee's case. Within the context of the movements of making-a-life this translation is critical. Without a connection with its related opportunities, the opportunity could not really work as intended. Karlee's story demonstrates that, were it not for other opportunities created through other means, the FLBP would have missed the chance to contribute meaningfully within her life trajectory. It was the collective agency of the meshwork that made it possible to work with this tension.

6.2.3 Part 3: Transgressive and generative agencies enable the crafting of a pathway, where power is navigated and redistributed in the movements of making

Whilst the positive outcomes in Karlee, Nomlanga and Mayan's lives stood in distinction to others who come from similar situations, their stories demonstrate that each of them had to contend with the legacies of their historical marginalisation attached to their social identities daily. While the young womxn in this study achieved a differential positioning, it was one that always needed to take account of potential exclusions that were a consequence of aspects of their identities that did not disappear completely as their life trajectories began to show signs of prospering. Each case, therefore, illustrated how experiences of social exclusion *and* inclusion co-existed within the fabric of everyday life. Experiences of social exclusion and inclusion were not diametrically opposed within these cases because the evidence in the cases suggest that they are interacting processes that were engaged with through the movements of making-a-life for each young womxn. Making-a-life emerges, therefore, as a political phenomenon because power must be negotiated and redistributed through its processes to acquire the necessary social and economic capital to build a life within post-apartheid South Africa. The outcome of this negotiation and redistribution of power was that, in each case, the primary participant was able to make their lives more on

their own terms, flourishing despite the ongoing social exclusion embedded within marginalising contexts. In navigating the power dynamics inherent within the dialectic of social exclusion and inclusion, participants had to learn how to 'comply enough' with dominant structures and institutions, in order to simultaneously undo their hold on the movements of making, resisting their imposition on participants' ways of doing and being in the world.

Complicity and resistance can co-exist and create a way for a young womxn to make a life

Whilst complicity and resistance appear at odds with one another, the cases demonstrate that these two opposites can co-exist. Movements towards making a life were not *either* the product of complicity *or* of resistance, but could be understood as being *because of* their composite presence. To understand the way that this worked in the *movements of making-a-life*, I turn first to Nomlanga's case narrative.

Nomlanga resisted being placed in the position that was (pre)determined for her in post-apartheid South Africa. She asserted this overtly, and hinted at it multiple times in her case narrative. To resist this predetermined social position – a product of her intersectional race, gender, and class position – she developed an understanding of how to comply with certain hegemonies, whilst simultaneously resisting others. Nomlanga discovered that taking actions in accordance with this meant that she could improvise a pathway towards making a life, despite the ongoing imposition of hegemonic constraints that kept denoting a particular social position as being *for* her. This was because complicity with certain dominant norms was required to enable the activation of certain opportunities that could eventually situate her differently, particularly from a socioeconomic perspective. Her negotiation of these opportunities had to comply with the structures that governed her world. This demonstrated a strategic complicity of sorts, the product of the embedded sense-making processes referred to in Part 1 of the overarching intuition. Raising capital through opportunities that rendered Nomlanga complicit with certain hegemonies makes absolute sense. If she wished to traverse the social terrain towards a different experience in it, she had to comply with its norms, including the dominant norms, beliefs, and values of those

who controlled access to these opportunities. Complicity then becomes a fundamental aspect of survival, developed in response to an understanding of what opportunities and resources were needed to ensure her potential prosperity.

Whilst complicity could contribute to a potentially different social positioning, it did not appear as if it could, on its own, ensure that participants could make their lives more on their own terms. It's dialectical opposite – resisting – is what made the experience of this complicity, and its outcome, different. Whilst Nomlanga complied with certain norms, she simultaneously resisted others that tended to demarcate an inferior social position for her. Resisting racist and gendered norms was inculcated in Nomlanga from a young age, by the matriarchs who contributed to raising her. She developed a deep desire to respond to imposed restrictions, working out that an 'otherwise' was possible for her as a young black womxn. She actively contested imposed ways of thinking and acting that she believed would prevent her from accessing opportunities that would get her to where she would like to be and make her everyday life easier. In certain situations, this meant relinquishing some of the privileges attached to complying with all the expectations of the dominant view. For instance, she challenged her father and as a result had to endure the repercussions of not receiving support from him for a period. Nomlanga, therefore, created a situation where she was complicit *on her own terms,* to survive, grow and develop. Whilst it would be naïve to suggest that her experiences could ever be solely on her own terms because of the modernity/coloniality embedded within post-apartheid South Africa, it does appear as if it is possible for this dialectical relationship to craft a road that could lead to an experience of re-existence.

The co-presence of complicity and resistance in Nomlanga's story was characteristic of a kind of transgressive agency that worked both with and against restrictive hegemonies. Transgressive agency was therefore responsive to where she was at and where she wanted to be socioeconomically and socio-politically. This transgressive agency was therefore also partly responsible for the intuitive improvisational character of the *movements of making-a-life* and was the embodiment of a practical consciousness that understood exactly how to transgress, but also how to stay 'in the game'.

Persuasion for the important relationship between complicity and resistance is also seen in Karlee and Mayan's cases. In these two cases the dialectic between complicity and resistance shows up more subtly, providing a wider array of possibilities for understanding how transgressive agency might operate within the *movements of making-a-life*. Because the collective agency of the meshwork provided the predominant structure within which Karlee crafted the movements of making, she became complicit with the views, beliefs, and values of those embedded within the meshwork. The meshwork constructed an ideal way to transgress the boundaries of her immediate existence and improvise the necessary movements of making a life. The capacity to do this appeared as a by-product of multiple years of navigating everyday life that had built an understanding within and amongst individuals in the meshwork regarding what it takes to transcend the possibilities that are usually on offer for young people growing up in Lavender Hill. Karlee's complicity with this is a product of trusting the knowledge that emerged through the meshwork and paralleled her own sense-making processes that contributed to a subtle contestation of dominant norms early in her life. She refused the imposition of what Lavender Hill told her to be. Evidence of her resistance is captured in her difference. This resistance gained traction as a different expectation was built of her in her immediate family and social life. She complied with these expectations, and continued to resist dominant ways of thinking and acting that she believed might prevent her from achieving her goals. We see a transgressive agency emerging here too, located in the individual, but also connected to the collective agency of the meshwork as there was a transgression of the structures demarcating how Karlee should act and what should happen for her.

Mayan had learned to be complicit with adults' expectations of her and so largely conceded to these expectations and the immediate possibilities known to her for young people in her community. She was not outwardly combative; however, her resistance was evident in the actions she took to limit the restriction of these expectations on her. Her sense-making processes, which were often connected to the opportunities she had access to and was living through, allowed her to (re)consider alternate possibilities. This prompted her resistance to taking up possibilities that were only immediately apparent. The emergence of Mayan's transgressive agency is interesting in this respect though, as it demonstrates the very subtle interplay between complicity and resistance that can exist. Her sense-making

processes, and imagination of the future triggered her resistance of these expectations. Whilst she still had only a certain repertoire of possibilities available to her (that were in line with dominant hegemonies attached to race, class, and gender) she actively selected an alternative that demonstrated her simultaneous complicity, but also resistance, within the boundaries of what was possible. This was most aptly reflected in the choice to take up a position as a domestic worker as opposed to continuing to work at Arties. Given the pivotal point in her life trajectory at which this came to the fore, it could reasonably be assumed that the evolution of this transgressive agency could have played a role in the cycles of generative disruption that she experienced. We continue to see the interplay of complicity and resistance in Mayan's ongoing cycles of generative disruption and perhaps most remarkable in her story is the resolution of this dialectic, so to speak. In her case narrative we see the capacity to shift the movements of making beyond both complicity and resistance, to a place where the 'not-yet' is an active and ongoing creation. Transgressive agency might, therefore, also be understood as a generative form of agency, capable of bringing into existence something exceptionally different.

Accessing opportunities involves working with and through 'gatekeepers', demonstrating the dialectic of complicity and resistance

Accessing opportunities as the materials of making became a process in and of itself that relied on the dialectic between complicity and resistance, as each primary participant made sense of what was necessary in a particular situation. Here, too, there was an improvisational aspect to this process. In both Nomlanga and Mayan's stories it was evident that there was a process of negotiating access to opportunities which involved a careful discernment of, and working with, gatekeepers of opportunities. In other words, the politics of accessing opportunities as the materials of making needed to be considered as a precursor to their potential use. If this process of negotiation was not considered, it might have meant that the opportunities in question could not be accessed. These gatekeepers showed up in the formal bureaucracy attached to certain opportunities in the form of systemic controls, illustrated pertinently in both Nomlanga and Karlee's cases in terms of their access to National Student Financial Aid Scheme and the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme respectively. Gatekeepers also showed up in the informal power located in

private spaces, in the form of other people. These people could uphold racist, sexist, and paternalistic views that shaped the ways in which they needed to be negotiated with for participants to access the desired opportunities in question. This involved a careful combination of complicity and resistance, with each participant complying just enough to get what they needed, but simultaneously resisting the imposition of these tropes. This is evident in Nomlanga's negotiation with her father and with the student leaders who helped her access funding for registration. It is also evident in Mayan's story in the ways in which she complied with the opportunities that Ouma, Oupa and Aileen offered her, whilst simultaneously resisting how these opportunities were to be lived out.

Whilst gatekeepers needed to be complied with in different ways, Mayan's story offers insight into how they might also be bypassed to access an opportunity when she was denied access to speak to the manager at Possibility and found a way around this. While we do not see this markedly in the other cases it is important to consider because it allows us to contemplate how bypassing certain gatekeepers, where possible, could be a form of resistance too.

6.3 Conclusion: The political nature of making-a-life

This chapter has described the overarching intuition that emerged in this study to explain how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts moved towards experiences of social inclusion in post-apartheid South Africa through the *movements of making-a-life*. The explanation of the cartography of the overarching intuition consistently hints at the political nature of the movements of making-a-life. The contextually embedded process of intuitive improvisation that made these movements possible, embodied a kind of practical sense that was resident in individuals who formed part of the meshwork. This practical sense understood the prevalent hegemonies and was also able to improvise in ways that could counter these. Over time, each case demonstrated that, as different opportunities were taken up as materials within the movements of making, the practical sense of each primary participant was incrementally shaped to respond to new ways of being and doing. Consequently, there were shifts in the routinisation of everyday life that began, and continued, to shift the possibilities available to participants. Transgressive and generative

agencies contributed to these shifts. This made it possible to navigate social inclusion and exclusion as interrelated processes.

As a product of these co-constitutive aspects, participants were able to dispute, negotiate and (re)claim the power required to situate their lives differently. There is more, however. Making-a-life also made an important generational contribution in the post-apartheid South African context. Karlee actively considered how to bring a different experience of life into being for her daughter Julia, differentially shaping her social positioning. She also taught differently in her class and considered what her learners needed to make their own lives well. Nomlanga consistently used strategies to (re)shape how her daughter Sange could experience life, as she attempted to craft an experience for her that stood in distinction to her own. This was similar for Mayan, but her narrative also illustrated the intergenerational contribution that *making-a-life* had beyond her own immediate family unit. The creation of the Future Academy was a demonstration of this, where she played a role in building the next generation of young people through nurturing independent, critical thinkers from a young age. Therefore, as each participant made her life she also contributed to making South African society differently, shifting power in ways that could contribute towards a more equitable social reality.

This chapter has, through describing the set of cross-case inferences that provided a descriptive interpretation of the landscape of the Quintain, illuminated the sheer complexity of the number of interrelated processes that must work in correlation with one another during the *movements of making-a-life* for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa. It falls now to Chapter Seven to both theorise and discuss how the processes and components of making-a-life emerge *together* to create the experience of reaching towards social inclusion for these young womxn.

Chapter 7

Discussion:

Making-a-life as a praxis of correspondences

7.1 Introduction

The work of this chapter involves proposing an explanation of how the conjoined parts of *making-a-life* make movement towards social inclusion possible, as a way of getting closer to comprehending the Quintain as a unified whole. Once I have concluded this explanation in the first parts of this chapter, I move to discuss the implications of this for underwriting a critical occupational therapy practice focused on justice, equity and social transformation. This involves advancing our understanding of 'doing' and 'making'. The last section of the chapter comprises a proposal for how these new understandings provide us with the theoretical grounds to prompt new avenues for working towards justice in contexts of high poverty and inequality. My intention in doing so is to open a pathway through which the findings of this study can be linked back to youth development in the local South African context, preparing the reader to engage with Chapter Eight -the final chapter in the thesis - which outlines the implications of this scholarship and the recommendations emanating from it.

7.2 Section One: Conceptualising making-a-life as a praxis of correspondences

Making-a-life is best viewed as an ongoing praxis because, as has been demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six, it subsists as an incremental process that draws together thinking and doing as part of "a form of activity that, when executed within a particular conjuncture, proves capable of transforming its conditions of possibility" (Wainwright, 2022, p. 42). The praxis of *making-a-life* has a distinctive Marxian agentic orientation (Wainwright, 2022), demonstrated in its outcomes, which manifest in the redistribution of power through transgressive and generative agencies in young womxn's lives. These outcomes can bring possibilities into existence and are best conceptualised as a "series of beginnings", on their

way to somewhere else (Ingold, 2012). The essential nature of the praxis of *making-a-life* is best captured by Spuybroek's articulation of the process of artistic design as "…a matter not of predetermining the final forms of things and all the steps needed to get there, but of opening up a path and improvising a passage" (Spuybroek, 2011, p. 160). The process of *making-a-life* must therefore hold the tension of being able to visualise a future, without necessarily fixing an endpoint (Spuybroek, 2011).

Beginnings are always historically located, but they refuse "…to be trapped, either in history or in the present…" (Erasmus, 2017, p. 140) and so they become capable of issuing forth potentially different experiences. This requires that we read the creativity that is part of making-a-life forwards (Ingold, 2011a), where beginnings are understood as a matter of prophecy, where we look where we are intending to go, rather than predicting a final state of affairs (Spuybroek, 2011). The 'not yet' is cultivated because of such a praxis, where human agency is demonstrated as the manifestation of the hope for a different future (Erasmus, 2017) and becomes an ongoing "…space in which to reconfigure subjectivity, resistance, learning, living and doing" (Erasmus, 2017, p. 146) without being held captive by the past. *Making-a-life* thus brings the future into the present moment (Erasmus, 2017).

In this study, the praxis of *making-a-life* demonstrates how social reproduction can be interrupted through these beginnings. But to explain how this occurs we need to more thoroughly examine how the series of beginnings referenced above are created through *how making-a-life* operates as a praxis. Therefore, to provide a reference point to further theorise the praxis of *making-a-life*, I will draw on the interdisciplinary ideas of the anthropologist Tim Ingold (2013). Ingold's ideas focus on illuminating the concept of 'making' as it applies to craftmanship and the generation of artifacts (Ingold, 2013), but his ideas have utility for the theorising I am doing here because of one important elaboration: his ideas about making are positioned in relation to what Ingold refers to as 'humaning' (Ingold, 2015). Ingold (2015) asserts that human beings are auto-fabricators and are constantly making themselves. Therefore, whatever the endeavour of 'making' seeks to produce, 'making' itself is part of the process of humaning. It is this elaboration that provides the opportunity to relate Ingold's ideas on 'making' to the more metaphysical idea of *making-a-life*. The concept of humaning (Ingold, 2015) provides the grounding for the

complexity of the praxis of *making-a-life* as I articulate what could be understood as being responsible for the movements of making within young womxns' lives.

I have previously sketched the cartographic outlines of the landscape of the Quintain and its contribution to a social re-positioning for these young womxn (Chapter Six). Here I add colour to the canvas by theorising the praxis of making-a-life as a praxis of correspondences, illuminating how various processes and parts of it correspond with one another, resulting in the probability of moving towards social inclusion for young womxn. Having positioned making-a-life as a praxis lends itself to such a theoretical manoeuvre because of the ways in which praxis, as a process, always tries to establish a relationship between a "knowledge of the present" and a "vision of the future" (Gadotti, 1996, p. 29). In so doing, various correspondences become apparent.

These correspondences are evident when we view processes as carrying on *alongside* one another (Ingold, 2018). The correspondences that are explained here are seen as providing the lifeblood for the process of *making-a-life* – they give it breath, considering that *making-a-life* materialised as an emergent and generative ontogeny. This orients our focus on the longitudinal responsiveness of the various processes of making-a-life *with* one another, rather than on their discrete interactions at points in time, turning attention to how the processes of making-a-life answer to one another, how they co-respond (Ingold, 2016). This co-respondence becomes responsible for and responsive to the beginnings in young womxn's lives, positioning them differentially to open the 'not-yet'. The meshwork, as a core part of humaning and a central feature of *making-a-life*, provides the grounds for this correspondence.

The Quintain is routed within, and is a consequence of, how the meshwork operates. In the first sub-sections that follow I seek to animate the meshwork first, as a way of further articulating how it provides the basis for the collective, intuitive improvisation of the movements of *making-a-life* (Section 7.2.1). Thereafter, I explain the three correspondences that embody the Quintain: Correspondences of co-creation (Section 7.2.2), correspondences of subversion (Section 7.2.3) and correspondences of possibility (Section 7.2.4).

7.2.1 Routed inside the kinship of the meshwork

"To *human* is a lifelong process of life-in-the-making with others" (Erasmus, 2017, p. XXII). Part of humaning means that each of us, through the processes of living our everyday lives, puts forth a (life)line (Ingold, 2015). These lines become enmeshed with other lines, forming the 'knots' that constitute what can be understood as the meshwork (Ingold, 2015). The meshwork expresses our sociality in a distinct way, where the relations between us are the central focus, rather than the individuals constituting it (Ingold, 2011b). Our capacity to create our lives is therefore always "emergent within the field of human relations" (Ingold, 2015, p. 122). This is because there is a certain kinship that arises through this mesh of lines (Ingold, 2015). This kinship is important because "…what do kinspersons do? They *attend* to one another, in the sense of abiding with one another, caring for them and doing their bidding" (Ingold, 2015, p. 154). When this sense of kinship animates the meshwork in a young womxn's life, it becomes capable of prompting the intuitive improvisational and collective agency that constitutes the movements of making. This is because the multiple lifelines that become knotted together correspond with one another, both whimsically and strategically, and consequently the meshwork corresponds with each of the conjoined parts of the Quintain that become responsible for the crafting of a pathway towards social inclusion. These correspondences partly explain how transgressive and generative agencies can be demonstrated by young womxn, since "…the along-ness of correspondence… does not go back and forth but side by side, like companions walking together or playing music together. And the thing about walking and playing is that they do not issue from a position but continually pull the performer out of it" (Ingold, 2018, p. 160). ***The praxis of making-a-life is therefore clearly located inside the meshwork as its lifelines answer to one another. Consequently, making-a-life is a collective praxis.***

As a collective praxis, making-a-life engages a plural view of the idea of a maker. In other words, we must think of makers who create and are embedded within the mesh, using their agencies as part of propelling the movements of *making-a-life*. Whilst Nuttall (2009) indicates that the story of post-apartheid South Africa is often told from the perspective of difference and segregation, we have to account for the important "overlaps that mark the present and at time, and in important ways, the past, as well" (p. 1). It is these overlaps that

explain how different lifelines in the meshwork can hold different social positions within the South African context, meaning that the everyday lives of each ‘lifeline' operate through and from different intersectional positions within the colonial matrix of power. These diverse social positions mean that different actors in each meshwork hold a practical sense of different social fields within the South African context, informing their practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984) and, by corollary, their knowledge of the rules governing these diverse social fields (Galvaan, 2015). The historical segregation and oppression associated with the marginalising contexts that young womxn originate from mean that knowledge of the social fields that characteristically allow them to succeed within the Colonial Matrix of Power is often obscured. The differences in the everyday lives of different lifelines result in different kinds of practical consciousness becoming available to young womxn as they attempt to reach towards social inclusion, albeit that this is fundamentally shaped by coupling constraints and the daily organization of the time-space continuum (Giddens, 1984). The meshwork therefore operated through a drawing together of different actors’ practical consciousness, that was both enabled and limited as members in the meshwork attended to one another, with sometimes focused attention on the young womxn that was the subject of each case. It is the mix of practical consciousness that becomes capable of creating and using opportunities that are potentially valuable for social inclusion and could be seen to realise a form of bridging/linking social capital that was noted to be importance for the conversion of opportunities for young people in other contexts in studies reviewed in Chapter Two (MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; Morgan et al., 2020). This ultimately influences the meshwork’s capacity for the intuitive improvisation of the movements of making.

The meshwork thus operates with high levels of sensitivity and responsiveness without necessarily making its strategies discursively explicit. This can be a natural part of the kinship associated with humaning, dependent on how and whose lifelines are entangled. Make no mistake, though. ***Whilst this mix of practical consciousness operates below the level of discursive articulation, it is not without direction. It uses chances – but does not leave things to chance – because correspondences of practical sense open the gaps through which agencies might emerge. Operating in this way, the meshwork is the grounds***

through which pathways towards an experience of social inclusion might be choreographed.

7.2.2 The paradox of structure and freedom: Correspondences of co-creation

Inside the meshwork, *making-a-life* is an act of creation under particular conditions of possibility, moulded by various other processes of (re)making in post-apartheid South Africa. Since multiple aspects are responsible for shaping these processes, *making-a-life* has to work with and through a shifting landscape – a consequence of the complexities and contradictions of our everyday lives in this local context (Soudien et al., 2019). It does this by using an improvised, collective choreography that initiates the necessary dialectics that ordinarily propel praxis in its broadest conception (Gadotti, 1996). This makes sense since improvisation, in its different forms, is also understood as an act of creation under particular conditions of possibility (Lewis & Piekut, 2016). How social actors improvise as part of social action is shaped by the fact that "…the nature of constraint is [always] historically variable, as are the enabling qualities generated by the contextualities of human action" (Giddens, 1984, p. 179). The collective improvisation that constructs the movements of *making-a-life* has to answer to this constraint/enablement as part of its co-creational processes.

The everyday dimension of the concept of improvisation has ordinarily received less theoretical attention than the artistic dimension, where it first emerged as having importance for understanding human action (Ravn et al., 2021). There is now recognition that social formations can improvise, the practice of which constitutes them (Lewis & Piekut, 2016), as in the case of the meshwork. Whilst this everyday dimension is different from the artistic one, it similarly calls for a great deal of fluency in convoluted situations that may be governed by multiple, and potentially contradictory, undetermined structures (Ravn et al., 2021). This means that the act of improvising must be inherently spontaneous, but it is never random (Ravn et al., 2021). It rests on the internalisation – both conscious and unconscious – of experience (Ravn et al., 2021). This is important in relating the concept to the Quintain since improvisation in the context of *making-a-life* works with 'what is', as the mix of practical consciousness in the meshwork makes sense of what is required for young womxn to move towards social inclusion. Various people in the meshwork apply their

agency in ways that relate with this practical sense. Through improvising, the meshwork is "juggling, mobilising, de/activating, reinterpreting and renegotiating various sets of rules to accommodate the evolving and dynamic particularities of their interaction situations" (Crossley, 2021, p. 73). As such, the meshwork becomes capable, through improvisation, of mediating the nature of constraint since this constraint varies "…in relation to the forms of knowledgeability that agents possess about those circumstances" (Giddens, 1984, p. 179). The collective improvisation of the meshwork thus generates the kind of "thinking through making" that Ingold refers to, where thinking happens inside and along the movements of making and not prior to it (Ingold, 2012).

Like the improvisation that occurs as part of everyday conversation, the improvisation of the meshwork is a collaborative emergence (Sawyer, 2003), which reflects a moment-to-moment contingency that is always open to collaboration, but is directed by its sociohistorical location (Sawyer, 2002). As such, "…no single person controls or directs [it]; instead, the direction of its flow is collectively determined, by all of the participants' contributions" (Sawyer, 1999, p. 192). The improvisation that makes a life is thus located beyond the cognitive operations of singular individuals and in a multitude of other aspects that are contextually embedded (Krueger & Salice, 2021). This brings us to what we have learnt about how agency operates within the context of the improvisation of the meshwork that is the grounds for *making-a-life.*

Ravn et al (2021) explain that "…when we attend closely to different analyses of artistic practices, we notice that improvisation implies a paradoxical kind of expertise, which is specifically marked by the artist's ability to participate competently in complex situations while deliberately relinquishing control… engaging in a dialogic interplay" (p. 2). These scholars go on to describe that when an individual practices improvisation, their agency is never given up, per se, but rather it is "exercised in highly trained ways" and "extended in intersubjective relations of collaboration and recognition" (p. 2). Improvisation, therefore, demands a fluent, distributed agency that is directed by the practical sense of the meshwork, enabling young womxn to 'go with the flow' in ways that allow a smooth(er) engagement with the necessary structures, without ever absolutely transcending them (Ravn et al., 2021). This does not negate the contribution of each young womxn's own

practical and discursive consciousness as part of shaping their own actions. Rather, it constructs this as part of a relational agency, allowing young womxn to effectively navigate the priorities set by modernity/coloniality, particularly with respect to the space-time settings of the market and their citizenship within everyday life (Galheigo, 2020). This makes it apparent that thinking from the binary opposition of agency and structure where young womxn must use only their individual power in dealing with these structures (Burkitt, 2018) will not provide us with effective solutions to the problem of social exclusion. Understanding agency relationally, as emerging via the improvisatory latency of the meshwork, means that young womxn's own improvisations will always be situated relationally as a product of both their interrelations and interdependencies (Burkitt, 2018) in and across the meshwork.

A core paradox of improvisation as a practice is that it requires two seemingly contradictory aspects to work in close unison with one another. This paradox involves the necessity of a close reading of rules and resources to know enough about what to do when and how in a particular situation, whilst still engendering a remarkable sense of freedom and spontaneity that associates the practice with the kind of creation that results in the emergence of 'newness' (Ingold, 2022). Lewis and Piekut (2016) suggest that we should not view freedom as being in opposition to structure. Rather, it would be better to understand structure and freedom – as well as power, agency and constraint as "emergent in improvisative interaction" (Lewis & Piekut, 2016, p. 17). This makes improvisation capable of operating in subversive ways (Lewis & Piekut, 2016) that both work with, and challenge, the existing ways of being and doing through which young womxn compose their lives. To do this, improvisation imagines as it composes, which puts the key into the lock of the 'not yet', so to speak. Its intention, as part of intuitive improvisation, is to "open up paths in and through the world, rather than fixing end points in advance" (Ingold, 2022, p. 36).

When imagination is triggered through particular experiences in the meshwork in the context of young womxns' lives, it allows the actors involved in these experiences to hold an internal dialogue between 'what is' and 'what may yet be' as the praxis of making continues to unfold through collective sense-making. This approximates the kind of "internal conversation" that Archer (2007, p. 87) refers to in describing how reflexive deliberation can contribute to social mobility. However, the key difference here is that internal dialogues

across individuals contribute collectively to imagining what could be. Improvisatory actions are constructed to respond through this sense-making process to what needs to be done (Lewis & Piekut, 2016) to position young womxn distinctively, both in contrast to the expectations of them within their various immediate contexts, and that of the expectation of them within the broader social context. This creates tensions that prompt further improvisation because imagination wants "…to pull into the distance", but "the drag of the materials" keep the maker(s) fixed in the present moment on the "labours of proximity" (Ingold, 2012; timestamp 25:25 - 25:50) and captures a further nuance of the paradoxical interplay between structure and freedom that is part of the improvisatory process. The embedding of opportunities within the context of everyday life creates this drag and will be addressed in the sections that follow. It is this tension between makers, their materials and their imaginative capacity that brings the possible into dialogue with that which appears seemingly impossible, acting as the threshold through which new, previously unthought of, social realities can be brought into existence (Erasmus, 2017). This dialectic creates a connection between the present moment, and its future, holding space through which the 'not yet' may be navigated.

Although improvisation has mostly been thought about in the context of the single moment of performance, scholars have more recently illustrated that improvisatory action can extend beyond this to expand longitudinally across larger time frames (Lewis & Piekut, 2016). ***Making-a-life engenders this longitudinal format of improvisation and requires that young womxn act as wayfarers, in a sense, as they are "…commanded by what is not yet given but on the way to being given" and they are rendered "…attentive, opened up in readiness for the 'not yet' of what is to come***" (Ingold, 2022, p. 136). To imagine is to participate inside these processes of becoming (Ingold, 2022) and it is this that makes the improvisation of *making-a-life* an act of creation, rather than creativity (Ingold, 2022). As with art, the praxis of *making-a-life* is always part of the "…daily struggle to begin afresh. And it is in this struggle, in the undergoing, that… creation lies" (Ingold, 2022, p. 25). This requires "specifically attuned interpretations in and of the situation" (Ravn et al., 2021, p. 2) that are part of the improvisational process that translates "the currency of creative agency across the realms of the individual, the social and the worldly…" (Erasmus, 2017, p. 140) to imagine beyond one's current position. This translation of creative agency brings us back to the

dialectics that are part of the praxis of making-a-life. It is in understanding these dialectics that it becomes possible to know how young womxn answer to the attuned interpretations of the situations in which they find themselves to co-create their lives through decolonial agencies that are subversive in nature.

7.2.3 The paradox of complicity and resistance: Correspondences of subversion

When young womxn from and in marginalising contexts reach towards social inclusion in post-apartheid South Africa, they have to decipher a maze of potential pathways in order to succeed. These mazes are set up in advance, via the Colonial Matrix of Power, and require decoding. This decoding can occur, in part, via the meshwork, but the ways in which potential futures must be navigated are also always directly connected to young womxns' sense of these pathways. This includes both a rational and intuitive understanding of the social order and the fields it operates in. The process of decoding this maze results in the dialectical interplay between complicity and resistance, which requires closer examination. Thinking dialectically concentrates our attention on the connections between aspects and the movements that are promulgated as a consequence of the clashes between them (Gadotti, 1996).

Complicity in the praxis of making-a-life constitutes a kind of "folded-together-ness" that Sanders (2002, p. 5) explains is part of humaning, where young womxn are tangled in meshworks that themselves are tangled with modernity/coloniality. Nuttall (2009) explains this folded-together-ness as constituting what she refers to as entanglement. Designating particular 'rubrics of entanglement' including, but not limited to, historical entanglement, temporal entanglement and racial entanglement, she demonstrates the nature of the intimacy that we acquire as a consequence (Nuttall, 2009). These rubrics of entanglement frame the ways in which our colonial and apartheid histories, the particular historical juncture in which we find ourselves, and the logics of race and racism in South Africa require a more nuanced reading of how it becomes possible for young womxn to work with the limits of this entanglement (Thorpe & Naidu, 2020). The dynamics of entanglement force us to acknowledge both intimacy with a situation, and the fact that this can simultaneously be experienced as unwanted and, correspondingly, resisted (Nuttall, 2009). In Sanders' work on

complicities, he endeavours to "explore the problem of complicity without either simply accusing or excusing the parties involved", but rather as an interrelated mix of both resistance and collaboration (Sanders, 2002, p. x). The intimacy that young womxn and their meshworks share with modernity/coloniality explain how institutional powers within the Colonial Matrix of Power become capable of facilitating young womxns' agency through the ways in which they gather them up into their mechanisms (Sanyal, 2015). Young womxns' complicity within the Colonial Matrix of Power is a necessary part of both surviving and thriving because it offers the chance to move beyond the captive snare of apartheid logics that keep them trapped in subjugated positions.

However, young womxn do not simply submit to this complicity. Rather, they demonstrate what can be understood as a 'consequential complicity' (Thorpe & Naidu, 2020), which manifests as a paradox. For, while young womxn must collude with the systems that oppress and render them vulnerable to gain, use and move through particular opportunities towards social inclusion into the systems that disavow them; they simultaneously become capable of resisting these logics by redistributing power through their alignment with the dominant desires of this system. The overflow of this consequential complicity is "…a form of transgression… which is potentially empowering" (Thorpe & Naidu, 2020, p. 181). In the findings this was referred to as the emergence of transgressive agency. It was this transgressive agency that allowed each young womxn in this study to find themselves anew as each beginning was crafted in the praxis of making. This is consistent with the relational view of social power, where power has an interwoven character (Selg, 2018). Correlatedly, Gqola (2001) asserts: "As we [Blackwomen] world our environs, we refuse to inhabit the world passively and reject the myriad of ways in which we are defined under white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (pp. 12-13). Transgressive agency demonstrates itself, then, as a decolonial form of agency, through which a kind of abjection is negotiated (Kristeva, 1982) where, although young womxn are not fully cut off from the impacts of modernity/coloniality they are able to somewhat release their hold on their lives. In this way transgressive agency, emerging through consequential complicity, has generative potential (Thorpe & Naidu, 2020). ***These generative agencies emerge over time as young womxn are repeatedly re-situated, through the series of beginnings that are a consequence of the praxis of making. This prompts young womxns' capability to actively orchestrate the re-***

direction of their lives, using these emergent beginnings. As such, they remake "…what [was] already made in the continuity of praxis [emphasis author's own]" (Giddens, 1984, p. 170)***, interrupting social reproduction through desiring both alignment with dominance and a transcendence of it*** (Thorpe & Naidu, 2020). In doing so, they repurpose the grammar of the praxis of living in post-apartheid South Africa to re-exist themselves and hold space for a better future to be brought into being.

Re-existence is a decolonial act where existence and hope are (re)assembled towards a life of dignity and self-determination (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), *despite* the experiences of de-existence that are characteristic for those who are oppressed through the Colonial Matrix of Power. Re-existence is understood as the ongoing renewal of life (Walsh, 2021) and is an outcome of *making-a-life*. This is because the totality of *making-a-life* engenders a process of creation that makes re-existence possible by catalysing these decolonial agencies. This might be best captured as *subversion-in-the-making*.

7.2.4 Coherence, not adherence: Correspondences of possibility

Now, to finish out the explanation of the Quintain as a praxis of correspondences I need to take a moment to attend more actively to how opportunities fit into this praxis. Here, I want to pay heed to the relationship that was illuminated in the findings between opportunities, as the materials of making, and their correspondence within the situational context of young womxns' everyday lives. It would appear that this mimics the processes that Ingold refers to in his theory of making where he suggests that the maker must *join with* [emphasis my own] their materials in a unique dialectic as they undergo certain processes during the course of making (Ingold, 2020). Ingold asserts that makers do not impose a previously designated outcome/design on the materials they use. Rather, the maker, in a dialogue with their materials, has to find the grain in the processes of making and manipulate this grain to their evolving purpose (Ingold, 2012). ***In the flux of young womxns' everyday lives, opportunities show up first as possibilities that could contribute to new beginnings in making-a-life; but remain only possibilities unless they are actively converted in the praxis of making-a-life into opportunities that can (re)orient the directional course of the life in question. Therefore, just as materials are transformed in processes of making*** (Ingold, 2013)***,***

possibilities become opportunities through the processes of making-a-life too. Opportunities therefore have no power outside of the processes of "thinking through making" that occur within the meshwork.

Using the example of a watchmaker in the process of making a watch, Ingold (2013) explains that "what the watchmaker has to hand, to begin with, are cogs and springs, among other minute pieces. These pieces do not belong together, in preordained positions, by dint of some external necessity. They are no more part of a watch then are twigs on the forest floor part of a bird's nest. Rather, as with the nest, pieces become parts only as the assembly proceeds and tends increasingly to cohere. They gradually acquire a feel for each other, they *settle* holding each other in place ever more tightly as the work advances asymptotically towards closure without ever absolutely reaching it" (p. 69). This analogical reference point begs of us to understand opportunities within the processes of making-a-life as engaging the tensions of living, not to adhere, but rather, to cohere within those circumstances. It cannot, then, be understood as part of an additive process. Ingold suggests that in the processes of making, it is the coherence of materials, rather than their adherence that gives them their temporal longevity, their *lasting* effect as they are transformed into artifacts or 'things' (Ingold, 2020). ***The idea of coherence, rather than adherence, makes it possible to fathom why certain opportunities do, and others do not, contribute in the ways we expect them to within young womxns' lives.*** This must cause us to pause, and (re)evaluate, how government and civil society create and make available opportunities for young people in post-apartheid South Africa. I intentionally use the word 'create' here as opposed to 'provide', since it is impossible to deny the active process of creation that is the Quintain. Explaining opportunity apart from the Quintain is relatively meaningless.

Understanding the necessary coherences between opportunities and the everyday lives of young womxn illuminate what might be understood as the correspondences of possibility within the Quintain. At this point, then, ***I suggest that we conceptualise opportunities as 'possibilities-in-the-making' to signal that they can never be separate from the praxis of making-a-life.*** The idea of *possibilities-in-the-making* offers a perspective on opportunity that brings together the idea of chances, the relational aspects and social context that influence how chances can be perceived and taken up, and the concept of options as being

crafted through the experience of engaging with possibilities as corresponding dispositions for action (Alvarez, 2009). As I recognised in an earlier publication, drawing on Alvarez's (2009) work, options exist in relation to chances only when a person is capable of recognising these possibilities as being for them (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). Understanding opportunities as *possibilities-in-the-making*, brings together chances and options when opportunities are understood as correspondences that must *cohere* within processes of making. This diverges slightly from Alvarez's (2009) understanding where options are imagined in advance of the processes through which chances are used in particular ways to advance certain ends. Rather, ***opportunities themselves are made through living out possibilities, and options are collectively constructed through the processes of making.*** The complexity of this understanding of opportunities potentially explains why many initiatives designed to provide opportunities for young people have failed in their endeavours. Only possibilities can be provided. Opportunities are constructed during making.

So, what does all this mean for the processes of designating value to *certain kinds* of opportunities? The above arguments make it evident that to understand the negotiation of opportunities within conversion processes we have to take account of their correspondences with everyday life. This advances my original thinking regarding the construction of a typology of opportunities that could serve the work of social transformation (Peters & Galvaan, 2021). Whilst a typology of opportunities might still be helpful, it would be critical to think about it relationally to avoid valorising *particular* opportunities as the panacea for the social exclusion of young womxn from and in marginalising contexts. Instead, we have to approximate how various opportunities, as materials for making-a-life, *increasingly* cohere within young womxns' everyday lives and take this into account in such theoretical work.

Because making-a-life operates as a metaphysical phenomenon, it does not necessarily have direct concrete outputs, as in the case of craftsmanship, against which we might systematically evaluate how the coherence of particular materials were contributing to these. Opportunities themselves are not necessarily concrete, observable phenomena. Although this is the case, the gains of *making-a-life* are still material, in a sense, in that the ways in which opportunities cohere within the praxis of *making-a-life* result in the differential social positioning that becomes incrementally probable as a consequence. It is

this different social positioning that makes it more likely that young womxn are able to accrue the necessary material and political capital that allows them to subvert the operational mechanisms within the colonial matrix of power that keep them subjugated. This line of thinking provides an opening to begin asking questions regarding whether, in a context of modernity/coloniality and high poverty and inequality, there is something to be said about certain opportunities that may potentially have a greater affinity for enhanced coherence within the praxis of making. In this study it was apparent that opportunities aligned with the goals of modernity/coloniality contributed well towards (re)positioning young womxn to make their lives differently. This was particularly apparent in the context of educational opportunities, although given the methodology used in the study and the insights that have emerged about the dialectically-oriented nature of the Quintain, it is difficult to say for certain whether these opportunities should hold some sort of pride of place. Therefore, further investigation would be required to assert that these kinds of opportunities need to hold prominence should we take up the scholarly work required to develop the typology of opportunities referred to above. This would ensure that we avoid reiterating the usual discourse associated with only thinking about opportunities as ways to prevent exclusion (see Chapter One).

That said, what I am sure about at this stage of theorising the Quintain is that any sort of typology must simultaneously address the issue of 'coherence' of opportunities in relation to the issue of 'kind' which will challenge initiatives within youth development to think differently about how opportunities might be created through these initiatives. The above discussion, alongside the findings in this study, demonstrates that, unless the correspondence and coherence of opportunities within processes of making-a-life is taken seriously, it will continue to be difficult to create and use opportunities to influence young womxn's trajectories towards social inclusion in post-apartheid South Africa.

7.2.5 Conclusion to Section One: Making-a-life as radical co-creation and subversion

The intentional bringing together of the inferences presented in Chapter Six, and the theorising of the Quintain as a totality, has demonstrated that, ***for young womxn to have a realistic shot at reaching towards social inclusion, the praxis of making-a-life has to alter***

the routinisation of everyday life, contracting the space between macro structures and everyday experiences and subverting the intentions of the Colonial Matrix of Power present within post-apartheid South Africa. It does this through its orientation as an ontogenetic praxis of correspondences that improvises *with possibilities-in-the-making*, drawing out transgressive and generative agencies which become capable of operationalising a different social positioning. This occurs through renewed forms of practical consciousness that generate alternative ways of doing and give birth to new beginnings.

The theorising of the Quintain as a praxis of correspondences emphasises the dialogue that exists between experiences of social exclusion and inclusion for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts that was raised in Chapter Six. Therefore, the praxis of making-a-life must operate as a sustained process. Reaching towards social inclusion continues indefinitely, since marked systemic change was not a feature of the praxis in this study. Whilst much has changed in South Africa since apartheid ended, much has also remained the same (Wa Azania, 2014).

Young womxn from and in marginalising contexts continue to make-their-lives through a relational process of radical co-creation and subversion, characterised by paradoxes, in a South Africa that was not necessarily intended for them.

7.3 Section Two: Lessons for a socially-transformative occupational science and critical occupational therapy

My intent in this section of the chapter is to draw the theorisation of the Quintain towards a crescendo, that puts its explanation to use within occupational science and occupational therapy. As has been noted, occupational scientists and occupational therapists often demonstrate a 'stuckness' in being able to legitimately contribute to social transformation (Laliberte Rudman, 2021). I believe this 'stuckness' could be directly attributed to the register within which we understand opportunity, agency, structure and occupation. Using a

relational register offers the chance to (re)imagine how occupational therapists might contribute to social transformation.

7.3.1 Conceptualising 'doing' and 'making': Potential avenues for working towards justice and equity

Having explained the Quintain as a praxis of correspondences in section one, I have demonstrated that it is possible to think afresh about the relationships between agency, structure, opportunity and occupation, as these exist within a relational process of radical co-creation. This provides a more dynamic way to think about the processes of converting opportunity into beneficial ends, since I raised in Chapter Two that our ways of considering this in the discipline were 'static'. Thinking in this way, however, requires that we let go of some of the dominant views of occupation and to think about processes of conversion in a different register.

Barlott, Shevellar and Turpin (2017) suggest that to effectively contribute to social transformation occupational scientists need to resist and challenge dominant configurations of normative thinking by "becoming minor" (p. 524). Becoming minor appears to approximate what is thought about in decoloniality as thinking from and in the margins (Mignolo, 2011). As was illustrated in Chapter Three, the margin offers a different vantage point, opening potentially different perspectives and tools for understanding. When we think in the minor, we become capable of using a kind of wisdom, rather than fixed categories of thought, that "…is about attending to things, both opening up and responding to their presence" (Ingold, 2022, p. 53). The theorisation that I have offered of the Quintain is effectively a contribution in the minor key since it has shifted our gaze from the ontologically separate categories of *opportunity*, *agency*, *structure* and *occupation,* to their ontogeny – how they work *with* one another, rather than how they discretely exist and mechanically influence each other. In this sense, agency cannot be thought of as anything other than *relational*. From this view, it is not whether young womxn from and in marginalising contexts do or do not have agency. Rather it is about how the relational aspects of everyday life, opportunity and occupation, make it possible for them to *use their agency* in particular ways. Thinking in the minor key recovers agency as a natural part of

humaning in the meshwork, rather than a distinct competency or singular action of the individual. Agency is *distributed* through the meshwork. With this in mind, we are able to "move beyond the individual as the principal unit of analysis" (Barlott et al., 2017, p. 524) towards a view of social phenomena that is acentred from the individual, but that still accounts for an individual's actions in a non-hierarchical fashion (Barlott et al., 2017).

With the movement towards socio-political modes of thought within the discipline of occupational science there has been a proposition to conceptualise the individual and collective as existing on a continuum (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015). This is helpful in bringing to bear an understanding of the relational aspects of the individual and collective, but still tends to operationalise a linear relationship between them, where we are thinking 'more' or 'less' of each at different points of 'interaction'. Now, what the idea of *making-a-life* prompts us to do is to think in 3D since it has been shown that the individual is wrapped *up* and *in* a meshwork (the collective). Therefore, rather than focusing on individual, collective, and context, the focus is on processes of co-creation: the notions of 'doing' and 'making' as these exist as part of a relational agency.

7.3.1.1 The generative power of 'making'

There has been recognition that the concept of doing has been undertheorised within occupational science and that, since it is an often-dominant part of occupation, we require further unpacking of its potential elements and related parts (Ellerin, 2015). Taking this theoretical project up, Ellerin (2015) demonstrates the notional equivalence of doing and making using languages other than English. Making *is* doing. But what kind of doing is it?

Ellerin (2015) raises both creativity and transformation as part of conceptualising doing by indicating that "…the meaning of doing, then, is that of the modification of the world, either by creating, i.e. coming or bringing into existence of some participant that did not exist before, or by transforming, i.e. the converting or altering of some participant already in existence in such a way that the participant functions in a new role" (p. 409). This aspect of doing demarcates its longitudinal implications. Making-as-doing brings these longitudinal aspects to life and attempts to take account of the correspondence that creates something

new or transforms the way things are. How making occurs as part of doing then becomes an important area of focus in processes that seek to contribute to justice and equity, and that endeavour to use occupation as a way of redistributing the power to do differently. As has been shown in the theorisation of the Quintain, making creates new beginnings and, since it is characterised by movement, it can link these beginnings together. It is therefore making that appears to promulgate the kind of occupational flows that Barlott and Turpin (2022) refer to when they comprehend occupation as a social process that creates particular social arrangements. Making becomes capable of redistributing power within these arrangements through co-creation, not by shifting structures per se, but rather by subverting those structures from the *inside* so that a different social positioning becomes possible *over time*. In such processes, doing is making when it crafts opportunities from possibilities that feed back into processes of everyday life, reconfiguring the power agents have at their disposal to orchestrate prosperous lives. Making can reach towards social inclusion and potentially pave the way towards social transformation as those in marginalising contexts are imbued with more social power. This has generational power in movements towards equity and justice. As such, making as part of doing, is the appropriate point of focus when considering processes of social inclusion that, whilst not contributing directly to systemic change, can contribute to social change.

To fully comprehend how making might contribute to the political good, we need to understand what drives its movements. Barlott and Turpin (2022), drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, refer to the concept of *desire* as "a creative and transformative [social] force" that can also be "disruptive" (Barlott & Turpin, 2022, p. 135), having "…the potential to shape the social world and also to be shaped by [it]" (Barlott & Turpin, 2022, p. 131). Desire operates as part of collective co-creation, that involves individuals, but whom are not its focus (Barlott & Turpin, 2022). Desire is a product of entanglement in and with the social world. Judging from the theorisation of the Quintain, making is best understood as an act of desire because it is inherently political and generative. It is this co-creation that makes it possible to operate within both the rhizomatic (minor) and arborescent (major) cartographies that characterise social life (Barlott & Turpin, 2022) in modern/colonial contexts. For whilst it is possible to think from the minor, and dwell in the margins, modern social life expects that we operate in mazes that are constructed by the major. As such, the

consequential complicity of those whose lives are devalued by the major, as they operate across these different cartographies, is what becomes capable of realising the relational agencies of creation that can situate those with less social power differently.

Because making is constituted in flows of doing over time that are promulgated by desire, it can be connected to, but not fully approximated by, punctuated instances of doing, during the course of lives, as they are lived out. The idea of making, then, causes occupational therapists to confront how one makes a life *with* occupations, calling for a more explicit grasp of the relational and co-creational flows of doing. This is quite different from our traditional modes of thought in the discipline where we have characteristically considered how to *use* occupations as instances that are part of *making-a-life* in order to contribute to health and well-being. This is a remnant of our historical alignment with the medical sciences and has been identified as a discourse that fundamentally limits the potential of transformative practices (Farias & Laliberte Rudman, 2019). Making has generative power because it is where agency, structure, opportunity, occupation and everyday life meet in a longitudinal process across time, bringing their dialogical nature into the spotlight. What we see in the light on this metaphoric stage offers the opportunity to take new lines of flight (Barlott et al., 2017) in contributing towards a socially-transformative occupational science and occupational therapy.

7.3.1.2 New 'lines of flight' for a practice focused on justice and equity

The ideas regarding the need to practice in socially-transformative ways that have shaped occupational therapy and occupational science to date have set us on a different path towards contributing to processes of justice and equity. As was shown in the theorisation of the Quintain, the conversation amongst agency, structure, opportunity, occupation and everyday life generates a consideration of the entanglements that are the basis for being able to construct different lives that bring the 'not yet' into being. It would be remiss not to consider how these entanglements shape both the lives we work with and the (de)limitations of our practice(s). Many of the proposed contributions towards using occupation as a way of contributing to social transformation do not take seriously enough this entanglement and the way it requires us to work "…with difference and sameness but

also with their limits, their predicaments, their moments of complication" (Nuttall, 2009, p. 1).

As the idea of making calls on occupational therapists to use a different register for understanding how lives are made *with* occupation *from the inside*, our proposals for how to work with and through the making of these lives must take account of our complicities with the systems we know are problematic. We cannot be 'simply' aspirational in our thinking as this would mean that we cannot adequately consider these entanglements – and the tensions they raise – in our practice approaches. In speaking about intellectuals' complicity with apartheid, for instance, Sanders indicates that "…opponents [to apartheid] found themselves implicated willy-nilly in its thinking and practices and shaped their responsibility accordingly" (Sanders, 2002, p. 1). Histories of segregation and dispossession, as well as experiences of oppression of those with target identities, occur throughout the world and are particularly prevalent in those contexts that were colonised. Apartheid is also being replicated in other contexts. I raise this point to recognise that all of us share complicities with immoral and oppressive systems that privilege certain identities, whilst oppressing others. Our entanglements are shaped by our intersectional positions and our positioning within the matrix of domination. We can, and should, resist but we are inevitably entangled, and it lies to us to actively work with these entanglements. For young womxn in this study, it was the various paradoxical correspondences that had the capacity to generate decolonial agencies for crafting a different life course. Thinking in this different register could help occupational therapy and occupational science to radically reconfigure the conditions of possibility that situate our practices towards social transformation (Laliberte Rudman, 2021).

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has considered both the theorisation of the Quintain and its prompting of potential new directions for a socially transformative praxis within occupational science and occupational therapy. In the next chapter, I forefront conclusions that can be drawn from this. I also bring the discussion back to the local context and raise critical aspects that could be addressed within youth development in South Africa, to support young womxn in marginalising contexts in their continued efforts to reach towards social inclusion. In doing

so, I end this thesis with considering the implications for how this new disciplinary knowledge could be utilised beyond our disciplinary boundaries, contributing to social and occupational justice for young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 8

Conclusion(s): Generating new vistas for the social inclusion of young womxn from and in marginalising contexts

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I draw together the findings generated by the study and suggest what new conceptual insights might arise to enhance the social inclusion of young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa. In doing so I raise the possibilities for redirecting our thinking about young womxn, opportunities and social inclusion. The implications of this research are presented in the propositions to respond differently to the problems of exclusion facing young womxn, alongside the opportunities that exist for policy development, occupational therapy practice and further research. I subsequently frame what I interpret to be the limitations and strengths of this scholarly work and end by summarising this study's main thesis.

8.2 Study implications: Possibilities for enhancing the social inclusion of young womxn from marginalising contexts

In Chapter One, I sought to highlight the need to articulate the relationships between agency, structure(s) and opportunities more clearly to understand how young people might facilitate the process of social inclusion to live generatively and freely. In doing so, I forefronted the ways in which many young people use their agency and respond to the situations of their lives, while also demonstrating that policy initiatives have failed to understand how to create opportunities in ways that mitigate waithood. They have also failed to incorporate a gendered intersectional perspective that could develop more realistic interventions to confront the complex realities that young womxn in marginalising contexts face.

I want to suggest that the emergence of *making-a-life* as a praxis of correspondences has the power to prompt both occupational therapy and youth development in South Africa to respond differently with the contributions we make in our respective arenas of practice, in important new ways. Reckoning with this praxis of correspondences is urgent if post-apartheid South Africa has any chance of realising a born-free generation.

In what follows, I aim to show how the theorisation of the Quintain as a praxis of correspondences of co-creation, subversion and possibilities offers the potential to re-shape the contours of youth development into new vistas.

8.2.1 Taking flight: Pushing occupational therapy to contribute more effectively to the generation of new vistas for young womxn in marginalising contexts

In Chapter Seven, the value of thinking in a different register has been articulated and some possible lessons that emanated from the findings of this study were proposed. Here I take the opportunity to propose possible recommendations for the discipline/profession that are directed by the proposed new lines of flight:

1) To radically reconfigure the possibilities situating our practices as critical occupational scientists and therapists, we would need to generatively disrupt (Galvaan, 2021b; Laliberte Rudman, 2021) the thinking we have advanced to date about opportunities, social inclusion, occupational justice, and social transformation. The idea of making-as-doing provides us with a way to do this because it demonstrates the ongoing and complex relations between opportunity, agency, structure, and occupation(s). This makes it possible to start to see the relationships that exist between social inclusion and social transformation. Whilst higher degrees of social inclusion act towards instigating the development of different lives, they still tend to correlate with the dominant hegemonies and demarcated 'place' of certain lives within the system in question. This is consistent with the problematic of social inclusion raised in Chapter Two, where it is possible that social inclusion does not necessarily change the social dynamics of society. Notwithstanding, this study has shown that because an opportunity to reach towards social inclusion has the

capacity to contribute towards the development of transgressive and generative agencies for young womxn, it can create the potential grounds through which social transformation might become more viable. This is because it can redistribute power within this system, changing the landscape of who has access to particular kinds of lives. If more young womxn have the chance to develop in these ways, then it is possible to reimagine a world where the opportunities created and made available are more equitably distributed and cohere within the contexts of their lives to promote generational change.

2) Occupational scientists and therapists will need to work out how to engage with our individual and collective complicities with the societies in which we work to contribute to the goals outlined in 1) above. New vistas for social inclusion have potential generative capacity if we can learn to think in these alternative ways and correlate our practices with them. This will require an active working with our own entanglements with modernity/coloniality as a discipline/profession. As Emery-Whittington (2021) suggests, the idea of occupational justice, and how it is often worked towards, may just be "colonial business as usual" (p. 153). This is because one of the dominant lenses shaping the possibilities for our practice is an individualisation of social issues (Farias & Laliberte Rudman, 2019), that is made more pronounced because of our general positioning within health and social care systems. Since these findings have supported a clearer articulation of the dynamic nature of how young womxn move toward an experience of inclusion, taking a relational approach in promoting occupational justice is important. Reflexively engaging with my own social position, the theoretical lens used in this study, and the participants involved in this study to collaboratively produce these findings, has resulted in a deeper understanding of my own complicity and resistance in the systems that I am a part of. At times, this was a painful reckoning as I recognised the lies of modernity/coloniality that have influenced how I understand myself and my socialisation, as both a white middle-class womxn in South Africa, and an occupational therapist socialised into White, Judeo-Christian and Eurocentric views of what is and should be part of everyday life. I acknowledge that this is not an answer for working out our individual and collective complicities in the profession, but is, perhaps, a start towards this.

3) Finally, in enacting the second recommendation, one would need to consider what and whose agenda is being served. Occupational therapy's current positioning in health care in the South African context makes it increasingly difficult to serve agendas of justice and equity, in addition to individualised health and well-being. We are also not well-understood within the youth development fraternity as necessarily having a contribution to make. It seems timely to engage our imaginations towards reshaping, not only where we are positioned within current systems, but how we might shift our practices towards justice and equity for young womxn in marginalising contexts. Our current occupational therapy practices tend to take the form of individual and group approaches which means we think predominantly in these modes for service design. However, these findings suggest that different modes of practice will be required to embrace the dynamic nature of the phenomenon, as it has been demonstrated to exist in the context of everyday life. In other contexts, such as Brazil, occupational therapists have had success in reorienting the profession and its practices towards the social field (Esquardo Lopes & Serrata Malfitano, 2021). Whilst we have worked to develop approaches to occupational therapy in South Africa that reimagine our occupational therapy practices towards equity and justice as ends (Galvaan & Peters, 2017a, 2017b), we can learn from the reorientation of occupational therapy services that made Social Occupational Therapy possible in Brazil.

8.2.2 The kinship of the meshwork as the grounds for new vistas in youth development

Perhaps the most important implications for youth development arise from the grounding of the phenomenon of *making-a-life* within the meshwork. The meshwork was a powerful feature in the movements of making-a-life and its generative force was clear. Its construction within the context of humaning should make it apparent to us that its contribution to social life could have far-reaching effects for youth development. Whilst overall the meshwork was a benefit for the young womxn in this study, it was also possible to see its 'moments of undoing' at points in the lives of participants. This can be the result of family and community systems that become dysfunctional, themselves a product of a dysfunctional system of social protection. The actualised goal of social policy is that of the individual, but the direction I

have sought to take in this study, towards building new knowledge, is to suggest the urgency of thinking beyond the individual. I have tried to approach the individual as being situated, always, in relational positions. They are enmeshed. In this enmeshment, the individual is decentered, directing our attention, instead to the praxis of correspondences that makes it possible to move towards social inclusion. The integrity of the meshwork is therefore central in a youth development that aims to realise the creation and use of opportunities that have a realistic probability of promoting social inclusion. It would therefore be important to consider how current youth policy and youth development interventions could be enabling or disabling the meshwork.

8.2.3 Implications for youth policy in post-apartheid South Africa

8.2.3.1 Protecting and enhancing the integrity of the meshwork

In Chapter Two I showed that social capital is critical in shaping the creation and use of opportunities and how they can be navigated. Thinking from the perspective of the meshwork locates social capital inside its processes, and not as a separate element to be understood in isolation. This allows us to grasp how various forms of social capital – bridging, linking and bonding – come together and interface with the creation and use of opportunities. What is apparent from this study is how social capital was importantly enhanced through the meshwork. This pulls to the fore two important dimensions to consider in the construction and implementation of policy responses:

1) That policy should engender and protect the natural ways in which the meshwork operates through its various mechanisms; and
2) That policy responses need to consider how to support a collective that includes young womxn, rather than sees them as individual end targets.

I am very aware that policy makers are not always receptive to engaging with the kind of complexity that complicates policy responses, instead valuing knowledges that match their already defined "vocabularies of action" (Simons, 1996, p. 226). So, where reimagining a collective as the end point of policy might be too far a stretch for policymakers, it depends

on those of us supporting the processes of policy development to consider how the integrity of the meshwork could be supported through corresponding policy proposals.

Policy that forefronts the mitigation of the legacy of segregation that coloniality and apartheid processes have left in their wake, can be particularly helpful here. This includes policy that supports, for instance, social housing projects, where mixed income families live and work together. Such projects also support where children go to school and who they have the opportunity to form relationships with. This kind of policy move would systematically curb the rise of opportunity markets, making it more possible for different young womxn, despite their family's income and relative social position, to build the kind of capital that makes it easier to access other opportunities to construct different futures. There have also been promising policy proposals and advocacy for the institution of the Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG) in South Africa. The proponents for the UBIG have carefully and skilfully crafted their arguments for this policy, demonstrating how it can serve in the fight against poverty in our context (Marais, 2022). Despite there being as many antagonists for this policy option as there are proponents (Mathebula, 2021), the UBIG has been shown to have important potential as a cash transfer (Mathebula, 2021). Whilst this is an individually-based policy instrument that would be guaranteed to all as citizens, it has the potential to enhance the integrity of the meshwork because, given how collectives are constituted in communities, it could drastically increase the combined resources available within households. It therefore holds the promise of strengthening the social fabric of the meshworks within which young womxn are embedded.

8.2.3.2 Thinking from the perspective of social inclusion

The necessary coherences required between opportunities and everyday life, to contribute effectively to the social inclusion of young womxn, makes it impossible to treat all young womxn the same in youth policy interventions. Thinking from the heterogenous perspectives of what makes the inclusion of young womxn in marginalising contexts possible, rather than simply attempting to mitigate their exclusion, will serve current youth policy implementation and future youth policy design. This would mean thinking beyond the creation of work and educational opportunities as the panacea for social inclusion of all

young womxn. Instead, interventions and policy should consider what might be necessary, alongside these kinds of opportunities, to generate new pathways towards social inclusion. Therefore, within the current National Youth Policy (NYP 2030), youth organisations and others involved in youth development could reorient their thinking towards the coherence of opportunities within heterogenous lives, apart from simply focusing on educational and work opportunities as ends in themselves.

8.3 Strengths and limitations of this work

Both the strengths and limitations of this work reside within the same aspect of this study, and that is in the strategic selection of only three cases focused on a single gender, as an initial starting point for theory building. The use of three cases allowed the generation of deep and meaningful narrative data over a period of a few years, with a focused intent on understanding the intricacies and specificities of each case that was included. Given the orientation of youth development and the previously limited knowledge development within occupational science/occupational therapy on this topic, this was an apt choice and served the purpose of this study well. My capacity to provide a thick and accurate description of the Quintain was enhanced through this methodological choice.

Notwithstanding, I propose that this is also a limitation of the study. Specifically, all of the young womxn identified as heteronormative and cisgendered. Consequently, there was not an opportunity to explore how the phenomenon might occur within the lives of young womxn who occupy different gender positions and/or identify as LBTQIA+. A further limitation resides in the similarities between the three cases with respect to the nature of opportunities that contributed to participants' experience of social inclusion. All three primary participants utilised participation in higher education as a key opportunity. Whether or not other kinds of opportunities could result in the kind of social inclusion demonstrated through these cases remains, at this stage, unexplored. I must therefore rely on you, as the reader, to determine how these study findings measure up in your own context and work. Taking this into account I acknowledge that these findings will require further development and, as such, in Section 8.4 I propose how this might be done through further scholarship in this area.

8.3 Opportunities for further scholarship

Given the findings that emerged in this work, I believe three further pieces of scholarship are necessary to continue to build on what has been presented here:

- Whilst I have presented a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the cross-case inferences that emerged through the application of the multiple case study design, the theorisation of the Quintain was based on a limited number of cases. It would therefore be helpful to explore how this initial theory might be extended upon, by exploring its application for other young womxn who live in different contexts in post-apartheid South Africa. The first piece of proposed scholarship is therefore a qualitative study, using a grounded theory as its study design. Grounded theory has been shown to develop theory through the systematic collection and comparison of data (Chun Tie et al., 2019). This design would be well suited for scholarly work that builds on the findings presented here.
- Secondly, the opportunity exists to conduct similar multiple case studies with young people who identify with different genders: those who identify as young men and those who identify as gender non-binary or transgender. This would provide the chance to consider these findings in light of how the process of moving towards social inclusion, through opportunities, occurs for others who occupy different positions on the gender spectrum and who identify with diverse sexual orientations.
- Thirdly, I want to return to the potential that exists to develop a typology of opportunities that was touched on in Chapter Seven. Given the proposed need for youth policy and interventions to advance the coherence of opportunities in young womxns' lives, scholarly work in this area would support this end. Further consideration would be required to determine the exact nature of this work.

8.4 Thesis Conclusion

How do young womxn from and in marginalising contexts in post-apartheid South Africa move towards an experience of social inclusion, through opportunities? To generate the thesis that responds to this question I used a multiple case study that drew on narrative

inquiry as an approach for generating and analysing data, situating myself theoretically using decoloniality as a form of critical social theory, together with the theory of structuration. This was apt since these young womxn are exposed to the risks of waithood, creating a potential experience of exclusion that is directly linked to the colonial and apartheid histories of the South African context. Three in-depth individual case narratives were produced in the study and provided the basis for a cross-case analysis that effectively teased out a set of inferences, drawn together into a single overarching intuition about the phenomenon. The overarching intuition demonstrated that it was through the process of *making-a-life* – a uniquely crafted political praxis – that young womxn were able to 'reach towards' social inclusion. *Making-a-life* was further theorised as a praxis of correspondences, routed within the kinship of the meshwork. Through it, various paradoxes are negotiated in favour of realising possibilities that cohere within the context of everyday life, (re)constructing it differently. Consequently, it is possible to redistribute social power, halting social reproduction in young womxn's lives through the application of decolonial agencies. These agencies correspond with opportunities as possibilities-in-the-making, subverting the structures that modernity/coloniality orchestrate.

The relational view of opportunity, structure, agency, and occupation that has been presented provides a more dynamic understanding of how young womxn from and in marginalising contexts move towards experiences of social inclusion, opening a pathway for socially transformative occupational science and critical occupational therapy to reimagine the proposed practice approaches that might contribute to equity and justice for young womxn in post-apartheid South Africa. Youth development interventions and policy options can also benefit from the knowledge generated and possible proposals towards this have been articulated throughout this closing chapter. Central among these is the necessity of paying attention to and protecting the integrity of the meshwork, as well as understanding that, when attempting to orchestrate the provision and use of opportunities, one must heed the ways in which the negotiation of opportunities operate as processes that must cohere with the context of everyday life to be converted into positive gains for social inclusion.

Appendix A: Search Parameters: Studies from other disciplines

An initial search was conducted in 2017 and then updated in September 2023. The parameters of the updated search are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Search strategy for studies from other disciplines

Search Parameters	
Selected database	Ebscohost: Academic Search Premier
Database description[76]	"Designed specifically for academic institutions, *Academic Search Premier* is a multi-disciplinary full text database containing full text for more than 3,100 journals, including nearly 2,700 peer-reviewed titles. In addition to the full text, this database offers indexing and abstracts for more than 8,500 journals. This scholarly collection offers information in nearly every area of academic study including: computer sciences, engineering, physics, chemistry, language and linguistics, arts & literature, medical sciences, ethnic studies, and many more. *Academic Search Premier* is an enormous collection of the most valuable peer-reviewed full text journals, offering critical information from many sources unique to this database. Examples of titles offered in *Academic Search Premier* include: *American Historical Review, American Journal of Political Science, American Libraries, American Sociologist, British Journal of Psychology, British Journal of Sociology, Central European History, Contemporary Literature, Early American Literature, English Language Notes, Family Relations, International Journal of Psychology, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism, Journal of Counseling & Development, Journal of Education, Political Science Quarterly, Journal of General Psychology, Journal of Genetic Psychology, Journal of International Affairs, Journal of Learning Disabilities, Journal of Marriage & Family, Journal of Politics, Journal of Psychology, Journal of Social*

[76] This description is taken directly from: https://support-ebsco-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/help/?int=ehost&lang=en&feature_id=Databases&TOC_ID=Always&SI=0&BU=0&GU=1&PS=0&ver=live&dbs=aphjnh,aph

	Psychology, Library Journal, Social Forces, Sociological Review, Theological Studies, Women's Studies, etc."
Search terms	Opportunit* AND (social inclusion) AND (youth or young people or adolescents)
Number of results	187
Number of potentially appropriate studies identified using their title as a reference point	47
Number of papers admitted for full-text review (after engaging with the content of each abstract)	15
Number of papers found to be relevant for developing an understanding of the processes of conversion	8

Appendix B: Plan for semi-structured selection conversation

Participant name:

Date:

Necessary additional documents:

Printed information letter
2 x consent documents for selection conversation
2 x consent documents for full study

Structure:

1. Framing the space:
   - How we will structure the conversation
   - The selection advisor's participation
   - Sharing a little about myself before we begin and why I am doing this research (previous research findings and practice experience)

2. Taking consent for the semi-structured selection conversation and addressing any concerns that the participant may have

3. Having the conversation – see table below (45 minutes to 1 hour)

4. Concluding and deciding on the way forward

5. Consent for next stage of the process (if a suitable candidate and participation is something desirable)

To emphasise:

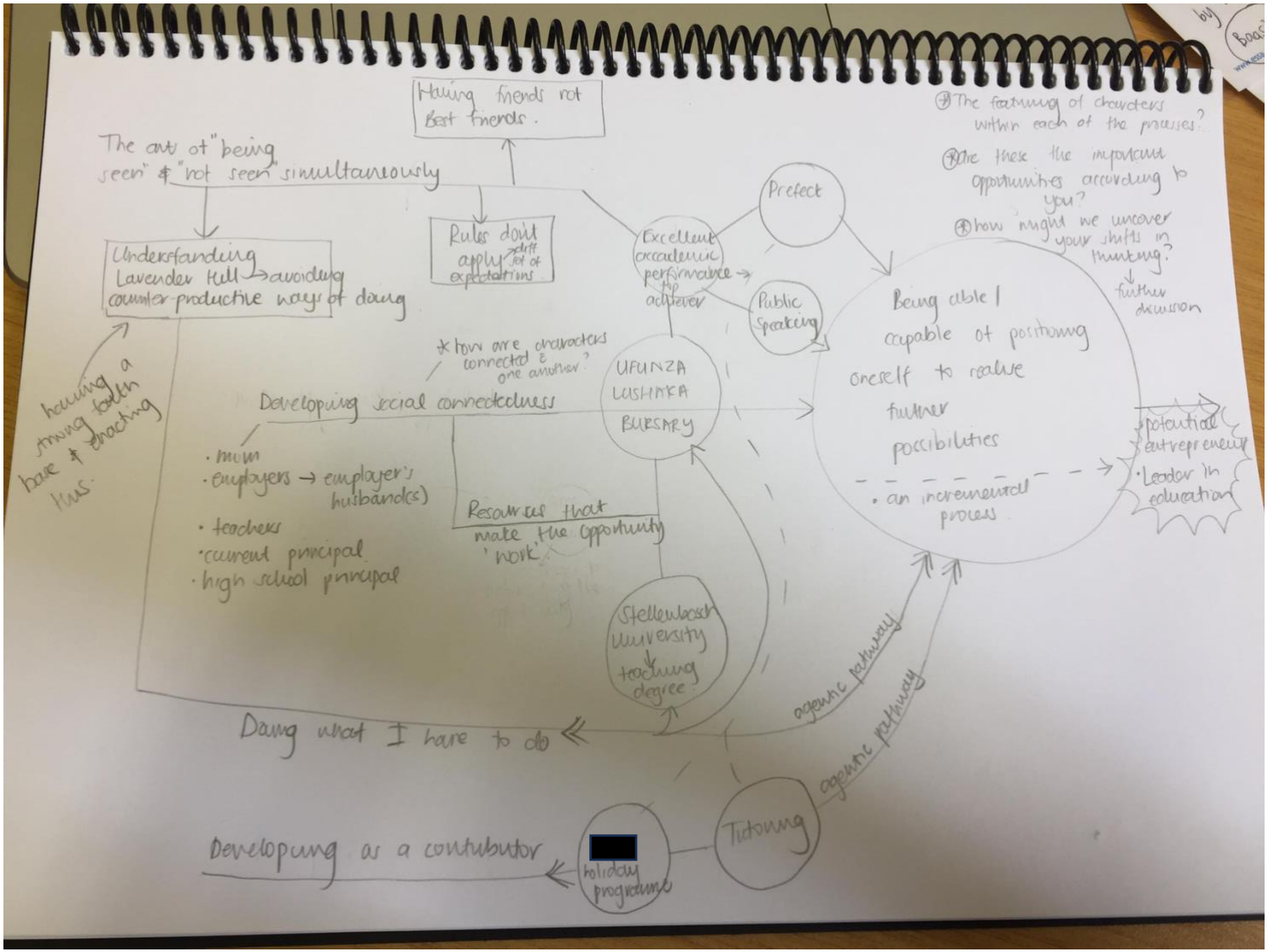
- Collaborative identification in terms of suitability
- The importance of reaching a shared understanding/agreement about participation moving forward
- Questions help to unpack criteria (which are only a guide as we understand more about the phenomenon)
- Holding on to "labels" lightly

Questions to explore	Criteria delineating the phenomenon being explored	Ideas that may be contentious and may need further discussion	Researcher's notes
1. Can you tell me about what you currently do in your daily life? *(how do you experience your current participation?)* 2. It would be helpful if you could share some of your childhood experiences with me and some of the past and current experiences of your immediate family. *(How old are you? Can you tell me about a typical day when you were a child? Where did you live and what was it like to live there? Where did you go to school and what was*	• A young person (25-34 years) who believes they have been moving towards an experience of social inclusion in the period identified as 'youth' in SA (14-35 years) • Intergenerational experiences of multi-dimensional poverty • Possible own/family has negative experiences related to aspects of their social identities • Currently economically active • Showing leadership and productivity within their community • Believe they are moving towards social inclusion and are relatively successful in establishing their life trajectory	• Ideas about oppression • Ideas about leadership and productivity • Ideas about what denotes success • Ideas about what denotes prosperity	

your school like? Did you study anything after school (where/what)? What did/do your parents or close relatives do? Do you feel you had access to anything that helped you to live your life as you wanted to?) 3. Would you say that your previous experiences are in contrast with your current experiences? 4. In your opinion, what are the opportunities that have been available to you and how have these influenced your life? 5. What are your views on your current position and the future opportunities	• Currently have access to the necessary resources to live a life they value • Believe they have a prosperous future		

that may be open to you? 6. What are your views on what it means to be socially included?			
Social inclusion (as I currently view it): - A process and an outcome - Social citizenship where young people are active agents in dignified social, economic and political participation - Access to the necessary rights that results in the above - Creates future opportunities and promotes the development of capabilities			

Appendix C: Example of a story map



Appendix D: Matrix supporting the development of cross-case inferences

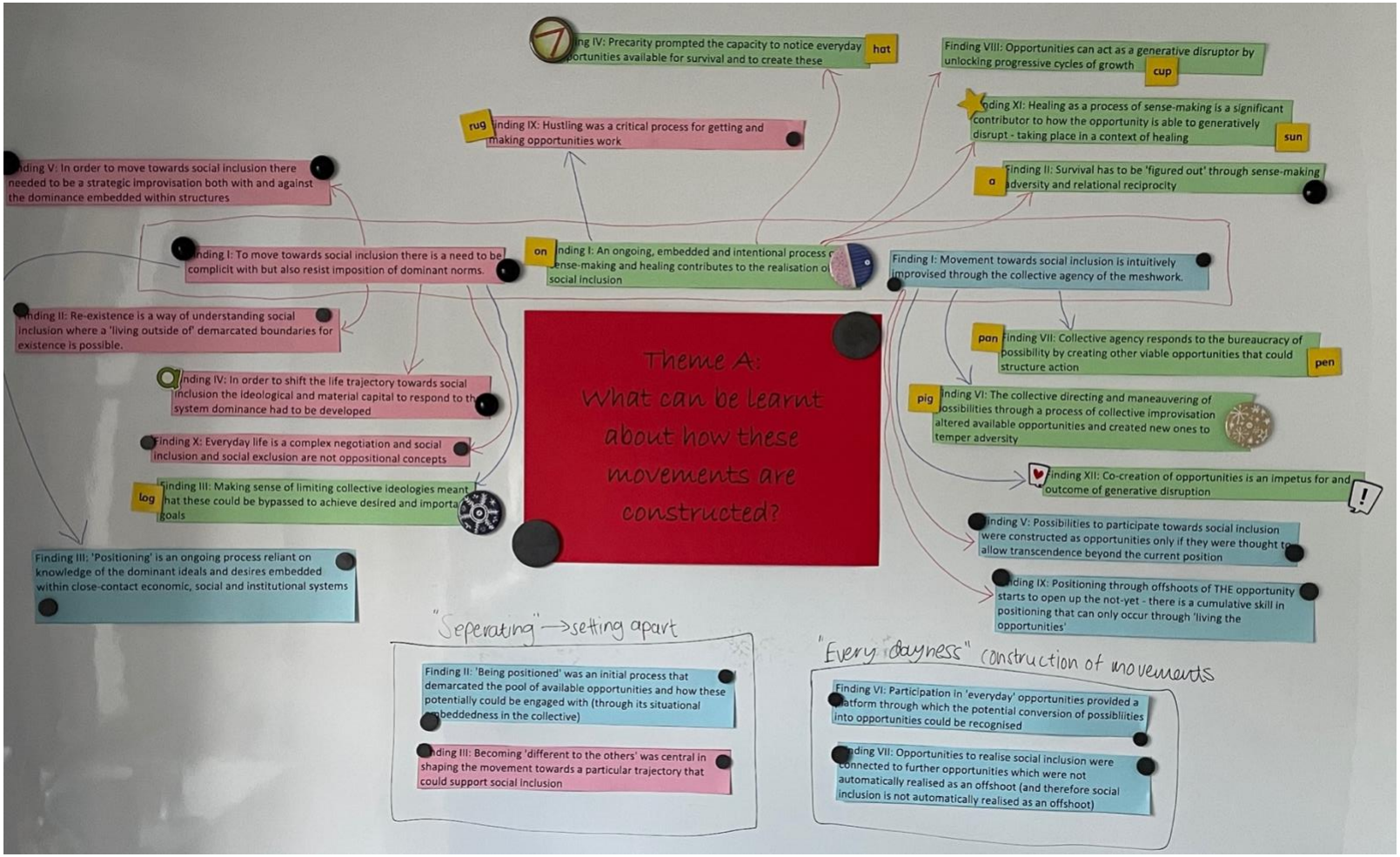
A matrix for generating theme-based inferences from case findings rated important	Themes					
Case 1: Karlee	**A: What can be learnt about how these movements are constructed?**	**B: What can be learnt about the constitution of opportunities that could lead to social inclusion?**	**C: What can be learnt about the strategies that might be utilised in negotiating these opportunities towards a different ends?**	**D: What can be learnt about how agency and structure are related in such processes?**	**E: What can be learnt about the challenges to and possibilities for experiencing social inclusion for young womxn from marginalising contexts?**	**Notes related to each finding**
Finding I: Movement towards social inclusion is intuitively improvised through the collective agency of the meshwork.	★		★	★		Collective agency can be interpreted in two ways: that which emerges when people's lifelines intersect strategically towards a particular end and the individual agencies of people in the network, the collective sum of which contributes to the movement towards social inclusion. Who is the collective - will need to define it as the 'meshwork'. What is intuition based on? Knowledge of the opportunity structure?
Finding II: 'Being positioned' was an initial process that demarcated the pool of available opportunities and how these potentially could be engaged with (through its situational embeddedness in the collective)	★	★				
Finding III: 'Positioning' is an ongoing process reliant on knowledge of the dominant ideals and desires embedded within close-contact economic, social and institutional systems	★		★	★	★	
Finding IV: The designation of particular opportunities as powerful contributors to social inclusion are captured within the collective imagination of the meshwork.		★		★	★	
Finding V: Possibiities to participate towards social inclusion were constructed as opportunities only if they were thought to allow transcendence beyond the current position	★	★				
Finding VI: Participation in 'everyday' opportunities provided a platform through which the potential conversion of possibliities into opportunities could be recognised	★	★			★	
Finding VII: Opportunities to realise social inclusion were connected to further opportunities which were not automatically realised as an offshoot (and therefore social inclusion is not automatically realised as an offshoot)	★	★			★	The idea of placeholder opportunities becomes important here. In other words it is not one opportunity on its own that is responsible for social inclusion.
Finding VIII: Opportunities positioned within the system were designed to realise the goals of the broader social and economic system and were not always sensitive to the ways in which an individual would need to negotiate these		★			★	
Finding IX: Positioning through offshoots of THE opportunity starts to open up the not-yet - there is a cumulative skill in positioning that can only occur through 'living the opportunities'	★			★		

Case 2: Nomlanga	A: What can be learnt about how these movements are constructed?	B: What can be learnt about the constitution of opportunities that could lead to social inclusion?	C: What can be learnt about the strategies that might be utilised in negotiating these opportunities towards a different ends?	D: What can be learnt about how agency and structure are related in such processes?	E: What can be learnt about the challenges to and possibilities for experiencing social inclusion for young womxn from marginalising contexts?	Notes related to each finding
Finding I: To move towards social inclusion there is a need to be complicit with but also resist imposition of dominant norms.	★			★	★	Navigating issues of mental health became a consequence of constantly resisting imposition
Finding II: Re-existence is a way of understanding social inclusion where a 'living outside of' demarcated boundaries for existence is possible.	★			★	★	
Finding III: Becoming 'different to the others' was central in shaping the movement towards a particular trajectory that could support social inclusion	★					
Finding IV: In order to shift the life trajectory towards social inclusion the ideological and material capital to respond to the system dominance had to be developed	★					This required a kind of 'double consciousness' where she needed to know and be part of the dominance in order to 'get ahead' through it
Finding V: In order to move towards social inclusion there needed to be a strategic improvisation both with and against the dominance embedded within structures	★			★		When I speak about languages I am referring to the way the market uses specific languages to 'place people in the system' - social capital in particular spheres, material capital and dominant (linguistic) languages offer the tools to do this. The kind of cultural capital I am referring to here is different to how we usually think about cultural capital - cultural capital is usually thought about in relation to the dominance but this was cultural capital that was not dominant but rather existed as part of black ontology in the form of ubuntu
Finding VI: Negotiating access to opportunity involves a careful discernment of and working with 'gatekeepers' that was a critical process in and of itself		★	★	★		Access points are not immediately evident and must be searched for using a resolute disposition developed in response to the context
Finding VII: A critical opportunity, mismatched with expectations, makes negotating the opportunity extremely difficult		★	★		★	The opportunity doesn't 'sit well' with everyday life
Finding VIII: Learning how to negotiate with informal and formal gatekeepers was essential in accessing desired opportunities and is a never-ending negotiation embedded within everyday life. The informal power of private spaces must be carefully negotiated in order to access desired opportunities.			★	★		Red-tape was prominent in the processes of negotaiting access to opportunity and needed to be constantly discerned, thought through and engaged with in order to 'transcend' these. In some instances she needed to know how to manipulate the situation to achieve the desired outcome.
Finding IX: Hustling was a critical process for getting and making opportunities work	★		★	★		

Finding X: Everyday life is a complex negotiation and social inclusion and social exclusion are not oppositional concepts	★				★	I wonder if the idea of figuring out what opportunities you actually want later and over a process in time actually should appear here?
Case 3: Mayan	**A: What can be learnt about how these movements are constructed?**	**B: What can be learnt about the constitution of opportunities that could lead to social inclusion?**	**C: What can be learnt about the strategies that might be utilised in negotiating these opportunities towards a different ends?**	**D: What can be learnt about how agency and structure are related in such processes?**	**E: What can be learnt about the challenges to and possibilities for experiencing social inclusion for young womxn from marginalising contexts?**	**Notes related to each finding**
Finding I: An ongoing, embedded and intentional process of sense-making and healing contributes to the realisation of social inclusion	★			★	★	
Finding II: Survival has to be 'figured out' through sense-making adversity and relational reciprocity	★			★		The realisation that she needed to be the person taking care of herself was a critical prompt for generating her own survival - this prompted the strategic looking for stability through everyday opportunities
Finding III: Making sense of limiting collective ideologies meant that these could be bypassed to achieve desired and important goals	★			★		
Finding IV: Precarity prompted the capacity to notice everyday opportunities available for survival and to create these	★		★	★		
Finding V: Opportunities are capable of metamorphosizing into something beyond their original 'form' that is not seperate from how the person engages with them and how this is 'noticed' by others. She was noticed as different from what?		★	★	★		Learning enriching things as part of the opportunity not only changed the opportunity but also shifted her own perspective about possibilities for herself
Finding VI: The collective directing and maneauvering of possibilities through a process of collective improvisation altered available opportunities and created new ones to temper adversity	★		★	★		
Finding VII: Collective agency responds to the bureaucracy of possibility by creating other viable opportunities that could structure action	★			★		
Finding VIII: Opportunities can act as a generative disruptor by unlocking progressive cycles of growth	★		★		★	
Finding IX: Maneauvering within and beyond racist and paternalistic tropes made it possible to use, but not be constrained by, the opportunities that this offered			★			This included going around the 'gatekeepers'
Finding X: The content of and spaces in which opportunity occurs create a container in which disruption is manageable and collective growth is a prompt for different kinds of action		★				Victim mode is contested here

Finding XI: Healing as a process of sense-making is a significant contributor to how the opportunity is able to generatively disrupt - taking place in a context of healing	★		★			
Finding XII: Co-creation of opportunities is an impetus for and outcome of generative disruption	★			★		
★ - this incidicates that the findings has utility for responding to the question posed through this theme						

Appendix E: Example of clustering exercise used to develop cross-case inferences



Appendix F: Ethics approval letter

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee

Room E53-46 Old Main Building
Groote Schuur Hospital
Observatory 7925
Telephone [021] 406 6492
Email: sumayah.arlefdien@uct.ac.za
Website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms

21 August 2017

HREC REF: 400/2017

A/Prof R Galvaan
Division of Occupational Health
Health & Rehab Sciences
F56, OMB

Dear A/Prof Galvaan

PROJECT TITLE: PATHWAYS THROUGH OPPORTUNITY TOWARDS SOCIAL INCLUSION: A MULTICASE STUDY OF MARGINALIZED YOUTH IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA- (PhD-candidate-L Peters)

Thank you for your response letter dated 07 August 2017, addressing the issues raised by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

It is a pleasure to inform you that the HREC has **formally approved** the above-mentioned study.

Approval is granted for one year until the 30 August 2018.

Please submit a progress form, using the standardised Annual Report Form if the study continues beyond the approval period. Please submit a Standard Closure form if the study is completed within the approval period.
(Forms can be found on our website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms)

We acknowledge that the student, L Peters will also be involved in this study.

Please quote the HREC REF in all your correspondence.

Please note that the ongoing ethical conduct of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

Please note that for all studies approved by the HREC, the principal investigator **must** obtain appropriate institutional approval before the research may occur.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR M BLOCKMAN
CHAIRPERSON, FHS HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Federal Wide Assurance Number: FWA00001637.
Institutional Review Board (IRB) number: IRB00001938

Appendix G: Information letter and consent form for selection advisors

Pathways through opportunity towards social inclusion: A multicase study of marginalised youth in post-apartheid South Africa

Researcher:

Mrs L Peters (principal investigator): PhD candidate in Occupational Therapy Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape Town

Part 1: Information Sheet

This information sheet will explain the research and invite your participation in it as a key informant. This study has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT (HREC No. 400/2017). Once you have gone through this information letter you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Background to the research study

This research is being conducted for degree purposes (PhD in Occupational Therapy). The purpose of this research is to learn from the stories of young people who believe they have been able to move from an experience of being excluded to an experience of being an included and valued citizen in South Africa. The way opportunities have presented and been used in their lives is a key focus.

You have been identified as a potential person who may be able to assist the researcher with the identification of these young people who may potentially become participants in the study. This is because it is felt that your own background and experience place you in a position to understand the particular issues that the study seeks to explore. The researcher came to contact you as a result of knowing you or knowing someone else who recommended you as a key informant.

Is my participation voluntary?

Your agreement to participate in this study is voluntary and no prejudice will be held against you if you choose to decline to participate.

You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences.

What will my participation involve?

- Meeting with the researcher to assist in the identification of potential participants who could be approached to participate in the study. This meeting may involve sharing parts of your own story to identify who may be suitable participants.
- Where necessary, assisting the researcher to make contact with the potential participant(s)/introducing the researcher to these participants.
- You will be required to agree to hold in confidence the identity of any potential or actual participants who you identify or introduce the researcher to. This means that you will not share these details with anyone outside of the study.

Will my identity remain confidential?

Your personal details will not be made available to anyone besides myself and my research supervisors (A/Prof. Roshan Galvaan and Prof. Crain Soudien). All audio recordings, transcriptions and field notes with any identifying information on them will be locked in a secure cabinet in my office and I will be the only person who has access to these. Your real name will not be used in order to conceal your identity in any reporting of the research findings.

Are there any risks to participating?

A risk of participating in this study is that you may share personal information about your life with the researcher, who commits to holding this information in the strictest of confidence. This means that it will not be shared with others and she will do her best to conceal your

identity in any reports of the research and its findings. However, it is important to be aware that it may not always be possible to conceal your identity given the information you share about your life since it might be possible for other people who are aware of some of these details to make inferences about whether you were a key informant or not. Although every effort will be done to avoid this, it is still a minor risk of participating.

You will be required to travel to each interaction that you may have with the researcher. These interactions will take place at a convenient location and time for you. If you need assistance with travel costs then please let me know and I will make the money for your travel available to you.

Are there any benefits of participating?

There are no direct benefits to yourself as a result of acting as a key informant in the study. However, the findings of the study will contribute to understanding how to enable the inclusion of marginalized young people in South Africa and will work towards contributing to the development of relevant policies and interventions.

How will the findings of the study be shared?

The findings of the study will be made available to all those who participated and will be presented in the researcher's PhD thesis. They may also be shared at conferences and published in relevant journals. When the findings are shared no identifying information of key informants and participants will be included.

Who to Contact for more information

Liesl Peters (researcher and PhD candidate)

Contact: 021 650 4929 OR liesl.peters@uct.ac.za

OR

Professor Marc Blockman, Chair of the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 if you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research subject in this study. Please quote the HREC number 400/2017 in all your correspondence with them.

Consent form and confidentiality agreement for key informants

I have read the information sheet and I have had the opportunity to ask any related questions. My questions and concerns have been addressed to my satisfaction.

Please tick the appropriate box(es):

I consent to voluntarily participate as a key informant in the research and I understand what is required of me in this role ☐

I agree to have any meetings between myself and the researcher audio-recorded ☐

I agree to hold in the strictest confidence the identities of any potential or actual participants in the study ☐

Print Name of key informant _____

Signature of key informant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Appendix H: Information letter for primary participants

Pathways through opportunity towards social inclusion: A multicase study of marginalised youth in post-apartheid South Africa

Information sheet and informed consent form to participate as a primary participant in this study.

Researcher:

Mrs L Peters (principal investigator): PhD candidate in Occupational Therapy Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape Town

Part 1: Information Sheet

This information sheet will explain the research and invite your participation in it. This study has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT (HREC No.: 400/2017). Once you have gone through this information letter you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have. Should you choose to participate there will be two parts involved in the consent process. ***The first part involves consenting to participate in an initial selection conversation and coming to a mutual decision about your suitability as a participant.*** Should we agree on the fact that you are a suitable candidate for the study you will be asked to consent to participate in the full study and will have the opportunity to refuse if you so wish. If you do agree to participate in the full study you will need to complete a second consent form to indicate this. You will be given a copy of your full signed consent form should you choose to participate.

Background to the research study

This research is being conducted for degree purposes (PhD in Occupational Therapy). The purpose of this research is learn from the stories of young people who believe they have been able to move from an experience of being excluded to an experience of being an

included and valued citizen in South Africa. The way opportunities have presented and been used in your life is a key focus.

You have been potentially identified as a person whom we might learn from given your current participation and your background and history. You were identified as a potential suitable in one of two ways:

1. By a person who is known to you and is someone I approached to assist me in finding participants; or
2. Through social media channels where I noticed that the things you currently do indicate your possible suitability to participate.

Is my participation voluntary?

Your agreement to participate in this study is voluntary and no prejudice will be held against you if you choose to decline to participate.

You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences.

What will my participation involve?

To decide together if you are a suitable participant, you will have to:

- **Participate in a 1 – 1 ½ hour long selection conversation**

Your suitability for the study will be based on your past experiences and social situation. Your current situation and its contrast with your previous one will be considered, together with an indication of the kinds of opportunities that may have been present in your life. I am looking for participants who have moved from being vulnerable to being more socially secure and feeling included. Both of us will need to agree that you are a suitable candidate and we will decide this together during the initial selection conversation. If we agree that you are not a suitable candidate for this study and you feel disappointed by this you will have a chance to talk through your feelings with the researcher. Although you may not

become a full participant in the study it is important for you to know that the insights you provide through this conversation will add additional understanding that will help the researcher to understand the topic being explored.

If we decide that you are a suitable candidate for participation you will be required to:

- Share your life story over **five individual interviews that are each 1 ½ to 2 hours long**. Finding a suitable time for the interviews will be based on your convenience and negotiated with you. These interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed word for word. This will help me to analyse the information in more depth. If you wish to conduct these interviews in your home language (where this is not English) then you can inform me of this and we will arrange to do so.
- **Share any artifacts or photographs during these interviews that you feel would add to the information** about your life and will help me to understand your story more clearly.
- **Identify people in your life who you feel can speak to aspects of your life story** that have been important in your moving towards a different experience of inclusion and **assist me to approach these people to participate** in the study too. ***You will be given the opportunity to participate in this focus group if you wish to, but this will not be compulsory.***
- Identify one or more things that you do on a daily basis, in different environments, and **allow me to observe you as you participate**. During these times I will make detailed notes about what I observe to help me make sense of what I see.
- **Provide me with access to your social media feeds** so that I can observe your interaction here periodically.

I intend to write up the account of your life in the form of a story that truthfully represents your own view of it. You will be given the opportunity to read this after which you will be asked to commit to **one final interview in order to discuss the accuracy of my interpretations and to make adjustments as necessary**. I anticipate that this interview will be **1 -1 ½ hours long**.

Will my identity remain confidential?

If another person has identified you as a potential participant they will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement that indicates they will not reveal your participation in the study to others. If a language interpreter is involved in our interviews then this person will also sign a confidentiality agreement.

Your personal details will not be made available to anyone besides myself and my research supervisors (A/Prof. Roshan Galvaan and Prof. Crain Soudien). All audio recordings, transcriptions and field notes with any identifying information on them will be locked in a secure cabinet in my office and I will be the only person who has access to these. Your real name will not be used in order to conceal your identity in any reporting of the research findings.

Are there any risks to participating?

A risk of participating in this study is that you will share detailed and personal information about your life with me. I commit to holding this information in the strictest of confidence. I will not share it with others and will do my best to conceal your identity in any reports of the research and its findings. However, it is important to be aware that it may not always be possible to conceal your identity given the information you share about your life since it might be possible for other people who are aware of some of these details to make inferences about whether you were a participant or not. Although every effort will be done to avoid this, it is still a minor risk of participating. However, if there are details you do not want in the final reporting of the study you will be given an opportunity to indicate this.

You will be required to travel to each interview which will take place at a convenient place for you. If you need assistance with travel costs then please let me know and I will make the money for your travel available to you.

Are there any benefits of participating?

There are no direct benefits to yourself for participating in the study. You will, however, be given a bound copy of your life story to keep after we have finished working together. The findings of the study will contribute to understanding how to enable the inclusion of marginalized young people in South Africa and will work towards contributing to the development of relevant policies and interventions. These should assist others who have found themselves in similar positions as you did in the past to progress in their lives.

How will the findings of the study be shared?

The findings of the study will be made available to all those who participated and will be presented in my final PhD thesis. They also may be shared at conferences and published in relevant journals. When the findings are shared no identifying information of participants will be included.

Who to Contact for more information

Liesl Peters (researcher and PhD candidate)

Contact: 021 650 4929 OR liesl.peters@uct.ac.za

OR

Professor Marc Blockman, Chair of the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 if you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research subject in this study. Please quote the HREC number (400/2017) in all your correspondence with them.

Appendix I: Consent form for primary participants to participate in the selection conversation

I have read the information sheet and I have had the opportunity to ask any related questions. My questions and concerns have been addressed to my satisfaction.

Please tick the appropriate box(es):

I consent to voluntarily participate in the selection conversation to determine my suitability to participate in this research ☐

I agree to have the selection conversation audio-recorded ☐

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Appendix J: Consent form for primary participants to participate in the full study

I have participated in the selection conversation and agree that I am a suitable participant for this study. I understand the requirements to participate. I have read the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask any related questions. My questions and concerns have been addressed to my satisfaction.

Please tick the appropriate box(es):

I consent to voluntarily become a participant in the full research study ☐

I agree to have audio-recordings made of all interviews conducted ☐

I give permission for the researcher to access my social media platforms ☐

I agree to allow the researcher to observe me in certain places during certain activities that have been mutually agreed upon ☐

I agree to allow the researcher to use and make copies of any photographs, artifacts or other documents that I introduce during the interviews ☐

I agree to provide the researcher with names of key people in my life who could participate in a focus group discussion ☐

I wish to participate in the focus group discussion together with the people I identify ☐

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Appendix K: Information letter and consent form for ancillary participants

Pathways through opportunity towards social inclusion: A multicase study of marginalised youth in post-apartheid South Africa

Information sheet and informed consent form to participate as an ancillary participant.

Researcher:
Mrs L Peters (principal investigator): PhD candidate in Occupational Therapy, Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape Town

This Informed Consent Form has three parts:

1. Information sheet (to share information about the research with you)
2. Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you agree to take part)
3. Confidentiality Agreement (that you will commit to should you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of your full signed consent form should you choose to participate.

Part 1: Information Sheet

This information sheet will explain the research and invite your participation in it. This study has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT (HREC No.: 400/2017).
Once you have gone through this information letter you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Background to the research study

This research is being conducted for degree purposes (PhD in Occupational Therapy). The purpose of this research is to learn from the stories of young people who believe they have been able to move from an experience of being excluded to an experience of being an included and valued citizen in South Africa. The way opportunities have presented and been used in their lives is a key focus.

One of the young people, _____, who is participating in this study has identified you as someone who would be able to speak about how they have used opportunities within their lives and how this has helped them to move forward. The knowledge and information that you would be able to share about this will greatly assist my ability to make sense of their lives. I therefore wish to invite your participation in my research.

Is my participation voluntary?

Your participation in the study is voluntary and no prejudice will be held against you should you choose not to participate. You will be required to sign a consent form if you are willing to participate. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences. However, you should be aware that once you have participated in the focus group it might be difficult to exclude the understanding you have contributed, although none of the things you have said will be used directly. This is because your views and experiences would have altered my understanding of _____ life story.

I will follow up with you via telephone/e-mail to confirm whether you are willing to participate or not once you have had an opportunity to study the information letter and consent form.

What will your participation involve?

If you agree to participate in this study you will be required to participate in **one focus group that will be 1 ½ to 2 hours long.** A focus group is a conversation that happens in a group where people share their views and knowledge about a particular subject. I will lead the conversation, but participants in the conversation respond to one another and share their ideas freely. We need to decide on the best language to use for the focus group and so if you are uncomfortable talking in English then please let me know so that we can arrange for an interpreter to be present. The focus group will be audio-recorded so that what you say can be transcribed word-for-word after the group. This will help me to analyse the information in more depth. You will be sent a copy of my interpretations of the information ***shared in the focus group*** to check that they are an accurate representation of what you shared during the focus group.

If you wish to participate in the study but are unable to make yourself available for the focus group for whatever reason then we can arrange to do an individual interview with you.

Are there any risks of participating?

Although you will be sharing information freely, there will be no negative consequences as a result of any information, view or opinion that you share. There is a minor risk that those individuals who may be familiar with _____ life story may be able to make inferences about your potential involvement, depending on how you feature in the final write-up of the story. ***However, all names will be changed so as to protect your identity in the final version of the story.***

An additional risk of participating in this study is that you will make your views and thinking known to other participants during the focus group interview and to the researcher. Although you will be sharing information freely, there will be no negative consequences as a result of any view or opinion that you share. All participants in the focus group will be required to sign the confidentiality agreement indicating that they will not share the

conversation in the focus group with individuals outside of it. Even though this is the case it is not always possible to ensure that other people in the focus group do not share information outside of it.
You will be required to travel to the focus group which will take place at a convenient place for you. If you need assistance with travel costs then please let me know and I will make the money for your travel available to you.

Are there any benefits of participating?

There are no direct benefits to yourself for participating in the study. However, the findings of the study will contribute to understanding how to enable the social inclusion of youth who are often excluded, an important obligation in our country.

Will my identity remain confidential?

Your personal details will not be made available to anyone besides myself and my research supervisors (A/Prof. Roshan Galvaan and Prof. Crain Soudien). The audio-recording of the interview with you will be transcribed verbatim and your real name will not be used to protect your identity in any reporting of the study. All audio recordings and transcriptions will be safely stored in a locked cabinet in my office that only I have access to.

Your participation in the research will mean you are aware of _____ participation and those who participate with you in the focus group. You will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement in order to protect the identity of those people. This will mean that you cannot share details of their participation with others.

How will the findings of the study be shared?

Once the findings from this study are available they will be sent to all those who participated. The findings of the study will be presented in my final PhD thesis and will also be shared at conferences and published in relevant journals. No identifying information of participants will be included in any of these.

Who to Contact for more information

Liesl Peters

Contact: 021 650 4929 OR liesl.peters@uct.ac.za

OR

Professor Marc Blockman, Chair of the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 if you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research subject in this study. Please quote the HREC number (400/2017) in all your correspondence with them.

Part 2: Certificate of Consent

I have read the information provided and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions. My questions and concerns have been addressed to my satisfaction.

Please tick the appropriate box(es):

I consent to voluntarily become a participant in this research ☐

I agree to have the focus group audio-recorded ☐

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Part 3: Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, agree to hold in the strictest confidence the identity of _____, as well as the identities of my fellow focus/interview group participants' participation in the study during and after my participation in the study "Pathways through opportunity towards social inclusion: A multicase study of marginalized youth in South Africa" (HREC number: 400/2017). I am aware that it is unethical to disclose identifiable information about them that reveals their participation in the study or information about views and opinions that are shared during the group.

Participant's name (printed): _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix L: Information letter for observation episodes

Information Sheet: "Pathways through opportunity towards social inclusion: A multicase study of marginalised youth in post-apartheid South Africa"

Researcher:

Mrs L Peters (principal investigator): PhD candidate in Occupational Therapy Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape Town

How does this information sheet and research relate to you?

This information sheet will provide a brief explanation of the research and explain how observations, as a particular form of data gathering in the study, might involve you indirectly. This study has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT (HREC No. 400/2017). Once you have gone through this information letter you will be provided with information regarding how to contact the researcher should you have any questions regarding the study or are opposed to being involved in the observations described here.

Background to the research study

This research is being conducted for degree purposes (PhD in Occupational Therapy). The purpose of this research is to learn from the stories of young people who believe they have been able to move from an experience of being excluded to an experience of being an included and valued citizen in South Africa. The way opportunities have presented and been used in their lives is a key focus.

Part of the research involves observing these young people as they participate in different aspects of their daily lives. They have identified a place, where you too may be present at particular times, that they feel would be most beneficial for me to observe in order to understand their stories more clearly. This will mean that I will be able to observe you as well, although you are not a direct participant in this study.

The date, place and time for the planned observation is as follows:

Date: _____

Place: _____

Time: _____

How do I raise an objection if I am uncomfortable being observed?

You may form part of the place where this young person is being observed. As a result you participate indirectly, although you are not the direct focus of the research. If you know you will be involved at the place and time given above but you wish not to be then please contact me (contact details supplied at the end of this form) and raise this. If any objections are raised I will not observe the relevant young person at the place and time identified on this form.

There will be no ill-consequences for you if you raise any objection.

Raising an objection after being observed

Should you unintentionally become part of an observation time and you have an objection to this you can raise this with me. Any information gained from this observation episode will then be excluded from the study.

If my identity is revealed during the observation will it remain confidential?

Your personal details (where you provide these) will not be made available to anyone besides myself. Any aspect that can identify people who are part of the observations (including their names) will not be revealed in any reporting of the study findings. During the observations I

will be making detailed notes on what I see. All of these notes will be safely stored in a locked cabinet in my office and nobody, besides me, will have access to these.

It is equally important that the confidentiality of those young people participating in the study is maintained. Therefore, if you are part of the observation above and you are aware of who the study participant is I ask that you do not share this information.

Are there any risks associated with being part of the observation?

There are no risks attached to being part of the environment in which the observation takes place. There will be no negative consequences as a result of anything that you say and do during this time.

What are the benefits of this study?

There are no direct benefits to yourself. However, the findings of the study will contribute to understanding how to enable the social inclusion of marginalised youth, an important obligation in South Africa. The observations will therefore contribute positively to important knowledge generation.

How will the findings of the study be shared?

The findings of the study will be presented in my final PhD thesis and will also be shared at conferences and published in relevant journals. No identifying information will be included when these are shared.

Who to contact for more information

Liesl Peters
Contact: 021 650 4929/liesl.peters@uct.ac.za

(Should you wish to raise an objection about the observation that is planned then please contact the researcher directly)

OR

Professor Marc Blockman, Chair of the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 if you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research subject in this study. Please quote the HREC number (400/2017) in all your correspondence with them.

Thank you for the time you have taken to read this and for your agreement should you raise no objections.

Appendix M: Confidentiality agreement for transcriber, writing coach and artist

Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, agree to hold in the strictest confidence any information associated with the research study "Pathways through opportunity towards social inclusion: A multicase study of marginalised youth in post-apartheid South Africa" (HREC number: 400/2017) that may be revealed during the process of providing services to Liesl Peters (PhD candidate) in the construction of the data that forms part of her PhD dissertation. I am aware that it is unethical to disclose information about the study to any other person.

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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