STIGMA MANAGEMENT IN WASTE MANAGEMENT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTERACTIONS OF 'WASTE PICKERS' ON THE STREETS OF CAPE TOWN AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR AGENCY

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Teresa Perez[1] was born in 1978 in Brighton, UK. After completing her Social Sciences BA and PGCE at Manchester Metropolitan University, she worked in secondary education for nine years. In 2011 she took a career break and moved to South Africa to complete her postgraduate studies. She received her MA in 2013 and continued into the PhD programme in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town. During the last five years, Teresa also worked as a research assistant at the Centre for Higher Education Development and volunteered at the Knowledge Co-op Project, both at the University of Cape Town.

[1] On South African documents my name is Teresa Peres (as it appears on my passport) but on all other UK documents it is Teresa Perez. I use Teresa Perez as my author name. Hence citations in the thesis are Perez but the PhD is authored as Peres.

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary approaches to waste management in South Africa have been driven by a desire to modernise and cleanse urban public spaces. Even though street waste pickers provide a separation-at-source service, thereby minimising waste to landfill, these people and their work continue to be stigmatised. Using Goffman's theory of stigma and impression management, this study establishes how evident stigma is in the agency of waste pickers. Agency was conceptualised using Emirbayer and Mische, to identify the management of stigma in waste pickers' choices, regarding established routines, future plans and their practical evaluation of ongoing circumstances. Following Giddens, stigma is posited as a source of both enablement and constraint to waste pickers' agential capacity. A social constructionist theoretical approach, combined with an interpretivist epistemology, was used to gather qualitative data using ethnographic methods. The first of its kind in this field, participatory fieldwork was conducted with waste pickers over the course of a year. Using a combination of thematic and discourse analysis the findings showed that stigma emerges in an insidious manner.

To overcome being stigmatised by their physical appearance, waste pickers use an idealised presentation of self to position themselves as superior to criminals, illegal drug users and poor working classes. Although the capacity to overturn negative stereotypes was constrained because waste pickers were often unable to confine discrediting behaviour to back region spaces, the power of stigma was never absolute. Impression management enabled waste pickers to resist being positioned as matter out of place through their cultivation of relationships with residents and agents of social control. However, I argue that because these reciprocal relationships go largely unseen by the wider public, stigma continued to constrain the agential capacity of impression management strategies. The implication of the study is that, although agency is somewhat invisible, waste pickers are able to subvert the impact of policies designed to threaten their freedom of movement and access to waste. In achieving this, the unintended consequence is that waste pickers' agency further entrenches the stereotypical discourses that position them and their work as a threat to order in Cape Town.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEO	Chief Operating Officer
CIDs	City Improvement Districts
CoCT	City of Cape Town municipal government
COP	Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
FWC	Football World Cup
GAIA	Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
GAWA	Global Alliance of Waste Pickers and Allies
GBP	Great British Pounds (Sterling)
GSCID	Groote Schuur Community Improvement District
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KKPKP	Kadad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat
LEP	Labour and Enterprise Policy Research Group
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
PMC	Pune Municipal Corporation
PPP	Public Private Partnership
R	Rands – South African currency. Abbreviation for ZAR.
SAWPA	South African Waste Pickers' Association
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRA	Special Ratings Area
SWaCH	Solid Waste Collection and Handling
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollars
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing
ZAR	Zuidafrikaanse Rand (South African Rand)

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INTRODUCTION

This research is concerned with the meanings and labels attached to the act of opening someone else's dustbin and taking things out, to keep or sell. This opening chapter justifies and explains my use of concepts that appear in the thesis title. I follow this with an explanation of how I came to be interested in people who take things out of bins, ending with a statement of my research questions. I then use the feedback from the parts of my thesis that have been peer-reviewed so far, to attend to matters of naming and terminology. The section ends with a breakdown of each chapter, to give a sense of the connections between each section and its contribution to knowledge.

1. WHAT IS A WASTE PICKER?

"Waste picker" is a generic term used to describe "people who sustain themselves and their families by reclaiming re-usable and recyclable materials from what others have cast aside as waste" (M. Samson, 2009b, p. 1). There is no consistency, even within the same city (and even less so across Africa and the globe), over how the work is seen or named (Benson & Vanqa-Mgijima, 2010; M. Samson, 2010). There is broad consensus within recent research that the historic use of the term "scavenger" should be rejected due to the "animal imagery" (M. Samson, 2010, p. 2) and the associated connotation that people are opportunistic and less entitled to access waste than other waste workers.

My research participants did not use the word waste picker but instead identified themselves and others like them as "strollers" and their work as "skarrelling." Literature that mentions strollers has defined the term as a euphemism local to Cape Town for street children or youth (people under the age of 30) engaged in informal street work such as begging, parking cars in return for small change or prostitution (Hansson, 2003). Skarrelling is Afrikaans slang meaning "always on the lookout for something," "scrounging around," or "struggling but doing something about it" (Benson & Vanqa-Mgijima, 2010, p. 1). When I asked my key informant about this terminology, he said I could refer to the work as "mining" (see Chapter 6). For the purpose of this thesis, I have instead chosen to use the English term waste picker. I justify my use of waste picker instead of local terminology because waste picker is used in cross-country advocacy work, and by the union-like organisation that represents some waste pickers in South Africa: The South African Waste Pickers' Association (SAWPA).

1.1 Stigma and Waste Pickers

A search for "stigma" and "South Africa" in Google Scholar is far more likely to return pages of research into HIV/AIDS than anything to do with waste picking. However, although not mentioned through using the term stigma, the role it plays in waste pickers' interactions and freedom of movement is evident in the following account:

> In 2006, Santraj was thrown off an Alitalia flight in Delhi because he was a waste picker. He was en route to Brazil to share his experiences with other waste pickers. The airline did not think he looked like someone who should be in First Class and refused to let him take the flight. After pressure in the media, the airline compensated him with an apology and tickets. (M. Samson, 2009a, p. 8)

In fact Santraj was not ejected from First Class because he was a waste picker. He could have been a waste picker, or any other kind of worker, and boarded the flight without incident. The decisive factor in his removal was the mismatch between him and other First Class passengers. Constructions of First Class air travel meant that Santraj was out of place. He did not fit with what a First Class passenger should look like, and therefore upset the order of things. The cabin crew probably removed him because of his physical appearance and in anticipation of complaints from people who successfully presented themselves as First Class. The issue was less about what Santraj was, and more about his inability to put on a convincing First Class performance.

This thesis disaggregates the aspects of waste pickers' performances and presentation of self while on the streets of Cape Town. By focussing on waste pickers who collect from household bins rather than those who pick from landfill refuse, the setting in which interactions take place is restricted to public streets. The strategies used to negotiate the impression formed by others of waste pickers are interesting enough on their own to warrant further study. However, like Santraj in a space constructed as First Class, waste pickers' performances are particularly remarkable given that they do not look like people who should be in the affluent suburbs. This brings me to the rationale for taking an interest in how people come to construct others as individuals who do or do not fit in a particular space in time.

Cabin crew were not convinced that Santraj could be allowed to sit in First Class despite having a First Class ticket. This raises questions about the information that people use to form an impression of others' entitlement to define themselves using particular labels. "First Class," "waste picker," and "cabin crew," are all labels that are applied and

have meaning because of the shared understanding of what these categories symbolise. These labels become stereotypical when oversimplified images are applied to a whole group of people, regardless of whether individuals conform to this image or not. Waste pickers are stigmatised as homeless because their appearance conforms to homeless stereotypes. Unlike other waste workers, waste pickers have no uniform to communicate that they are something other than homeless people trawling through the bins. Given the success in other parts of the world in altering perceptions of waste pickers, the rationale for this research lies in finding out how stigma (the connection between attribute and stereotype) affects waste pickers' capacity to effect change (agency).

1.2 Stigma and Agency

The connection between stigma and agency stems from the literature produced by advocacy groups in the global south, about the extent to which waste pickers around the world have successfully organised and collectivised themselves. The following extract exemplifies the absence of the term stigma in the literature, despite the debilitating impact of the blanket application of negative labels being a common theme:

> Treated as nuisances by authorities and with disdain by the public, waste pickers are usually ignored within public policy processes and frequently suffer low social status and self-esteem. They are particularly susceptible to violence by the police. They may face exploitation and intimidation by middlemen, which can affect their earnings. (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, 2013)

The implication of the above summary is that policy-makers marginalise waste pickers because people in positions of authority ubiquitously regard them as an irritation. Together with residents' disregard, when people adopt a negative attitude towards waste pickers it affects their sense of worth. Presentation of self has the capacity to bring about change by altering stereotypes that position waste pickers at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The starting point for this thesis is that stigma constrains agential capacity because the connection between negative stereotypes and waste pickers has become entrenched. Consequently, this thesis examines the interactions between waste pickers and the people that they come into contact with, mentioned in the above extract, such as authorities, the public, police and middlemen. This is with a view to gaining an in-depth understanding of how waste pickers interpret and respond to perceptions of them and their

work, or more specifically how they mediate their marginalisation with an eye to potentially improving their social standing.

1.3 Origins of my Interest in Waste Picking and Stigma

My interest in waste pickers originally came about as a result of my part-time work as a researcher at the Labour and Enterprise Policy Research Group (LEP). Tasked with investigating the potential for job creation in the waste management industry, I interviewed Cape Town local government officials to find out their thoughts about the future of the recycling industry. In one interview with two senior officials, street waste pickers were referred to as "the trolley brigade" who "cherry pick" material from household bins:

> Sometimes they [waste pickers] will just throw the other types of recyclables on the street and then it becomes waste for us [local government] to clean up, which costs seven times as much as it does for us to collect from the wheelie bins. So firstly you are not getting a collection of all the types of recyclables that you want out of the waste streams, and you are also getting a mess on the streets. If you look at the economics of it, it just doesn't make sense at all to even try to support that. (Interview, July 27, 2012)

The assumption made in the above extract is that waste pickers are all the same. The policy-makers think that when waste pickers take things out of the bin they make a mess and leave litter on the street. This is used to explain that any gains made from reducing the waste that goes to landfill are far outweighed by the expense incurred from having to clean up after waste pickers. Accordingly, for government to think of waste pickers as offering a free separation-at-source service is nonsensical because waste pickers only take a fraction of recyclable waste from the bins. Because waste picking is not economically viable it is therefore not something the government should be encouraging. Informing this conclusion is the idea that government should only concern itself with profitable enterprises. The Cape Town local government officials therefore understood waste picking as voluntary work. It was not until I discussed the interview with my employers at LEP that it occurred to me that this framing was somewhat narrow-minded.

This PhD research therefore arose out of two intertwining thoughts. Firstly, upon a more critical reading of the interview transcripts, I started to think about the absence of any reference to conversations with waste pickers working on the streets of Cape Town. In

the interview I had raised the example of Brazil as a place where waste pickers had formed co-operatives and gained recognition from the government. Both South Africa and Brazil are infamous for having high levels of inequality among their populations, which means they are frequently compared and contrasted with regard to economic policy. In contrast to my expectation that parallels could be drawn, the Cape Town local government officials dismissed out of hand any level of support for waste pickers. This caused me to wonder how it was that the act of waste picking could be interpreted so differently in Cape Town compared to Brazil, when comparisons are so frequently drawn between the two places in other respects.

Secondly, I felt ashamed that someone else had had to point out the shortcomings of the officials' opinions, before I questioned any of what I had been told. This made me think about why it was so easy to discredit waste pickers. This moment marked the beginning of a process of questioning the tacit knowledge which I had used to form assumptions about people about whom I knew nothing. Conversations with my supervisor about attitudes and shame with regard to waste picking then became a discussion about stigma and spoiled identities. This steered my thinking away from the economic comparisons between waste pickers in South Africa and Brazil, towards the micro-scale interactions of waste pickers and the relationship between stigma and agency. Together with reading about waste picking and further reflection, I composed the following research questions, which have remained largely unchanged throughout the PhD journey:

Overall research question: How evident is stigma, in the agency of waste pickers, based on their interactions while working on the streets of Cape Town?

Sub-question 1: What are waste pickers' experiences of stigma?

Sub-question 2: How do waste pickers manage stigma in interactions?

Sub-question 3: What is the capacity for waste pickers to effect change?

1.4 Race Categories and Decolonisation

When presenting sub-sections of this thesis as a work in progress, several issues have been drawn to my attention, all of which intersect with matters of racial identity using "race" categories. "The apartheid era *Population Registration Act [1950] [original italics]* constructed racial categories in order to establish a system of racial hierarchy that, in many ways, continues to shape socio-economic opportunities in South Africa" (McEwen & Steyn, 2013, p. 2). Research participants and academics spoke about White, Black,

Coloured or Indian people.[2] Among many in South Africa, race continues to be presumed to be a category that can be conceptualised based on physical appearance (Fisher, 2007). This meant that when I presented my work, questions probed the extent to which I had analysed the impact of the waste pickers' race and reflected on the effect that my own race had on interactions with waste pickers. Although there is no discrete chapter concerning race, issues pertaining to waste pickers' racial identity is addressed throughout this thesis.

However, there is a "tension between re-inscribing the idea [of race], and acknowledging the inequalities it stands for in one's efforts to eradicate both these inequalities and the idea itself" (Erasmus, 2010, p. 255). I therefore thought carefully about how to name race. Other South African authors generally have a footnote explaining why they continue to use racial categories. I share McEwen and Steyn's position by "acknowledging that racial categories are not biological, fixed, or essential truths" but have "implications for lived realities, social positionings and life opportunities" (2013, p. 2). I have chosen to place race groups in single quotation marks throughout this thesis,[3] to firstly emphasise the socially constructed nature of race and my objection to the idea of racial categories. Secondly, to denote that the words White, Black, Coloured and Indian have different meanings (if any meaning at all) outside South Africa. The significance of terminology is to signal "the unequal power relations established between racial groups during apartheid" (McEwen & Steyn, 2013, p. 2). Although other terms such as "historically disadvantaged" could be used, all the ways of naming race come with their own set of critiques and are no less problematic than using apartheid racial categories in single quotes.

Most recently, I presented a subsection of my findings at the South African Sociological Association's annual conference (Perez, 2016). There I was asked to comment on why, given that the conference theme was decolonising knowledge, my theoretical framework exclusively relied on 'white' western thinkers. I accepted that this

[2] " White' is used to refer to those who would have been identified as 'white' under the apartheid Population Registration Act (1950) and therefore in positions of socio-economic privilege. The term 'coloured' is used to refer to those who would have been classified as 'coloured' under this act, which meant 'any person who is not a member of the white group or of the native group.' The category of 'Coloured' was positioned in the racial hierarchy as being subordinate to Whites and Indians, yet superior to Bantu, or black 'Native', people" (McEwen & Steyn, 2013, p. 2).

[3] Other than racial categories that use a single quote, in all other instances double quotation marks have been used following APA formatting style. Double quotation marks "alert the reader to introduce a word or phrase used as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression. Use quotation marks the first time the word or phrase is used; thereafter, do not use quotation marks" (American Psychological Association, 2016).

was a legitimate criticism, but that as I explained in my methodology, I could only create new knowledge through that which already exists (see discussion of "bricolage" in Chapter 4). However, I pay attention to the inequality in knowledge production through a discussion of "the west and the rest" in my literature review (Chapter 2). In this way, together with challenging dominant discourses, I hope to make a small dent in the continued acceptance of colonial thought.

At the same conference, I was asked to comment on if and how I had been able to benefit from my status as a 'white' woman while working as a waste picker. A significant omission of this PhD is the story of gendered power relations. This could have been the sole focus of the research had it not been for the way that I was positioned by the group of waste pickers with whom I worked. Although being a woman was significant and ultimately led to me stopping the research at one point (see Chapter 4), I ended up being positioned as an honorary male in many ways, because of my identity as European. In practical terms this meant that I spent the majority of my time with men. My relationship with my key informant, who was the dominant male in the group, would have made it impossible to get a moment alone to talk to women about their experiences. To focus on women would have meant taking a completely different methodological approach and severing my relationship with my key informant. Instead I plan to revisit my data and publish a paper about the significance of gender.

At the outset of the project, replacing "skarrel" and "stroller" with the English phrase "waste picking" would have been unlikely to have warranted further justification. However, student protests in Cape Town since March 2015 (BBC, 2015) have led to a groundswell of demands to decolonise higher education in South Africa (E. H. Prinsloo, 2016) and internationally (Breckenridge, 2016). These student-led movements have re-charged feminist critiques of western women carrying out research in the global south (Eisenstein, 2011; hooks, 1990; Mama, 2000). Consequently my epistemological position is under greater scrutiny because of my British nationality and European ancestry. These shifts in higher education, together with the woeful lack of transformation in the South African academy (Mangcu, 2014), have led me to question whether I should be pursuing an academic career at all while registered at a South African university. This dilemma and the questions posed to me throughout my PhD journey have meant that when considering the limitations of the study, I have focused mainly on the constraints posed by my identity (Chapter 4).

1.5 Contribution to Knowledge

Regardless of the changes in the politics of higher education since 2013, my acute awareness of colonial era power relations stems from my Master's research with NGO workers in Cape Town (Perez, 2013). In a continuation of my Master's minor dissertation, the purpose of my PhD thesis has always been to produce knowledge that challenges dominant ways of thinking. Before moving on to the literature review, therefore, I give a summary each chapter's contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 compares and contrasts the way that authors from academia, pressure groups and media variously construct waste picking and waste pickers. While Dias and Samson (2016) have argued that interpretations of waste pickers as victims are misplaced, I show that the divide between texts produced in the global north (the west) and the global south (the rest) perpetuate myths about waste pickers in developing countries as lacking agency. This chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach to contextualising waste pickers' interactions in Cape Town, drawing on peer-reviewed research in the fields of human geography, urban studies, sustainable development, and labour relations. With some notable exceptions in recent years, very few of these researchers have taken an ethnographic approach.

Chapter 3 explains the relevance of the conceptual building blocks that were available to me, notwithstanding the decolonising critiques mentioned earlier, and the value that combining theories brings to understanding waste pickers and waste picking. The theoretical foundations of this research are built on Goffman (1959; 1963), Giddens (1984) and Emirbayer and Mische (1998), which I use to establish the agential capacity of impression management strategies. My research supports the view that waste pickers can use weapons of the weak (Scott, 1985) to resist the power of discourses that position their work as matter out of place (Douglas, 1966). My work with waste pickers gives credence to Wolff's (2016) theory that a traditional hierarchical theory of need does not apply in highly unequal societies such as in South Africa, yet continue to frame waste pickers' habits as irrational.

Chapter 4 explains my social constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemological position and how this links to participatory research methods. This thesis contributes to an emerging body of ethnographic work with waste pickers, in an attempt to see things from waste pickers' point of view. In doing so the research methods were designed to demystify waste pickers and their work, and to generate knowledge that sheds light on tacitly held assumptions that stigmatise waste pickers as lacking agency. I achieve

this through a combination of thematic and discourse analysis of fieldnote transcripts, aimed at achieving an ethical and rigorous qualitative research project. To date this is the only PhD project to conduct an ethnography of street waste pickers in South Africa.

Chapters 5 to 8 presents evidence about how waste pickers are stigmatised and the extent to which stigma constrains and facilitates their actions. I argue that to overcome being stigmatised by their physical appearance, waste pickers used an idealised presentation of self to position themselves as superior to criminals, illegal drug users and poor working classes. Impression management enabled waste pickers to resist being positioned as matter out of place through their cultivation of relationships with residents and agents of social control. However, because these reciprocal relationships go largely unseen by the wider public, stigma continued to constrain the agential capacity of impression management strategies.

Chapter 9 draws out the contradictory nature of interactions. This concluding chapter includes the implications of my findings, to explain the benefits of getting to know waste pickers and overcoming the fear of dirt and disorder. At the outset of this project, I aimed to challenge my own assumptions about touching waste and the people that I saw picking through my wheelie-bin each week. After three years of research, this thesis is an invitation for others to do the same. To this end, I begin with a review of literature to start the process of questioning commonly held assumptions about waste pickers and their work.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW: SETTING THE STAGE

Since conceptualising this project in July 2013, there has been exponential growth in interest in waste picking in South Africa. This body of work incorporates a diverse range of sources, though comparatively little of it is in peer-reviewed academic journals. Despite this increase in attention, there is no English literature that centres on stigma or how it surfaces in the agency of waste pickers. This chapter therefore functions to contextualise the literature around the interactions of waste pickers. Although the themes in this literature are tightly interwoven, I have divided it into global, historical and local contexts.

Part One sets out the global stage in which waste pickers are positioned through a combination of a "west and the rest" discourse and environmental discourses. These two discourses create a paradox with one undermining waste pickers' agential capacity in the global south, while the other positions waste pickers as contributing to sustainable development. Either way, waste pickers remain largely dependent on advocacy groups to achieve change. The voice of South African waste pickers on the global stage is quiet compared to waste picker collectives in other parts of the global south.

Part Two takes a historical perspective to understand how South Africa, and Cape Town in particular, has come to have the human geography that it does today. I briefly consider how contemporary attitudes about the movement of waste pickers in urban spaces have been shaped by colonial, apartheid and neoliberal power relations. I argue that each has led to national and local governments stigmatising waste pickers as poor, criminal and unsanitary. The result has been policies and practices that entrench spatial segregation along race and class lines, creating front and back region city spaces. The polarity in living conditions in Cape Town contextualises my application of Wolff's (2016) theory to the experiences of the waste pickers with whom I worked.

Part Three is confined to literature that sheds light on the context of the interactions between waste pickers and residents. At a local level, the Cape Town government advocates an avoidance of people who look homeless. The suspicion that waste pickers are potential criminals, insinuated by security and safety organisations, is fuelled by the fear of crime in affluent suburbs. These local messages about how to respond to waste pickers, conflict with national and global messages about the impact of recycling on the environment and the potential for job creation. Waste pickers need to

anticipate these different attitudes in order to avoid being stigmatised and maintain their access to affluent parts of the city.

2. PART 1. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The World Bank estimates that there are 15 million waste salvagers around the world (Bonner, 2008, p. 7). There is no consensus over how many waste pickers there are in South Africa. According to the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers (2009), the South African Waste Pickers' Association (SAWPA) has 6,000 members. Statistics about waste pickers are mostly from workers located in Asia, South America and other parts of Africa. In these developing regions, concern has been expressed about unemployment and the low standard of employment opportunities, particularly for young people (International Labour Organisation, 2013). Of these regions, South Africa has the highest unemployment in the world (Seekings, 2016) at 36.4 percent[4] (Statistics South Africa, 2016, p. xiv). Subsequently, South African policies are driven by national government targets to create five million new jobs and reduce unemployment to 15 percent by 2020 (Economic Development Department. South Africa, 2011). Recycling, as part of the "green economy," has been identified as a sector with the potential to create "green jobs" (Maia et al., 2011). The connection between waste picking and green job creation means researchers have readily conceptualised waste picking in South Africa as a form of employment (C. Schenck, Blaauw, & Viljoen, 2012).

Melanie Samson's work, focused on racialised and gendered social relations in the labour market (M. Samson, 2008b), was among the first to raise the profile of waste picking in South Africa. Critical of the treatment of waste pickers as "passive objects of study" (M. Samson, 2010, p. 9), she takes care to use language that draws attention to the work they do by referring to her research *with* "reclaimers" (M. Samson, 2008a) [italics added]. Despite her calls for a more ethnographic approach, the bulk of academic research into waste picking continues to rely on interviews[5] (Adamo, 2014; Benson & Vanqa-Mgijima, 2010; Chvatal, 2010; King, 2014; Langenhoven & Dyssel, 2007; R. Schenck & Blaauw, 2011), driven by research questions that are underpinned by an interest in gaining quantifiable data (notable exceptions include Millar (2008) and Thieme (2013)). The

[4] This is the expanded measure of unemployment, which includes people of working age (15-64 years old) who want a job but are not actively searching for a job (Africa Check, 2014).
[5] Common constraints to embarking on ethnographic research include institutional processes, teaching academics' lack of available time, and the increasing difficulties encountered in securing ethics permission for any research involving a degree of risk.

unintended consequence of this approach is the production of a body of literature that largely assumes stigma is an implicit, and inevitable side issue in the work of waste picking. If touched on at all, stigma, stereotypes and prejudice tend to be raised as part of the analysis of the constraints to improving waste pickers' position in the recycling value chain (Balarman, 2015).

The lack of ethnographic research can partly be explained by the dominance of economic concerns. Interest has grown in alternatives to the linear economy model of discarding products as waste when they come to the end of their life. In contrast, the circular economy re-uses and re-purposes what would otherwise become waste at landfill. In South Africa, expanding the circular economy is touted as a way to "generate a host of jobs and viable new enterprises, so helping to counter the country's unemployment crisis" (Pressly, 2015, p. 1). Alongside the expected creation of new jobs are policy debates about how to integrate waste pickers, as existing informal waste workers, into South Africa's waste and recycling economy (Godfrey, 2016).

Integration with the formal sector is partly founded on the premise that it is in waste pickers' interest to build alliances with the formal sector (Ezeah, Fazakerley, & Roberts, 2013; Wilson, Velis, & Cheeseman, 2006). The success of waste picker movements to achieve integration through collectivising has been documented in Colombia (Rosaldo, 2016), Brazil (S. Dias, 2011; Ferri, Diniz Chaves, & Ribeiro, 2015; Tirado-Soto & Zamberlan, 2013) and India (Chikarmane, 2012; Chikarmane & Narayan, 2005). The consensus is that organising workers is most likely to achieve minimum standards of working conditions (International Labour Organisation, 2015; Lindell, 2010; Nkosi & Muzenda, 2013; M. Samson, 2009a). Given the interest in the future of interactions between waste pickers and the formal sector, by integrating them into public sector solid waste management services, much of the recent literature in "the rest" has documented the interactions between waste pickers and local government (Bartolomeu Buque & Ribeiro, 2015; Chikarmane, 2012; Ferri et al., 2015; M. Samson, 2016).

Given the interest in formalising waste pickers by integrating them into public sector solid waste management services, much of the recent literature in "the rest" has documented the interactions between waste pickers and local government (Bartolomeu Buque & Ribeiro, 2015; Chikarmane, 2012; Ferri et al., 2015; M. Samson, 2016). Some of these have exposed the prejudice that government officials exhibit towards waste pickers (Assaad, 1996; Magni, Amélia, Günther, & Maria, 2014; M. Samson, 2008a). A recent court case in Johannesburg illustrated the use of stereotypical images by local government

to discredit waste pickers. The decision to tender a private company rather than waste pickers was justified due to "the need to 'control' reclaiming on the site as they [the local government] argued the reclaimers were not capable of managing themselves" (M. Samson, 2015, p. 822).

Set against the backdrop of waste pickers as informal and unorganised, it becomes difficult to conceive of agency as anything other than improving waste pickers' bargaining power and conditions of employment. Media portrayal of the gains made by "rag pickers" in India (Mehta, 2015) is used to spur on advocacy work in South Africa. With the exception of research into the potential for waste pickers in South Africa to organise and collectivise (Theron, 2010; Theron & Perez, 2012), advocacy work and its accompanying literature tends to be produced by pressure groups rather than academics (see Chamane, 2014; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, 2013). These publications refer to the invisibility and silence surrounding waste pickers in South Africa. For example, Samson notes that "most people prefer not to see them, and look down on them for doing such 'dirty' work" (2008a, p. 1). The solution to these barriers to improving working conditions has been found through the use of status symbols, such as uniforms and identity cards, with a view to gaining greater levels of acceptance from residents (Solid Waste Collection and Handling (SWaCH), 2013).

2.1.1 Advocacy and Recognition

In 2008, the efforts of pressure groups globally culminated in the First International and Third Latin American Conference of Waste Pickers in Columbia (Bonner, 2008). This forum included delegates from South Africa, although none of them were waste pickers. It was not until 2009 that the South African Waste Pickers' Association (SAWPA) was formed, with the support of Groundwork (an environmental justice and development NPO) as part of their waste campaign (Groundwork, 2014). The First Global Strategic Workshop of Waste Pickers, which brought together waste pickers from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe (Vryenhoek, 2012), had one representative of South African waste pickers, Simon Mbata from SAWPA. Thus, South African waste pickers' presence on the global stage is still emerging.

Schenck, Blaauw & Viljoen's (2016) systematic review of South African literature found that greater recognition was commonly found to be a source of enablement to waste pickers. The underlying assumption was that currently waste pickers are excluded from the

formal waste management system because they do not have a voice. Recognition is enabling because waste pickers become visible, gain validity and have a voice. However they later point out:

> …the public and local authorities regard waste pickers as undesirable and posing problems to society. They prefer not to see the waste pickers and look down on them for doing such dirty work. (R. Schenck et al., 2016, p. 48)

The central point is that the regard for waste pickers hinges on how they are interpreted by local authorities and the public. It is not so much that waste pickers are invisible, but that residents and government officials "prefer not to see" waste pickers. People choose to ignore street waste pickers because of stereotypes that position them as "undesirable" and a problem to society. Recognition for the work that they do in minimising waste to landfills may mean that people are more likely to tolerate their existence, but does not necessarily bring about a change in how they are perceived. Other waste workers who do "dirty work" are not regarded as "undesirable" or "problems to society," not only because they have greater recognition but also because they are significantly less stigmatised. The key difference is that, unlike street waste pickers, other dirty work is not associated with homelessness, addiction and criminality.

Although research that calls for greater recognition of waste pickers implicitly acknowledges stigma, to date there has been no doctoral study in South Africa that attempts to understand the connection made between street waste pickers and stereotypes. The impact of waste pickers' physical appearance and manner are overlooked in advocacy work, where stigma is often not explicitly mentioned. Instead, the emphasis is placed on ways to "increase recognition of the value of waste picking and the need for dignified working conditions and the protection of their basic rights" (Ciplet, 2014, p. 88). For example, advocacy efforts to get uniforms for waste pickers are orientated as important to improving health and safety (Mehta, 2015). Uniforms are also crucial to differentiate waste pickers from homeless people so the public are able to categorise them as waste workers, enabling freedom of movement and access to household waste (McLean, 2000, p. 3).

2.1.2 The West and the Rest Discourse

If stripped of context, what I refer to as "waste picking" can be observed all over the world and is not limited to specific continents. However, interpretations of the act of "reclaiming reusable and recyclable materials" (M. Samson, 2009b, p. 1) varies

enormously globally. Language use is positioned by a discourse of "the west and the rest" (Hall, 2006). "The west" is short hand for core countries that are in the global north which are developed, modern, industrialised and civilised. "The rest" comprises countries in the global south which are less developed, old fashioned, less civilised and somewhat backward in that they are playing catch-up. This discourse makes it possible to construct "dumpster divers" (Edwards & Mercer, 2007) as part of a freegan sub-culture in the west, while limiting waste pickers in the rest to "scavengers" (Medina, 2000) whose stories are of "poverty and survival" (Benson & Vanqa-Mgijima, 2010). The division perpetuates stereotypical images found in literature set in Africa, where people do not talk about themselves other than to speak of their suffering, with "no conflicts or resolutions in their stories, no depth or quirks to confuse the cause" (Wainaina, 2005).

In the west, research is almost exclusively conducted with people who reclaim from the streets (Exceptions include Reno, 2009). In South Africa, the majority of research is conducted at landfills (R. Schenck et al., 2016). In other parts of the global south, research with street waste pickers has been prompted by concerns over working conditions (Samarth, 2014), health and safety at landfills (Sasaki, Araki, Tambunan, & Prasadja, 2014; Shibata et al., 2015), and child labour (Adamo, 2014). In Cape Town, waste picking at landfills is prohibited and strict security measures are in place to ensure that people cannot access the site. In this way, Cape Town is similar to the west in that waste pickers only operate on the streets. However, no equivalency is drawn between choices made, because "freegans" in the west are people sifting through dustbins as a way to free themselves from the tyranny of consumerism. Waste pickers in the rest are stereotyped as victims lacking choice (S. M. Dias & Samson, 2016).

In research conducted in the west, waste picking is interpreted as a conscious choice. Freegans can afford to go into a supermarket and buy food but instead choose to reclaim food that has been thrown away. Living from food found in bins is seen as a political act: a rejection of consumerism and capitalism (Edwards & Mercer, 2007). Ethnographic work has used dramaturgy to examine freegans as part of an organised, environmental social movement (Barnard, 2011). By contrast, in the rest, there has been an absence of ethnographic work that aims to find out "why reclaimers collect what they do and what happens to these items once retrieved" (M. Samson, 2010, p. 9). In South Africa, "Living off vegetables from a dumpsite" is a story about surviving unemployment and the health and safety dangers at the dumpsite, complicated by theft and conflict among waste

pickers (Mbomvu, 2015). The assumption is that unlike in the west, waste picking in South Africa is a compulsion born out of necessity rather than a choice.

In contrast, academic interest about waste picking in the west is rarely conducted with people living in poverty. Documenting waste pickers in low socio-economic positions is largely left to journalists and NGOs in places such as Toronto (Whyte, 2007); Europe (WASTE, 2013) and China (Duggan, 2015). Of the ethnographic research undertaken by academics in the west, Jeff Ferrell's (2006) book is heralded as "an important commentary on the debate over environmental conservation and globalization" (Cameron, 2008, p. 143). Ferrell's choice to resign from his position in academe, become unemployed, and live the life of a waste picker attracted interest because of the connection book reviewers made to environmental and political ideologies. The situation of unemployment and poverty in the rest is not a choice and therefore waste picking is the study of the poor and historically disenfranchised. Thus academic publications about waste picking in South Africa are a far cry from waste pickers' status and agential bent in Ferrell's "Empire of the Scrounge."

In past research in South Africa, the west and the rest discourse posits any departure from waste picking as a survival strategy of the poor as somewhat irrational. For example, if waste pickers explain their work as a choice, this is met with a degree of suspicion and disbelief:

> The pickers *appear to be working for themselves,* and notwithstanding the *obvious* dependent relationship that pickers have with the recyclers (*some even gave 'independence' as the reason why they liked picking as opposed to wage employment*). The picker can decide whether or not to work, at what times to work, where to work and what to collect *and these factors probably create an illusion of independence*. However, it must be remembered that the picker is in fact not independent but firmly linked into the industrial system by his/her dependence on the recycler, or scrap yard owner as buyers. The picker is also affected by trends in the market. (De Kock, 1986, p. 23) [all italics added]

The author has taken a critical approach, a position I share, but the way this is written diminishes waste pickers' reasoning skills. The phrasing implies that the structural constraints of supply and demand are "obvious" to the researcher (but seemingly not to waste pickers). Conversely, waste pickers "appear" to be working for themselves in their own mind, "even" (to the author's disbelief) giving reasons for this stance. The author then

speculates about the reasons for the "illusion" of independence that waste pickers appear to be under, thus saving waste pickers from presenting themselves as having completely lost touch with reality.

Given that any business owner is in a dependent relationship with their buyers, the implication here is that waste pickers are in some way ignorant of this fact merely because they express a preference for waste picking over wage employment (a sentiment shared by research participants who took part in my research (see Chapter 6)). The reader is left with a sense that waste pickers are somewhat deluded about the reality of their work, which stigmatises waste pickers because of the connection between cognitive impairment and homeless stereotypes. This thesis sets itself apart from existing literature by resisting a west and the rest discourse. Following Scott, my interpretations of waste pickers' construction of their actions "take account of the full range of self-descriptions" offered (1985, p. 139). I have taken care to convey and clearly demarcate both waste pickers' construction of their actions and my use of sociological theories to interpret these constructions (see Chapters 3 and 4).

The compulsion to incorporate waste pickers into government run services assumes that existing informal and independent working arrangements are inferior to formal ones. This supposition is evidenced by the tendency of middlemen to exploit waste pickers who are not protected by legal frameworks. Individuals are exploited by buy-back centres, which have led to initiatives to ensure waste pickers are given a fair price for the recyclables they sell (Infrastructure news, 2013). The absence of unionisation of informal workers gives the impression that waste pickers are disorganised. Although it is true that working informally and individually weakens collective bargaining power, this is not to say waste pickers' working practices are random or disorderly. To label waste pickers as informal somewhat exaggerates the dichotomy between formal and informal working arrangements and, as a consequence, masks street waste pickers' highly structured work routines (see Chapter 4).

Furthermore, the line between formal and informal work has become blurred for waste workers in South Africa. Despite attempts to discourage informal working practices, a rise in the prevalence of informal labour has resulted from the pursuit of neoliberal policies in South Africa (Valodia, 2001). As part of the privatisation of waste, the detrimental effect of outsourcing services is evident in Miraftab's documentation of contract employees being given no more than a bag and a broom to carry out their work (2005, p. 883). Workers are at the will of private firms and the government does not keep

track of how much contractors are paid (Theron & Perez, 2012). Waste pickers' choice to avoid formalisation becomes less irrational than it may at first seem when the fallacy of the benefits of standard employment relationships are taken into account (see Chapter 6).

The way forward then for waste pickers' role in waste management systems in South Africa is unclear and, as Godfrey points out, has thus far not been illuminated by academic research (2016, p. 6). Other criticisms of the South African academy are levelled by Pithouse on the grounds that Marxist critiques describe the urban poor as a homogeneous mass "incapable of emancipatory praxis and quite possibly an automatic threat to the possibilities of progressive politics" (2012, p. 483). Waste pickers are largely absent from university spaces and rely heavily on others' representation of them to advance their interests. Qualitative, ethnographic work that prefaces the voices and choices of waste pickers are mostly to be found in post-graduate theses. For example, King (2014) tells the story of a man who chose to leave his job and home to live and work with his wife at a landfill. van Heerden (2015) adopts a theoretical approach to his ethnographic work with street waste pickers to emphasise individual agency. Together with NGOs, this thesis contributes to an emerging literature that avoids stereotypes and theorises waste pickers as a heterogeneous group in society.

2.1.3 Environmental Discourses

The formation of waste pickers into a global social movement began relatively recently, in 2009, with the establishment of the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers and Allies (GAWA). With the support of more established NGOs such as the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), waste pickers have been able to lobby the United Nations annual climate change negotiations,[6] which has been "a key avenue for transnational waste picker movement building" (Ciplet, 2014, p. 88). These high profile events attract media interest, which has drawn attention to the way that waste pickers are "ignored, marginalised or despised" around the world despite their "efficiency that saves the planet a fortune in environmental terms" (Ingham, 2009).

The logic behind waste pickers "saving the planet" (Swainston, 2009) rests on the work they do to reduce the amount of waste that emits harmful greenhouse gases at

[6] (COP/UNFCCC: Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).

landfills. The reduction is achieved either by extracting from the waste stream at source (street waste pickers) or picking from waste as it reaches the landfill (landfill waste pickers). The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)[7] means that countries in the west can improve their rates of greenhouse gas emission by investing in projects in the rest. Thus wealthier nations can offset their rates of harmful gases through claims to have reduced emissions in other parts of the world. Ciplet (2014) cites the following extract from his interview with a GAIA staff member in an explanation of waste pickers' interactions with the Clean Development Mechanism panel members:

> You can show [panel members] a project that can be absolutely devastating in terms of emissions…and it will take them five years to get around to maybe doing something. But when we got out in front of the television cameras and we're saying they're taking away livelihoods of poor people, they paid a lot more attention. There is a disconnect between what they are allowed to take account of formally, and what actually motivates CDM panel members to do something. (Ciplet, 2014, p. 90)

The above extract demonstrates that although reducing the environmental impact of waste can be a rationale to raise the status of waste pickers, even within the confines of a group mandated to reduce greenhouse emissions, lobbying officials does not necessarily result in action. Portraying waste pickers as poor people with no other livelihood strategy is a more emotive and persuasive tactic to get the attention of decision makers than simply explaining that pollution that causes global warming. This framing unintentionally entrenches the west and the rest discourse, the stereotype of informal workers as victims and waste pickers' lack of agential capacity (S. M. Dias & Samson, 2016; Lindell, 2010; Scheinberg, 2012).

The extract also points to the disjuncture between the official's presentation of their emotions and motivations in private (back region) and public (front region) spaces. Policy-makers on the global stage need to be seen to be responding to environmental degradation but are equally under pressure to address developmental goals. The use of media coverage

[7] The "Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as defined in Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol provides for industrialised countries to establish project activities that reduce emissions which are located in developing countries that have no committed greenhouse gas reduction targets in return for Certified Emission Reductions (CERs)….This new kind of income stream generated through the sale of emission reductions provides an attractive incentive to develop additional environmental projects worldwide inter alia in the waste management sector" (Plochl, Wetzer, & Ragossnig, 2008, p. 104).

to criticise officials for neglecting one or both of these goals is intended to improve waste pickers' lives but unintentionally reinforces waste pickers' reliance on the sympathy of others. This works against efforts to depict waste pickers as agents (M. Samson, 2009a).

Similarly to those on the global stage, South African policy-makers are also left to grapple with some of the irreconcilable differences between poverty reduction and neoliberal globalisation. International resolutions present the link between poverty eradication, sustainable development and the world economy as unproblematic. The following extract appears under heading VII "Meeting the special needs of Africa" in the United Nations Millennium Declaration:

> We will support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy. (United Nations, 2000, p. 7)

The extract illustrates the international attitudes against which interactions and decision making happen in South Africa. The term "Africa," despite grouping together 52 nation States, is used to delineate a continent with "special needs." Africa and Africans' struggles are framed as, in some way, distinct to poverty eradication in other parts of the world. Africa and Africans are terms that can be broadly applied because what unites this place and its people is their exclusion from the mainstream of the world economy. Since 2000, this declaration has been used to found the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Banozic, Skevington, & Todorova, 2015). The incorporation of environmentalism into the SDGs brings with it a new set of contradictions between discourses of climate change and sustainable development (Madzivhandila, 2014, p. 92). Despite these tensions, advocacy groups have endeavoured to exploit the professed rise of environmental concerns on the United Nation's agenda to raise the status of waste pickers in South Africa.

2. PART 2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Critical of ahistorical accounts, Miraftab stresses the significance of "colonial legacies of neoliberal urban development and governance strategies" in South Africa (2012, p. 1). Part of the stigma that waste pickers face in contemporary South Africa stems from historical attitudes about "waste itself and the unsanitary Other" (King, 2014). Firstly, Victorian sanitation reforms in England linked sanitation to health, cleanliness,

morality and the redemption of the urban poor. These social and moral aspects of "sanitation syndrome" (Swanson, 1977) were "carried to the colonies giving weight to imperialist attitudes to 'indigenous' cultures" (King, 2014, p. 14):

> By placement of garbage in locations it increased Africans' exposure to plague carrying rats, thus creating a certain irony in white fear over the disease caused from their own garbage. Rubbish in these areas further characterised 'natives as unsanitary' and it is not uncommon to come across sources citing the 'natives' inability to organise the municipal garbage in the area…the reality was that the locations received poor, if any, municipal garbage service and were the prime spot for dumping the cities' garbage, exacerbating existing health concerns within what were often impoverished areas. As a result rubbish can be seen as an actor in the cementation of the thought that urban Africans were unsanitary and thus propelled the colonies towards segregation. (King, 2014, p. 52)

Parallels can be drawn between the policies and attitudes of the 1930s above with the context of contemporary Cape Town (See McFarlane & Silver (2017) for a full account of the politicisation of sanitation). African populations continue to be disproportionately affected by the "failure to transform apartheid spatialities" (Fieuw, 2011, p. iii), which means low income 'black' people were moved to the periphery of the city area with inferior service delivery (D. A. McDonald, 2008, p. 270). Peripheral suburbs, referred to as townships[8] or informal settlements, continue to be in close proximity to garbage sites. New low income housing, as part of the N2 Gateway project, was built next to the "busiest highway in the city and downwind from a large sewage treatment plant and waste transfer station" (D. A. McDonald, 2008, p. 289). Informal areas are characterised by unsanitary and dehumanising living conditions, high densities of people and dwellings, and poor urban services (water supply, electricity, drainage and solid waste disposal) (Darkey & Visagie, 2013).

In Cape Town, "while some progress is being made to extend public services to the historically neglected townships, the scale and character of investment differs markedly across the city" (Turok, 2001, p. 2350). For example, compactor trucks cannot access unpaved streets in informal areas because they are too narrow. Unlike collection in formal

[8] The word 'township' emerged as a term "to identify 'non-white' neighborhoods alone and was thus a core spatial concept of the apartheid era – but it is a term that nevertheless continues to be used today" (Jürgens, Donaldson, Rule, & Bähr, 2013, p. 256).

areas, households in informal settlements are issued with refuse bags which are collected twice a week and carried to an open skip or shipping container (Theron & Visser, 2010, p. 6). Illegal dumping is found particularly in low-income areas, near townships and squatter camps, which in turn causes greater social, health and environmental problems (Chvatal, 2010, p. 9). Waste pickers' presentation of living on the streets of the affluent suburbs as a choice (see Chapter 6) is given credence, when compared to some townships where residents' only access to a toilet is a "porta potty" (C. Stewart, 2014).

Environmental problems, together with poverty, unemployment and lack of education opportunities in townships, manifest themselves in diseases and malnutrition (Jürgens et al., 2013, p. 258). These problems are exacerbated by inadequate service provision in South African cities and contribute to the embodiment of social ills. The "representation of Africans as a diseased population" and the "racialisation of certain health conditions, particularly HIV/AIDS, has created a prime breeding ground for HIV/AIDS related stigma" (Brown, BeLue, & Airhihenbuwa, 2010, p. 444). The combination of poverty, illness and skin colour breads stigma and fear, which has further entrenched existing segregation in Cape Town.

For some commentators, Cape Town has "arguably become the most racially segregated and racist city in the country" (D. A. McDonald, 2008, p. 9). The movement of black bodies outside of the confines of the "septic periphery" taints waste pickers as "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966), posing a "medical menace" to the urban privileged:

> In some instances, colonial authorities referred to the living environment of the colonised as the 'septic fringe' of the city and as a 'medical menace.' Such dehumanising discourse laid the groundwork for 'segregation for sanitation' as a slogan to justify removal of non-Europeans to segregated zones called 'locations'- a strategy that generally contributed to the Europeans' urban privilege and wealth creation. (Miraftab, 2012, p. 3)

An unintended consequence of waste management policy and planning by government officials is the promotion of casual labour and "differential levels of services that reproduce apartheid's spatialised hierarchies" (Miraftab, 2004, p. 880). The standard and type of waste collection provided by local government is correlated to residents' ability to meet the full cost of refuse services, known as cost reflective pricing, which has an adverse impact on the standard of living and quality of life in townships (D. A. McDonald, 2002). Cape Town is one of the least changed cities in the country (Turok,

2001). The relationship between rich and poor Capetonians bears a striking resemblance to colonial era power relations and attitudes, born out by the establishment of City Improvement Districts (CIDs) (expanded on later in this chapter).

2.2.1 Neoliberal Discourse

The primacy of protecting and attracting investment is perpetuated by international forces (D. A. McDonald, 2008). "When new parts of the world system succeed in attracting capital - that is, when they 'develop'- it shows clearly in the satellite images, as in the strong contrast between the dark northern and luminous southern half of the Korean peninsula" (Hornborg, 2015, p. 210). Accordingly, this is how neoliberal discourses position the policies of government officials in Cape Town. When asked to comment on the future of waste pickers in Cape Town, one government official's first thought was to protect the private businesses that they tender. A questionnaire response read "Informals can play a role in areas without such tenders" (Godfrey, 2016). Areas serviced by tendered recycling firms are affluent, whereas those without services are in the poorer parts of the city.

Waste pickers' invisibility in the minds of some local government officials is reflected in their absence in policies. The Department of Environmental Affairs recently announced plans to integrate waste pickers into South Africa's waste management programme (J. Evans, 2016). However, as yet, none of the recent South African waste management legislation mentions waste pickers specifically. The Waste Act (2008) legislates that local government must have a Waste Management Plan. As part of this plan, local governments can act using discretionary power to interact with waste pickers who operate at landfills or on the street. In Cape Town, waste picking is seen as voluntary (see Chapter 1 introduction), and local government uses "efficiency" to justify the pursuit of modern waste management systems. Waste minimisation systems are mechanised rather than labour intensive, despite targets set to create "green jobs" (Economic Development Department, 2011). The emulation of European models has continued in Cape Town despite the vast difference in economic and historical context of the west compared to South Africa (Anschütz, Scheinberg, & van de Klundert, 2004).

Cape Town local government has conceived of projects that employ otherwise unemployed people in waste management services. Although previously marketed as public-private partnerships (PPPs), these projects have been known to bypass the public

(in other words, the unemployed in townships) and have thus become a cover for outsourcing services to private companies, shored up by a discourse of efficiency. Miraftab noted that government officials found "partnership with communities is 'too difficult' and it is 'more efficient' for the city to deal only with the contracting firm" (Miraftab, 2004, p. 882). "Efficiency" is frequently used to legitimise the privatisation and outsourcing of waste management services (D. A. McDonald & Smith, 2004). This discourse positions waste pickers as inefficient which undermines their status and the work being carried out by advocacy groups to draw attention to the recycling service they could provide.

2.2.2 Privatisation

The post-apartheid rise of neoliberalism has led to the privatisation of services (D. A. McDonald & Smith, 2004) and the privatisation of waste, both of which restrict street waste pickers' access to waste. Privatisation changes the legal status of waste so that governments or private companies "who now have the responsibility or the access then enforce this new status, barring scavengers from taking something which used to be open to anyone" (Anschütz et al., 2004, p. 22). In Cape Town, local government has made it illegal for "unauthorised persons" to access landfill sites, which criminalises waste pickers as trespassers (Tischler, 2013, p. 99). The door-to-door collection of recyclable materials has been outsourced by the provincial government to service some parts of Cape Town (Western Cape Government, 2007). In order to deter waste pickers from accessing recyclables, bags issued to residents for the collection of recyclables are labelled in such a way as to discourage waste pickers from opening them when placed on the street for collection. For example, bags are marked as the property of Drakenstein municipality and carry a warning that attempts by "unauthorised persons" to access the bag will be subject to prosecution (Theron & Perez, 2012, p. 41).

The protection of private business interests is used to justify the exclusion of waste pickers from accessing waste. Last year, there was an escalation in the violence towards waste pickers after a long battle with local government about waste pickers' right to access a landfill in Durban. Local government sanctioned the use of pellet guns to shoot at "illegal" waste pickers attempting to access New England Road landfill in Pietermaritzburg (Pillay, 2015). This violence was seen as justified on the grounds that waste pickers intimidate customers wishing to dump their rubbish at the landfill, thus requiring an increase in security measures. The only organisation that defended waste

pickers' human rights was Groundwork. In a meeting, one councillor "raised concerns…saying that pellet guns were 'too forceful' and paintball guns would be better" (Pillay, 2015). The use of violence towards waste pickers was not brought into question.

2.2.3 World City Syndrome

Hand in hand with neoliberalism and privatisation is the government's pursuit of "world city" status (D. A. McDonald, 2008). Waste pickers discredit the impression of Cape Town as modern and European. Waste pickers are therefore stigmatised because their work is informal (not modern) and they cause a visual disruption to the image of Cape Town as clean and orderly. The continued tendency by local authorities and residents to project a clean image can be seen as a product of the development of knowledge in western culture that is seemingly "inseparable from a cleansing or refining impulse; a will to order" (Scanlon, 2005, p. 58). Rooted in colonial era policies of "separation for sanitation," the removal of waste pickers by officials can be seen as part of government's presentation of self, to manage the stigma of poverty that separates the west and the rest.

Similar to "environmental improvement projects" implemented in Beijing before the Olympics (Shin & Li, 2013), government agencies moved homeless waste pickers to other parts of Cape Town as part of the preparations to host the FIFA World Cup (New Internationalist, 2010). In effect, waste pickers were stigma symbols that needed to be hidden before the arrival of the audience as part of a strategy to raise the status of South Africa among the international community. Presenting South Africa as modern, clean and orderly was part of;

> the visual aspects of efforts to promote human development in the future, as opposed to efforts to alleviate poverty immediately. The featured role of the South African State, in this regard, is to orchestrate foreign investment and tourism by staging the 2010 FWC – a sports mega-event designed to attract media attention, showcase modernity and generate positive images of Africa. (Manzo, 2012, p. 174)

Thus, the motivation to re-house waste pickers was driven more by the urgent need to get waste pickers out of sight before foreign tourists arrived than it was to tackle the inhumane conditions in which people live. In fact, once moved, some found the living conditions to be worse in informal settlements than on the street in the city centre (Majavu, 2009). This response to individuals is consistent with the idea that "a certain kind of social

'refuse' is a manufactured part of the process of capitalist transformation" (O'Brien, 2008, p. 146). At other times, away from the gaze of tourists, JP Smith, a local councillor, took pride in protecting business interests in his ward by "cleaning up the streets." A documentary team filmed JP Smith and a team of volunteers going out at night to conduct "crime walks" in the affluent, historically 'white' seaside suburb of Seapoint. Homeless people who were found sleeping outside were woken up and moved on (Al Jazeera English, 2009).

Even where waste pickers are out of sight at landfills, security firms and landfill contractors stigmatise waste pickers because of the connection they make between the act of waste picking and the stereotype of a drug addict. Government officials tend to assume that "waste salvagers are carrying out landfill salvaging as a means for illicit drug abuse rather than as a means for generating income" (Chvatal, 2010, p. 68). Waste pickers are considered a nuisance because they take down fences to sell to scrapyards which costs the municipality millions of Rands to replace (Chvatal, 2010, p. 68). Waste pickers have been known to steal from people, cause trouble, threaten staff and stop the working of machinery so that work at the landfill cannot be completed (Chvatal, 2010, p. 68). Causing a nuisance can be interpreted an act of desperation that the public identify as synonymous with criminal activity to fund drug addiction. An alternative interpretation is that being a nuisance is a weapon of the weak (Scott, 1985) that enables waste pickers to evade State power (Scott, 2009) (see Chapter 3).

2. PART 3. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Interactions with waste pickers on the streets of Cape Town are connected to the global context and government policy, both of which have been discussed in previous sections. This final section dwells on how these broader messages infiltrate citizens' attitudes to people they see waste picking on the streets in the city suburbs. In the absence of any shared vocabulary to define waste picking, waste pickers in South Africa are "stereotyped by the public as being poor and inferior" (Sentime, 2011, p. 109). They are therefore associated with homelessness (see Chapter 5).

Literature disseminated by the Cape Town Central City Improvement Districts (2008; 2015) and videos produced by local government (City of Cape Town, 2014b; 2015) instruct people to "Give responsibly" and "Support shelters. Not begging." These adverts encourage the public to avoid direct interactions with anyone who looks homeless and poor. Instead, people who would like to "help the homeless find shelter" should interact

indirectly, through a charitable donation to financially support shelters. When waste pickers are identified from afar as homeless people, if the public follow the government and local City Improvement District's (CIDs) advice, waste pickers should be ignored. The lack of interaction means that the public continue to rely on appearances and stereotypes, and waste pickers and their work continue to remain a mystery. In the absence of information to the contrary, residents' attitudes continue to be positioned by a discourse of crime and public safety, touted by CIDs.

2.3.1 City Improvement Districts

City Improvement Districts (CIDs) are geographical areas where property owners can raise levies to fund additional services (Miraftab, 2007). Miraftab traces the origins of CIDs to businessman, Michael Faar, as a strategy to attract tourism and foreign investment by fighting "crime and grime" (2012, p. 14). The first CID was in the central business district of Cape Town, but there are now 23 CIDs encompassing the southern suburbs where the waste pickers in this study live and work. CIDs are marketed as community driven because the government has no involvement beyond administering the collection of levies from residents. On average, CIDs spend 50 percent of their budget on security (Cape Town Partnership, 2016):

> Private waste collection contractors made their rounds during the day to pick up the District's trash and then the private security forces made their rounds in the evening to clean up the District from perceived criminal elements, the street children and homeless. (Miraftab, 2012, p. 15)

Miraftab makes a compelling case that "safety is the new sanitation" where the "discourse of crime and public safety" have replaced colonial era justification for urban exclusion (2012, p. 15). Exacerbating existing spatial segregation (see earlier discussion), CIDs are only found in affluent areas. Although 80 percent of people surveyed in Khayelitsha (the largest township in the Cape Flats) reported feeling unsafe (Maregele, 2015), this area is not a CID because people cannot afford to pay the additional levy. In contrast, residents in more affluent areas pay for security services in addition to the police, which has contributed to South Africa having "the largest private security industry in the world" (The Labour Research Service, 2014). Referred to as "Rent-A-Cop," some CID security staff were trained and licensed to make arrests (Miraftab, 2012, p. 15).

The additional surveillance of public spaces in the city centre and suburbs is justified by CIDs in reports posted on their website texts. This literature is used to justify the existence of CIDs and their work with local people. From a survey of 1701 people (80 percent of whom were students), the following conclusions were drawn:

> The surveys confirmed that there are street children, vagrants, homeless people and beggars in the area. Although there is clearly considerable tolerance of street children, many residents see them as detracting from the image of the area, and report that they harass people for food and/or money. Respondents are less accommodating of vagrants and homeless people, who they believe detract from the image of the area, display threatening behaviour, and harass people for food and/or money. It is not entirely clear if there is a drug abuse or drug-dealing problem in the area, but almost half of the respondents say that there is. Similarly, over half of the respondents consider beggars to be a problem. (Cattel, Michell, & Bowen, 2007, p. iii-iv)

The survey differentiates between different types of people who are considered visible but not residents in the area. There is no mention of waste pickers even though they pick from bins in this area once a week. My assumption is that waste pickers are grouped together with "vagrants" and "homeless people" because residents are unable to distinguish waste pickers. Cattel et al (2007) glean from respondents that they are concerned about "the image of the area." Authors portray residents as showing "considerable tolerance of street children," even though residents feel these children are damaging the image of the area. According to the survey's findings, waste pickers would be less likely to warrant compassion because respondents are "less accommodating" of adults than children. Despite "beggars being a problem," the CID have not canvassed the opinions of "vagrants" in order to clarify if they think there is a drug abuse or drug-dealing problem.

Having established that "the majority (61 percent) of those who were asked the question believe the area to be unsafe" (Cattel et al., 2007, p. iii), the CID mandate themselves to spend ZAR 2,452,873[9] (56 percent of the total levy income of ZAR 4,373,617[10]) on security. CID have been known to team up with police, and were accused of unlawfully confiscating the possessions of anyone found sleeping on the streets

[9] USD 170,283/ GBP 128,418
[10] USD 303,625/ GBP 228,977

(Broughton, 2015). The implication for waste pickers is that any possessions that are taken out of bins to keep are at risk of being confiscated if agents of social control interpret them as criminals.

Separate to CID security, private security firms fuel residents' fear of crime by claiming that waste pickers are the "eyes and ears of criminal networks." Residents are advised to avoid putting anything in their bin that will "attract bin scratchers" (Medcalf, 2013) so as to avoid encouraging more waste pickers to frequent the area. Neighbourhood watch groups are also known to send literature to residents that stigmatises waste pickers as criminals:

> One area of concern is the wheelie bins and the recycle bags that are placed outside properties on Thursday evenings – they are only meant to be put out on the morning of collection. This practice encourage 'bin pickers' into HMNW [Highway Mountainside Neighbourhood Watch] area and although some of these people are genuinely desperate, it is a fact within all Watch areas in the valley and beyond, that criminals use "bin picking" as an excuse to watch our homes and take the opportunity to burglarize them. (Greenfield, 2014)

Unlike poorer parts of the city, government services in more affluent areas include both refuse and recycling collection. In the HMNW area, putting bins out in advance of the arrival of municipal trucks is an "area of concern" because it encourages waste pickers. Though not substantiated by any evidence, Greenfield (2014) claims "it is a fact" that "criminals" waste pick so they can commit burglary. Regardless of the difference between "people who are genuinely desperate" and criminals, the newsletter to residents maintains that all waste pickers are to be denied access to household waste. This neighbourhood watch monitors residents' and waste pickers' behaviour through patrols. The newsletter goes on to appeal for more residents to undertake patrols, day or night. Volunteers are sought to be on call for a 24 hour period, using a special mobile phone and two way radio to assist patrols if need be (Greenfield, 2014).

The connection between crime and waste pickers can also be traced to the stigma of the Cape Flats and 'coloured' identities as criminal. The Cape Flats area incorporates informal settlements and townships. People classified as 'non-white' were relocated to these areas as part of forced removals under apartheid. Since the 1970s, these areas have also included squatter settlements that emerged due to the lack of public housing (van Blerk, 2013, p. 560). Distant from the city centre, these areas of Cape Town are often

associated with drugs, gangsterism and poverty (van Blerk, 2013). People, especially young males, are seen as a risk to safety and security which restricts the way that 'black' and 'coloured' people navigate different neighbourhoods in Cape Town (Lindegaard, 2009). The sight of people associated with the Cape Flats in the historically 'white' suburbs can illicit anxiety because the discourse of crime and safety positions poor people as a threat to the relative security of affluent enclaves.

2.3.2 Mixed Messages

Government policies regarding waste mean that local waste management departments are under pressure to divert 25 percent of recyclables from landfill sites for re-use, recycling or recovery (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2011). Together with other environmental movements that encourage people to recycle, the local government employs consultancy firms to design awareness campaigns to encourage residents to separate their household recyclables from wet waste (Tyrell, 2010). Although residents might feel that they should participate in recycling schemes, there remains an element of scepticism about the environmental benefits of recycling when offset against the amount of energy used to recycle (Institute of Ideas, 2007). Mixed messages about the benefits of recycling make it more difficult for advocacy groups to convince residents to separate their waste to make street waste pickers' work easier.

Residents might also be doubtful about supporting recycling schemes in general, when compared to the benefits of other waste management strategies. For example, the local government publicised plans to convert plastic into oil that can be used for heating (City of Cape Town, 2014c). This pilot project was marketed as attracting investment and significant in Cape Town successfully winning the bid for World Design Capital 2014[11] (City of Cape Town, 2014c). By comparison, the manual extraction of recyclables by residents in their homes or by waste pickers on the streets appears somewhat outdated. Although advocacy groups claim that waste pickers should be supported to protect their livelihood, there is misalignment with the image of waste picking and the pursuit of a modern world city status.

Waste-to-energy projects that use landfill gas to produce electricity have been explored by local governments in other parts of South Africa (Sewchurran, Davidson, &

[11] The World Design Capital designation is awarded biennially by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) to cities that are dedicated to using design for social, cultural and economic development (World Design Capital, 2014).

Ojo, 2016). Favouring waste-to-energy over recycling schemes is intuitive given the energy shortages in South Africa. All homes have experienced load shedding[12] in recent years, which negatively impacted the service industries (Steenkamp et al., 2016) upon which Cape Town heavily relies on to create employment. Given these competing factors, there is an ongoing battle to persuade people to support the manual extraction of recyclables from waste, rather than other modern waste-to-energy alternatives. Subsequently, residents can be left feeling conflicted about whether or not to separate their recyclables and/or support street waste pickers.

2.3.3 Waste and shame

The visibility and placement of rubbish exposes the "distinctions between public and private values" (O'Brien, 2008, p. 138). When household rubbish is stored in a bin it remains private and so too are private tastes and habits that personal rubbish conveys. Waste pickers challenge the autonomy that residents have over this information by taking it out of the private and into the public. The contents of bins also expose residents to criticism if what they throw away makes them look wasteful or environmentally unfriendly. Thus waste can be a source of shame for individuals depending on what their rubbish communicates about them.

An illustration of the emotion around waste is revealed in residents' response to the introduction of clear plastic bags for both recyclable and non-recyclable waste in Canada. The idea was that by making waste visible, residents would be shamed into correctly sorting their household refuse (Stark, 2015). Some residents petitioned the local government because transparent bags were a "violation of privacy" (K. Evans, 2015). In addition to the emotion attached to waste (Hawkins, 2006), the assumption was that displaying waste would attract homeless people. Residents' reactions to waste pickers are therefore bound up with ideas about the rightful place of rubbish and homeless people, which unites attitudes of residents in Canada and Cape Town.

[12] "Loadshedding is a measure of last resort to prevent the collapse of the power system country-wide. When there is insufficient power station capacity to supply the demand (load) from all the customers, the electricity system becomes unbalanced, which can cause it to trip out country-wide (a blackout), and which could take days to restore. Scheduled loadshedding is controlled by way of sharing the available electricity among all its customers (….) By switching off parts of the network in a planned and controlled manner, the system remains stable throughout the day, and the impact is spread over a wider base of customers" (City of Cape Town, 2016).

In the absence of any need for affluent (mostly 'white') Capetonians to travel through the Cape Flats due to spatial segregation, residents' information about what these places are like come mostly from the mass media. Since 2004, publicity about the standard of living in the Cape Flats has been from coverage of protests about "service delivery and against uncaring, self-serving, and corrupt leaders of municipalities" (Alexander, 2010, p. 25). People living in well-serviced areas of the city are therefore aware of the unsafe living conditions in parts of the Cape Flats. However is difficult for the affluent minority to know how best to respond to the sight of people who they suspect live in unsanitary conditions, partly because of conflicting advice.

On the one hand, the government advises that if people want to help, they should "give responsibly" through formal organisations and not encourage people to live on the streets. In helping to foster a world city image, homeowners are likely to gain from stable property prices. On the other hand, some residents are known to ignore advice to avoid people who look homeless and instead interact with waste pickers. Residents set aside goods that waste pickers can consume, re-use or sell (van Heerden, 2015). Especially in light of the inequality in South Africa, to throw away anything that could be of use to someone else comes with a certain amount of shame. Gregson, Metcalfe, & Crewe et al argue that discarding goods is enacted with a degree of "care and concern, guilt and anxiety" (2007, p. 684). Residents may therefore feel obligated to make donations to waste pickers irrespective of instructions from their local neighbourhood watch or their opinions about the environmental value of recycling.

CHAPTER 2 CONCLUSION

The environmental benefits of waste picking and the argument that it provides a sustainable livelihood have led to successful outcomes for some landfill waste pickers in South Africa. However, gains have been made in collaboration with advocacy groups and the government, and on the condition that waste pickers formalise. As yet, there are no support structures in place for informal street waste pickers in Cape Town and picking at landfills remains outlawed. Literature that critiques the neoliberal stance of local government in Cape Town highlights the adverse effect of the privatisation of waste and the impact of the compulsion to present a modern image. This standpoint taken by local government marginalises street waste pickers by moving them to the city periphery. The resultant continued spatial segregation of Cape Town entrenches discourses of dirt, which positions people according to their appearance and manner. In turn, these discourses are

used by residents to justify increased monitoring and surveillance to tackle crime and grime.

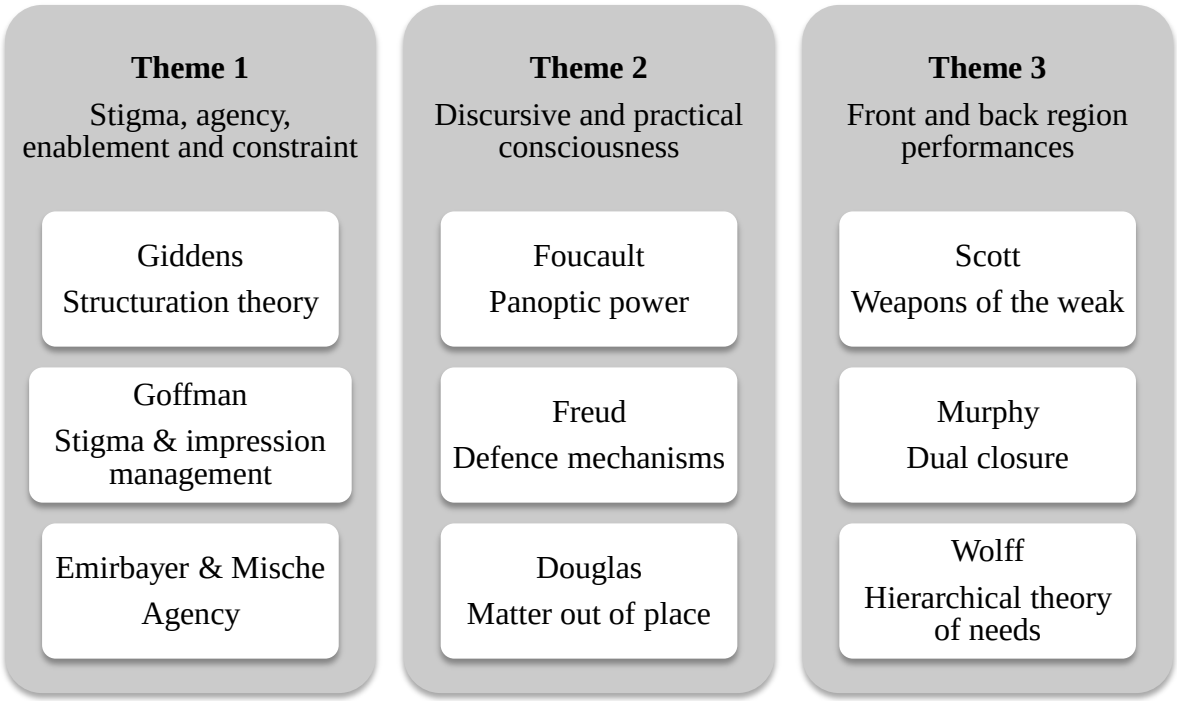
Historically, research about waste picking in South Africa has been largely prompted by an interest in the potential for job creation. Although harassment, poor working conditions and prejudice feature in the documenting of waste pickers' experiences, stigma is overlooked as a specific area of study. Unlike in other parts of the world, there is no consistent policy approach to waste pickers in South Africa. This means that waste pickers' interactions with the government and residents vary across South Africa. Regardless of how waste pickers feature in waste management policies, existing research shows that attitudes towards waste pickers are frequently connected to stereotypes. Where people choose to waste pick on the streets informally, they will likely need to manage the stigma of informality, criminality and homelessness. This stigma is exacerbated by a west and the rest discourse that positions waste pickers in the global south as lacking agential capacity. This victim discourse is unintentionally entrenched when researchers conceptualise waste picking solely in terms of a survival strategy. The next chapter sets out my theoretical framework in order to take a different approach to reach an understanding of waste pickers and their work that emphasises agency.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given existing literature, the previous chapter established the premise that waste pickers are stigmatised. Although there have been various attempts in South Africa to formalise waste pickers working at landfills to provide recycling companies with materials, this thesis focuses on street waste pickers in Cape Town. In doing so, I explain how waste pickers can be theoretically framed as highly visible yet largely invisible in suburban areas. As outlined in the Figure 1, this chapter has been divided into three themes to emphasise the interplay between what is seen and said versus what remains hidden and silent. In doing so, I lay the theoretical groundwork to arrive at the point where I can explain how waste pickers' agency is simultaneously enabled and constrained.

FIGURE 1

Overview of Theories



I begin with theorists who provide the conceptual foundations upon which this thesis rests. **Part one** begins with a summary of Giddens's (1984) structuration theory to explicate the interplay between micro and macro social processes. The next section

concentrates on micro-level interactions, combining Goffman's theory of impression management (1959) and his later work on stigma management (1963). I show how encounters are analogous to performances, to define the concepts used to analyse waste pickers' interactions throughout Chapters 5-9. Having theorised the parts of my research questions that tackle interactions, I move on to link stigma and agency. Extending Giddens's definition, I use Emirbayer and Misches's (1998) article to expand on the component parts of agency, through which interactions can be connected to bringing about change. Each of these three theories provide a segue into other concepts that are fundamental to understanding how stigma surfaces in the interactions of waste pickers.

Following on from Giddens's theory of sanctional constraints, **part two** begins with a discussion of the utility of Foucault for understanding tacit knowledge, panoptic spaces and the disciplining of bodies in the absence of overt force. Using Mary Douglas's framing of dirt as matter out of place, I take into account discourses of dirt and how these position waste pickers as people who are somewhat irrational and should be avoided. Staying with what is unspoken, I move into the realm of unconscious decision-making processes, to open up the possibility that waste pickers' stigma management strategies can be explained as part of psychological defence mechanisms.

Commensurate with Giddens, **part three** uses Scott (1985) to disrupt the assumption that individuals are unable to escape structural exploitation and oppression. I use Scott's work to draw attention to the subtle ways that individuals are able to breach the impositions of higher status groups. From here I look at how dual closure (Murphy, 1986) can function as a way to achieve distance from other low status and marginalised groups. Maintaining a focus on hierarchy, I consider the disjuncture between the behavioural expectations of people labelled as poor, compared to the choices they make. I use Wolff's (2016) discussion of how people at the bottom of the social ladder are seen as having irrational priorities to offer an explanation for the stigma that waste pickers experience. The section concludes by connecting parts 1, 2 and 3, arguing that both structural and micro-processes simultaneously enable and constrain the capacity of waste pickers to change perceptions of them.

3. PART 1. STIGMA, AGENCY, ENABLEMENT AND CONSTRAINT

Part 1 is divided into a number of sections in order to gradually build up a complex theoretical foundation one layer at a time. I start with Giddens's structuration theory, as an overarching theory, to connect micro and macro social processes. I add Goffman's theory

of impression management to explain how individual behaviour is orchestrated in order to give a specific impression to others in their interactions. I point out some of the links between Goffman and Giddens, before moving on to define the concept of agency in some detail with reference to Emirbayer and Mische. The overall purpose of Part 1 is to establish the conceptual anchors to which other concepts can be subsequently attached.

3.1.1 Structuration Theory

Giddens's structuration theory presents an antidote to the historical separation of micro and macro societal processes within the social sciences. This thesis follows Giddens's line of thought that there cannot be "any question of one having priority over the other" (Giddens, 1984, p. 139). However, since Giddens published "The Constitution of Society," doubt has been cast over the extent to which he successfully avoids prefacing the powerful structural processes in society over individual agency. Critics argue that in Giddens's theory, agency "tends to remain so tightly bound to structure that one loses sight of the different ways in which agency actually shapes social action" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to launch a detailed defence of Giddens's analytical framework. Instead, I apply the parts of Giddens's theory where there is considerable overlap with those who critique Giddens, such as critical realists (Archer, 2003), summarised by Hodgson (2002, pp. 165-166).

3.1.1.1 Enablement and Constraint

One of the pillars of structuration theory is duality of structure. The emphasis on duality is a way "to show how social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution" (Bryant & Jary, 1991, p. 7). This way of thinking keeps in mind the simultaneous shaping of human agency from different sources, and human agency's power to shape social processes. For Giddens, individuals are agents in that they are able to deploy a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Actions depend on the capability of the agents to make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events (1984, p. 14). In turn, action involves power in the sense of its transformative capacity. Power to transform lies both in the individual and in the structure of society (1984, p. 14). The co-constitution of society means waste pickers and those they interact with are agents, positioned by societal rules and resources (structure), with the capacity to respond to rules

in a way that effects change (agency). Although all agents have choices, the extent to which different choices are available is expressed using the language of enablement and constraint.

"Constraints do not determine actions but operate by placing limits upon a range of actions open to an actor" (Haralambos, Holborn, & Heald, 2000, p. 1067). Using the rules of grammar by way of analogy, Giddens explains how enablement and constraint happen simultaneously and take on several forms. The ability to make oneself understood is enabled through the rules of grammar. Equally, communication is constrained by having to fit within grammatical rules. Giddens identifies three types of constraint. Firstly, material constraints refer to the physical capabilities of the human body (Giddens, 1984, p. 175), which can constrain movement through space. Secondly, sanctional constraints are punishments or the threat of punishment which make some choices less favourable than others. Sanctions are usually visible only where a transgression actually occurs or is likely to occur (1984, p. 176). Thirdly, structural constraints are those where choice is constrained by the structure of society. Although agents' behaviour may seem inevitable, courses of action are not predetermined. People always have some choices even in circumstances where the range of feasible alternatives is greatly limited (Giddens, 1984, p. 178).

As conceptual tools, enablement and constraint make it possible to see waste pickers as agents, rather than victims who are totally bound by exploitative power relations. Waste picking is seen as a choice that agents have made amid a selection of others. Waste pickers' physical appearance may constrain the likelihood that they will be formally employed in a different line of work by a company. But this is not a material constraint because there is nothing that physically stops waste pickers from carrying out practical tasks. Rather, it is the ways of thinking about physical appearance that constructs some bodies as more socially acceptable than others, which as a consequence can enable and constrain agents. For example, stereotypes about homeless people's bodies can operate as a sanctional constraint when employers' prejudice limits the choice of occupations open to waste pickers. This marginalisation from the job market can be viewed as a punishment (sanction) and/or feature of free-market capitalism (structure).

3.1.1.2 Intended and Unintended Consequences

Even where it may appear that an individual has no choice, structures (rules and resources) provide a "generalised capacity to respond to and influence circumstances"

(Giddens, 1984, p. 22). While people may act to achieve a specific purpose, this does not mean that agents are necessarily able to predict the outcome of their response to situations. A study in the US illustrated the difficulty of navigating structural constraints to avoid unintentionally reinforcing negative stereotypes. Welfare systems were found to encourage "poor people to 'play into' and sometimes enact or reinforce stereotypes about welfare recipients as ignorant, stupid, incapable and dishonest, because these are the images that make sense to case workers" (Friedman & Graham, 2008, p. 379). In claimants' interactions with staff, feigning ignorance achieved the intended outcome of getting food stamps, but had the unintended consequence of entrenching the stigma of welfare recipients as stupid. The consequences for individuals when they conform to stereotypes depends on the extent to which behaviour is seen as a conscious and strategic choice. I return to the unintended consequences of non-conformity later in the chapter in my discussion of Wolff (2016).

3.1.1.3 Tacit Knowledge

Sanctional and structural enablement and constraint is not necessarily explicit because rules are largely tacitly understood and informally sanctioned. Giddens's concept of practical consciousness explains how people can apply their knowledge but it may be difficult to fully recognise or explicate its usage. Rules can therefore start to be seen as natural and normal responses to behaviour, people and things. When attitudes become habitual, to the extent that they become integral to what it means to be human, some ways of thinking may no longer be seen as a choice or brought into question. For example, norms to do with the place of dirt in relation to human hands have become somewhat fixed. This results in the avoidance of touching dirt with bare hands, disgust being a natural reaction to the sight of touching dirt, and an avoidance of putting dirt in the "wrong" place (Douglas, 1966).

Tacit knowledge is a useful conceptual tool for the study of impression management, given that much of what is said and done in interactions is unreflective. When bodies of knowledge become tacitly adhered to and linked to power, they can also be understood as discourses (discussed later in connection to Foucault). Despite the power of discourses, Giddens maintains that "agents always know what they are doing on the level of discursive consciousness under some description" (Giddens, 1984, p. 26). This means that waste pickers are able to explain their conduct, regardless of whether or not they are aware of the broader implications of their actions.

Tacit knowledge about waste pickers uses stereotypical images of homelessness to paint a picture of waste pickers as victims (see Chapter 2). The theory of duality of structure shows how waste pickers are agents who both influence and are influenced by social structures. This is not to romanticise the suffering that accompanies living and working on the streets, but keeps in mind the subtle ways that waste pickers evade the oppression of "State-making projects" (Scott, 2009, p. iv). Although some may think that waste picking is the action of a person who has no other choice, the waste pickers with whom I worked brought this assumption into question (see Chapter 6).

3.1.2 Stigma and Impression Management

Unlike classic or Glaserian grounded theory (Christiansen, 2008), I entered the field with a set of theoretical assumptions (see Chapter 4). Giddens (1984) and Goffman (1963) were central to framing my research proposal with the aim of connecting agency and stigma management. The strength of Goffman's approach is his incorporation of the impact of negative stereotypes and labelling, both of which were reported to be central to waste pickers' daily experience (see Chapter 2). However, as fieldwork progressed, stigma did not come to the fore and Goffman's earlier work (Goffman, 1959) began to resonate more strongly with my fieldwork experiences. A second reason for widening my theoretical lens from stigma to impression management was that the primary focus on stigma management somewhat confined the understanding of waste pickers' actions to merely unconscious defence mechanisms. By extending my theoretical scope to surface impression management techniques that are shared by all individuals, I was better able to conceptualise waste pickers as agents.

3.1.2.1 Audiences, Agents and Normals

Throughout this thesis, I use "normals" (Goffman, 1963) and "audiences" (Goffman, 1959) interchangeably, alluding to the multiple roles taken by people who attract the attention of waste pickers. I talk about normals when I want to emphasise prejudice and stigma in interactions. I use audiences for people who are forming an impression of a performer. The distinction is that waste pickers *and* normals can be audiences, but only audiences can also be normals. Regardless of phrasing, I make the assumption that presentation of self and stigma management strategies can be conscious or

unconscious choices. Therefore, implicit in all analytical applications of Goffman (1959; 1963) is that interactions happen between "agents" (Giddens, 1984).

3.1.2.2 Personal, Social and Idealised Fronts

The analogy between interacting and performing is what characterises "dramaturgical analysis as a variant of symbolic interactionism" (Ritzer, 2008, p. 217). Goffman understands the actions of individuals as a performance, where the audience is "asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess" (1959, p. 10). The impression created through the performance, or "front," functions to define a particular situation for the audience and is composed of three parts (see Goffman, 1959, pp. 13-19). One part is the "setting," which for waste pickers is composed of streets, bins and rubbish. These "props" establish the scenic parts of waste pickers' performance, helping to define them as informal workers. Secondly, a "social front" is a generalisable category that audiences identify when presented with a performance. Therefore, waste picking tends to be viewed as a performance of homelessness because audiences connect the homeless stereotype (social front) with the action of sifting through a bin (performance and setting).

Thirdly, "personal front" is the appearance and manner presented by an individual to an audience. "Appearance" encompasses physical attributes and gestures, which can be fixed or changeable, with the power to convey status (clothing, race, size, looks, speech patterns, facial expressions). "Manner" is more to do with expectations of conduct, for example, whether one would be seen as the sort to initiate interactions or follow the lead of others. The gesture of picking through the contents of a bin is part of waste pickers' appearance. Waste pickers' politeness when initiating interactions with gatekeepers of waste is part of their manner. A large part of this thesis compares waste pickers' presentation of self (personal front) with audiences' interpretations of their performance. The impression that audiences form is based on the social fronts that they have experience of and tacit knowledge (see Chapter 5).

Goffman's work on stigma underlines the idea that audiences' stereotypical thinking can be a constraint. For waste pickers, their ability to present a personal front that deviates from the image of homelessness is limited by the absence of a universal and well known category for what waste pickers do. In order to change existing perceptions, waste pickers' performances need to convey a personal front that leads audiences to define performers as something other than homeless people. The ways that waste pickers

construct a personal front, with the potential to change audiences' definition of them, are collectively referred to as impression management strategies. Among these is "dramatic realisation," where "facts that might otherwise remain obscure" are pointed out (Goffman, 1959, p. 16). This means appearance and manner can draw the audience's attention to particular attributes while concealing others.

Performances that use dramatic realisation can enable audience members to differentiate between different performers. For example, waste pickers can emphasise some parts of their personal front while suppressing others to achieve an impression of superiority compared to other social groups (see Chapter 6). When dramatic realisation surfaces the admirable aspects of ourselves, Goffman calls this "idealisation" (1963, p. 22). Waste pickers use idealisation to display their intelligence, autonomy and moral integrity. Both dramatic realisation and idealisation can be utilised to debunk stereotypical social fronts that audiences otherwise rely on to interpret the performance.

3.1.2.3 Stigma and Impression Management

Impression management is the study "of the contingencies which arise in fostering an impression" and of the techniques for meeting them (Goffman, 1959, p. 49). Goffman uses Cooley to argue that in peoples' minds experience "is always idealised in some sense" (Cooley, 1902, p. 363), although to permanently maintain an idealised impression is rare. "There is hardly a legitimate everyday vocation or relationship whose performers do not engage in concealed practices which are incompatible with fostered impressions" (Goffman, 1959, p. 42). Although concealment practices are discussed in "Notes on Stigma" (Goffman, 1963), concealed practices are ubiquitous among both normals and stigmatised groups. In either case, the aim of concealment is to avoid revealing discrediting attributes to the audience.

However, "performances need to be understood as a function of the interaction as a whole" (Goffman, 1959, p. 47). This means individual performances can give a good impression of the larger group of people to which an individual belongs. "Teams" are therefore a set of performers who co-operate in presenting a single performance to form "a bond of reciprocal dependence" (Goffman, 1959, p. 50). For example, one waste picker might successfully define himself as non-violent by abstaining from violent behaviour in the presence of audiences. Other waste pickers, in their role as team members, can cast "social doubt" about a fellow team member by talking about their involvement in violence. Although an individual has maintained "expressive coherence," stigma by association

means that the whole team can be discredited as potentially violent. Goffman's name for actors who deliberately discredit a team performance is "renegades."

Analysis of interactions later on in the thesis use Goffman's concepts, in addition to the ones mentioned so far, to explicate the personal fronts and team performances of waste pickers. Stigma symbols, mystification, team secrets, cynical and sincere performances are explained alongside their application in subsequent chapters. These aspects of impression and stigma management are choices among a range of options available to waste pickers. So far I have discussed agency in terms of an ability to change a course of events (Giddens, 1984, p. 58). In order to fully interrogate the relationship between stigma and agency, I also draw on the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998).

3.1.3 Agency

Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) explanation of agency brings to the fore the thoughts that actors have about their past, present and future. Following Giddens (1984), agency "both reproduces and transforms" structures (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 970) Change is achieved through an "interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (1998, p. 970). For example, based on existing literature, waste pickers are stigmatised by ideas that originate from colonialism. The capacity to change these entrenched ideas comes about "through the interplay of habit, imagination and judgement" (1998, p. 970). Agency is "temporally constructed" because actors engage with their past (habit), future (imagination) and immediate environments (judgements) (1998, p. 970). Agency is not merely about instances of change but also about the choices involved in the lead up to change. Impression management strategies are agential in that actors' choice of performance incorporates past habits, what they imagine will happen in future, and split second judgments made in the moment.

Emirbayer and Mische assert that choices mean "agency *toward* something" (1998, p. 973) [original italics]. This means actors make choices with a desired end result in mind, although, as Giddens reminds us, agency can have intended and unintended outcomes. The directedness of this theory of agency helps to keep an analytical spotlight on the ideal presentation of self that performances are designed to achieve. Emirbayer and Mische's theory about intended outcomes also aligns with impression management. They state that actors' goals are achieved by entering into a relationship "with surrounding persons, places, meanings, and events" (1998, p. 973). Thus, actors' relationship with their

surroundings is an ongoing interaction, through which meaning is continually made and re-made. This thesis aims to understand more about how waste pickers' performances define their relationships with people, places, meaning and events.

In order to unravel the temporality of agency, I use three interconnected theoretical strands that Emirbayer and Mische (1998) refer to as "iteration," "projection" and "practical evaluation." These concepts are divided into artificially discrete sections here (as in the original text) to emphasise the past, present and future, but these elements act simultaneously and feed into one another.

3.1.3.1 Iteration

Important to analysing waste pickers' relationships are the parts of iterational agency that incorporate the "selective reactivation" of habits to give "stability and order" to social situations, thereby sustaining "identities" over time (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 971). The selective reactivation of past patterns of behaviour is a departure from the idea of habit as something that is beyond one's control. Instead, routines are adhered to, modified or discarded depending on the expected situation. Choices over how to present one's appearance, or "personal front" (Goffman, 1959), can be seen as part of habitual behaviour. Because choice is always "agency towards something" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 973), habits are regarded as fulfilling an intended function. For example, wearing long sleeves can be a habit that is selectively reactivated depending on the expected audience. If the aim is to conceal physical stigma symbols (tattoos), then the wearing of long sleeves can be analysed as a stigma management strategy. The underlying reason for this habitual choice of clothing might only become apparent if the audience catches sight of the actors' arms uncovered. At first, habits can appear to be unconscious and of no consequence. But when thought of as iterative the maintenance of routines can be seen as a form of agency.

Other habits achieve "stability and order" because rules of interactions become standardised. However, even in the most mundane of social interactions, "actors must still exercise effort in order to…keep social relationships working along established lines" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 980). This "effort" is framed in this thesis as impression management strategies. Actors' performances overlap with Emirbayer and Mische's explanation of the achievement of stability and order through a "maneuver among repertoires" (1998, p. 980). Choice of a suitable performance, amid a repertoire of routines, enable social relationships to continue as they always have. The stability and

order of reciprocal relationships, for example between waste pickers and buyers, may only continue for as long as routine norms of interaction are upheld.

While iterational agency can enable the continuation of established relationships, routines can also help to "sustain identities, interactions and institutions" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 971). Performing particular habits is part of one's presentation of self in order to be identified as a member of a particular group, or "team" (Goffman, 1959). However, what are considered socially acceptable habits changes from one team to another. Interpretations of adherence to some routines also shift over time and place. Iterational agency may enable habits to gain entry into one team, but simultaneously exclude individuals from another team. For example, maintaining an alcohol habit can enable stability in existing relationships with one team (waste pickers) but in the long term can be damaging to relationships with other teams (family). Choices about which habits to keep or change are therefore also informed by a consideration of the future.

3.1.3.2 Projection

The projective element of agency has two facets. Firstly, projection[13] can be when an actor pictures what lies in store for them in settings that have yet to come. Secondly, the projective element can be the actions taken to achieve these mental images. Projective capacity therefore encompasses imagined futures and the pursuit of them. Giddens (1984) and Emirbayer and Mische have a shared ontological position on agency, given their stance that all humans think about goals, plans, objectives, dreams, wishes, desires, anxieties, hopes, fears and aspirations (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 971). Thus, this element of agency fits with the thesis's aim to avoid entrenching existing knowledge that positions waste pickers as victims. Instead, Emirbayer and Mische's approach is useful for highlighting engagement with the future:

> As they respond to the challenges and uncertainties of social life, actors are capable of distancing themselves (at least in partial exploratory ways) from the schemas, habits and traditions that constrain social identities and institutions. (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 984)

The assertion is that the projection element of agency is evidenced when actors counter constraints imposed on them. One way that actors can respond to difficulties is by

[13] Projection in this thesis bears no relation to its meaning in Psychology.

"distancing themselves" from existing arrangements by exploring alternatives. As established in Chapter 2, a significant source of constraint to waste pickers' social identity is the stigma of dirt. One way that actors can distance themselves from habits that spoil their identity is through impression management. Performances can begin to re-configure traditional negative schemas by presenting a positive image, or "idealised front" (Goffman, 1959). For example, the stigma of dirt can be minimised if waste pickers can enact a convincing display or "sincere performance" (Goffman, 1959) of dirt as a resource. The discursive construction of trash to treasure, or use of "dramatic realisation" (Goffman, 1959), helps audiences to conjure a mental image of the future of waste pickers as workers.

The element of projection within agency is also achieved when actors imagine themselves and their achievements as superior to those of other teams. Performances can be used to selectively activate routines to emphasise the ways that actors are a cut above the rest. An idealised front can therefore be used to distance actors, at least partially, from other teams that are ostensibly similar. For example, by projecting an image of the team as autonomous, waste pickers project an image of themselves as better than people who are less self-sufficient (for example, homeless people, illegal drug users or low-wage workers). This presentation of self is an attempt to respond to the constraints of conventional images, or social fronts (Goffman, 1959), that audiences otherwise use to define waste pickers. Avoiding stigma by association can therefore be a demonstration of actors' projective capacity.

3.1.3.3 Practical Evaluation

Practical evaluation incorporates both iteration and projection, because any judgments made among a range of alternatives will inevitably be informed by past and future happenings. The distinction is that the practical evaluation element of agency is useful for thinking about the judgements that actors make in the *durée* of interaction. Adherence to routines (iteration) and careful planning (projection) cannot always mitigate any unexpected changes in circumstances. Performances need to be monitored and adjusted according to "the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 971). Actors make a judgment about which impression management strategy to employ in any given interaction, depending on the audience's reaction to the performance as it unfolds.

One part of Emirbayer and Mische's account of practical evaluation is "characterisation" (1998, p. 998), which connects with enablement and constraint. Characterisation refers to how a situation is perceived based on previous experiences. Characterisation applies to actors in both of their simultaneous roles as audience and performer within group interactions. Actors' performances aim to assert their definition of a situation, which audiences might accept or reject based on their characterisation of the performance. Their interpretation will depend on previous experiences of similar performances and/or performers. For example, if residents made demands that were out of the ordinary, waste pickers used previous experiences to characterise the situation before deciding how best to respond. The practical evaluation part of agency enables actors to tailor their performances to different audiences, as they happen, to achieve the desired outcome.

These agential processes, driven by considerations of the past, present and future, happen consciously and unconsciously. So far, I have set out how a combination of Giddens's (1984) and Goffman's theoretical frameworks (1959; 1963) offer the flexibility to analyse the agency of waste pickers without focusing on micro-level processes at the expense of societal processes or vice versa. The next section selects theories in order to think about the extent to which agency, impression management strategies and performances are explicit (conscious, verbalised) and implicit (unconscious, non-verbal). In doing so, I extend Giddens, Goffman, Emirbayer and Mische using concepts from the writings of Foucault, Freud and Douglas.

3. PART 2. DISCURSIVE AND PRACTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Giddens's conceptualisation of individuals as agents incorporates conscious and unconscious realms of cognition and motivation (Giddens, 1984, p. 43-44). He therefore considers three types of consciousness: discursive, practical and unconscious (1984, p. 49). The significance for understanding waste pickers is that individuals are not always able to verbally articulate why they act one way or another in a given situation (discursive consciousness). They may be able to describe the choices that they make but not always to the extent that they are able to evidence why they act one way rather than another in any given situation (practical consciousness). Ergo, the rationale behind some decision-making processes may come to be seen as common sense.

Material, sanctional and structural constraints (and enablement) do not necessarily make themselves known explicitly. Instead, conformity to rules happens unconsciously,

informed by tacitly held assumptions, which define a performance as normal or deviant. In Part 2 of this chapter, building on Giddens's explanation (1984) in Part 1, I clarify how constraints can be imposed without explicit use of sanctions and how tacit knowledge operates as a discourse. These Foucauldian concepts are followed with social psychological explanations for human behaviour, such as defence mechanisms, which are not always consciously or explicitly communicated. Part 2 ends with the constraints imposed by tacitly inferred norms about the placing of people and dirt, taken from Mary Douglas (1966). The common thread is the combination of micro and macro forces that define and position individuals, in ways that they may only be partially aware of, which constrain the agential capacity of impression management.

3.2.1 Foucault and Power

Constraints to iteration, projection and the practical evaluation elements of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) come in various guises that can be usefully thought about via Foucauldian concepts. The combination of disciplinary power, panoptic power and discursive power can limit actors' ability to imagine (projection) something other than the status quo. Hierarchical power relations come to be routine (iteration), tacitly understood and entrenched through the circulation of capitalist discourses. Impression management, consciously or unconsciously, enables people to negotiate their position in interactions that are characterised by a high degree of inequality. Foucault and Giddens demonstrate that discursive power is never complete and individuals, no matter how low their status, can intentionally or unintentionally transform societal structures.

3.2.1.1 Disciplinary Power

Giddens, following Foucault (1979), draws attention to how disciplinary power manipulates the body akin to a machine that can be optimised. Foucault uses the example of prisons to explicate strands of his theory, but his logic can be used to understand how waste pickers both conform to and resist disciplinary power:

> New forms of discipline are tailored precisely to movements, gestures and attitudes of the individual body…Each individual has his/her 'proper place' at any particular time of the day… [Partitioning] helps to avoid the formation of large groups which might be a source of independent will formation or of opposition. (Giddens, 1984, p. 145)

Although waste pickers synchronise their working hours with the municipal waste workers, they are not bound by the same level of regulation of their body and the movement of it through space and time. Waste pickers can dictate their own working hours, and if they do not arrive to work in the morning, there are no sanctions. They can take breaks when they choose to. They can smoke and consume alcohol while working. They have no collection targets to meet and no annual appraisals to evaluate their performance. Therefore, unlike formal employees, waste pickers' autonomy enables them to evade disciplinary power by exercising some autonomy over their body in time and space (see Chapter 6).

In response to the number of informal workers in the waste management industry in South Africa, there have been moves made by government and NGOs to attempt to incorporate the informal sector into formal waste management systems. Waste pickers are seen as a problem, in part because they do not optimise the use of their body and time for the purpose of fulfilling waste minimisation targets set by national government. Their formation, independent of any overseeing body or authority, poses opposition to conventional capitalist work routines and hierarchies, and is posited as inefficient. Waste pickers are enticed to organise and formalise through the promise of improving their working conditions, but formalisation invariably involves succumbing to disciplinary power, which constrains the autonomy they have over their work (see Chapter 2).

Waste pickers' refusal to conform to their "proper place" in society can also be interpreted as a form of resistance (Scott, 1985). Contrary to appearances of disorganisation, the waste pickers with whom I worked were not free from disciplinary power completely. This is better explored via Foucault's work on panoptic power in order to focus on how surveillance serves to discipline both audiences and waste pickers in Cape Town.

3.2.1.2 Panoptic Power

Foucault identifies panoptic forms of power as those that work "analogously to Bentham's design for the panopticon, motivated and implemented by the multiple and diverse operation of power in the most minute and apparently inconsequential ways" (Downing, 2008, p. 83). The panopticon is an architectural design for prison spaces that allow inmates to be watched in a way that means they are uncertain as to whether they are being watched or not. As a consequence, prisoners bow to disciplinary power by

modifying their behaviour regardless of whether they are in fact being watched or not. In this way, the routine adoption of preferred ways of behaviour, in the absence of any explicit punishment, becomes unconscious.

Panoptic power constrains audiences' performances. Household rubbish can discredit residents if placed in public spaces by exposing them to the risk of being judged as wasteful or distasteful (see Chapter 2). Residents can manage the impression that others form of them through concealment practices, making sure that what goes in the bin, stays in the bin. Power becomes panoptic when residents cannot be sure if or when, items intended for landfill, will be seen or by whom. Waste pickers disrupt residents' performance by looking at parts of their setting, sign equipment and status symbols (Goffman, 1959) that land up in the bin. The threat of exposing rubbish to scrutiny by other teams, if residents see waste pickers taking rubbish out of their bin, potentially causes conflict (see Chapter 5). Bringing waste into view disrupts the public/private divide, which conveys information about normals' consumption habits.

Waste pickers are also constrained by panoptic methods of formal and informal social control. Waste pickers cannot be sure if or when residents are watching them because residents are hidden from view behind their windows. Similar to one-way mirrors, residents can look out of their homes on to the street, but waste pickers are too far from the windows to see what is behind them. If police or security guards are summoned in addition to their routine patrols of city spaces, it is not clear who has requested their presence. As part of global trends, the increase in surveillance cameras in South African cities contributes to an ongoing sense that someone, somewhere, might be watching. The rise in surveillance, together with the fear of crime in affluent suburbs, has resulted in the "creation of fortified enclaves and a withdrawal from public space" (Lemanski, 2004, p. 101). This exacerbates the panoptic gaze that waste pickers are subjected to and constrains their ability to conceal discrediting performances. This is in stark contrast to normals who can always retreat to the privacy of their home.

3.2.1.3 Discursive Power

The term discourse is used frequently in social science but with different meanings. Unlike discourse as a narrative, as it is used in fields such as linguistics, in this thesis discourse is linked to power:

> Discourse, following Foucault, refers to a set of related statements, manifested multimodally through an interplay, for example language and visual structures that

> produce and organise a particular order of reality and specific subject positions therein. (Lazar, 2005, p. 143)

When statements convey a particular definition of a situation, discourses can position actors in hierarchical relationships with one another. In Chapter 2, I discussed how discourses of the west and the rest position Cape Town on the world stage by demoting South Africa below other countries. The same discourse positions waste pickers in South Africa as uniformly poor and inferior. Discourses can both enable and constrain waste pickers. Waste pickers can use language to raise the status of their work by tapping into environmental discourses that position trash as treasure. At the same time, stereotypes constrain the audience's projective capacity by operating as a discourse that positions waste pickers as homeless. The accompanying attributes of waste pickers can both entrench or transform the discourse of homelessness, which in turn determines waste pickers' impression management strategies (practical evaluation).

Discourses operate as structures to simultaneously construct individuals' position and shape individuals' discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Given that waste pickers' agency is conceptualised as a process of deliberation (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), some theoretical space needs to be given over to ways of understanding the conscious and unconscious motivations for decision-making.

3.2.2 Interaction and Consciousness

Giddens paraphrases Goffman to define encounters as "the guiding thread of social interaction, the succession of engagements with others ordered within the daily cycle of activity" (Giddens, 1984, p. 72). The rules of engagement in encounters become routine and may seem inconsequential and unrelated to "fixed" societal institutions. The brevity and triviality of encounters may mean that they are confined to the realm of practical consciousness (motivation is not articulated because actions become common sense) or the unconscious (motivation is not articulated due to a mental block). Beginning with a continuation of the previous Foucauldian section, I present theoretical concepts that help to explain the less reflexive part of performances.

3.2.2.1 Practical Consciousness

As outlined in Part 1, rules and resources (societal structures) simultaneously enable and constrain actors. However, rules are largely tacitly understood and informally sanctioned, meaning they might not be consciously recognised by actors. Practical consciousness is a useful concept to understand how performances come to be felt as natural and normal responses to behaviour, people and things.

As discussed earlier using the example of grammar, tacit knowledge can be used but be difficult to convey discursively. Impression management therefore draws on practical consciousness to achieve a particular presentation of self, even though how this happens is difficult to verbalise. Tacit bodies of knowledge, even if unspoken, can function as discourses when they are linked to power:

> Foucault's work on the dynamics of discourse and power in the representation of social reality is instrumental in unveiling mechanisms by which a certain order of discourses produce permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible. (Escobar, 1995, p. 5)

This means that individuals' judgment (practical evaluation) may not take in to account some actions, because discourses position some behaviour and people as normal or deviant. Actors' may take a position on a social issue as if this position is the only one available to them. This means that for some audiences, the notion that waste picking is a choice is inconceivable. It becomes "common sense" that no one would choose to touch other people's waste unless it was absolutely necessary (practical consciousness). The historical trajectory of bodies of knowledge about dirt (discourses) make it synonymous with disease, and by extension people who touch waste with their bare hands are a walking health hazard. Discourses have the power to represent reality in a way that makes the thought of digging through a bin unmistakably irrational, and the people that do the digging the target of stigma.

3.2.2.2 Discourses of Dirt

Assumptions about waste that are taken for granted are revealed through Douglas's discussion of dirt. When seen as "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966, p. 36), the placing of a shoe on a table becomes less about the threat posed by the shoe and more to do with entrenched ways of thinking about the rightful place of footwear. Similarly, taking waste out of the confines of a bin to consume or sell becomes entirely counter intuitive.

Accordingly, the act of moving items from inside a bin to the pavement becomes reasonable grounds for residents to raise objections (see Chapter 5). With regard to the placing of food waste, consumer behaviour has "less to do with individual attitudes or desires than it does with standard requirements of accomplishing a satisfactory performance of a particular practice" (D. Evans, 2014, p. 19). Eating food that has been extracted from a bin stigmatises waste pickers not only because of the threat of illness, but also because of the disruption this behaviour poses to the "natural" order of things. Discourses of dirt position the life of a waste picker as an unsatisfactory performance of what it means to be a normal human being.

The power of discourses is such that to share waste pickers' definition of waste picking as a choice presents a significant disruption to tacitly held assumptions about what is socially acceptable. Discourses of dirt constrain the transformative capacity of impression management to position waste picking as a choice. For an audience to be convinced of the sincerity of a performance that defines waste picking as a choice requires a leap of logic, a leap similar to the kind required to accept that a shoe should remain on a table even though there is available floor space. Neither proposition makes sense because they fail to meet the standard requirements of performances. Consensus is dictated by a "will to order" (Scanlon, 2005) that informs assumptions about the right and wrong place for things to occupy. Discourses of dirt therefore position cognitive deficiency as a more plausible explanation for the claim that waste picking is a choice. Non-conformity to the ordering of dirt, rather than enabling different interpretations of waste picking, may unintentionally result in entrenching the stigma of homeless people as psychologically impaired.

3.2.2.3 Defence Mechanisms

In contrast to attitudes that become routine and rely on tacit knowledge, social psychological explanations consider unconscious patterns of thought and behaviour. For example, Giddens uses Freudian theories to explain discursive and practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984, pp. 41-45). Of Freud's work, his ideas about defence mechanisms are useful for understanding the means by which people unconsciously respond to traumatic events. Defence mechanisms are unconscious coping mechanisms that help protect a person's ego, and enable them to make sense of themselves and their lives (Gabbard, 2000, p. 30). Although everyone uses defence mechanisms, the use of the concept in this thesis is

to offer an alternative explanation for waste pickers' presentation of self in different settings.

Defence mechanisms can also be seen as part of agency, or projection (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), when individuals present an idealised front. Defence mechanisms could be evident in the recounting of a situation where a person felt threatened. For example, begging is normatively understood as a shameful act, which is potentially damaging to a person's ego. An alternative construction is that because begging relies on others' goodwill, recipients of charitable giving must be well-liked and worthy beneficiaries. This idealised version of what it means to beg can protect an individual from feeling stigmatised. When future interactions are characterised in this positive way, it unconsciously helps an individual to cope by restoring a sense of dignity. However, because defence mechanisms are unconscious, they may remain hidden and absent from narrative accounts of everyday life. Agency in these forms may remain hidden, or confined to back region spaces (Goffman, 1959), which is explained in the next and final section of this chapter.

3. PART 3. FRONT AND BACK REGION

"Front region" refers to the space where a performance is given. Here, manner and appearance can be of great importance because performers are aware of the audiences' presence (Goffman, 1959, pp. 66-68). "Back region" is a space away from audience members, "a place relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered is knowingly contradicted" (1959, p. 69). The division is important because back region spaces can be used for performers to step out of character. A fairly ubiquitous impression management technique is to keep back regions hidden to avoid discrediting the personal front constructed during front region performances. Waste pickers' refusal to conform to their "proper place" in society has been so far discussed with regard to front region performances (see earlier section on Foucault and Douglas). I now move on to back region expressions of resistance using the work of Scott (1985).

3.3.1 Weapons of the Weak

Scott (1985) draws from Goffman (1959) to conduct a class analysis of a small village in Malaysia. Founded on ethnographic research, Scott critiques other sociological enquiries which presume that acceptance of capitalist norms is steadfastly correlated to a

lack of consciousness about the nature of oppression. Collectively referred to as "weapons of the weak," Scott uncovers "hidden transcripts" that reveal the subtle ways that people respond to exploitation and inequality. Adherence to capitalist power relations is re-framed as "pragmatic submission" and "resistance." Scott argues that conformity is born out of necessity, not ignorance (1985, p. 317). I use Scott's logic to argue that waste pickers' performances demonstrate their awareness of multiple structural constraints that perpetuate their low social status. However, like the villagers in Scott's study, these expressions are confined to back region spaces and are therefore mostly hidden from audiences (see Chapter 8).

3.3.1.1 False Consciousness

A Marxist lens can be used to analyse any attempt to situate oneself as somehow outside the ruling class/subject class dichotomy as false consciousness. When people agree to work for poverty pay as manual labourers, they can be conceptualised as a reserve army of labour who shore up capitalists' economic relations. For waste pickers, their reliance on selling to buyers in the formal economy comes from a need to extract value from what they find in residents' bins. From a traditional, structural Marxists perspective, regardless of how waste pickers explain their work, they are an exploited class.[14]

To claim that waste picking is a choice can therefore be seen as a failure to grasp both the hold that the rich have over them, and their place in reinforcing their own oppression. Given conventional thinking that "Marx was always concerned to expose social conditions that produce large-scale human suffering" (Wilkinson, 2005, p. 51), it initially felt appropriate to analyse waste pickers' interactions from a Marxist approach.

The strength of a Marxist approach is that waste pickers can be understood as a product of capitalist structures, where poverty is constructed as an inevitable part of society. This component of Marxist thought is useful for analysing how discourses position waste pickers in society. However, as pointed out by Giddens, reliance on a solely Marxist theoretical approach makes it more difficult to take seriously the significance of micro-scale interactions. I therefore contrast Marxist theory with Scott's interpretation of the relationship between thought and actions. This combination helps to keep in mind the

[14] I acknowledge there is plurality in contemporary Marxist thought and I use 'Marxist' here as shorthand for conflict perspectives that stress the significance of social class.

component parts of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). In doing so, I avoid interpreting waste pickers' explanations for their work as nothing more than false consciousness.

3.3.1.2 Pragmatic Submission

Scott asserts that "(…) most subordinate classes are able, on the basis of their daily material experience, to penetrate and demystify the prevailing ideology" (1985, p. 317). This means that the disruption of unequal power relations is not confined to overt acts with explicitly revolutionary intent. Everyday encounters among groups constructed as inferior have the capacity to disrupt the capitalist order. Therefore, acting within the confines of the prevailing ideological order, from a position of disadvantage at the bottom of the social hierarchy, does not preclude the capacity to transform. Furthermore, Scott (1985) makes a compelling case when he argues that adherence to dominant discourses should not be equated to a belief in them. Scott uses the term "pragmatic submission" (1985, p. 317) to draw a distinction between conformity and the performance of conformity.

When subordinate classes conform to dominant ideologies, it is because non-conformity is "impractical, dangerous or both" (1985, p. 320). The practical work of meeting basic human needs necessitates performances of conformity in front region spaces. For example, in the mornings when waste pickers need access to bins, they are polite and exercise decorum. Their appearance and manner show deference to superior classes by greeting people using the word "boss" and waiting patiently to be given permission to pull bins out onto the street. Routines are utilised (iteration) and judgment is used (practical evaluation) to arrive at situations that are to the benefit of waste pickers. This ostensible "resignation to the inevitable" in front region spaces is not the same as according it legitimacy, even though both may serve to maintain the status quo (Scott, 1985, p. 224).

3.3.1.3 Resistance

Given that constraints on waste pickers are material, sanctional and structural (Giddens, 1984), the imaginative capacity of subordinate classes are "more likely to be radical [more] at the level of ideology than at the level of behaviour" (Scott, 1985, p. 331). Resistance can therefore be conceptualised as a thought, an idea or a private conversation. The inspiration for these minor transgressions comes from within the confines of oppressive structures, hence constructing capitalism as a paradox. "The very process of attempting to legitimise a social order by idealising it always provides its subjects with the

means, the symbolic tools, the very ideas for a critique" (Scott, 1985, p. 338). For example, Adam Smith's phrase "the 'invisible hand,'" has been used to explain how mechanisms of the market can remove unemployment (Heywood, 2003, pp. 52-53). The failure of laissez-faire approaches in South Africa can be used to expose neo-liberalism as a euphemism for State neglect. The mere presence of waste pickers is a site of resistance against the misnomer of the universal benefits of pursuing free market economic principles.

In summary, the ruling class's engagement in forms of impression management, amid ostensible displays of audience compliance, enable waste pickers to discredit the idealised performances of capitalism. The practical evaluation element of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) connects with Scott (1985), where subtle forms of resistance are a response to the challenges of social life. The other aspect of practical evaluation is when actors distance themselves from habits that are a constraint (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 984). Agency through the achievement of social distance can also be conceptualised using the theory of dual closure. Together with defence mechanisms, dual closure adds texture to the framework I use to analyse idealised fronts.

3.3.2 Closure theory

Closure theory is a "process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it that it defines as inferior and ineligible" (Murphy, 1986, p. 23). Bourdieu applies closure theory to explain how an individual's taste in one thing or another position groups in a hierarchical relationship (Bourdieu, 1984). Acceptance into a higher class position is in part reliant on being able to give a suitable performance to communicate one's refined tastes. For example, consuming alcohol conforms to traditional images of the working class. Groups who see themselves as superior can impose restrictions on alcohol consumption, to restrict inferior groups' use of public spaces. Waste pickers' opportunities were closed off through the threat of the enforcement of legislation that bans alcohol consumption in public places. However, closure theory can also be applied to waste pickers' interactions to show the creation of distance as a source of enablement for waste pickers.

Weber suggests that "any convenient and visible characteristic…can be used to declare competitors as outsiders" (Murphy, 1986, p.23). Although unable to rely on visible characteristics cited by Weber such as race or language, waste pickers emphasised other

characteristics to discredit "competitors." Groups such as homeless people, criminals and drug users are competitors in the sense that audiences use experiences with these groups to form opinions of waste pickers. Declaring competitors as outsiders can help to characterise waste pickers in a positive way (characterisation is also explained in the previous discussion of practical evaluation). This creates distance between waste pickers and stereotypes that otherwise stigmatise them as homeless, alcoholic and criminals. Rather than social closure, this process of distancing can be understood as a form of dual closure.

3.3.2.1 Dual Closure

Murphy begins with an explanation of Frank Parkin's expansion of Max Weber's model, to clarify how "exclusionary closure" and "usurpation closure" are used by groups as a means to achieve "dual closure" (Murphy, 1986, p. 23-24). Here I draw on Murphy's modified definition of these concepts in his attempt to avoid positing exclusion and usurpation as opposites:

> Usurpation is a practice the consequence of which is to bite into the advantages of higher groups, with the exclusion of lower groups that are even weaker being typically the means used to bring about this consequence. Dual closure on the other hand occurs when an excluded group in turn excludes even lower and weaker groups without having as a consequence the biting into the advantages of higher groups. Usurpation and dual closure are best conceived as two alternative reactions to exclusion even though they both involve the exclusion of lower groups. (Murphy, 1986, p. 31)

Existing literature evidences the social exclusion that waste pickers around the world experience. One way to bring about change is to give a performance that convinces powerful groups (government and residents) that waste pickers are similar to other workers. I discuss this in the literature review (Chapter 2) with regard to waste pickers' efforts to gain recognition. Recognition can also be seen as the result of usurping the advantages of formal workers to achieve the same rights. Street waste pickers can also use dramatic realisation to emphasise their similarity to low-wage workers by presenting waste picking as equally lucrative. In doing so, they present themselves as "normals" and avoid being stigmatised, allowing them to assert their entitlement to occupy public spaces and distort discourses of dirt that position them as matter out of place.

Murphy's (1986) theory helps to keep in mind that excluded groups are not homogeneous. Marginalised groups can use dual closure to make audiences aware of the subdivisions between groups. In doing so, although some groups may remain marginalised in some ways, they can avoid some sources of stigma that are experienced by other groups. For example, by giving the impression that illegal drug users and criminals are excluded, a group can posit themselves as morally superior. This creates a distance between a group and the discreditable habits of other marginalised people. The exclusion of drug users and criminals does not dent the advantages that come with being seen as similar to a low-wage worker. Usurpation and dual closure can therefore be a form of agency (practical evaluation) as a response to social exclusion. Although waste pickers do not achieve social mobility through dual closure, there are normative expectations about the pursuit of betterment. Assumptions about the aspirations of excluded groups has been theorised by Wolff (2016) in his work about Southern Africa.

3.3.2.2 Hierarchical Theory of Needs

Wolff (2016) draws an analogy between social mobility and climbing rungs on a ladder. The gap between each rung becomes greater the more inequality there is in a society. This image is useful in understanding why the spending habits of waste pickers, while seemingly irrational in the minds of more affluent audiences, is logical given the level of inequality in South Africa:

> In deeply divided societies, where it may be impossible for more than a handful to make the leap from living anxiously in cramped, unsanitary, crime-ridden surroundings, with poor schools, to the life of privilege, then those living at the bottom have a very limited range of options. If, in effect, you are rejected by mainstream society, then the prospects of ever fitting in are very bleak, however hard you try. In such circumstances it seems entirely reasonable to spend effort and resources on fitting in, or even standing out, locally. Social mobility is very hard to achieve where society is divided into the privileged elite and the mass, without many intervening middle positions, and resources spent trying to ascend the ladder over the divide may simply be wasted. (Wolff, 2016, p. 36)

South Africa is infamous for being one of the most consistently unequal countries in the world (Bhorat, 2015). Structural constraints are imposed on lower class people living in societies where the disparity between rich and poor is vast. The above description

of those at the bottom of the "ladder" fits with the standard of living in the Cape Flats in Cape Town, where the waste pickers with whom I worked previously lived. Wolff's (2016) suggestion is that the gap between those "living at the bottom" (waste pickers) and "mainstream society" (the audience) is too huge to be bridged by judicious spending habits. Efforts, instead, are concentrated not on becoming socially mobile, but on fitting in or standing out locally. For example, rather than using disposable income to accrue savings, individuals spend money on alcohol to socialise in their local area.

In Chapter 2, I touched on the rise in the casualisation of work and the "flexible" workforce in South Africa (Theron, 2003). Along with formal workers, waste pickers are also in precarious work. Unpredictable earnings make medium and long term financial planning difficult, which constrains projective capacity. Regardless of these constraints, there remains an expectation that no matter how poor a person is, they should act judiciously. Above all else, people should aim to be financially self-sufficient to the extent that they can meet basic human needs. A hierarchical theory of needs dictates that people should prioritise food and set aside any leftover money for food for the rest of the week (Wolff, 2016). Spending habits discredit actors if they choose to buy non-essential items before having procured staple goods that one cannot live without. For waste pickers, discrediting spending habits are difficult to conceal because they work and live in public spaces. As a consequence, they are easy to label as pre-occupied with short-term gratification rather than investing their money in their long-term future.

Wolff's (2016) point is that non-conformity to a hierarchical theory of needs does not mean that individuals are devoid of agency or have no interest in improving their lives. Decisions about how to spend limited money can be seen as the result of practical evaluation in response to the dilemmas of poverty. Having been rejected by mainstream society, there is little to be gained from making incremental changes to spending habits. For example, waste pickers could give up alcohol and tobacco and instead spend all their money on healthy food. However, this would make little difference to how they are characterised by audiences. Incremental changes to spending habits do not change the visual markers that stigmatise waste pickers as homeless and dirty. The "limited range of options" available to waste pickers is unlikely to result in them ever "fitting in."

The sacrifice of giving up alcohol and spending the money on food does not "yield much" because these sacrifices are made in back region settings. To break with existing routines also risks losing the benefits of "fitting in locally." To continue with the example of alcohol consumption, social drinking is a form of escapism and a way to maintain social

ties and enjoy others' friendship. When Wolff's logic is applied to waste pickers, what at first seems an irrational distribution of resources becomes understandable behaviour. However, the way that waste pickers rationalise their thinking is confined to thoughts that are not visible to all audiences (see Chapter 8). Waste pickers' refusal to fit in with normative expectations in front region settings constrains their ability to change stereotypes. Instead, waste pickers take advantage of the prejudice against other marginalised groups of working poor to achieve distance from them using dual closure (see Chapter 7). Stigma can therefore be theorised as a source of enablement and constraint to the agency of waste pickers on the streets of Cape Town.

CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has set the theoretical backdrop in order to understand the work of waste picking and the position of waste pickers in contemporary South Africa. In doing so, waste pickers are conceptualised as agents with the capacity to change routines, current circumstances and make future plans. This agential capacity both shapes and is shaped by micro and macro social processes that simultaneously happen in everyday interactions. The behaviour of individuals has both intended and unintended consequences for how the rest of society perceives waste picking and waste pickers.

This chapter has touched on ontological assumptions, for example that all humans have choices. The next chapter expands on how ontology informs my approach to investigating stigma and agency. As set out in this chapter, social processes are confined to back region spaces, which pose the question of how I plan to access such spaces given that I am not a waste picker. Because presentations of self are contradicted by actors in back region spaces, epistemological decisions need to be made about what counts as knowledge. These concerns are complicated by the broader context of research into waste picking, discussed in Chapter 2, which has hitherto painted waste pickers as victims. The next chapter aims to address these considerations to explain why I decided to take an ethnographic approach to gain knowledge about the relationship between stigma and agency in the interactions of street waste pickers in Cape Town.

CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY: RESEARCHING STIGMA

This study aims to investigate waste pickers' experiences of stigma, how they manage stigma, and how evident stigma is in enabling or constraining their ability to effect change (see research questions in Chapter 1). To achieve these aims, I am taking an ethnographic approach:

> Ethnography is best suited to exploring things that cannot be observed directly because they do not have a physical presence the world, and yet these 'things' shape it in very real ways: the implicit assumptions, operating principles, relations among concepts, and categories of thought and understanding that people take for granted and do not make explicit. (Shehata, 2006, p. 260)

The "thing that cannot be observed" in this study is stigma. This chapter sets out the ways in which I went about designing and conducting an ethnographic study to uncover the place of stigma in the interactions of waste pickers. **Part 1** sets out my theoretical perspective through a discussion of interpretivism and social constructionism. I argue that although stigma does not have a "physical presence," analysing interactions can be a way to uncover the "operating principles" that individuals use to connect individual attributes to stereotypes. I link constructionist assumptions to my theoretical framework to make the link between the study of micro (interactions) and broader contextual social processes (stereotypical discourses).

Part 2 explores the rationale for my choice of ethnographic research methods and use of participant observation as a way to access and be a part of "relations among concepts." For example, how my methods allowed me to see the connections between attribute and stereotype, as they play out in waste pickers' daily interactions. I also look at the way that my approach to fieldwork and researcher identity helped to surface "categories of thought and understanding" and how this influenced the data gathered and the process of analysis. I include some discussion of the limitations my identity presented and ways I attempted to overcome them. I argue that waste pickers interactions with me revealed a lot about what they had come to "take for granted," which in turn surfaced how stigma shaped their everyday world. The section ends with an explanation of the ethics of using a concealed recording device.

Part 3 continues the topic of ethics with regard to how texts have been produced and analysed from fieldwork experiences. I end this section discussing the use of discourse

analysis to identify the "implicit assumptions" that individuals make, indicated in their use of language, and what this revealed about the utility of impression management strategies in interactions.

4. PART 1. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

A theoretical perspective is the "philosophical stance lying behind methodology" (Crotty, 1998, p. 66). This section therefore explains the connection between my assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and how these assumptions shape how I research the world (epistemology). I utilise established paradigms (Kuhn, 1970) that delineate the logic behind my research methods. Despite the wide spectrum of Sociological theory and "hybrid approaches" (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009: 696), a relatively neat division tends to be drawn between two theoretical approaches. On the one hand, positivists' objective orientation to studying society positions researchers as independent observers. This way of thinking is absolutist and relies on a subject-object dualism between researcher and research subjects (Johnson, 1977, p. 172). On the other hand, interpretivists' have a subjective orientation to the world, acknowledge researchers' values and stress the importance of human experience.

Broadly speaking, this separation manifests itself in the use of quantitative (positive) or qualitative (interpretivist) research methods. This project uses qualitative methods which is a distinct departure from the physical sciences. For example, I am not analysing human interactions using experiments or statistical analysis. However, in other respects the relationship between theory and method is less linear. Therefore, in Part 1 of this chapter I set out my understanding of the relationship between subjective and objective aspects of interpretivist theories of knowledge. I begin by addressing broad ontological considerations and then narrow my focus onto aspects of social constructionism that are housed within interpretivism. I then refine my discussion further by concentrating on social constructionist approaches to the study of discourses and power relations.

4.1.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is rooted in Weberian approaches to the study of society, stemming from his use of "verstehen" (understanding) to underpin qualitative research projects. Verstehen meant analysing "the meanings that individuals use to understand their social

circumstances rather than trying to identify "social facts" that comprise positive social theory" (Hatch, 2002, p. 8). Interpretivist approaches assume that "knowledge is constructed not only of observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of peoples' intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding" (Henning, 2004). This means that knowledge can be gleaned through observing what waste pickers do and talking to them to understand how they make sense of their reality. Interpretivist methods are those that enable researchers to witness and listen to actors' narrative accounts, which is to assume that research participants have knowledge about their reality that can be conveyed to a researcher. Research participants are therefore not merely "research subjects," although their knowledge may be partial and tacitly understood.

4.1.1.1 Tacit Knowledge

Giddens rejects positivist (objectivist) epistemologies while simultaneously acknowledging that some knowledge is tacitly understood, informally sanctioned and occurs without conscious recognition. Giddens therefore stipulates that while people always have an understanding of what they are doing, this knowledge may be incomplete:

> Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activities. Human agents always know what they are doing on the level of discursive consciousness under some description. (Giddens, 1984, p. 26)

This means that everyone is capable of explaining what he or she "knows." As "human agents" individuals have a choice over which bodies of knowledge and what language to use to explain and justify descriptions of social life. To come back to the example used in the previous chapter, the impact of having tacit knowledge of the rules of grammar is evident from language use. However, until one questions their assumptions, this tacit knowledge may be somewhat invisible. People have practical consciousness where they use rules but are not necessarily always able to convey how these rules are implemented in everyday life.[15] This is what is meant by the assertion that structures do not have an external existence that is independent of human knowledge.

[15] There is no difference in meaning between practical consciousness and tacit assumptions. I use the terms practical consciousness when making connections to Giddens's (1984) theory. I refer to tacit assumptions when talking about assumed knowledge more broadly.

4.1.1.2 Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

If we think of theories as social structures, following Giddens's logic, it is not ontologically possible for a researcher to rely solely on inductive reasoning as if they are value neutral. Whether acknowledged or not, researchers adopt a theoretical position before beginning fieldwork. My epistemological assumptions are founded on a distinct set of theories that I subscribed to before entering into interactions with waste pickers. This stands in opposition to some researcher's use of "Classic or Glaserian" grounded theory (Christiansen, 2008) which advocates an avoidance of imposing categories on data. However, in claiming that one can be almost completely subjective, interpretivists subscribe the same ontological assumptions traditionally used by some positivists. For example, some interpretivist researchers continue to employ qualitative methods in an attempt to approach analysis without any "preconceived bias, dogma and mental baggage" (Allan, 2003, p. 8). This positivist leaning has evolved and has had its objectivist streak tempered to better match a constructivist sensibility (Charmaz, 2000).

Notwithstanding these modifications, as a social constructionist, I do not believe that it is possible to interact with research participants in such a way. To sweep aside my own thoughts and feelings would itself constitute a "preconceived bias." I approached the research with a great deal of "mental baggage" (see later discussion on researcher identity) and existing ideas about how the project should be theoretically framed. For example, I chose to name and conceptualise waste picking as work. Using deductive reasoning, this meant I placed the homeless or alcoholic identities of participants as secondary to their identity as waste pickers.

4.1.1.3 Structure, Culture and Agency

Unlike social construct*ivist's* focus on the meaning-making of the individual mind (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127), social construct*ionists* emphasise the role of cultural entities in society. These entities are influenced by collective and individual actions, which are largely given and "remain in circulation" (Geertz, 1973, p. 45). This means that social structures are imbued with meaning that shape individuals' interpretations and the interpretive strategies (agency) that they use to arrive at one meaning over another. The different interpretations of structures that circulate in society make it possible to reach different conclusions about what an action means. Interpretations vary for example, depending on the historical and social context of situations. Hence sifting through a bin can equally be defined as an act of desperation or an act of liberation. The possibility of

both interpretations, through a constructionist epistemology, combines subjectivity and objectivity.

Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conceptualisation of agency contextualises the maintenance of routine behaviours of the past, processes of deliberation in the moment, and the impact of thoughts about what may lie ahead. This fits with a social constructionist assumption that streams of consciousness are always ordered temporally, where transitions between realities are akin to the rise and fall of a curtain in a theatre (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 39-40). The centrality of agency in interactions is also aided by Scott's (1985) "Weapons of the Weak." His work provides theoretical reasoning that avoids interpreting waste pickers' actions as merely a symbol of conformity to capitalist structures. Instead, actions are contextualised gestures with different meaning and utility depending on whether waste pickers are on or off stage. My interpretation of interactions as front or back region is subjective, open to interpretation, but underpinned by a theoretical framework and contextualised in time and space.

The importance of agency in my theoretical assumptions was in part based on the scarcity of ethnographic research *with* street waste pickers in South Africa. I did not consider using theories that disregard the perspective of actors and their opinions about agency. Keeping agential processes at the forefront of my mind was also the result of my rejection of stereotypical ways of thinking about waste pickers as homeless and helpless (see Chapter 2). The strength of Giddens's (1984) theory keeps in focus that agents and structures are mutually constitutive. Stereotypes are therefore not as fixed as they may seem. The context in which interactions take place is one where knowledge is being constructed and re-constructed. I therefore went into the research process with the aim of disrupting stereotypes that stigmatise waste pickers as lacking agency (see Chapters 1 and 9).

4.1.2 Social Constructionism

Berger and Luckmann argue that "reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs" (1966, p. 13). Firstly, this means that what people experience and the meanings that they attach to it are multiple and context specific. Consequently there is no *one* truth, but different interpretations of meaning resulting in multiple truths. Reality is "a quality appertaining to a phenomenon that we recognise as having a being independent of our own volition" (1966, p. 13). This definition means that reality is contested rather than chosen. Multiple

realities exist alongside the version of reality that each individual human constructs as real to them. Therefore, waste pickers cannot "wish away" stigma by constructing a different interpretation of what it means to be a waste picker. My research is not designed to ascertain which construction of reality is correct but, given the multiple available interpretations, is an analysis of how waste picking is and can be constructed.

Secondly, "human knowledge is a given in society, on an a priori to individual experience, providing the latter with its order of meaning" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 20). We inherit and learn the social order, the "normal" way of looking at things, which shapes interpretations of the world. Thus, despite the capacity for waste pickers to change how they see themselves, the people they interact with may continue to interpret waste picking as they always have done. Bringing about change is enabled and constrained by structures, which constitute and are constituted by individual agency (Giddens, 1984). Social constructionism encompasses the interplay between explaining and understanding social life within an interpretivist and interactionist paradigm.

4.1.2.1 Interpretivism and Interactionism

When researchers attempt to see and hear from the perspective of people who are the subject of study, interpretivist approaches take on a symbolic interactionist sensibility. Following Mead (1964), interaction is symbolic because the gestures that comprise human practices are saturated with meaning. To more fully understand (verstehen) and interpret what the meaning of gestures are, requires a method that enables researchers to recognise "the most extensive set of interwoven conditions that may determine thought, practice, and our fixation and enjoyment of values" (1964, p. 337). The importance I attach to putting myself in the position of research participants is because these "interwoven conditions" are intertwined so tightly. Stigma, stereotypes, labelling and discourses all reinforce and feed into one another. Therefore, in order to make my way through this jungle of knotted processes, I needed to be guided by the perspective of waste pickers themselves. The meaning of gestures and their connection to social processes are not direct or distinct enough to understand without some shared points of reference. In this way, through taking the role of a waste picker, participant observation enables me to understand waste picking.

Crotty explains symbolic interactionism as the relationship between the symbolic tools that humans share, such as language, and interactions (role taking) (1998, p. 75). "Only through dialogue can one become aware of the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent" (Crotty, 1998, p. 75). Talking to research

participants is therefore an essential tool for understanding (verstehen). To date, "dialogue" has featured in research with waste pickers mostly through interviews, which has been a somewhat blunt tool for investigating waste picking (see Chapter 2). Asking direct questions assumes that a subject matter can be sufficiently communicated orally. However, as set out in Chapter 3, knowledge is not always conscious or understood in a way that is easy to verbalise. Unlike direct questions and interviews, dialogue is an important methodological tool for comparing my interpretations with the meanings that waste pickers arrive at. Dialogue is a way to discuss, explore and clarify, to understand how feelings and attitudes have come to be presented one way and not another. I therefore do not take the content of dialogue at face-value, which brings me on to the matter of how gestures are deciphered.

4.1.2.2 Hermeneutics and Dramaturgy

The centrality of language in interpretivism dates back to the tradition of hermeneutics developed by Paul Ricoeur. Hermeneutics is "a method for deciphering indirect meaning, a reflective practice of unmasking hidden meanings beneath apparent ones" (Rée & Urmson, 2005, p. 333). "Unmasking" in my analysis of waste pickers' interactions has a double meaning. First, I am conducting discourse analysis to delve beyond the literal meaning of language by interpreting what informs waste pickers' attitudes. Secondly, I use a dramaturgical approach, where interaction is seen as analogous to a performance, to interpret on and off stage interactions (see discussion of Goffman, 1959; 1963 in Chapter 3). In doing so I pay attention to the construction, wearing and slipping of waste pickers' metaphorical masks.

To dig behind waste pickers' masks, or idealised front, I do not mean to imply I am revealing a hidden, objective truth, waiting to be discovered. "The front becomes a 'collective representation' and a fact in its own right" (Goffman, 1959, p. 17). I therefore do not concern myself with which interpretation of waste pickers' presentation of self is the most truthful one. Nor do I mean to insinuate that the presentation of an idealised front is somehow unique to waste pickers. My assumption is that we all have the "impulse to show the world a better or idealised aspect of ourselves" (Cooley, 1922 cited in Goffman, 1959, p. 23) – not least researchers. All interactions are imbued with falsehoods, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on who the audience is. The focus of the study has been on how waste pickers presented themselves to me, which was dependent on how they perceived my identity and role (see later discussion of researcher identity).

4.1.2.3 Social Constructionism and Truth

Although constructionists do not share the positivist assumption that research can uncover an objective truth, this is not to say that the construction of meaning is a rejection of all that is objective. There is a "high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Crotty (1998, pp. 43-60) sets out the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in social constructionism, an account upon which I have relied to compose the following summary.

Meaning (or truth) is constructed, not arbitrarily but from the interplay between humans and their interaction with the world and the objects in it. Crotty (1998) cites Fish's (1990) anecdote about university teaching and the interpretations of a list of names that were written on a classroom board. At the end of the first seminar the names refer to authors whom students should consult to complete an assignment. In the next seminar for a different course, the same names are presented as a poem and students are able to extract various meanings from the list using biblical references. Constructionism emphasises that whether constructed as a list of names or a poem, there is no one correct interpretation. However, the diversity in interpretation cannot be equated with a purely subjective conjuring and imposition of meaning on an object.

Whether a poem or a list of authors, these pre-existing categories come with a body of knowledge that students have learnt through primary and secondary socialisation. Crotty explains that Lévi-Strauss's concept of "bricolage" (1974, p. 16) alludes to the constraints of existing objects available to humans. Although people may re-purpose (re-interpret) the world, the objects in it are the only ones available to an individual: "Imaginativeness and creativity are required, to be sure, but an imaginativeness and creativity to be exercised in relation to these objects, these materials" (Crotty, 1998, p. 50). Interpretation, as mentioned earlier with regard to dialogue as a methodological tool, is a comparison between competing constructions of reality. This means gestures can only be interpreted in relation to context and the established conventions therein. Social constructionism therefore brings together objective (pre-existing bodies of knowledge) and subjective (interpretations) parts of society.

Crotty's (1998) point about the constraints of bricolage also applies to researchers in their theorising. Put more bluntly, I cannot know what I do not know and I can only use what I know to exist. For example, as a researcher, my choice of theoretical framework and ontological assumptions are reliant on existing knowledge that I have been exposed to.

My capacity to break with dominant forms of knowledge (iterational agency) is restricted. "Collective bodies are captured, ordered and dealt with by the modernist legal construction of the subject" (L. Stewart, 2014, p. 4). I have the right to protest against oppressive structures and colonial legacies, but only from within the confines of legal frameworks. I can refuse to submit a PhD using theories that stem from colonial thought, but in doing so I cannot register as a student and lose the right to stay in South Africa. I have the choice to refuse to conform, but in doing so I lose legal rights.

In Chapter 1, I mentioned critiques that were levelled at my reliance on western theories written by 'white' men. This is a limitation that is difficult to overcome. Butler's underlying assumption in her explanation of gender performativity can be applied to how researcher and researched are bound by western thought that has become the norm. These norms "are acting on us before we have a chance to act at all, and that when we do act, we recapitulate the norms that act upon us, perhaps in new or unexpected ways, but still in relation to norms that precede us and exceed us" (Butler, 2009, p. 11). Therefore even in my awareness of how discourses of the west and the rest silence theories from the global south, I unavoidably remain complicit in entrenching the colonial domination of knowledge production.[16]

4.1.3 Knowledge and Power

So far I have set out the main ontological and epistemological thrusts of my research project. This next subsection carries through previous social constructionist themes, but with a closer eye on approaches to studying the power of bodies of knowledge and power relations in interactions. In doing so I pick up on Giddens (1984) conceptualisation of discourse as a structure that is constituted and the medium through which the constitution of society takes place.

4.1.3.1 Stereotypical Discourses

Stigma in this project is defined as the interplay between attribute (individual characteristics such as physical appearance) and stereotype (group characteristics such as

[16] Magubane (2016) argues that the discipline of Sociology in South Africa is a colonial form of knowledge. The first Sociology book in America was titled "Sociology of the South" which was used to defend slavery. The first African sociology department was created as a result of the Carnegie commissioned enquiry into the "poor white problem" in South Africa. It was assumed that South Africa did not have any sociologists. Therefore American sociologists travelled to Cape Town to establish the first Sociology department at The University of Stellenbosch to respond to "white" poverty.

social front) (Goffman, 1959). Stereotypes can therefore form a body of knowledge that stigmatise personal attributes in particular ways. Homeless stereotypes for example stigmatise waste pickers as poor or criminal (see Chapter 2). While other interpretations of waste pickers are available, stereotypes become discourses when they position some ways of thinking as superior to others, creating an "order of meaning" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 20). These hierarchies have implications for the choices that actors make about which bodies of knowledge they use to construct meaning:

> Power and social structure are (…) seen to be strongly influential processes, even though influence is partial, indirect and contested. Local actors are considered to be agents, not simply passive followers, yet they are agents that must swim in rivers that have strong currents. (Erickson, 2011, p. 52)

Stereotypical discourses form "strong currents" which, together with the influential process of labelling, constrain the capacity of agents to change mainstream interpretations of actors. "Power and social structure" limit the ways that people construct and subsequently name the behaviour that they see. The "power and structure" of stereotypes can partially and indirectly determine the language used to name and describe waste picking. Of interest to me is not so much why waste pickers are "poor" or "criminal" but rather how individual experience is understood in particular terms such as these (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011, p. 345). This is to assume that "discursive practices manifest in the dynamics of talk and interaction that constitute everyday life" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011, p. 344). Thus the research methods used enable me to see how waste pickers contest these "strong currents" and how these contestations are evident in waste pickers' interactions.

4.1.3.2 Discursive Constraints

So far I have established that interpretations are reliant on the existing bodies of knowledge that actors have been exposed to. The term discursive constraints captures the limits that are imposed on an actor's ability to articulate how knowledge informs their behaviour. It may not be until a dialogue prompts an individual to reflect on why they behave a certain way, that tacit assumptions become evident. The implication from a constructionist approach is that researchers need to be cognisant of the limitations of practical consciousness. This requires that researchers;

> not be straightjacketed by the conventional meanings we have been taught to associate with the object. Instead such research invites us to approach the object in

> a radical spirit of openness to its potential for new or richer meaning. It is an invitation to reinterpretation. (Crotty, 1998, p. 51)

Returning to the earlier analogy, words on a blackboard might be a list of authors and/or a poem, but equally they could be something completely different. Researchers are constrained by the conventional array of meanings that a text can have. Although Sociologists do not have special powers that release them from being "straightjacketed," as Mills (1959) indicates, researchers can debunk "conventional meanings." In doing so they can expose a stereotypical discourse for the straightjacket that it is, rather than as common sense. Notwithstanding the constraints of colonial forms of knowledge production in the academy (discussed earlier), researchers can reinterpret tacit assumptions, stereotypes and discourses. By engaging in "systematic theoretical reasoning" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 29), researchers can arrive at "new or richer meaning." This study is designed to invite others to question conventional meanings, and be more open to alternative interpretations of waste pickers and waste picking. However, stereotypes can take on an objective nature even as individuals may resist them:

> There is no subjective defence against the stigmatic identity assigned to him. He *is* what he is supposed to be, to himself as to his significant others and to the community as a whole. To be sure, he may react to this fate with resentment or rage, but it is *qua* inferior being that he is resentful or enraged. This resentment and rage may even serve as decisive ratifications of his socially defined identity as an inferior being, since his betters, by definition, are above these brutish emotions. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 185) [original italics]

This study uses a dramaturgical lens to analyse the "subjective defence" that waste pickers use to manage the "stigmatic identity assigned" to them (see Goffman, 1959; 1963, in chapter 3). The strength of discrediting labels further supports my insistence that, following Mead (1964), I need to try and take on the perspective of waste pickers. This approach enables me to examine what waste pickers think they are "supposed to be" and how these suppositions are presented in interactions with "significant others" (government) and "the community as a whole" (residents). This constructionist epistemology is commensurate with Giddens's (1984), where performances of "resentment and rage" may be intended to enable "the community" to assign a different identity, but unintentionally ratifies a waste picker's "identity as an inferior being." Stereotypes are not

objective in that they may not change, but may be experienced as an objective truth given how entrenched they have become in the way that others think.

4.1.3.3 Analytic Bracketing

Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) criticise researchers who ignore the divide between analysing discourse (seemingly external and therefore objective) and micro-scale interactions (subjective) as "ontological gerrymandering." Before embarking on a reflexive discussion of my methods, I take a moment to further clarify the bridge between structure, discourse and interpretations using the concept of analytic bracketing. Holstein and Gubrium put forward a method for "the constructionist analytics of interpretive practice" that explicates the "discursive opportunities and possibilities at work in talk and social interaction" (2011, p. 345). I use "analytic bracketing" to alternate between "discursive practices" and "discourse-in-practice" (2011, p. 347). This means that although the operation of stereotypical discourses may happen unconsciously, it does not preclude the possibility of arriving at subjective interpretations of what discourses are and how they position waste pickers.

When thinking through the everyday realities of waste pickers, I consider how language is both a resource (discursive practice) and a product of contextual and structural processes (discourse-in-practice). Impression management can be a resource that waste pickers use to construct an idealised front (discursive practice) and, a product of how stereotypical discourses position waste pickers (discourse-in-practice). For example, if a waste picker repeatedly mentions their educational achievements, this can be seen as a component part of the presentation of an idealised front (discursive practice). At the same time, stereotypical discourses position waste pickers as illiterate and uneducated, thereby "forced" to pick though bins for a living (discourse-in-practice). Thus, discursive practices help me to know *what* attributes are prefaced in waste pickers' presentation of self. By contrast, discourse-in-practice can shed light on *why* some attributes are prefaced over others.

4. PART 2. ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Hammersley sets out the methods that make ethnography distinct from other qualitative approaches. Among these are that empirical data is gathered from "real world" contexts for the purpose of analysis. Analysis "involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly take on the form of verbal descriptions and

explanations" (1994, p. 1). As alluded to in my discussion of social constructionism, in order to investigate stigma management, the ontological assumptions I made necessitated an ethnographic epistemological approach to research methods.

Having addressed the theoretical aspects of ethnography in Part 1 of this chapter, I use the points Hammersley raises about ethnographic methods to structure the subsequent discussion. Firstly, the scope of ethnographic studies is small scale and conducted with one social group. Secondly, data tends to be gathered in an unstructured way, using observation and informal conversations, with no pre-determined fixed start or end date. Categories used for interpreting data are not pre-given either (Hammersley, 1994, p. 1).

4.2.1 Scope and Scale

The micro-scale nature of this project stems from a desire to surface stigma using "detailed examinations of people and their social discourse and the various outcomes of their actions, underlying principles and concepts" (Berg, 2001, p. 136). Underlying concepts are stigma and impression management. The outcomes of waste pickers' actions are understood within the concept of agency (See Chapter 3). I sought to recruit a small number of waste pickers who were open to the idea of my working with them for some length of time. The duration of contact with waste pickers was negotiated and re-negotiated throughout the study. Although my use of ethnographic methods was set out in my thesis proposal, these methods morphed as the research progressed.

4.2.1.1 Research Setting

Having been alerted to how researchers often neglect to protect their wellbeing when conducting research (Moncur, 2013), I attempted to compartmentalise my personal and professional life. I therefore chose to start my search for waste pickers in a suburb of Cape Town that I was familiar with but some distance from where I lived. I could therefore retreat to the privacy of my home without running into my research participants. Details about the suburbs and streets where we walked and talked have been kept deliberately vague in my narrative accounts. Where possible I have avoided specifying place names beyond information that contextualises the interactions I present in my findings (Chapters 5-8). My time with waste pickers was spent in the "southern suburbs," which are areas that historically were "almost entirely set aside for white settlement" (Seekings, 2010, p. 3). Pertinent to stigma is apartheid legislation that would have restricted waste pickers' access and movement in these suburbs. The implications of the

continued spatial segregation of Cape Town with regard to waste pickers are discussed in my literature review (see Chapter 2).

4.2.1.2 Recruitment Technique

The only criteria people had to meet, to be approached to take part in research, was that I had witnessed them sifting through the bin and that they were willing to talk to me (known as "criterion sampling" (Palys, 2008, p. 697)). On Thursday 12th December 2013, while sitting on the kerb I saw two people at the other end of the street opening up the bins as if checking their contents. As they approached where I was sitting, they greeted me and we struck up a conversation. I introduced myself as a student from the university. I told them I was interested in finding out about waste picking but also wanted to work as a waste picker to understand what the work was like. Immediately one of the two waste pickers, Tamas, started to take the lead in the interaction. At this point, I adopted a "key informant technique" that originated from Tamas's fluency in English and willingness to communicate his knowledge to me (Marshall, 1996, p. 92).

When Tamas and I reflect now on how we met, he describes it as the time he interviewed me. Of initial importance to him were my habits and opinions concerning religion, alcohol and illegal drug use (fieldnotes, week 2, January 16, 2014). I told him honestly what I thought, unaware of whether what I said was "building rapport" (see later discussion of ethical considerations). Subsequent to what transpired as a satisfactory performance on my part, Tamas and I made an arrangement to meet once a week and quickly fell into a routine. I met Tamas every Thursday morning for three months from January 2014 to the end of March 2014. I took a break from data collection for two months and resumed the same weekly schedule from June 2014 to the end of the year (see Appendix). I "shadowed" (Bartkowiak-Theron & Robyn Sappey, 2012; S. McDonald, 2005) Tamas, which positioned him as a gatekeeper to the waste picking community. I never strayed far from Tamas's side during fieldwork and subsequently my pool of potential participants was restricted to the people that Tamas interacted with.

4.2.1.3 Research Participants

By the end of December 2014 I had a list of 43 people who I had interacted with and allocated pseudonyms. Not all of these were people who I picked through the bins with, some were caretakers and stallholders. Over and above these 43, there were interactions that were very brief. These ranged from a short greeting ("Hi") to non-verbal

gestures of acknowledgement of each other's presence (smiling). I did not keep a record of these anonymous interactions and they do not feature in my analysis. My findings are based on regular interactions with approximately a quarter of these 43 people who I came to know over the year. I refer to these 11 people as a "core group" of waste pickers to demarcate them as people who I saw most weeks and with whom I grew familiar.

Although the naming of research participants tends to be random and unreflexive (Lahman et al., 2015), given the centrality of naming and stigma in this research, I thought carefully about the naming of waste pickers. Many of the people I spoke to had uncomplimentary nicknames that had simply stuck, given to them as children or while in a prison gang. Given that the aim of the research is to avoid entrenching negative stereotypes, pseudonyms were chosen from the names of successful footballers. I took the first letter of participants' first name or nickname, and then scrolled down the top 100 footballers (for males) and South African female football team (for females) for names that began with this letter. Although no one ever asked, it was important to me that I was able to explain who participants had been named after and what their sporting achievements had been. As such, waste pickers may have Xhosa/Afrikaans/English pseudonyms even though they do not necessarily identify with these cultures or languages.

4.2.2 Participant Observation

The rationale behind my use of participant observation is theoretical and practical. Theoretically, following interactionist traditions espoused by Herbert Blumer, participant observation is a method to grasp the perspective of social actors from their point of view (Gobo, 2008, p. 39). Therefore, participation is suited to gaining a sense of what it feels like to be a waste picker. On a more practical note, I hoped participation would help to ensure that my presence did not contribute to a "them and us" mentality (see Chapter 2). Given the tendency for researchers to interview rather than get their hands dirty, I hoped to show that given the same set of circumstances I too might opt to waste pick for a living. I assumed that actions spoke louder than words, and that sifting through the bins alongside everyone else was a more effective way to gain waste pickers' trust than carefully crafting a compelling verbal case.

4.2.2.1 Fieldwork

In order to keep my hands free to waste pick I wore a digital recorder to record the conversations I had with participants during fieldwork interactions. I downloaded each

sound file and transcribed conversations verbatim. In total I accrued approximately 82 hours of field recordings (See Appendix). Analysis in this thesis is based on text that is comprised of summaries of each fieldwork session (written immediately after fieldwork), verbatim transcriptions of conversations, personal reflections and additional annotations. I collectively refer to these texts as "fieldnotes," because the different writing genres intermixed to form one text document for each week of fieldwork. Fieldnotes totalled approximately 1,000 pages of text, which I imported into Nvivo (Qualitative software package) where I also stored and organised electronic literature.

In total there were 33 separate fieldwork encounters (See Appendix). Each session usually took approximately three hours, during which time the methods I used shifted but followed a routine structure. Each fieldwork session can be broadly categorised into three phases; participation, observation and focus group style unstructured discussions.

Phase 1: Participation

The first hour of a fieldwork session was research participants' last hour of waste picking. During this time I shadowed Tamas, sorting through rubbish with my bare hands. I was taught to look for returnable plastic or glass bottles, any in-date, unspoilt food and anything that could be re-used or sold. My participant observation was more participant than observation. I focused on the work and there was little verbal interaction other than clarification questions or commentary about the items found in the bins. A substantial proportion of this first hour involved waiting for bins to be brought out on to the street, which waste pickers mostly spent in silence, smoking cigarettes.

Phase 2: Observation

The transition from phase one to phase two is marked by ceasing to collect any more things from the bins. At this stage waste pickers splintered into sub groups. I stayed with Tamas's group who carried their stuff to a collection point. From here items were sorted according to type of material. I often helped with sorting under the guidance of others, but paid more attention to watching what people were doing. If a passerby took an interest in items, I did not involve myself in negotiating a sale. More often than not, any textiles were sold in bulk to stallholders at the nearby second-hand market. Once everything had been collated, the next job was to sell returnable glass to the bottle store in exchange for wine. At the bottle store we sometimes met up with the waste pickers who I had worked with before. The first sip of wine marked the beginning of phase three.

Phase 3: Informal conversations

From the bottle store, waste pickers walked to find a place to congregate and drink. This was most frequently a spot on the banks of a river. I chose not to participate in the consumption of alcohol. Instead I listened to and took part in conversations that flowed more freely than earlier in the more sober hours of waste pickers' day. If I spoke to individuals, it would be amid the din of the group. So although they felt like unstructured interviews, there was no privacy, because conversations were never out of earshot of someone else. Much of the fieldnote extracts in the findings chapters are from conversations during this last hour of fieldwork.

4.2.2.2 Longitudinal Approach

Mindful of the tendency for outsiders to prejudge waste pickers (see Chapter 2) I planned a longitudinal project. My thinking was that the duration of fieldwork should allow enough time for waste pickers and myself to overcome our prejudices, based on our vastly different histories and circumstances. Secondly, it was also important to me that I waste pick in summer and winter, given that it is outdoor work, to get some sense of how waste picking differs according to the weather. Thirdly, the longer I spent with waste pickers the more shared experiences and shared knowledge we accrued. For example, the goings on between my fieldwork visits required less explanation the more I got to know Tamas and the core group. Just as with any human relationship, talk and silence became more comfortable the more time we spent in each other's company.

Working as a waste picker over a prolonged period of time helped me, as I had hoped it would, to garner credibility among the core group of waste pickers. I always followed through any promises I made, and in doing so retained the privilege to shadow Tamas each week. The significance of having been a waste picker remains apparent, even though fieldwork ended 18 months ago. My identity as an ex-waste picker is prefaced to this day when Tamas introduces me to people. This brings me onto the limitations of the study and the somewhat unsmooth transition from ending fieldwork to a non-research relationship with Tamas.

4.2.2.3 Ending Fieldwork

There was a week in November 2014 where I felt as if I had become rather invisible (fieldnotes, week 26, October 9, 2014). People were not talking to me very much

even during phase three of fieldwork. I started to feel that anything that was being said to me was nothing that had not already been reinforced several times. I asked Tamas how he felt about me stopping fieldwork and interviewing people, neither of which he seemed to have any strong feelings about. More out of convention than a necessity to gather more data, I began the process of conducting individual interviews with waste pickers during December 2014. In my mind's eye, I would sit down with respondents and talk over a coffee somewhere quiet. In a setting more private than with everyone else at the river, waste pickers would have the opportunity to ask me anything they wanted to in confidence. I have not included any of the data from these interviews for several reasons.

Firstly, I was not convinced I had gained consent. The mistake I made was offering money as a small token of appreciation. I felt bad that waste pickers had given their time and, unlike in other funded research, had received nothing in return. I saved up R300 (USD 22.3/ GBP 17.2) so that I could remunerate the core group of waste pickers for their participation in my study. I planned to divide this sum between the core group and give it to each person at the end of their interview. It was a small gesture that I thought would round off the research.

I interviewed Tamas first. He immediately claimed the money for his drinking kitty to buy five litres of wine to share with the group. This set a precedent that all subsequent interviewees should put their interview money towards buying alcohol. I stopped arranging interviews as soon as I realised that people might be agreeing to be interviewed only to avoid having to explain to Tamas why they had passed up an opportunity to earn R25 (USD 1.7/ GBP 1.3). Secondly, the interviews felt oddly artificial. Apart from when Tamas walked me to the main road at the end of fieldwork, I had not spent time alone with any of the waste pickers because people always stayed in groups. In a group dynamic where mistrust is already pronounced, extracting one person to talk with in secret felt as if I could be causing a rift.

Thirdly, waste pickers had fixed ideas about what an interview with me meant. All waste pickers' previous one-on-one interactions with professionals had been with people who worked in the penal system and social services. Despite having known me for a year, once in an interview setting, waste pickers treated me like a psychologist or social worker: Tamas interpreted the interview as a test, Steven felt compelled to make resolutions to live a more conventional life, and Peng interpreted the interview as a request for his life story. I therefore also started to suspect the interview was a source of anxiety, in anticipation of being expected to divulge personal details about their past. Furthermore, all interview

narratives were driven by a misplaced sense of loyalty, which resulted in a desire to give me "good answers" to help make sure I passed my PhD.

After abandoning interviews I instead made a pledge to bring brunch every last Thursday in the month as gesture of my thanks for their participation in my research. In this way I have stayed in touch with Tamas and the people with whom he continues to work. I have therefore been on hand to update Tamas about where I am up to in the PhD process and answer any questions that he or anyone else has about the research. These monthly meet-ups have continued to date but I do not keep a record of them. These meet ups are therefore not "member checking" because I do not seek to triangulate or verify my findings to prove the validity of my analysis (see Koro-Ljungberg, 2010). Participants have not been formally involved in any data analysis, although I do share with them what I have been writing about. This brings me on to matters of "whose voices? whose choices?" (Cornwall, 2003) in my representation and relationship with waste pickers. In the following section I pick up on power relations in the researcher-researched relationship, via a discussion of my identity and the limitations this brought to the research.

4.2.3 Researcher Identity and Limitations

When conversations took place within participant observation, the research method resembled an interview style of engagement. These were occasions to enact particular kinds of narratives "in which 'informants' construct themselves and others as particular kinds of moral agents" (Atkinson & Coffey, 2002, p. 808). Conversations therefore became opportunities for participants to showcase their impression management skills and construct an idealised front, and for me to respond in ways that reflected how I wanted to be perceived. "As the research proceeds, therefore, the identities of the researcher and of the subjects are reciprocally constructed" (Gobo, 2008, p. 122). In some circumstances I became a status symbol for waste pickers, which I resisted by positioning Tamas as my work place superior and everyone else as colleagues. The unintended consequence of this construction was I entrenched the hierarchical power relations between waste pickers and cemented Tamas's place as group leader (see Chapter 7). These and other limitations were in part a result of my identity.

4.2.3.1 Language, Nationality, Class, Race and Gender

I was born in Brighton, have spent most of my life in England and speak with an English accent, which has not subsided since moving to Cape Town in 2011. In contrast,

the people whom I met while waste picking were mostly first language Afrikaans speakers. Unlike other British researchers who became fluent in Afrikaans before undertaking ethnography in South Africa (Cohen, 2015), I did not. This meant I was not privy to the many conversations that took place in Afrikaans, which would no doubt have been another way to reflect on front region (English) and back region (Afrikaans) interactions. Furthermore, anyone who was not fluent in English either did not speak to me or had his or her sentiments relayed via another person's English translation. This silences anyone who is monolingual. As alluded to earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 1, my reliance on English as the medium of communication can be criticised as an extension of a Eurocentric theory and method.

In my defence, upon arrival in Cape Town one of the first things I did was enroll and complete a language course. Unfortunately it was in Xhosa not Afrikaans. At that time I did not know I would be conducting research with Afrikaans speakers. In the absence of time and financial pressures to complete the PhD in three years, perhaps I would have learned Afrikaans. At the outset of fieldwork I thought I might pick up some basic language skills. As time passed, my inability to grasp even the basics of Afrikaans made me the butt of jokes which injected cold winter days with a much-needed source of humour. Not learning Afrikaans also gave research participants control over my access to information about them.

After reading about instances where criminologists have been pressured to let the police access their transcripts (Israel, 2004), and the alleged link between waste picking and criminality, I used language as a way to protect the research from being part of any legal investigation.[17] I promised Tamas and my core group that I would not translate anything that was said in Afrikaans. If anyone wanted to speak in private for any reason they could switch to Afrikaans and I would think nothing of it. For this reason, with some exceptions,[18] I did not ask English language speakers to translate anything that was said in Afrikaans in my company. In some ways restricting the medium of communication to English balanced the power relations. Notwithstanding any pressure that people may have

[17] My legal position as a waste picker was a grey area. The Public Nuisance By-Law prohibits "certain activities in connection with objects" (Province of Western Cape, 2007). Arresting me for washing returnable glass bottles in public or causing an obstruction by storing items on the street was a possibility, but unlikely and depends on how the legislation is interpreted.

[18] I ask Steven to translate what staff tell him to justify not serving the group (preceding Extract 27, Chapter 8) and I ask what the police officer says to make the group laugh (Extract 28, Chapter 8). I never asked waste pickers to translate what other waste pickers had said.

felt to converse in English, exerted by Tamas, I only know what people wanted me to hear and felt comfortable sharing with me.

In the UK my ethnicity is physically noticeable because I am half English and half Spanish. In South Africa, my olive skin tone and dark features have no bearing on my ethnicity because my European ancestry classifies me locally as 'white.' So although I am marked as different in the UK, privilege is not written on to my skin in the way that it is in Cape Town. I therefore cannot have conversations with waste pickers that might shed light on stigma through a shared sense of oppression because of skin colour. I am a similar age to the waste pickers with whom I worked but the rest of our biographies were dramatically different.

I grew up in a working class family with an income low enough to mean I was eligible for free school meals, but have become upwardly mobile by completing formal education to post graduate level. In Britain the divide between State and private education means I am not classed as privileged. In South Africa merely the number of years I have spent in education makes me privileged, not only compared to waste pickers but to most of the rest of the population. Although I felt able to capitalise on my working class roots to "build rapport" (Duncombe & Jessop, 2002) with waste pickers, previous experiences of conducting research in Cape Town had alerted me to the significance of physical attributes. Although the apartheid "pencil test"[19] no longer exists in practice, ideologically my type of hair (straight) is associated with colonial racism (Erasmus, 1997). I took this into account because I wanted to distance myself from historical power relations (see Chapter 2), given that my research participants would have historically been classified as 'coloured' or 'black.' I therefore made sure I dressed like other people, I always wore a scarf that I fashioned into a head covering, and arrived ready to work alongside everyone else.

While I made a valiant attempt to minimise the differences between researcher and research participants, one of the key limitations on the research is my gender. It is beyond the scope of the project to give an in-depth discussion of hegemonic masculinities, but suffice to say that Jewkes (2015) presentation on gendered power relations struck a chord with me. For example, when Tamas tried to hold my hand I had to explain why this was

[19] A method used to classify "whites" and "non whites." "If a person's hair was sufficiently tightly curled to hold a pencil, then supposedly that person was not white" (Posel, 2001, p. 105).

not acceptable in a way that did not threaten his masculinity in front of the group. My decision to not have children was repeatedly criticised and questioned to the point where I was told I was not a woman (fieldnotes, week 25, October 2, 2014). One of the reasons I stopped fieldwork after three months was because tactfully dealing with sexism was exhausting. The upshot was that I missed out on three months of fieldwork, which means that data does not represent an entire year. For reasons I have never fathomed, when I returned after a three-month break, sexism seemed less pronounced and/or easier for me to negotiate.

4.2.3.2 Identity, Data Gathering and Analysis

Feminists have critiqued traditional ethnography for focusing on relatively powerless groups with the researcher "exploiting their powerlessness to carry out the research" (Hammersley, 1994, p. 12). In contrast, at times I had to resist being dictated to by research participants about how I should conduct the research. For example, I was directed to ask questions. If I was quiet for too long, this was interpreted as a cause for concern and attracted multiple enquiries into my wellbeing. My insistence on building a reciprocal research relationship was tested most weeks. I had to re-state that I would help waste pickers sort and carry things in return for being able to conduct my research. My refusal to accept any remuneration in cash or kind for this work was a regular bone of contention.

Shehata's (2006) fieldwork investigation of social class particularly resonated with me. He notes "How people reacted to what I was doing and their expectations of me were revealing their attitudes and understandings of what social class in the factory and society is all about" (2006, p. 246). Similarly it quickly became obvious to me that the way to learn about waste pickers was not to ask specific questions about stigma, stereotypes or attributes. But instead, to pay close attention to others' reactions to me as an individual and my decision to conduct participant observation. To some it seemed unbelievable that a European would choose to pick through the bins for any reason. Several times Tamas's friends came to the river, where waste pickers drank after work ended, to see me for themselves and verify what Tamas had told them.

In the first two months of research I was asked a range of personal questions, some of which were to do with how rich I was which I did not anticipate. Being British is associated with wealth and therefore waste pickers wanted to know my earnings and if my family sent me money. I managed to convince the core group with whom I worked that I

was not rich and gave them a breakdown of my income and outgoings. People outside of this core group who did not get to know me over time were less convinced. A memorable heated exchange occurred between Tamas and a man who thought him gullible to believe that I did not stand to gain financially from my affiliation with waste pickers. It transpired his mistrust stemmed from his experience with a 'white' woman who had not been transparent about her use of funding. Supposedly raised to help homeless people, no one had seen any evidence of her help beyond some blankets.

As noted by Shehata "it was these situations – provoked by my failure to fit standard expectations – that proved the most revelatory" (2006, p. 247). What I was doing and how I was doing it was so out of the ordinary that it helped me to tell a story about what *is* ordinary to waste pickers. They are avoided by 'white' women and when "wealthy foreigners" do interact with waste pickers it is part of charitable giving. Therefore, when conducting analysis of waste pickers' interactions, themes of prejudice, stereotypes and discrediting others, felt significant because of my first hand experiences with these dynamics. Although my research was flexible and open ended, my identity and attitude have shaped the data I gathered and my research findings.

The unintended consequence of covering my hair was that people mistook me for Muslim, which may have led to more conversations about religion than would have been the case otherwise. During transcription of field recordings, it felt as if religion was a recurring theme that may have significance. I created a code for religion and analysed the text but did not feel it was actually telling me anything about the place of stigma. One way of seeing this decision is as having mistakenly demarcated religion as significant. Equally plausible is that sidelining the place of religion was easy because I do not have any specific religious faith. However, nothing emerged during the course of further analysis or reviews of literature over the subsequent year, to make me re-consider the annexing of religion as a code, theme or discourse.

Early on in my analysis I noticed the re-emergence of talk about qualifications. The primacy of education and training in waste pickers' presentation of self in the early stages of fieldwork needs to be read within the context of conversations that were largely with me. In presenting the research and myself, I explained that the purpose of the PhD was to get an additional qualification so that I could teach at university. If instead I was an ex-gang member, and had disclosed this to waste pickers, skills may not have been mentioned by waste pickers' to the extent that they were. The underlying point is that waste pickers' choices about how to present themselves to me were in part a response to my identity.

Consequently, in preliminary analysis, I made the connection between the stereotypes of waste pickers as uneducated and waste pickers' presentation of self as skilled.

4.2.3.3 Situated Ethics

"Situated ethics" (Calvey, 2008) in qualitative research, also known as "ethics in use" or "ethics in practice," have replaced the previous indiscriminate use of generalised ethical standards associated with the medical sciences (Guillemin & Heggen, 2012, p. 701). This does not mean that qualitative researchers should not aspire to high ethical standards, but rather that the principles of informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality and avoiding causing harm are evaluated in light of the context of individual research projects. For my research, the potential for ethical objections stemmed largely from my use of a concealed recorder to capture verbal interactions with waste pickers.[20] Hidden recorders are associated with covert research and deceptive practices because of the ethical criticisms of Humphrey's infamous study (Warwick, 1982).

Following Lugosi (2006), I took an incremental approach to asking waste pickers' consent to conduct research and record our conversations. In the first few weeks when I introduced myself to people (in English) I explained why I was recording and waste pickers' right to ask me to stop the research at any time, no questions asked. Tamas added his own version in Afrikaans, which included an explanation of the purpose of the recordings. By the end of the first month of research the core group of waste pickers all knew I was recording and where the recorder was located on my person.[21] They knew that the range of the microphone was short enough that if they were more than two metres or so away from me, unless they were shouting, it was unlikely that they would be heard clearly.

Instead of a consent form, I asked Tamas two questions at the beginning of each fieldwork session: "Is it ok if I work with you this morning?" and "Do I still have your permission to record?" I was asked to leave on only one occasion over the course of 2014. After waste picking ended (phase 1) Tamas told me that he did not have enough money to see him through the day. This meant that he needed to go and beg which was something he did not want me to see (fieldnotes, week 13, June 12, 2014). I immediately left without

[20] I authored a journal article which discusses ethical considerations in detail, titled "In support of situated ethics: Countering stigma through ethnographic fieldwork with 'waste pickers' in Cape Town" (Revised and submitted to Qualitative Research Journal in April 2016).

[21] I did not have money to buy a recorder so I borrowed the one that I used in interviews in my part time job as a research assistant. I fashioned a wearable recorder pouch out of a sock and a swimming costume so that the recorder stayed in place on my chest. I wore a T-shirt over the top of the swimsuit and in the winter wore warm layers underneath it.

hesitation. My loyalty was to waste pickers and therefore most other people who I did not know by name (residents, passersby, police and security staff) were not informed that I was recording. The utility of the recorder was not to catch people out, but to help me recollect interactions in as much detail as possible. In-depth accounts were also important in ensuring that the research achieved "rich rigor" and "credibility" as defined by Tracy (2010). Although I do not use quantitative terminology (validity, reliability and replicability), this research aims to be "trustworthy enough to act on and make decisions in line with" (2010, p. 843).

I have also aimed to ensure that "appropriate time, effort, care, and thoroughness" went into the choice and application of research methods and techniques used to analyse data (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). Transparency is important in avoiding the justified critiques, often levelled at qualitative investigations that otherwise appear "random, unintentionally intuitive, or non-systematic" (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009, p. 696). It is with this critique in mind that I turn to matters of rigour and credibility in my application of thematic and discourse analysis.

4. PART 3. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND THE ETHICS OF TEXTUAL REPRESENTATION

The previous sections have explicated my use of situated ethics (Calvey, 2008) during fieldwork, such as gaining consent from research participants and the politics of power relations between waste pickers and myself. This last section explains how I reached a point where I was able to select and analyse the specific sections of fieldnotes, as they appear in the findings chapters that follow (Extracts 1-29). In doing so I reflect on the ethical considerations of textual representations of waste pickers. I end with an explanation of my use of thematic and discourse analysis.

4.3.1 Transcription, Text and Preliminary Analysis

As other researchers with large qualitative data sets have found, the benefits of doing the work of transcribing oneself outweigh the time cost (E. L. Prinsloo, 2015, p. 45) for several reasons. Firstly, I was able to analyse while I transcribed by annotating the transcript as and when thoughts came to mind. I immediately identified some strips of text that spoke to theory and/or literature as a place to begin my preliminary analysis, or at the very least warrant a second reading. These annotations ended with the word "analyse" (see Figure 2) so I could easily locate parts of the transcript and my accompanying notes, using

a simple text search. This meant that as soon as I had finished transcribing I could quickly access and code text that I felt warranted closer examination. This initial round of coding constituted a fraction (50 pages) of the total body of fieldnotes (approximately 1000 pages), which made initial rounds of analysis more manageable.

The second advantage of doing my own transcription that I could, to some extent, re-live the fieldwork in the surrounds of a quiet office. I was able to clarify talk that I had not heard clearly at the time during fieldwork. I also heard conversations that were going on in the background while my attention was somewhere else. For example, it was not until I transcribed recordings from week 7 (February 20, 2014) that I heard a conversation between Steven and a builder (See Extract 10). Other than this interaction, unique because it is the only time anyone discloses their income, I chose not to transcribe parallel conversations that were not directed towards me. It was not my intention to capture things that people said when they knew my attention was averted.

4.3.1.1 Original and Translated Text

While listening to recordings I was transported back to the place where interactions happened and was able to recall the context of talk with relative ease, in order to interpret the meaning of what was said. It was not until I started to share my preliminary findings with peers that the extent to which the transcriptions were indecipherable to others became apparent to me. I therefore decided to present transcripts from fieldnotes in two columns (See Extracts 1-29). The left column is the transcription as it appears in my fieldnotes and the right column is an added translation, to clarify how I have interpreted the meaning of what was said. Preceding each extract is a short synopsis of the context in which dialogue took place to further elucidate the meaning of what was said.

Furthermore, I felt it important to have both the phrasing used by waste pickers and my Anglicised translation, to make transparent the contrast between the two textual representations. I was acutely aware that waste pickers' put time and thought into how best to phrase things so I would understand their English and that their voices are already marginalised. I therefore saw it as morally wrong to re-write what was said and confine fieldnotes to an appendix. To "correct" waste picker's phrasing with my own tidier and more orderly version of what was said, would be to potentially entrench the "will to order" that I am critical of.

Waste pickers often mixed English and Afrikaans within a single narrative. Talk omitted when waste pickers' switched to Afrikaans is indicated using "(…)[Afrikaans]."

The exceptions to this rule was some Afrikaans slang and swear words that I came to understand through the context of their usage. Not all of these phrases have direct English translations, but I have included what I understood them to mean in the right column. When talk was indecipherable from the recording I have indicated this using "(…)[inaudible]".

4.3.1.2 Thematic and Discourse Analysis

Following on from the earlier discussion of analytic bracketing (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011), in looking for the *whats* and the *whys*, I drew on texts that aid the practical work of conducting thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994) and critical discourse analysis (Johnstone, 2008). Although there are overlaps between the two, both use coding for example, there are also key differences. To my mind thematic analysis is more concerned with taking *what* is said in transcripts at face-value. Codes are developed based on grouping text together into themes based on the content of the writing. In contrast, discourse analysis is more concerned with looking beyond the words, to ascertain *why* the text is the way it is. This involves going beyond a summary of the transcript content and asking questions of it.

My approach was guided by my experiences of analysing texts in previous research (Jawitz & Perez, 2016; Perez, 2013). These analyses were informed by reading a variety of texts (Billig & Schegloff, 1999; Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 2011; Van Dijk, 1993; Wooffitt, 2005), but I frequently returned to Johnstone (2008) as a reminder of the questions I can ask myself with each read-through of fieldnotes. Similar to thematic analysis these include asking "Are some words or phrases repeated significantly more frequently than others?" A departure from thematic analysis are questions such as "What theoretical perspective is the speaker taking? Why are explanations this way and no other way? Who is the intended audience? What assumptions are being made?" (2008, pp. 3-10). For me this questioning of a text is what it means to interrogate the text.

4.3.1.3 Interrogating the Text

There is no standardised method or procedure that researchers use to interrogate texts. Explicating qualitative analysis is challenging because analysis is non-linear and iterative (de Wet & Erasmus, 2005). In order to make my analytical train of thought more transparent, I have taken three examples of annotations from my fieldnotes, which I use to

explain my combination of thematic and discourse analysis. These are labelled Extracts A-C in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Examples of Annotations Made to Fieldnotes

Extract A
On the one hand they say you can't go hungry because so many people donate food, but on the other hand, it is gone 10am and Ryan has not eaten yet, contradiction, analyse. Tension between wanting to show how they live informed by a discourse of "independent dependence," but also the extent of suffering punctuates their stories.
(fieldnotes, week 22, August 28, 2014)

Extract B
He mentions this several times, it is clearly something that is really important to him. Funny mix of justice and morality in some contexts and no sense of morality in others – especially when it comes to gender and sexuality, analyse. It occurs to me that the others think that they don't have to give her anything because Tamas does it.
(fieldnotes, week 20, August 7, 2014)

Extract C
I think it is Pele who is jealous and yet again, he tries to make me feel embarrassed/ bad, draw attention to the status of my relationship with Tamas. It appears to be beyond his conception that I could be friends with all of them equally, analyse.
(fieldnotes, week 25, October 2, 2014)

In Extract A (Figure 2) I first note the topic of conversation from what "they [waste pickers] say" ("you can't go hungry because so many people donate food"). This is in line with a thematic analysis that could go on to identify text that also talks about the same topic, to develop a dominant theme of opinions about food and hunger. However, this is not my motivation for marking out the text as an extract for closer analysis. I go beyond what "they say" by imposing my own interpretation of the chain of conversation as exhibiting a "contradiction." I then think about what has informed a stance of both being hungry yet claiming to not go hungry and characterise this as a "tension." I speculate that there is a discourse of "independent dependence," again my imposition of what could inform the way waste pickers talk about food.

In Extract B (Figure 2) I have got to a point in my transcription when I am starting to notice when things are being repeated. Repetition of words is a feature of both thematic and discourse analysis. Rather than merely identify repetition as evidence of a dominant theme (thematic analysis), I instead interpret repetition as an indicator of the importance of the words, particularly as Tamas is the only one who repeats the word. I characterise talk

as a "mix of justice and morality" which I go on to compare to other sections of talk that is also informed by this mixture (such as Tamas's opinions about "gender and sexuality"). This extends analysis from *what* ideas are to *how* they compare to other ideas expressed, to come to some conclusions about *why* these ideas have been expressed in this particular way.

The note in Extract C (Figure 2) does not conform to a thematic analysis. I am not concerned with what Pele has said but rather what he is trying to achieve through what he says and the timing of his comments. The frequency ("yet again") is not noted to identify a dominant theme, but as evidence that "it appears to be beyond his conception that I could be friends with all of them [waste pickers] equally." This note helps me to begin to identify the way that discourses work in shaping talk, by making some ways of thinking less possible than others.

These annotations proved useful in identifying sections of text to interrogate further. The extracts in Chapters 5-8 are the result of text that has been annotated in the manner indicated in Figure 2. Further questioning of the text with Nvivo software narrowed down strips of text that were indicative of several themes and helped to show up where language appeared to be functioning in several different ways. These sections were copied and pasted into a blank Word document at which point I added my analysis, by drawing connections with my theoretical framework, written underneath each extract. What appears in Chapters 5-8 are these detailed analyses of text from one interaction as indicative of waste pickers' interactions more generally. This is not to suggest that findings are generalisable, but rather that extracts are indicative of a finding that surfaced several times during the course of analysis.

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

My insistence on picking through rubbish with my bare hands was initially met with confusion by peers and waste pickers. Given that I could just as easily ask waste pickers about their work, as researchers before me have done, it seemed absurd to risk my health and safety by joining a group of waste pickers. To my mind, by contrast, the absurdity lay in imagining I could investigate something as insidious as stigma without ever having picked through a bin. This chapter has set out the theoretical assumptions that I make to arrive at this position.

The structure of my findings chapters arose out of my first rounds of writing and analysis that developed in the months immediately following fieldwork that ended in

December 2014. Over the course of 2015 I drafted five themed sections, “dirt and difference,” “constructing the mask,” “wearing the mask,” “the mask slips,” and “capacity to change.” These were condensed and refined into four findings chapters as they appear in this thesis. Cutting across these categories is the overarching theme of enablement and constraint, with an undercurrent of the tension between front and back region performances. These threads are used to draw together the four findings sections in the concluding chapter.

FINDINGS: OVERVIEW

The analysis of the interactions of waste pickers, from my experiences of working with a group on the streets of Cape Town, has been divided into four chapters (Chapters 5-8).[22] I start by explaining how evident stigma is in waste pickers' interactions (Chapter 5). This chapter establishes the premise that waste pickers' physical appearance is highly stigmatising yet talk of stigma and stereotypes was relatively absent from their verbal accounts. Given this silence, Chapter 6 analyses waste pickers' presentation of self. I use Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theory of agency to explain how waste picking is largely constructed as a choice.

Chapters 7 and 8 analyse how stigma enables and constrains waste pickers' agency. Although enablement and constraint operate simultaneously (Giddens, 1984), Chapter 7 gives primacy to sources of constraint. I argue that the construction of waste picking as a choice is undermined by waste pickers' inability to conceal discrediting behaviour. Even though stigma is a constraint, Chapter 8 analyses the sources of enablement to waste pickers' agency. Using Scott (1985), I argue that although often non-verbal and confined to back region spaces, waste pickers thwart efforts to restrict their movement in affluent suburbs. Chapter 9 unites elements of Chapters 5-8 to draw overall conclusions about the tension between front and back region performances in interactions between waste pickers and different social groups.

Each chapter follows the same structure with a distinct beginning, middle and end. A chapter introduction helps the reader to navigate the content in that specific chapter. The middle is structured around a series of vignettes, which are extracts taken from fieldnotes. These have been deconstructed in incremental detail, incorporating thematic and discourse analysis. With the aim of threading together primary and secondary sources, preceding and subsequent chapters are signposted regularly and links to theory are made throughout. The middle sections of chapters are divided into three parts, which is consistent with the structure of previous chapters. Each chapter ends with a conclusion that leads into the next chapter.

[22] Although I use the phrase 'waste pickers' in my findings, I am referring to the waste pickers with whom I worked and not waste pickers more generally.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS: STIGMA

Historical attitudes towards dirt (Douglas, 1966) combined with contemporary negative attitudes towards the informal sector (D. A. McDonald, 2008), set the context in which waste pickers operate in Cape Town. The resulting atmosphere of suspicion towards waste picking led me to presume that waste pickers would likely feel stigmatised. The absence of any consensus over naming waste picking points to the connection that "normals" (Goffman, 1963) draw between the attributes of waste pickers and homeless stereotypes:

> Homeless figures are presented negatively, as models to be avoided, and thus as illustrations of the value of other ways of being. Their roles and their traits emerge from their place in ancient narratives. They are the descendants of witches, old hags, tramps, drunks, beggars, mendicants and madmen. (Desjarlais, 1997, p. 5)

This chapter presents evidence that waste pickers' appearance and manner conform to the "homeless figure" (drunk, beggars, tramps, madmen) and criminal stereotype, which underpins my claim that waste pickers and waste picking are treated as "models to be avoided." In this chapter I excavate waste pickers' conversations with me to surface the place of stigma in their interactions, which I have grouped together into three parts.

Part one conveys what the physical appearance of the waste pickers communicates about their identity. I discuss the discrediting physical attributes that can be concealed (tattoos) and contrast them with ones that are more difficult to conceal (teeth and race). **Part two** shifts the emphasis from my interpretation of stigma symbols to the few pieces of evidence that indicate waste pickers perceptions of stigma. I present strips of text that reveal the assumptions that waste pickers make about the prejudice that normals exhibit against them.

Part three presents interactions that are to some extent permeated with silences or absences. This is with a view to evidencing stigma through impression management strategies, which sets the analytical tone for the rest of the findings (Chapters 6-8). The overarching themes in this chapter are the sources of stigma and strategies employed to reduce the discrediting power of stereotypical assumptions that underpin them.

5. PART 1. THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF WASTE PICKERS

Following Goffman (1963), appearance encompasses fixed or changeable attributes that can be concealed with varying levels of difficulty. For waste pickers, discrediting parts of their appearance were varied and multiple. In my interactions with waste pickers, the attributes that I connected to negative stereotypes, and therefore a source of stigma, included body modifications, scarring, teeth, hair type, skin type, body size, facial features and clothing. Evidence that these physical markers are stigmatising is based on accounts in the literature about waste pickers rather than anything that waste pickers told me (See Chapters 1 and 2).

Of all waste pickers' discreditable physical attributes, few waste pickers ever talked about them. When they were mentioned (mostly by Tamas, my key informant), it was as part of a story unrelated to stigma. Of these instances, I have selected attributes that illustrate the difficulty with which physical stigma symbols can be concealed among the waste pickers with whom I worked. Thus, stigma management strategies that enable other groups to pass as normal are largely unavailable to waste pickers. Part one of this chapter explains how tattoos, missing teeth and racial identity surfaced in interactions, as a constraint to making a good first impression.

5.1.1 Tattoos

In other parts of the world, "tattoos no longer automatically carry a stigma because they are no longer shared markers of criminality and masculinity" (Turner, 2012, p. 13). This is not the case with waste pickers' tattoos, known as "chappies," because they are synonymous with gang culture. Named after bubble gum wrappers that contain "did you know?" facts (Read, 2008), chappies fulfil a similar function. They communicate a gang member's status and rank, and "serve as a constant reminder of who they are and what they've done" (Goode & Murray, 2014). Some of the waste pickers with whom I worked had spent much of their life in Pollsmoor prison and were previously part of the numbers gangs (Steinberg, 2004) and therefore their chappies are the number 26, 27 or 28 (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3[23]

Examples of Tattoos and Chappies

Photo taken as part of a photojournalist's blog post about freegans in Vancouver, Canada	Martin was photographed as part of an exhibition in Cape Town of former South African prisoners titled "Life after"
	

Source: Left photo (Nelms, 2012), Right photo (de Clermont, 2008)

The two photos in Figure 3 show the difference between tattoos and chappies. On the left, a "freegan" sifts through a bin for food showing both arms that are heavily tattooed. On the right, an ex-inmate has fewer markings but they are not confined to his body. These chappies use pigment made from "grinding up rubbish bins, industrial rubber washers, batteries, or bricks. This will then be mixed with saliva, and will be pushed under the skin with nails pulled out of furniture, or sewing needles" (de Clermont, 2008). This method makes chappies distinct from finely detailed tattoos designed professionally and drawn in the skin with sterile needles (Figure 3, left photo). Chappies are more likely to be on the face, neck and hands (Figure 3, right photo) in a deliberate attempt to make it more difficult to renounce gang affiliation (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2010). People are secretive about the meanings of chappies because a lot of them are to do with violence (Allie, 2008).

[23] None of the photos used in this thesis are of people who took part in my research.

"They got tattoos on their faces"

The following interaction (Extract 1) takes place while Tamas accompanies me from the river, where we have been sitting with a larger group, to the main road before I go home. While we walk, he starts to talk about the people with whom we were previously sitting.

EXTRACT 1
Fieldnotes, Week 5, February 6, 2014

1	Tamas: They got tattoos on their faces	They have tattoos on their face
2	Me: They got	They have what?
3	Tamas: Tattoos on their faces	
4	Me: Yeah	
5	Tamas: All of them, (…)[inaudible	
6	name], that other one who was also sat	
7	there, didn't you see? This one also got	
8	tattoos on his face. When they are in	
9	prison, they are nongies, they like sex,	"Nongies" comes from the name
10	it's sex, the other young guys that's	Nongoloza in The Number gang's
11	coming into prison, they didn't know the	folklore. See Charlton (2012) for a
12	prison,	history of the numbers gang.
13	Me: Mmmm	Members of the 28 gang succumb to anal
14	Tamas: They sex them, show the	sex acts
15	(…)[Afrikaans]. You know what is called	
16	the (…) [Afrikaans] In the bum.	
17	Me: o.k.	
18	Tamas: That's why I don't want you	
19	Me: So people with	
20	Tamas: to say a lot to these people,	
21	because um (…) [he greets someone on	
22	the street] because they never cut a guy,	They are not used to perpetrating
23	they never, ah, other sort of um, done this	violence
24	with you. I don't want you to be like	I don't want you to be exposed to these
25	(…)[inaudible] people. Now me, I'm,	people
26	I'm different, because 26, go for money.	
27	How it works, when I change, when I get	I'm different because I was part of the 26
28	old and grey, I go for blood.	gang. I function to generate money for
29	Me: And that's 27? Or 28?	the gangs. When I get older, my function
30	Tamas: 27	will change to committing acts that lead
31	Me: 27	to bloodshed

When Tamas begins to explain the significance of facial tattoos (lines 1, 3, 5-11). I assume that he supposes I am curious given how inescapably noticeable the markings are (lines 6-7). Rather than go into any degree of detail about the individual meaning of tattoos, he uses them as a way to mark himself out as different. Unlike him, others have fallen prey to

sexual exploitation because they are unfamiliar with life in prison (lines 9-12). As a result of their unfamiliarity they, with or without consent, have had anal sex. He uses this as evidence that I should not talk to these people too much (lines 18 and 20) and he does not like that I am around them. The underlying assumption is that they are inferior and pose some sort of potential threat to me.

In contrast, he was a member of a different gang, has no tattoos on his face, with the implication that he has not exposed himself to anal sex in prison. His gang affiliation is superior because it is money motivated (lines 25-26) and not sexual. As he progresses through the ranks (lines 26-28) the crime he commits leads to blood shed (not sexual interactions). The 26's focus is on financing the gang (line 26), the 27's focus is on maintaining order via whatever means necessary (lines 27-30) and the 28's are the "Nongies" (line 9). Tamas's concern is not about my interactions with ex-prisoners and/or prison gang members but, for reasons that remain somewhat oblique, I should not become too friendly with people who have tattoos on their faces. This subtle creation of a hierarchy, with Tamas at the top, is a recurring theme that I return to in subsequent chapters.

When the conversation in Extract 1 took place I had not known Tamas long. In the absence of an interview schedule waste pickers dictated what sort of things to talk about. In Extract 1, Tamas's choice of conversation topic communicates several things. Firstly, that he was concerned about my wellbeing as a result of who I was mixing with. As the weeks progressed it became clear that the interaction above was in part driven by his interpretation of my behaviour as too trusting and friendly, ultimately leading to my harm – in particular rape (fieldnotes, week 10, March 13, 2014; week 15, June 25, 2014). Secondly, that there are intricate divisions and connections between the gangs. I do not go into these here, but gang affiliation may be of significance in other studies that seek to understand the group dynamics between waste pickers more broadly.

The relevance of prison gangs for this project is the impact on waste pickers stigma and agency. Unlike the others who were unable to cover their chappies, Tamas chose to conceal the markings that revealed his prison past. The only time I saw his chappies on his upper body was during the very last week that I worked as a waste picker. Tamas was standing outside a train station with the things he had collected that morning laid out on the ground ready to sort and pack. Unusually a coach party of people had parked up, and Tamas was able to negotiate sales of the items to earn himself R120 (USD 8 / GBP 6) in the space of 15 minutes. During this time he took off his long sleeves, which he quickly

put back on, audibly commenting on his "horrible chappies" (fieldnotes, week 33, November 27, 2014). Unlike the "freegan" in Figure 4, I never saw Tamas wear short sleeves even in the hottest summer months.

The significance for waste pickers' presentation of self is that chappies are not a symbol of an alternative lifestyle choice as with freegans' tattoos in the global north. In Cape Town, audiences are uncertain about who these people are that they see sifting through their rubbish and what their purpose is (M. Samson, 2010, p. 9). Amid this uncertainty, the neighbourhood watch and private security firms have been known to disseminate newsletters that link waste pickers to crime (Greenfield, 2014; Medcalf, 2013). The connection between waste pickers and criminality is given credence when residents see chappies on waste pickers' faces. Chappies therefore fuel the suspicion that waste pickers are not to be trusted given that they were, and might still be, part of a criminal gang.

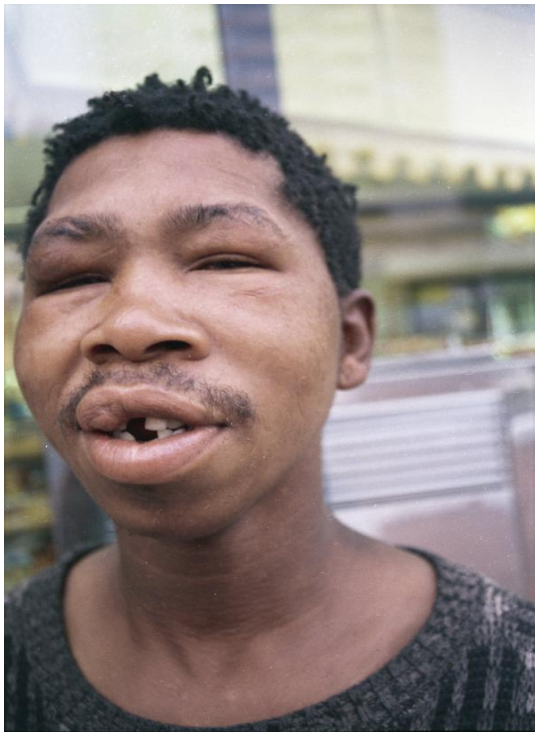
This distrust is exacerbated by the fear of crime in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, evidenced by the increase in security measures and hiring of security firms. This trend "perpetuates the social divisions that were inherent in the apartheid State into the post-apartheid context, with the fear of crime being used as a justification for a predominantly racist fear of difference" (Lemanski, 2004, p. 101). It is these differences to which I now turn with regard to parts of waste pickers' physical appearance that they were less able to conceal.

5.1.2 The Mystery of Missing Teeth

The interaction above alludes to the "mystification" (Goffman, 1959, p. 45) around the meaning of waste pickers' physical appearance, where what you are is left to the audience's imagination. Goffman discusses mystification with reference to the awe that can be created by using concealment to limit individuals' contact with the audience. For example, on a ship the captain does not dine with the crew, creating "social distance," which lends the captain as an authority figure some artificial mystery (1959, p. 45). However, the "social distance" between waste pickers and normals is not born out of awe, but from a lack of knowledge about the "other." Unlike a ship captain, I argue that mystification leads to stigma rather than status because physical appearance, manner and gestures (social front) are connected to homeless stereotypes and thereby "models to be avoided" (Desjarlais, 1997, p. 5).

Even in the absence of any tattoos, waste pickers' facial features mark them as different. For example, many of the waste pickers with whom I worked had a substantial number of teeth missing. Dental modification by having incisors removed is a known cultural practice among people who identify as 'coloured' in the Western Cape (Friedling & Morris, 2005). However some of the speculation about why people have healthy teeth removed are shaped by and reinforce negative stereotypes of bodies according to race and social class (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4
Examples of Dental Modification and the Stereotype of Homelessness

Photograph of an anonymous teenager in Cape Town posted in a local online forum titled "Why do we pull out our front teeth?"	Photograph titled "Bergie" featured online as artwork submitted for the Expectations 2010 Prize
	

Source: Left photo (Blandy, 2009b) Right photo (Frank, 2009)

Known as the "passion gap" or "Cape Flats smile" (Blandy, 2009a), reasons for taking out front teeth include the following: the result of a history of dental malpractice in impoverished parts of Cape Town, peer pressure, a fashion statement, a rite of passage into adulthood, to make way for gold teeth that have yet to be fitted, part of gang culture and to improve your partner's experience of oral sex and kissing (Moeti, 2013). All of these reasons are associated with working class tastes (Bourdieu, 1984). Partial dentures are

worn by "people who need to look acceptable at work or for special occasions" (Blandy, 2009a), in order to present a more middle class appearance, in settings outside the Cape Flats (for synopsis of living conditions in the Cape Flats see Chapter 2).

Whatever the reason, a lack of teeth communicates difference and low status. Audiences are unable to differentiate between a lack of teeth signalling gang affiliation from a person who has been the victim of medical malpractice. The broad range of possible motivations mean that audiences cannot be sure why waste pickers' teeth are missing unless they ask them. However, the prospect of normals having the level of familiarity with waste pickers that would enable them to converse about identity traits are constrained because of the multiple sources of physical stigma symbols. It is not only missing teeth that marks their body as "models to be avoided" (Desjarlais, 1997), but the multiple discreditable attributes that reinforce each other. The waste pickers with whom I worked physically conformed to the stereotypes of criminals (see Figure 3, right photo) and homelessness (see Figure 4, right photo).

"All my teeth is out"

The following interaction (Extract 2) takes place while walking with Tamas from one suburb to another after waste picking had finished. During the journey, conversations traversed school life, parts of his childhood and relationship with his parents. The story culminates in a re-cap of sex in prisons and the gang structure before explaining why he does not have many teeth left.

EXTRACT 2
Fieldnotes, week 22, August 28, 2014

1	Tamas: You see, all my teeth is out.	
2	That's how, the wardens in prison,	
3	(…)[inaudible] like 40 wardens,	
4	Me: 40?	
5	Tamas: You know the batons they have	
6	Me: yeah	
7	Tamas: 40, in a long lane, hit me, hit me.	40 wardens cornered me while I was in
8	Get me in the shower and throw	the shower and attacked me until I was
9	(…)[inaudible]. I'm down in the gutter,	unconscious because I stabbed other
10	gone I just, I'm out. That's because I am	people, including a warden in prison
11	stabbing some other people in prison. I	
12	sommer stabbed a warden in prison. I	I had to commit the stabbing, I know that
13	must stab. I know I got mind. I not scared	I had a choice, but I wasn't scared of
14	[of] people. You must see my body ne?	anyone. If you see my body, it is covered
15	You must see my body. A lot of holes I	in stab wounds from being part of a gang
16	get from stabbing, gangsterism	
17	Me: yeah	
18	Tamas: My head also, they hit me	They hit me on the head too, but I am
19	(…)[inaudible] to hit me in my head, but	still here
20	I'm still here. I'm still here. You know	
21	why? Me I go happy goes lucky.	I am happy go lucky. Anything I have,
22	Anything I got, (…)[inaudible] with	when I am with other people, people like
23	people, maybe like (…)[inaudible] also,	me, they can see I am always there for
24	they can see I'm always there, to see. I	other people. If you ask me for
25	can't say no to people. If you ask me	something to eat and I have money, I will
26	something to eat, and I have, I go to the	go to the shop and buy you something to
27	(inaudible). You will see it,	eat. You will see for yourself what I am
28	(…)[inaudible] people, buy you some	like, I share with people. I also share my
29	(….)[Inaudible] I share my mind also	thoughts with you
30	with you.	
31	Me: yes	

Tamas's reasons for having so few teeth conform to negative criminal stereotypes, having had most of his teeth knocked out at the hands of prison guards (line 2). Tamas could have attempted to garner sympathy about the brutality of excessive force (lines 7-10), integral to apartheid-era prison regimes (Steinberg, 2004). Instead he justifies the wardens' behaviour as a response to his conscious choice (lines 12-13) to stab other inmates (lines 10-11) and a member of prison staff (lines 11-12). He described but did not show me the scars from cuts and puncture wounds (lines 15-16) as a result of this and subsequent fights. He talks about damage and scars to his head (lines 18-19), which may explain why he nearly always wore a hat of some sort. Tamas uses these stories of violence as testament to his "easy come, easy go" philosophy of life (line 21). Further evidence of his carefree and easy going

nature is his willingness to share (lines 22-23). This is to the point where he has no urge to decline any requests (lines 24-25), for example in relation to food (lines 25-26). He ends by pointing out that I too am a recipient of his generosity, through his willingness to share his thoughts with me (lines 29-30).

The way that Tamas moves from discreditable physical attributes (lack of teeth) to a presentation of non-stereotypical manners became a familiar pattern in his narratives. Over and above his tendency to present an idealised front, Tamas's presentation of self was used to generate status and social distance (Murphy, 1986). In doing so he elevated himself above other waste pickers and positioned waste pickers as above low-wage workers in the social hierarchy. Before exploring these agential aspects of impression management, I first consider what waste pickers impression was of audiences' perceptions of them and their work.

5. PART 2. AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

In part one I looked at instances where waste pickers' appearance connected them to stereotypes that stigmatise them as homeless criminals. In part two I come to the other part of social fronts that Goffman (1959) terms "manner." Unlike physical features, manner is more to do with audiences' expectations of a performer. Audiences' expectations are shaped by (and construct) social fronts, through which the unfamiliar can be made familiar by labelling people using generalisable categories (See Chapter 3). I now consider aspects of waste pickers' personal front with regard to audiences' expectations from the perspective of waste pickers.

5.2.1 Assumptions about the Homeless

The manner associated with homeless stereotypes is partly a result of broader discourses, fed by government, that position those that live and work on the streets as people to be avoided. The expectation is that if someone physically appears to be homeless their interactions with normals are likely to involve gestures such as begging. The public are therefore discouraged from interacting with homeless beggars because face-to-face charitable giving encourages people to remain on the street (Cape Town Central City Improvement District, 2008; City of Cape Town, 2014a). The underlying "will to order" (Scanlon, 2005) results in an avoidance of interactions with homeless people and the harassment of waste pickers, and their removal by agencies of social control (see Chapter 2).

"they think 'oh they're homeless, they're stinking'"

As mentioned earlier, waste pickers are labelled as "bergies" in Cape Town when their physical appearance conforms to homeless stereotypes (see Figure 4, right photo). The negative connotations of this term were conveyed to me in the early weeks of fieldwork and I made sure not to use it. The term bergie is absent from fieldnotes other than where it is used once as an insult (fieldnotes, week 5, February 6, 2014). Extract 3 is representative of waste pickers' perception that normals assumed, because of waste pickers' homeless appearance, that they are all dirty and smelly. The following exchange with Jared is his response to my explanation of the purpose of my PhD, and why I felt it necessary to work as a waste picker to conduct research for it. Unlike Tamas for whom waste picking was a full time occupation, Jared only waste picked when he could not get other work.

EXTRACT 3
Fieldnotes, week 3, January 23, 2014

1	Jared: But I believe you're going to get a	
2	PhD. You know why?	
3	Me: No. Why?	
4	Jared: Because you do all the efforts to,	Because you are making an effort
5	to get there. See here, not one of those	See here, not one of those University of
6	UCT students gonna trust us like you	Cape Town students would trust us like
7	trust us now.	you do
8	Me: It's, some people, there's different	
9	ways of working,	
10	Jared: They (…)[inaudible] us	
11	Me: and this is, I don't think you can	
12	understand anything unless you actually	
13	Jared: Or maybe they think 'oh they're	Or maybe students think that we are
14	homeless, they're stinking' or they, you	homeless and stink. You get people like
15	know, you get people like that, you	that
16	understand what I'm saying	
17	Me: Yeah, I do, I understand	
18	Jared: (…)[Inaudible] Many of them. So	
19	that's the ones who never get to the PhD.	

Jared correlates my willingness to make an effort to get to know waste pickers (lines 4-5) with the likelihood of passing my PhD (lines 1-2). He compares my research approach to other University of Cape Town students (UCT hereafter) whom he criticises for not trusting waste pickers (lines 5-7). I respond by trying to bring the conversation back to different theoretical approaches and that students' avoidance of waste pickers

might be because they are statisticians. I begin my explanation (lines 8-9) but Jared cuts me off with another observation about students that I do not hear (line 10). I again continue to explain that my research approach is not because I am an especially trusting or nice person, but that it is underpinned about my interpretivist epistemology (lines 11-12). Jared cuts me off again to speculate about what students think of waste pickers. The importance of which warrants Jared seeking clarification that I have understood him (lines 15-16). He ends where he began, by re-asserting the correlation between students' lack of trust and academic failure (lines 18-19).

The interaction illustrates the way that both Jared and I switch between audience and performer. As a performer I try to present myself as similar to other students and researchers, but different in some respects. As my audience, Jared labels me as completely different from other students, which is not the impression that I want to give. My interpretation of his performance is that he is unfairly applying a stereotype, and as his audience I feel compelled to refine his interpretation so that his phrasing is more precise to characterise me more accurately. His perception of my interruptions to his performance is that I am failing to grasp the extent of prejudice exhibited amongst students. Ultimately Jared wins the power struggle to be heard. I concede that I understand the points that he has raised and do not push my agenda.

Jared feels that students avoid waste pickers because they appear to be homeless and unclean (lines 13-14). His explanation of prejudice incorporates homelessness (stereotype), stinking (attribute) and trust (manner). These combine to generate an impression that audiences do not trust waste pickers because a homeless appearance and body odour are signifiers of an unreliable character. Reminiscent of sanitation syndrome, order and reliability are connected to an ability to maintain a body that is free from unsanitary odours. Failure to embody cleanliness poses a threat to the social order where waste pickers become "matter out of place" which signals danger (Douglas, 1966). The threat that he poses is not to security and safety (as with the criminal stereotype), but to the smell of fresh air in public spaces. Both criminal and homeless stereotypes result in an avoidance of waste pickers, though for different reasons.

Jared's reasoning sheds light on waste pickers' reliance on stereotypes as inherent in their use of impression management strategies. Jared taps into the stereotype of UCT students as comparatively privileged, to give credence to his claims that they are unwilling to interact with waste pickers. This enables him to discredit students by prefacing their character flaws and the role this will play in their academic demise. As with Tamas's

critique of people with tattoos on their face, Jared too is proficient at discrediting the attributes of others to foster an impression of relative superiority. In doing so Jared contributes an "us and them" mentality, by simultaneously othering UCT students and criticising UCT students for othering waste pickers. Unlike *us* (Jared and me) *they* (UCT students) are mistrustful and judgemental in their avoidance of waste pickers.

By setting me apart from other students, he re-positions me as part of his team who trust waste pickers. Once I have been aligned with his way of thinking, in complimenting me, Jared is indirectly presenting himself as non-prejudicial as well. The interaction therefore enables Jared to present an idealised impression of himself because of our shared superior character traits. In doing so he ignores the fact that he achieves this impression by stigmatising students and conforms to their flawed way of thinking. Impression management strategies are therefore simultaneously a source of enablement and constraint.

However, Jared's language is permeated with a level of uncertainty. He prefaces his impression of UCT students with "*Maybe they think* "oh they're homeless, they're stinking" (lines 13-14), which shows a willingness to put himself in the position of students and allows for other possible explanations for their inability to trust. It points to a reliance on his imagination to draw conclusions in the absence of any overt expression of such thoughts by UCT students made in person. Jared makes an educated guess as to the underlying cause of students' mistrust of waste pickers in the absence of any verbal, overt, explicit evidence from students themselves. This surrounds the audience with a certain amount of mystery that results in prejudice being exhibited by both performers (waste pickers) and audiences (normals).

5.2.2 Assumptions about Alcoholism

So far I have presented evidence to show how waste pickers' narratives about prejudice and discrimination revolve around the shortcomings of audiences, owing to a fixation on waste pickers' physical appearance. In addition to assuming that waste pickers were likely to smell unpleasant, waste pickers observed audiences making a connection between homelessness and addiction. This means that waste pickers, firstly, felt that audiences avoided interactions with them. Secondly, waste pickers were under the impression that audiences' ideas about addiction resulted in low expectations of waste pickers' cognitive capacity. This led to an appraisal of waste pickers' projective capacity (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) as being limited to thinking short term. The stigma of alcoholism is evidenced in the following interaction about the attitude of local residents,

and supported by the absence of the inclusion of waste pickers in decision making more generally.

"They don't know what's going on in your mind"

Wherever possible I made sure to protect my Thursdays for fieldwork, but there were several unavoidable clashes, one of which was attending a workshop that I was helping to organise. The subject of the workshop directly related to waste pickers. Representatives from the South African Waste Pickers' Association had been invited and the venue was near to where my research participants work. Although I wanted to invite waste pickers, the thought of how they would get to the venue, on time and sober meant that I decided not to invite them. However, given that I had posited Tamas as my boss, I was compelled to anticipate and explain my absence. Subsequent to my failed attempt to give vague reasons about my absence due to work commitments, Tamas's questions demanded that I explain myself more precisely. The following interaction (Extract 4) takes place after having explained the subject of the workshop.

EXTRACT 4
Fieldnotes, week 21, August 21, 2014

1	Tamas: Yes because I don't like this, you	I don't like workshops because you have
2	can go and sit and you have to be	to stay sitting down and be disciplined
3	disciplined	
4	Me: Ja	Yes
5	Tamas: Share my whatever, opinion	And share my opinion or whatever
6	Me: Yeah	
7	Tamas: Share [my views] and see	Share my views and find out what people
8	whatever we got, mind work, that's	think. That takes thought, I'm talking
9	mindwork I'm talking about	about the thought process involved
10	Me: Ja	Yes
11	Tamas: You see (…)[inaudible] 'that's a	Other people think that I am an alcoholic
12	drunky, he nothing, he don't know	and because of that, that I am nothing and
13	nothing' everything like that, but he does	don't know anything, but I do
14	know	
15	Me: Who says that?	
16	Tamas: No they don't, it's like you see it	They don't say anything but you can tell
17	Me: they don't say it	by how they look at you
18	Tamas: They look you, by the face	You can see it in their face
19	Me: ah	
20	Tamas: They look you by your face, and	They look at your face and clothes
21	what clothes you got on, maybe you	Maybe you look dirty but they don't
22	dirty, but they don't know what's going	know what you are thinking
23	on in your mind.	
24	Me: ok	

I incorrectly interpret Tamas's recollection of what people say (lines 11-14) as recounting others' literal utterance, prompting me to ask who says these things to him (line 15). He clarifies that he gleans this information from others' body language (lines 16-18). Their facial expression communicates that they are judging Tamas by his face and clothes, with no regard for what goes on in his head as separate to dirt, clothing or drinking habits. These attributes are then incorrectly connected to the stereotype of an alcoholic, a person who means nothing and has no insight to share (lines 11-13). Although I think that Tamas has plenty worth sharing at the workshop I am attending, it is true that his appearance and alcoholism are the reasons why I chose not invite him. I do not overtly or verbally harbour prejudice or discriminate, but like the "normals" that Tamas describes, stigma infiltrates our interaction by what is tactfully not said or asked.

Amid my angst about not inviting him to the workshop, Tamas expresses (perhaps also out of tact to spare my embarrassment) that he does not like such formal public engagement (lines 1-3). Rather than leave it at that he goes on to explain his understanding of the skills required to engage in discussion ("mind work"), which despite what others may think, he is capable of but chooses not to attend because "you have to be disciplined." His choice of language is apt and draws attention to the source of my anxieties about inviting him. My assumption is that Tamas will not "fit in" in an institutional setting, akin to Foucault's (1979) theory of how the body is disciplined (see Chapter 3). Even though Tamas's non-attendance is an active decision, the lack of representation at formal events contributes to the silencing and invisibility of waste pickers more broadly.

For example, at a National Dialogue about how to integrate the informal sector into municipal solid waste management in South Africa (GreenCape, 2015), there were no waste pickers present. At this forum a representative from a solid waste management company described the effort his Chief Operating Officer (CEO) had gone to in attempting to formalise informal street waste pickers. After he identified two men as holding promise and potential to be productive workers, the CEO formally employed them at his company. However, these men were said to have failed to fit in because of their criminal background, swearing and alcohol dependency. Consequently, they were asked to leave and have since returned to informal street waste picking. These waste pickers, like Tamas, resisted disciplinary power but simultaneously conformed to the homeless, alcoholic stereotype. The latter of which entrenches the stigma of waste pickers, which may mean they are less likely to be invited to forums.

5. PART 3. SILENCES AND ABSENCES

According to Goffman, matters that the audience "leaves alone…are likely to be the matters about which he would feel shame were a disclosure likely to occur" (1959, p. 46). In this vein, I avoided asking any questions or raising topics that had not been brought up by waste pickers. For the most part I took what I was told at face value and exercised unconditional positive regard (Weiten, 2010). In the last part of this chapter I take two incidents, similar in that I break my silence to stand in opposition to the prevailing position. In doing so I focus on what is left unsaid by both performers and audiences in waste pickers interactions with members of the public.

5.3.1 Defence mechanisms

Defence mechanisms are used to describe a range of unconscious strategies people use to protect themselves from experiencing psychological trauma (see Chapter 3). Thus far I have established that waste pickers talked about being stigmatised in terms of the connection that audiences make between waste pickers and criminal, homeless and alcoholic stereotypes. As mentioned, in interactions with me, Tamas used tattoos to signal his superiority over other waste pickers and his lack of teeth as evidence of his resilience. I add to examples of these to explain how these ways of thinking are defence mechanisms against the potential offence caused by audiences' prejudices.

"They like me"

In my conversations with Tamas, he mentioned the generosity of the general public several times (fieldnotes, week 8, February 27, 2014; week 19, July 31, 2014; week 22, August 28, 2014). In one conversation he lists the items that he has received, in part due his strategy of targeting particular households to beg from. Extract 5 begins when the conversation takes a turn towards the topic of the motivation of people who give him alcohol, food and money.

EXTRACT 5
Fieldnotes, week 19, July 31, 2014

1	Tamas: Because I know, I don't steal I	Residents know I don't commit crime
2	don't rob, I always help them. And even	and I am willing to help them. Although
3	she don't, those people who give it to me,	they don't ask me for help to clean their
4	they don't even ask me can I come and	car or do some gardening
5	clean their car, can I cut this from the	
6	garden,	
7	Me: They just give it to you	"It" here refers to anything he is given
8	Tamas: They don't give me work. Also,	They don't expect me to work in
9	they like me	exchange for a donation because they like
10	Me: ok	me
11	Tamas: I don't know why, but they got a	
12	liking in them for me, I don't know why	I don't know why they like me but they
13	Teresa	do
14	Me: ok	
15	Tamas: Maybe um, I'm just a chosen one	
16	or, I don't know why	
17	Me: Do you think they feel sorry for you	
18	or do you think they feel guilty? Do you	
19	think they feel bad?	I think that is the case sometimes. If they
20	Tamas: I think, sometime I think so,	see that I am drunk which impairs my
21	because if I am drunk I go lame	movement or if I am alone, these might
22	(…)[inaudible] I'm alone. They think of	make them think, but I don't know if they
23	all those things, but I don't	feel sorry for me or whatever. Because
24	know if they feel sorry for me or	they like me and I know they care about
25	whatsoever, or because they like me. I	me, but beyond that, I don't know
26	know they love me. But I don't know	
27	Me: You don't ask them?	
28	Tamas: I never ask them	
29	Me: hm	I never ask, I have the opportunity so I
30	Tamas: Never ask. But it's my, I got	should ask them. But at the time I am
31	other opportunity, but I must ask	thinking about asking them for food or
32	them, the time I ask for the food or wine	wine or whatever, I don't think about
33	or whatsoever, then my mind	asking them why they give to me
34	slips away to ask them those questions.	Because in that moment I am just grateful
35	Because I'm just now grateful for those	and want to go
36	that give and I just want to go	
37	Me: yeah, not to stand and chat and	Not to get on their nerves, not to
38	Tamas: Not to work on their nerves, not	aggravate them. If I beg from the same
39	working on their nerves. You see if you	person, I go once a week, I don't take
40	go once, a week, by a person, I don't take	advantage
41	advantage	
42	Me: ok	Or I can go twice a week or whatever. I
43	Tamas: To go twice, twice a week or	know when to go and beg again. But they
44	whatever. I know when to go again.	like me
45	But they like me.	

Tamas speculates that the act of giving is driven by a belief in his moral integrity (lines 1-2) or that he is in some way special (lines 15). Ultimately he does not know with certainty why people agree to make donations (line 16). Of note to him is that whatever they give is unconditional (lines 3-9). He constructs the absence of being required to earn what he is given positively, as if merely part of the audiences' generosity. To my mind these are charitable acts born out of pity and guilt. My assumptions about the shame of 'white' privilege has been documented in the context of South Africa (Vice, 2010), but also raised outside of academia amid concern about global inequality (Moore, 2015). These thoughts bring me to ask Tamas's opinion of the role of sympathy (lines 17-19), given that these types of interaction are with comparatively wealthy suburbanites.

Ignoring the economic disparities between performer and audience, Tamas concedes that "sometimes" people might feel sorry for him, which he imagines might be provoked by his limited mobility when drunk, or if they see him alone (lines 20-23). In contrast to Jared's observations about being judged via homeless stereotypes (Extract 3), Tamas does not interpret the absence of any demands on him as a technique to avoid interactions based on his appearance.

Tamas focuses on what he knows for sure that, for whatever reason, people have affection for him (25-26). His construction of the meaning of these interactions is a stark departure from the conventional images of normals as harassed by beggars (Cape Town Central City Improvement District, 2015). Regardless of the extent to which the people who give to him do in fact "love" him, stigmatising discourses do not position waste pickers to the extent that they are unable to forge relationships with local residents to supplement their income from waste picking in either cash or kind.

That is not to say that interactions conform to an exchange between friends, despite the familiarity that is implied by Tamas's repetition that people like him (lines 9, 12, 25, 26, 45). He does not stop to converse once he has received a donation because to stay would be to potentially cause annoyance (lines 38–39). To stay and talk beyond asking for wine or food would be to take advantage of others' kindness. Mindful of imposing, he takes care not to visit the same people too frequently (lines 39-41). Implicit in Tamas's account are limitations to what he can ask, how often he can ask and the duration of each interaction. In contrast to the stereotype of alcoholics as cognitively deficient (see Extract 4), Tamas brings to the fore his use of practical evaluation and projection (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). In doing so, he successfully walks the fine line between harnessing the goodwill of others and outstaying his welcome, to retain future access to charitable giving.

By presenting himself as well regarded by residents, Tamas constructs an idealised front that staves off the stigma of homelessness. Rather than not talk about begging at all, he takes a discrediting action and uses it to create a positive impression. It occurs to me that there is a noticeable silence around why Tamas needs to beg at all if, as he claims at other times, waste picking affords him habits of consumption that are beyond the reach of other workers (see Chapter 6). The only time I get the impression that there is underlying shame associated with begging is when Tamas asks me to leave because he does not want me to see him beg (fieldnotes, week 13, June 12, 2014). At all other times strategic silences ignore the shame associated with begging which, as part of an idealised presentation of self, function as a defense mechanism. An overwhelmingly positive appraisal of the publics' attitude towards him, appreciative of his help, is a way of coping with a life that is emotionally demanding.

5.3.2 Will to Order

Waste pickers are positioned by discourses of dirt that mean the public have a set of assumptions about waste pickers and the rightful place of dirt (See Chapter 3). The act of touching dirt and taking rubbish out of the bin can therefore be a source of anxiety for residents because it disrupts the "natural" order of things. The logic that these things are no longer wanted and are therefore freely available to whoever wants them, does not necessarily apply to household waste. Discarded items are not necessarily available for the taking because they have been placed in a bin, out of sight. Moving items from private to public spaces can be constructed as an infringement on privacy (See Chapter 2) and a violation of an otherwise tidy street.

"You are making dirt all around here"

Corresponding to Tamas's inference that stereotypical assumptions were communicated non-verbally (see Extract 4), I was privy to only two verbal exchanges where I thought residents were harbouring prejudice towards waste pickers. One situation is discussed in Chapter 8 and the other is discussed here. An altercation takes place because a resident objects to waste pickers taking her rubbish out of the bin. She directs her anger towards Mike, a waste picker, although I initially held myself responsible for causing her offence. Earlier in the day, I took some magazines out of the bin and left them on the kerb so that Steven, who only collects paper, can easily see them without trawling through the bin. I go to another bin at the other end of the street and carry on waste

picking, but stop and hurry back when I realise that a resident is shouting at Mike from her first floor window. Extract 6 begins when I arrive to defend Mike, take responsibility for the pile of magazines, and quell any anxiety the resident (Ang) may have that I was being intentionally messy.

EXTRACT 6
Fieldnotes, week 16, July 3, 2014

1	Ang: I watched you!	
2	Mike: (…)[inaudible]	
3	Ang: And you dirt, you are making dirt	
4	all around here	
5	Mike: (…)[inaudible]	
6	Me: Do you know what, the paper, that	
7	was me, I'm leaving it because someone	
8	else comes and does the paper	
9	Ang: I don't want other people to come	
10	and take my paper. There is a reason I	
11	don't want it. You don't have access to	
12	my paper.	
13	Me: ok, sorry, what, why is it that you	
14	don't want us to take	
15	Ang: I don't, I have (…)[inaudible]	
16	Me: Just out of interest, you don't have to	
17	tell me	
18	Ang: I don't want you to take my paper	
19	Me: ok, it's just to recycle it	We take the paper to recycle it
20	Ang: (…)[inaudible] I do not want	
21	people taking my papers.	
22	Me: It's just to recycle	
23	Jared: It is to recycle	
24	Me: Is it because it's got your name on	
25	and stuff and you're worried about	
26	Ang: (…)[inaudible] and I don't want it	
27	recycled	
28	Me: ok. Ok so, I didn't, I didn't mean to	
29	cause you any bother. So you want me to	
30	put that back in the bin, you don't want	
31	that recycled.	
32	Ang: Those ones are not the ones I was	I mean the specific paper that the waste
33	(…)[inaudible] there's very specific ones	picker took out of a bag, that I had placed
34	that he took out of the packet, that I put it	in a bag
35	in a packet specifically because I didn't	
36	want it recycled	
37	Me: oh	
38	Ang: But he's taken it out	
39	Me: oh, ok	
40	Ang: I know you don't understand, but	
41	you don't have to understand because it's	
42	my property.	
43	Me: ok	

Mike has already been protesting his innocence by the time I arrive, at which point Ang indicates that she knows he is lying because she has been conducting surveillance

(line 1). This is in addition to her original complaint that we are making a mess (lines 3-4), which replicates the rationale of government officials upon which their apathy towards waste pickers is founded (see Chapter 1). While other waste pickers might leave a mess, the group with whom I worked did not. Gaining and retaining access to the bins each week was conditional on leaving the street clean and tidy, an unwritten rule that Tamas enforced. I was therefore keen to correct Ang's impression of the group as messy by explaining why I had taken the magazines out of the bin and placed them on the pavement (lines 6-8). I expected that upon realising that she had misinterpreted my actions, the matter would be easily resolved. Instead she continued her protest (lines 9-12).

My struggle to understand her reasoning is indicated by the transition in lines 13-14 (Extract 6), from acceptance (ok/ sorry) to confusion (what/why). She cuts me off before I finish my question but I do not catch all of what she says. My attention is distracted by the research ethics of this situation. I am angering her and she does not know that I am recording. I make the split second decision to allow myself one more round of probing. I explain the motivation behind my questions and remind her that she does not have to answer me, but I do not tell her that I am a researcher or that I am recording (see discussion of situated ethics in Chapter 4). She does not elaborate on her motivation and merely re-states her position (lines 18-21). I acknowledge her wish and reassure her of the previously intended destination of the paper (line 22) and Jared backs me up (line 23).

It then occurs to me that her concerns may be well founded if the magazines had her name and address on, risking identity theft (lines 24-25). Again she cuts me off and repeats her position more specifically (lines 26-27). At this point her anger is palpable. I immediately acknowledge her wishes and seek confirmation that I should return the paper to the bin (lines 28-31). Our interaction becomes somewhat superfluous when she tells me that we are not talking about the same magazines. I am talking about a pile that I have placed on the pavement, she is talking about some that were in a plastic bag (32-36). This leaves me at a loss as to why we have been arguing about the paper on the kerb, but I am reluctant to continue probing because she is still shouting. So I merely convey that I accept what she is telling me (lines 39, 43). She takes the trouble to make it known that she can see I do not understand but that explaining herself to me is unnecessary on the grounds that the matter concerns her property (lines 40-42). She shuts the window and everyone carries on regardless. I put the paper back in the bin and sulk.

Her tone implies that it is entirely reasonable to talk down (literally and metaphorically) to waste pickers. At no point does she come down to the street to speak to

us so that she can be heard clearly without shouting. Instead I am forced to look up to her, comparable to the spatial arrangements that convey unequal power relations in courtrooms (Mulcahy, 2007). Her position is a reminder of the panoptic space that waste pickers work in (Foucault, 1979). Waste pickers cannot tell if and when they are being observed by residents because we cannot see into their homes. To waste pick on the streets of Cape Town is to consent to unfettered surveillance in the interests of "public safety." Back region, private spaces, protected from prying eyes are hard to come by.

My failure to learn the reason why Ang does not want her magazines recycled, conveys that she feels talking to me is a futile exercise. It felt as if reaching a point of mutual respect and understanding was not obligatory to her. The interaction further enshrines the protection of private property and the privatisation of waste, which is not mitigated by the paper's location in a public place or demarcation as waste. Ang's inalienable right to send recyclables to landfill is not up for debate. Conversely, the wrong doing is on the part of waste pickers for interfering with the paper's uninterrupted journey to the landfill. The environmental impact is seemingly of no consequence. Underpinning Ang's opinion is the premise that recycling is a choice. Her position stands in contrast to conventions that stipulate the centrality of waste minimisation in easing the human impact on environmental degradation (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2012).

The interaction is not referred to again for the rest of the day until I bring it up. It did not seem to be something noteworthy to warrant discussion, as if part of everyday life. Waste pickers' characterisation of normals as people that stereotype waste pickers seemed to be founded on limited oral feedback from residents and the absence of any evidence to the contrary. Thus, the limited duration and frequency of verbal interactions with residents enable waste pickers to prejudge normals, as much as it fosters the prejudice of normals towards waste pickers.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

When performers are able to infuse their performance with an air of mystery, it can enable them to assert their definition of the situation because the audience is unable to verify the claims being made (Goffman, 1959). Thus missing teeth alone would not necessarily lead to a connection between waste pickers and gangs or violence. However when missing teeth are accompanied by chappies and scars, missing teeth are more likely to be interpreted negatively rather than indicative of a cultural rite of passage. The cumulative effect of discreditable physical attributes, that are difficult and/or expensive to

conceal, means waste pickers' appearance constrains their ability to give the impression that they are something other than homeless, alcoholic and/or criminals.

Waste pickers are affected in a subtle way by the stigma of homelessness. Waste pickers sense that audiences avoid them because of the assumptions that they make about what they smell like (stink) and their cognitive capacity (impaired). Stereotypical discourses are difficult to shift because interactions are mostly non-verbal. This imbues waste pickers and their work with an air of mystery that, together with ambiguous body markings and modifications, entrenches prejudice towards homeless bodies. Stigma therefore operates in a somewhat insidious manner. This contributes to my overall argument that although stigma is not explicitly named, it constrains the agential capacity of impression management strategies. Thus stereotypical perceptions of waste pickers as homeless figures tend to persist.

The utility of waste pickers' relatively few references to discrediting elements of waste picking is that it is part of a strategy to control the information that normals have about them. The implicit team front of maintaining silence around the dirt and smells of waste picking means that they do not further entrench the audiences' existing preconceptions about waste pickers. Instead there is a concerted effort to conspicuously contradict any impression that normals may have of them as dirty. However, existing prejudices constrain the likelihood of prolonged face-to-face encounters with waste pickers, which means their idealised presentations of self are largely unseen and unheard by the passing public.

I presented an opportunity to make these otherwise hidden narratives heard. The next chapter picks up on the threads already discussed with regard to the agential capacity of impression management. Namely, how waste pickers used an idealised front to achieve social distance from their nearest neighbours in the social hierarchy.

CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS: IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

So far I have established that evidence of stigma is not discussed at length in much of the literature about waste pickers or in the narratives of the waste pickers with whom I worked. Especially in my interactions with Tamas, my key informant, the silence about stigma reminded me of me of Johnny Steinberg's interview with an inmate in Pollsmoor prison. Steinberg (2004) remarks on the absence of any reference to the actual surroundings in his respondent's narrative:

> For Magadien does not exist in the place his narrative takes me. Nor does any other human being. The prison world conjured by his tongue is stylised and clean, a theatre of abstractions. There is violence there to be sure, but it is idealised violence animated by a logic so crisp it appears more a description of a chess game than a world inhabited by human beings (…) Around us are the fetid smells of poor food, the stale sweat of the men who pass us in the corridor, the eternal relay of curses and insults that batter the prison walls. There are times when I want to stop him and command him to listen: 'This is jail,' I want to tell him 'not the world in your head. Tell me about the place we can hear and smell around us.' (Steinberg, 2004, p. 207)

When invited to define waste picking, Tamas uses it as an opportunity to present a "stylised" image of looking for treasure and a "clean" narrative, devoid of references to dirt or dustbins (see Part one of this chapter). Given the relative absence of stigma in waste pickers' talk, this chapter shifts the emphasis from stigma management (Goffman, 1963), to impression management (Goffman, 1959). Waste pickers presented an "idealised" impression of themselves and their work, "animated by a logic" to distance themselves from discrediting attributes. "Around us are the fetid smells" of maggot-infested rotting food left to fester in the heat. For me, "fitting in" during fieldwork involved learning how to emulate waste pickers' ability to ignore "the place we can see and smell around us."

As part of this "idealisation" (Goffman, 1959), waste pickers replace talk about stigma with information that presents a positive image of waste picking. Interactions that speak to the capacity of impression management to minimise stigma have been grouped into three parts. **Part one** explains how waste pickers name and define waste picking. In these descriptions there is an absence of information about the less ideal parts of waste picking. I analyse this as a presentation of an idealised front that waste pickers use to

achieve an iterational form of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). **Part two** shows how once constructed as commendable work, comparable to other workers, waste pickers elevate their position in the social hierarchy by discrediting other teams. An idealised version of waste picking gives the impression that waste pickers are better off than poorly paid workers in Cape Town.

Having established that waste picking can be no more stigamtising than any other low skilled manual labour, waste pickers are in a position to construct waste picking as a rational choice. **Part three** looks at how, in dispelling the stigma of homelessness, waste pickers position themselves in a hierarchical relationship to one another. Access to accommodation, kinship ties and skills to navigate life on the streets are criteria used to create a hierarchical relationship between team members. This chapter concludes that when taken together, an analogy can be drawn between the construction of an idealised front and wearing a mask. In front region settings this mask successfully creates status and social distance between waste pickers and the stigma of homelessness. By creating and wearing this mask, waste pickers resist being positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy (iteration).

6. PART 1. LANGUAGE AND AGENCY

Following a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, alongside Giddens's structuration theory, bodies of knowledge about waste picking can become tacitly understood but remain open to being brought into question (see Chapter 3). It therefore becomes possible to analyse how waste pickers use language to alter stereotypical ways of thinking about themselves and their work. For example, already mentioned in Chapter 5 was waste pickers' aversion to the word bergie because it stigmatised waste pickers as homeless. This chapter begins with an interaction where, in contrast to my research approach at most other times, I raise the topic of terminology. Waste pickers, Tamas and Steven in particular, used my question of how I should name the work as an opportunity to re-brand waste picking.

6.1.1 Naming Waste Picking

There is no consensus even within the same city about how waste picking should be named. Among the group with whom I worked, other people were referred to as "strollers" and the act of waste picking was known as "skarrelling" or "scratching the bins." Other researchers have prefaced these terms (King, 2014; van Heerden, 2015) but I

had already decided to use the term waste picking and waste pickers (See Chapter 1). It was not until the 16th week of fieldwork that I consulted Tamas about how I should name their work when writing about it in my thesis.

"You just say mines"

Extract 7 is the tail end of an interaction that is dictated mostly by Tamas, even though Deco (Tamas's brother) and Viera (Deco's girlfriend) are sitting next to us. Having presented all three waste pickers with a range of ideas about how waste picking might be named, Tamas and Deco confirm that I should use either the Afrikaans word "skarrel" or the English phrase "bin scratching." I keep the discussion about naming going, to emphasise that their choice is not limited to the options that I have suggested or existing categories. Tamas consults Deco (not Viera) to canvas opinion. Before Deco has a chance to respond, Tamas interjects to confirm that skarrel is used most frequently. Deco concurs and repeats his choice as skarrelling and I consider the matter settled, so ask no further questions. This period of silence gives Tamas thinking time, which he used as an opportunity to change his mind and override his brother. The conversation continues between us in Extract 7.

EXTRACT 7
Fieldnotes, week 16, July 3, 2014

1	Tamas: Mines. You know what is mines?	
2	Me: Mines	
3	Tamas: If you go in a mine, there they	
4	going, they look for diamonds	
5	Me: yep	
6	Tamas: na? That's mines	They are mines are they not?
7	Me: Mining	
8	Tamas: Mines is to skarrel	To mine is to skarrel
9	Me: ok	
10	Tamas: Like in a mine they also skarrel,	
11	that's mines	That's mining
12	Me: ok	
13	Tamas: You can use that word, mines	
14	Me: Mines	
15	Tamas: Now that's a better word	
16	Me: That's a better one	
17	Tamas: ja, mines	
18	Me: ok	
19	Tamas: People who go in the mines, they	
20	also skarrel for some diamonds	
21	Me: yep	
22	Tamas: Now that's. That's, we call it in	That's a way to name it, mining from the
23	the dustbin, we mine things for	dustbins, we mine for things. Mining is
24	something, benefit, that's a better word	preferable to skarrelling or bin scratching
25	Me: ok	
26	Tamas: I asked him to choose a word for	Tamas clarifies that he asked Deco to
27	you, but he takes too long to give you a	provide a better word but Deco took too
28	better word now	long to decide.
29	Me: [laughs] I'm not in any hurry	
30	Deco: Scrap collectors	
31	Me: Scrap collector, ok	
32	Tamas: Yeah, you just say mine, mine,	
33	like the people in the mines they skarrel	Just say mining rather. We are like the
34	for diamonds, of mines, that is a mine.	people in the mine, skarrelling for
35	Now we call it, a better word is mine for	diamonds in the mine, that's mining
36	something, not scratching the dustbin.	Now we should call it mining because it
37	But you don't actually use the word	is a better word than scratching the
38	dustbin afterwards, you just say mines,	dustbin - but don't say mining the
39	we mines.	dustbin, just say mining, we mine
40	Me: ok	

Tamas's explanations are indicative of the way he frames the work of waste picking, as part of a broader performance to generate status and idealise waste picking, which forms a key theme in the rest of this chapter. He uses my question about how to name the work as an opportunity to tie waste picking to a formal occupation (lines 1, 3, 4,

7, 10-11, 19-20). In my mind, drawing an analogy between waste picking and mining makes sense on the grounds that they are both seen as dirty work that is considered hard manual labour. Rather than make the links between waste picking and mining on these less desirable characteristics, he instead likens the work to finding gems (lines 4, 20, 34).

Tamas's talk of diamonds, and (in a separate interaction) Brad's claim that other people's junk is his treasure (fieldnotes, week 15, June 26, 2014), confirms government claims that there is money to be made in the "green economy" (see Chapter 2). The strapline "turning trash into treasure" has been used to promote recycling as a form of employment for people who would otherwise be unemployed in Cape Town (Sentinel News, 2012). The same phrase has permeated academic work on waste picking in the US (Reno, 2009) and American media coverage of India's "invisible environmentalists" (Peters, 2011). Actually, the value of what is found in dustbins rarely constitutes a hoard of riches. Regardless of the monetary value, Tamas sees waste picking and diamonds as compatible on the grounds that both constitute "benefit" (line 24). As when someone unexpectedly discovers buried treasure, waste pickers get something for nothing.

The interaction illustrates the way that Tamas overrules his brother's suggestion of "scrap collectors" (line 30). Despite having pointed out that there is no time pressure (line 29), Tamas justifies his lack of consultation on the choice of word because Deco is deliberating ("he takes too long"). This criticism shows off Tamas's ability to think quickly and his command of English (his second language). As a consequence, he presents himself as superior to his brother. He ends the conversation by directing me on how to use this new vocabulary, instructing me to omit any reference to a dustbin (lines 37-39). Tamas used my invitation to name the work as an opportunity to cleanse it of negative connotations and reinforce his position as the leading authority in the group.

As part of iterative agency, overruling others' naming suggestions can be seen as an attempt to change traditional ways of naming waste picking. In doing so, language can be seen as a form of creating distance between waste picking and words associated with dirt. Alternatively, this distancing can be seen as a defence mechanism to protect Tamas from the stigma of working with waste in a way that is frowned on by society. Both explanations are supported by previous performances where waste pickers quash counter opinions (see also chapter 5). I encompass both interpretations by conceptualising language use as part of impression management, which comprise conscious and unconscious uses of language. Either way, the interaction draws attention to the necessity

to distance waste picking from any references to touching dirt, which spurs the need to find a "better word" and omit the term "dustbin."

6.1.2 Defining waste picking

Following on from Tamas's "trash to treasure" marketing strategy, waste pickers repeated the "benefits" of waste picking when talking about their work. "Benefit" is used as a noun and a verb simultaneously, as a catchall term for things that are found in the bins, and a way to preface the advantageous nature of the work. Rather than merely creating an idealised definition of waste picking as beneficial, the benefits of waste picking were used to make other forms of income generation look inferior. In contrast to waste pickers within the Freegan movement in the west (Edwards & Mercer, 2007), the waste pickers I met in Cape Town did not bring into question structural inequality or injustices. The benefits of waste picking were always framed within existing hierarchies and underpinned by an acceptance of unequal power relations.

"looking for the benefit"

The multiple achievements of constructing an idealised front is illustrated in Extract 8, through a discussion of "benefit." Extract 8 follows on from Tamas's description of an altercation with his friends about money that, on reflection, leaves him feeling weary. The topic of money transitions into a team performance by Tamas and Steven to affirm waste picking as an unpredictable, but nevertheless worthwhile, endeavour.

EXTRACT 8
Fieldnotes, week 10, March 13, 2014

1	Tamas: Even if you're scratching the	When you are waste picking there are
2	dustbin, sometimes good, sometimes bad.	good days and bad days
3	Steven: Expect the unexpected	
4	Me: Expect the unexpected [laugh]	
5	Steven: There is no guarantee by life but	There are no guarantees in life but you
6	you survive.	survive
7	Tamas: That is better than to rob and	Waste picking is better than committing
8	steal man, because you go to prison	theft
9	Me: It is better	
10	Tamas: Ja, it is better to beg or to scratch	Yes, it's better to beg or waste pick to
11	in dustbins, looking for the benefit, I then	look for benefits. I tell you what, last
12	tell you what I got last night, a R13,000	night I found a R13,000 phone, but I sold
13	but I ask for R300	it for R300

The adverse impact of the unpredictable income of waste pickers is shrugged off philosophically (lines 2, 3, 5-6). This frames the unstable nature of waste picking, documented in other parts of the world (S. M. Dias & Samson, 2016, p. 27), as no different to the ups and downs of life in general. Steven alludes to the precariousness of life when he refers to survival (line 6) but this train of thought is side-lined. Tamas refocuses my attention on the advantages of waste picking, compared to illegal means of profiting from others' possessions - especially given the penalty (lines 7-8). This omits the risk of being taken into police custody that waste pickers face. Law enforcement officers do not always recognise waste picking as legitimate. Several waste pickers told me that they have served prison sentences for the possession of stolen goods, which were in fact items reclaimed from bins. Jared served six months in prison for "stealing" a laptop, in part because the judge did not know what it meant to skarrel (fieldnotes, week 31, November 13, 2014).

Language choice and idealisation combine to conceal the precariousness of waste picking. According to Tamas, waste picking or begging has an edge over other means of subsistence because these are proactive and legal strategies from which to earn a living (lines 10-11). This neglects to reveal the relationship between the two; when revenue from waste picking is too low it has to be subsidised by begging for money (although begging too is idealised, see Chapter 5). Tamas's positive spin ends with a best-case scenario of finding a phone, exemplified as if typical, having happened in the last 24 hours (lines 11-13). The lack of bargaining power of waste pickers with potential buyers is only revealed through the discrepancy between the retail value and Tamas's asking price for the phone.[24]

There was a clear difference among participants as to whether waste picking was seen as a permanent or temporary source of income. Andrey and Jared waste pick to supplement earnings - if they could get other work they did not waste pick. Waste picking for them is a last resort, which implies an implicit lack of enthusiasm for waste picking compared to wage work, but there was never any explicit implication that waste picking is more shameful than other work. The team's performance is void of any judgement of waste picking as inferior. On the contrary, Tamas and Steven led the charge in espousing the comparative advantages of waste picking over wage work.

[24] In South Africa, second hand goods do not lose their value as quickly as they do in the global north. Waste pickers, therefore, made sure they had some idea of the recommended retail price of items so as to sufficiently undercut other second hand retailers.

6.1.3 Waste Picking as Self-employment

Tamas and Steven constructed waste picking as self-employment. Tamas emphasised the control that he has over his work, especially when compared to the conditions of employment in standard employer-employee relationships. Marxist interpretations of waste pickers' working conditions stress the exploitative power relations, particularly at the hands of buy-back centres in South Africa (Viljoen, Schenck, & Blaauw, 2012). Being at the will of buyers has given rise to waste pickers organising to negotiate better prices for recyclable items (M. Samson, 2009a). In contrast, Tamas disregards waste pickers' dependence on buyers as a threat to the autonomy that he has over his work. The price he gets seems to be of less importance compared to the freedom to negotiate with buyers of his choosing.

"I'm my own boss"

In Extract 9, Tamas rationalises his preference for waste picking over wage work as a personal choice. The interaction comes about because I realise I have not seen Andrey all morning and make enquiries as to his whereabouts.

EXTRACT 9
Fieldnotes, week 16, July 3, 2014

1	Tamas: There in Salt River, by Andrey.	Andrey is working near Salt River
2	Me: Oh is he, what's he doing?	
3	Tamas: I don't know what, something	
4	with carpentry	
5	Me: oh ok	
6	Tamas: Mos jack of all trades	He is a jack of all trades
7	Me: Jack of all trades	
8	Tamas: ja, he do a lot of things that he is	Yes, there are lots of jobs that he is
9	qualified in. And he like to work, if he	qualified to do. If he can find a job he
10	can find work, he like to work	likes to work
11	Me: no, that's good	
12	Tamas: But not me, I'm not	
13	(…)[inaudible]	
14	Me: You don't like working? This is	You say you don't like working but
15	work	waste picking is work isn't it?
16	Tamas: I like to work for myself, I pay	I'm self employed
17	myself	
18	Me: ok, work for yourself	
19	Tamas: I'm my own boss	
20	Me: ja, it's better. No one telling you	
21	what to do	
22	Tamas: ja, (…) [inaudible]	

The short-term, day labour work that Tamas refers to is common in South Africa (Blaauw, Louw, & Schenck, 2014). Tamas pays no mind to the particulars of the work (lines 3-4) but points out Andrey's diverse skills in the construction industry (line 6). Andrey had already mentioned the pride he took in his work by pointing out to me shoddy welding whenever he saw it (fieldnotes, week 28, October 23, 2014). Andrey's credentials are backed up by Tamas's confirmation that Andrey's skills have been accredited (lines 8-9). Tamas distinguishes Andrey's fondness for work when it is available (lines 9-10) from his own distaste of work (line 12). When I question this as unfounded, given that waste picking is work (lines 14-5), he pinpoints his aversion to work as an avoidance of entering into employer-employee relationships (lines 16-17). Waste picking suits him because he dictates his own pay and conditions as if he is self-employed (line 19).

In my role as audience member, I select information from Tamas's presentation of self to demonstrate that I am convinced by his performance (lines 20-21). Between the two of us we successfully maintain a definition of Tamas as more autonomous compared to other people, who are willing to be subordinates. Although he says he works for himself (lines 16-17) this is a somewhat romanticised version of self-employment, given that he does not pay himself a salary in any conventional sense. Neither of us mentions any of the advantages of having an employer over being a waste picker. This is an easy omission to make given the widespread use of labour brokers in South Africa and the casualisation of work. The traditional image of workers, in permanent employment with benefits (pension, medical aid, unemployment insurance, union representation), is gradually being replaced by a "flexible" workforce in South Africa (Theron, 2003).

Tamas's performance of autonomy contributes to an impression that waste pickers have entrepreneurial potential. In other parts of the world, phrases such as "trash to cash" are used to argue that informal waste pickers can make the transition to forming sustainable micro enterprises (Mukherjee, 2015). This view is popular among policy-makers because of the implications for job creation in the green economy in South Africa (see Chapter 2). Optimism about the profitability and scalability of waste picking is somewhat misplaced. Large scale recycling manufacturers demand huge volumes of clean, dry recyclable material and refuse to interact directly with individual waste pickers. Therefore street waste pickers' earning power from recyclable waste is minimal because of the economics of the recycling industry (Tischler, 2013, p. 42).

Tamas trivialises these unfavourable economic conditions. The bins he collects from when I join the group on a Thursday are largely from university student households. The volume of salvageable items of value fluctuated wildly. There was little waste when students vacated accommodation during holidays, but too much paper to physically carry when students had a clear-out before leaving. Waste pickers' inability to capitalise on overabundances due to lack of transport has been well documented (Viljoen et al., 2012). The constraints of seasonal fluctuations are absent in Tamas's idealised front, which silences his dependence on market forces and the resultant inability to pay himself a stable, regular salary (emphasised in De Kock, 1986).

Tamas's presentation of self as an autonomous worker ignores the structural constraints on the control he has over his work. The absence of any complaints about waste pickers' lack of rights as workers enable existing hierarchies to remain in place. Tamas's idealised impression of waste picking discounts the gains that could be made from a more collective approach to waste picking. For him, collective ways of working means a willingness to share when called on to do so (see Extract 2). Given his place at the top of the hierarchy within the group of waste pickers, he has little to gain from changing routines (discussed in more detail in Part 3 of Chapter 6). As part of the practical evaluation part of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) Tamas's idealised front minimises any sense that there is a need to consider alternative ways of working.

His position stands in contrast to dissatisfaction with existing arrangements expressed by other waste pickers. In India, "transformative resistance" has been used to change waste pickers' working conditions (Chikarmane, 2012). In other parts of South Africa waste pickers have formed alliances to bring about change (De Brito, 2012). None of the waste pickers who I met showed any awareness of these movements. This might be because street waste pickers are a more transient population compared to those at landfill (R. Schenck et al., 2016) and therefore more difficult to organise. The nearest Tamas came to discussing any room for improvement related to waste picking was when he mentioned that, if he had a car, the group would not have "to struggle to carry heavy things" (fieldnotes, week 10, March 13, 2014).

Tamas does not talk about the ways that waste picking could be made easier. This idealised impression served several purposes. Firstly, a performance of independence distanced the team from homeless stereotypes. This avoids stigmatisation as dependent beggars (see Chapter 5). Secondly, by prefacing his refusal to enter into a relationship with an employer Tamas conveys the difference between him and other team members. This

contributes to hierarchical power relations, with him placed at the top. Thirdly, an idealised definition of waste picking positions waste pickers as rational. Within the confines of working class employment in South Africa, given that most forms of manual work have become precarious, waste picking seems as good as any other job. In fact, waste pickers take the comparison between themselves and other low-status workers a step further by giving the impression that they are superior to their nearest neighbours in the social hierarchy.

6. PART 2. TEAM STATUS AND SOCIETAL HIERARCHY

Social stratification in South Africa is marked by the extreme gap between the richest and poorest in society. Inequality therefore divides society into the "privileged elite and the mass, without many intervening middle positions" (Wolff, 2016, p. 36). Waste pickers are unable to usurp status from privileged groups to become socially mobile, but given how poor the rest of society is, they can discredit the mass of working poor who live in the Cape Flats. This is achieved through the creation of the impression that waste pickers exhibit a superior position in the social hierarchy, above people working for poverty pay and living in marginalised parts of the city. Part two of this chapter explains how waste pickers used dual closure (Murphy, 1986) to give the impression that they occupied a higher and less stigmatised position in the social hierarchy.

6.2.1 Status and Money

Although there was much talk about the benefits of waste picking, no one volunteered earnings figures to me from which I could draw direct comparisons with the national minimum wage.[25] Instead, I was expected to share the implicitly held assumption that the earning power of waste pickers was, at the very least, comparable with an unskilled manual worker.[26] In the event that waste pickers' earnings for the day were insufficient to meet their needs, this was idealised by prefacing autonomy, net income and a high disposable income. While an idealised definition enables iterational agency, self-employment is also a constraint to other aspects of agency. For example, a highly variable

[25] There is no national statutory minimum wage in South Africa. Nine sectors have a minimum wage because labour in these industries has been identified as vulnerable (Wage Indicator Foundation, 2016).

[26] For example, the minimum hourly rate for a domestic worker in Cape Town is R11.44 (USD 0.74 cents / GBP 0.52 pence. The minimum hourly rate for a farm worker is R13.37 (USD 0.86 cents/ GBP 0.61 pence).

and unpredictable income makes it difficult to plan and save money (projective capacity). Regardless, waste pickers capacity to spend their money as they pleased was a central part of their idealised front, used to position themselves as better off than tax payers.

"Every week I make R1800"

The interaction in Extract 10 happens outside a train station where building work is taking place. Waste pickers are sorting items from what has been collected that morning. I am sitting with my back turned to the larger group engaged in conversation with Viera. While we chat, I am aware that Steven is talking to people who are working on the construction site at the station. But it is not until I transcribe the recording that I hear what he says clearly and realise he was boasting about how much he earns.

EXTRACT 10
Fieldnotes, week 7, February 20, 2014

1	Stanley: Every week I make R1800 for	Each week I earn R1800 just from waste
2	one week, only for a skarrel	picking
3	Worker: Every week?	
4	Steven: Every week I make from R1200	Every week I earn between R1200 to
5	up to R1500, R1600 ja, only for skarrel	R1600 approximately from waste picking
6	Worker: Without tax	alone
7	Steven: Ja, without tax ja, I already pay	Yes untaxed income because I already
8	tax already for years ago	paid tax when I was formerly employed
9	Worker: yes, and don't pay electricity,	And you don't pay for utilities. Your
10	power, water, nothing. Your life is better	quality of life is better
11	Steven: We must make it better	

The unreliability of a steady income is evident from the range in Steven's reported weekly income (lines 1, 4, 5). The worker seeks clarification on the frequency of earnings (line 3), deductions (line 6) and out goings (lines 9-10) before concluding that Steven's life is better. It is not clear what the worker is comparing Steven's earnings to, presumably his own, which are unlikely to be as high (upwards of R614 a week[27]). Steven's response to the worker confirms the ability of waste pickers as able to improve their lot in life (line 11). Steven's definition of waste picking as relatively lucrative comes as a surprise to the worker (line 3). Concerned that he might be judged for tax evasion, Steven is quick to mention that he used to make tax contributions when he was previously employed (lines 7-8).

[27] The median reported wage for a construction labourer is R15 (USD 1/ GBP 0.80 pence) an hour (Payscale, 2015).

It is not Steven's earnings that impress the worker, but rather that waste pickers get to keep 100 percent of what they earn. Performer and audience co-construct an idealised definition of waste picking. The interaction establishes that waste pickers keep all of what they earn because they are not subject to government deductions or the costs of running a home (lines 6, 9-10). The interaction is brief, but the feasibility of drawing comparisons between waste pickers and wageworkers is not discredited. This endorsement of waste pickers' presentation of self enables the power of impression management to generate status. Subsequently waste pickers are able to position themselves as financially on a par, or better off, than manual workers earning the minimum wage.

6.2.2 Discrediting Other Workers

Tamas presented himself as better at successfully living on a low income by discrediting working parents. He achieves social distance by citing others' lack of money management skills to draw attention to his superior financial planning capacity (projective agency), so that he can make what little money he has last. His performance also distances himself from the stereotype of alcoholics that he complained was used to stigmatise him as cognitively impaired (see Extract 4, Chapter 5).

"They don't know how to work with money"

While we are sitting at the river, a conversation with Tamas about India prompts him to reflect on his Muslim identity. Waste picking meant he could not participate in religious observances or festivals such as Eid. He does not dwell on this and instead re-iterates the merits of waste picking. Extract 11 is preceded by familiar tropes of waste picking as an "honest living," and waste pickers' superiority to "people that live in houses."

EXTRACT 11
Fieldnotes, week 19, July 31, 2014

1	Tamas: But they owe me, but they live in	
2	houses, I'm living on the street, but they	
3	owe me, because they can't afford what	
4	we have everyday	
5	Me: ja, the wages here are very low, so	Yes, the wages in South Africa are very
6	people, they don't have enough money,	low
7	even if they are working	
8	Tamas: They have got enough money,	It's less about not having any money and
9	what they doing with the money?	more about how they spend their money
10	Me: ah, yeah	
11	Tamas: Not only rent, they want to drug,	They are not only paying for essentials
12	whatever they do, I don't talk about them	like rent, but want to buy drugs too. I
13	now, whatever, it's their choice. But if	don't judge them for that, that's their
14	you live in a house, you work. You have	choice. But if you have high overheads,
15	to budget, out of your money that you	you have to budget. Calculate how much
16	work for. Right this is for the week, this	is needed for weekly outgoings such as
17	is for my children, for school fees, or	things that children need, school fees,
18	maybe shoes for my one son or, you must	new shoes perhaps, so you have to
19	budget. Can't, they can't, they don't	budget. The problem is that they don't
20	know how to work with money.	know how to work with money
21	They owe me, even though they live in	
22	houses and I'm homeless, they still owe	
23	me. Because they can't afford the things	
24	that we have	

Tamas acknowledges that workers are traditionally seen as above waste pickers in the social hierarchy, because workers live in houses and waste pickers live on the streets (lines 1-2). Tamas brings this hierarchy into question by depicting workers as in some way indebted to waste pickers (lines 1-4). Tamas disregards the significance of having a home because workers cannot afford to buy everyday items, whereas waste pickers can (lines 2-4). When waste pickers sell items to workers, at a fraction of the retail price, workers can buy things that would otherwise be too expensive. Workers "owe" Tamas because waste pickers are willing to share their spoils. Therefore, contrary to what most audiences assume, living in a house does not mean that workers are above waste pickers in the social hierarchy.

When I explain workers' hardships in terms of inadequate remuneration (lines 5-7), Tamas corrects my interpretation to bring agency to the fore (line 13) and shifts my attention from merely what workers earn to how they choose to spend their money (lines 8-9). He implies that workers have a recreational drug habit (line 11), which he is not critical of (lines 12-13), except when it results in misallocation of funds to the detriment of

children (lines 16-19). Working parents are unaware of the importance of budgeting (14-19) because they do not have the necessary financial management knowledge (lines 19-20). This places emphasis on individual responsibility over workers' poverty and exploitative working conditions. The implicit criticism here is that either through lack of education or stupidity, workers find themselves in situations where they cannot afford the everyday basics that waste pickers have.

The implication is that workers, yet to learn how to divide their money so as to meet crucial costs before luxury items, are cognitively inferior to Tamas. Tamas creates the impression that both waste pickers and workers have little money to work with, yet waste pickers can meet their needs while workers cannot. Tamas avoids ostensibly casting aspersions (lines 12-13) but injects a moral tone into his assessment of why workers are inferior to waste pickers by selecting discrediting attributes (illegal drug use) to discuss. Dual closure is therefore achieved by differentiating between workers and waste pickers' tastes (Bourdieu, 1984) and capacity to live within one's means. By using examples that refer to the cost of raising children, working parents' spending habits are defined as irresponsible. The implication is that workers' choices have a detrimental effect on younger family members. This insinuation uses the logic of a hierarchy of needs (Wolff, 2016) to criticise workers for not budgeting sensibly. In contrast, Tamas implies that, if faced with the same situation, he would make different choices to present himself as morally superior.

6.2.3 Status and Reciprocity

So far, I have shown how waste pickers present their relationships with other workers. Waste pickers anticipate that normals assume a worker's minimum standard of living is better than waste pickers' lives on the streets. Furthermore, they argued that these assumptions were inaccurate because waste pickers are in several respects better off than the lower echelons of the working classes. Evidenced so far are waste pickers' higher disposable income, better money management skills and comparable earning potential to workers. I now add to this list the status that waste pickers generate from an idealised presentation of the team as more cohesive than other workers. The aim of this section is to show how waste pickers' performance of reciprocal relationships further contributes to the impression that they are better than low-wage workers.

"He won't come to us"

While I am sitting at the river while waste pickers drink, Steven, Tamas and Ryan chat in Afrikaans. Steven's switch to English begins with an announcement that "It's a hard life Teresa." This is not followed by an explanation of why it is a hard life, but rather why other workers have it harder than waste pickers (Extract 12).

EXTRACT 12
Fieldnotes, week 8, February 27, 2014

1	Tamas: Look here, these people working	People work for companies and live in
2	for companies coming out of houses, but	houses but don't even have bread to take
3	they don't got bread to take to work even	to work for lunch. But waste pickers
4	(…)[inaudible]. You see this, this skarrel	don't go without
5	here for us, everyday we got	
6	Me: Yeah	
7	Tamas: We got, we got, we got luxury	We have luxury items, while workers
8	everything. But him, he come to us,	who live in homes ask us for food
9	nothing to eat, but he is a work man, lives	
10	in a house.	
11	Me: But being a labourer, the minimum	
12	wage it's like, R10 an hour	
13	Ryan: R80 a day	
14	Me: R80 a day!	
15	Ryan: R80 a day man	
16	Tamas: Wait, wait wait, look here, look	They debate/argue about how much
17	here, if you qualified in your job and you	workers earn
18	do a job, they pay you money for the day,	
19	maybe like R40 for a day man	
20	Me: So it's just as a day labourer	
21	Tamas: No, if you maybe like, help	If you are an unskilled labourer then you
22	bringing and breaking this, whatsoever,	would likely earn R21.50 per hour, but if
23	na? Maybe like R21.50. But if you are	you are qualified then earnings would
24	qualified, maybe earn like R350 or R100	rise to something between R100 and
25	for the day. But they come by us, they	R350 a day. But they come and ask us for
26	ask food from us.	food
27	Steven: But we sleep on the street	But we are homeless
28	Me: mmm	
29	Steven: (…)[inaudible] dirty street but	
30	we sit outside.	
31	Tamas: You know where it is coming	You know where they go wrong though,
32	wrong now. If you pay by the end of the	they won't come and give us a little
33	week, he won't come to us and say 'there	something once they get paid
34	guys something for you'	
35	Me: He doesn't	They don't
36	Tamas: No	
37	Me: Why is that?	
38	Tamas: I don't know, ask him	Ask them, I don't know

Extract 12 demonstrates how Tamas and Steven put on a team performance to achieve dual closure (Murphy, 1986). Together with idealising the pay and conditions of waste picking (lucrative and autonomous), they emphasise the poverty pay of day labourers (lines 13, 15, 19, 23-25). Notwithstanding these workers' access to a job and a house, they remain in absolute poverty (lines 1-3, 8-10). Not only do waste pickers have the basic necessities (lines 4-5) they also have luxuries that others cannot afford (lines 7-8). They present assumptions about workers' higher status above waste pickers and the reality of their reliance on waste pickers, as something of a paradox. Waste pickers sleep outside (line 27), sit on streets that are dirty (lines 29-30), yet workers with a job and a house come and ask waste pickers for food (lines 25-26).

Waste pickers would make charitable donations to labourers ungrudgingly, but for the discrediting tendency of workers to fail to return the favour (lines 31-34). Tamas has no explanation as to why this may be the case and directs me to make my own enquiries, rather than expect waste pickers to speculate about workers' motives (lines 37-38). Even though waste pickers frame low-wage workers as having less earning power than waste pickers, the expectation remains that, come pay day, workers should make a charitable donation to waste pickers. A failure to foster a reciprocal relationship is seen as wrong (line 32) which means low-wage workers are both economically and morally deficient compared to waste pickers.

Neither my reference to the low minimum wage (line 11-12) nor my exclamation at their R80 a day estimates (line 14) prompts a conversation about the unfair exploitation of the working classes. What this reveals is that waste pickers also have tacit assumptions about minimum standards of living that they do not bring into question. Waste pickers problematise the position of workers as being able to afford a house but not food, only inasmuch as it makes their standard of life broadly comparable. Waste pickers therefore contribute to discourses that position poverty as normal. For example, Tamas concurs with the hierarchical incremental pay differentials based on employees' qualifications (lines 16-18), despite the fact that his estimates of the minimum daily rate are far below a living wage.[28] The sole purpose of the interaction is to usurp the status of low-wage workers who have a house (lines 1-2, 9-10), and position themselves as homeless but better off, by

[28] Isaacs (2015), citing Finn's (2015) analysis and conceptualising of the poverty line, reports that a worker needs to earn ZAR 4,125 per month (USD 290 / GBP 219) to be brought up to the poverty line in South Africa.

differentiating between the absolute poverty of labourers and the relative poverty of waste pickers.

In summary, an idealised front has agential capacity in two respects. Firstly, waste pickers' performance achieves an impression that they are materially better off than other workers. This counters assumptions that being homeless positions waste pickers below low-wage workers. In doing so, waste pickers usurp the status of workers to present themselves as having a comparable standard of living. Even though waste pickers suffer the indignities of poverty along with other workers, their performance focuses on constructing normals who work for poverty pay as less astute.

Secondly, by pitting themselves against their nearest neighbours in the social hierarchy, Tamas and Steven communicate the watershed between their criminal past and their more conventional present lives. Images of waste pickers and criminals are conflated by security companies (discussed in Chapter 2) and exacerbated by their physical appearance (see Chapter 5). The selective presentation of information about waste picking helps to create social distance between waste picking and criminality. In particular, waste pickers' moral stance and commitment to reciprocal relationships do not fit with the criminal stereotype. However, hierarchal ways of thinking and power relations within the group also evoke stereotypical criminal gang structures.

6. PART 3. INDIVIDUAL STATUS AND GROUP HIERARCHY

The final part of this chapter turns from waste pickers place in the inter group hierarchy in South African society, to the intra group hierarchy among waste pickers. As mentioned previously, there was a division between team members for whom waste picking was a last resort, and those who were not actively seeking alternative forms of employment. Steven and Tamas fell into this latter group. This chapter began with Tamas using his language skills to express himself faster than his fellow team mates. This is explored in Chapter 7 with regard to how he positioned himself at the top of the group hierarchy.

For now, I turn my attention to Steven's conscious or unconscious strategies to manage the stigma of homelessness though the language of choice. Either intentionally or unintentionally, he sets himself apart from other waste pickers. In doing so he creates a division between waste pickers according to their access to accommodation, family, and their systematic approach to negotiating street life.

6.3.1 Access to Housing

Many of the waste pickers who I met had access to accommodation of one sort or another, but for various reasons had chosen not stay in these places permanently. One waste picker in particular, Steven, repeatedly explained why sleeping on the streets of the affluent southern suburbs afforded him a better quality of life and standard of living than the housing available to him in the Cape Flats. His idealised impression of life on the streets brings into question tacit assumptions about homelessness that are propagated by local government (City of Cape Town, 2014a). Steven disrupts the logic that reuniting waste pickers with their family and relocating them to live with their kin, used by residents (see GSCID, 2014b), is unequivocally preferable to sleeping on the streets.

"We rather choose it here"

As with Extracts 11 and 12, the following interaction (Extract 13) takes place while sitting at the river with waste pickers who are drinking wine. After some talk in Afrikaans, Steven addresses me by name and asks if I read "the voice." He is referring to the Daily Voice, the South African tabloid newspaper. It is known for stories that reinforce the established negative view of the Cape Flats through tales of "drugs, crime and alcoholism" (S. Samson, 2007, p. 4). In Extract 13, Steven uses these stereotypes to explain his choice to live on the streets in the affluent suburbs.

EXTRACT 13

Fieldnotes, week 5, February 6, 2014

Steven: our location's worse because all coloured people stayed there, and you know it's like gangsterism all the time.	The townships are worse than the southern suburbs because it's where all the coloured people live and there is a gang problem
Me: Yep	
Steven: It's like drug dealings all the time, you understand, it's like shooting all the time	There's drug dealing and shooting all the time
Me: Yeah	
Steven: Fighting all the time. But not here in [names of Southern suburbs] You see that's why, we rather choose it here because	That's why we rather choose to stay here
Me: It's peaceful	
Steven: You know, in my location, our location, [names of suburbs in the Cape Flats] it's like, say from 7 o'clock, it's like call in your dog, call in your kids	From 7 o'clock you have to start calling in your dog and your children
Me: Really, from 7 in the morning?	
Steven: No in the evening	
Me: Ah o.k so you can't go out in the evening.	
Steven: You know what, it's like you can't trust (…)[inaudible] you understand? So, it's like when it starts to become night time, it seem like the gangsters start to come out	You can't trust people because at night the gangsters come out
Me: mmm [agreement]	
Steven: And start looking for the enemies. Shooting guns, understand?	The gangsters start looking for enemy gang members and that's when the shooting starts
Me: So is this easier than living there?	
Steven: But it's a nice part, that is what I tell you. I sleep (…)[inaudible] 2 o'clock in the morning and I got some money in my pocket but I've no cigarettes. I have no cigarettes, you understand, I (…)[inaudible] it's like 2 o'clock in the morning and I find I have no cigarettes but I have money. I can go to Lower Main Road and buy me some, I will find a Somalian shop is open.	That's what I am telling you, the nice part is, if I wake up in the middle of the night and I have run out of cigarettes, I can go to the shops and buy some more because the Somalian shop on Lower Main Road is open.
Me: Yeah	
Steven: Or the clubs is open, even I want to drink a beer I can buy from here a beer	Or if the clubs are still open and I want a beer I can buy one
Me: Yeah	
Steven: But I'm talking about (…)[inaudible] 'til 4 'o clock is the last time, in the morning then people start to wake up, I can still go to the shops and buy me some cigarettes. But not in the location. 9 o'clock all the shops are closed.	The last places to close shut at about 4am, then you have to wait until people open up in the morning. So I can still go to the shop and buy cigarettes even in the middle of the night. But not in townships. All the shops are closed by 9pm in townships

Steven uses apartheid-era language to describe the "locations" (line 1) where he grew up, which are now known as the Cape Flats. His characterisation of the ubiquity of 'coloured' population groups (line 2), organised violence (line 3), dealing of illegal substances (line 5), gun crime (line 6) and use of physical violence (line 9) in the Cape Flats has been well documented (Bowers Du Toit, 2014; Lindegaard, 2009; Orderson, 2011). In contrast, these problems are absent in the southern suburbs of Cape Town (lines 9-10), which is why Steven chooses to live there (lines 11-12). The increased presence of gang members in the evenings (lines 24-26) threatens security in the Cape Flats (lines 22-26, 28-29), which dictates the mobility of residents (lines 16-17) and operating hours of shops and services (lines 49-51).

The freedom of movement in the southern suburbs afforded to residents, because of the reduced fear of crime and violence, means that Steven can wander around at all hours of the night and day. Should he be caught short, he can go and get a beer and cigarettes (lines 31-40, 42-43). In fact there are only about 2 or 3 hours when everything is closed, between when nightclubs shut and shops open, in which he will have to go without (lines 46-49). In the Cape Flats, he has to stay indoors in the evenings and, if he does need anything, must ensure procurement by 9pm (lines 49-51). The spatial and temporal privileges that are afforded to him by living in the southern suburbs, even though he is on the street, are still more favourable to him than living in a house in the Cape Flats.

The substandard quality of life in the Cape Flats gives credence to earlier portrayals of manual workers' impoverished standard of living. In places where the gap between rich and poor is narrower, there may be some sense in saving money to rent a home in a working class area (Wolff, 2016). For waste pickers, returning to the Cape Flats means mixing with gangsters and a life of crime, from which they have successfully distanced themselves (iterational agency). When seen from the perspective of waste pickers, it becomes possible to see why people labelled as homeless may resist being re-located. The premise of Steven's argument is that there is little to gain by moving from central and functional parts of Cape Town (front region), to poorly functioning "back region" areas on the city periphery.

Although Steven did not reside in the Cape Flats permanently, his access to facilities in his family home makes life on the streets more comfortable than it otherwise might be. For example, he could take clothes to be laundered. Having access to shelter to warm up and dry off, even if used intermittently, gives Steven respite from the infamously cold and wet Cape Town winter. These pieces of information were gleaned mostly from

what his girlfriend told me rather than what Steven prefaced, but the difference in his physical appearance was noticeable to me. He was a healthier weight and he was always appropriately dressed for the weather, unlike some of the other waste pickers. The divide between waste pickers with access to household amenities and those that did not was subtle but evident.

Steven idealises his living conditions by limiting his description of street life to information about access to shops and services. This ignores his access to a household which somewhat undermines his idealised definition of street life. It is more accurate to say that Steven, like several other waste pickers, lived between the street and other households. The group are therefore not unequivocally homeless in the sense they never have access to a house to sleep in. Individuals' had various reasons for not taking up the offers of a place to stay from different types of support networks, all of which were used as further evidence that waste picking was a conscious choice (agency as practical evaluation).

6.3.2 Access to Support Networks

The bergie label has negative connotations because it implies that homeless people have no support network, because they are unable to "nurture the kinds of social relations that would enable one to be cared for in dire circumstances" (Ross, 2005, p. 634). Audiences assume that waste pickers are forced to live on the streets because not only do they not have a home, but they do not have any friends or family that are willing to let waste pickers stay with them. The ability to go home *and* be welcomed by friends and/or family varied between individual waste pickers, but it was Steven who talked the most about his kinship ties. He used information about his support networks as evidence that his life as a waste picker was a choice, among a range of options available to him, thus distancing himself from the stigma of homelessness. The seeming unintended consequence of his use of dramatic realisation was to draw attention to the distinction between him and other waste pickers.

"I can go home anytime I want to"

The following conversation (Extract 14) follows on from Extract 12. Steven and Tamas have established that waste pickers have tangible goods that other workers do not have. This next part of the conversation (Extract 14) switches to the non-tangible, emotional support that waste pickers have.

EXTRACT 14
Fieldnotes, week 8, February 27, 2014

1	Steven: Teresa, I won't lie to you, higher	Middle and upper class people have a
2	people, these sommer people, this sort of	nice lifestyle, but I like it here with these
3	people, these sort of people, higher	people on the street
4	people living very nicely, but I like it	
5	here with these people on the street. I can	
6	go home any time I want to, I can stay	
7	there for 3, 4, 5 days, 1 week, 1 month, I	
8	don't care (….)[inaudible] my brother he	
9	loves me, but I like to be here. I am used	
10	to this kind of life. Living with the	
11	[street] people.	
12	Me: Does your brother understand that?	
13	Do you think	
14	Steven: He understands that ja	
15	Me: He does	
16	Steven: He does. My mother is still alive.	
17	When I come there she always likes to	
18	hug me, ask me 'why are you staying	
19	away for so long?'	
20	Me: mmmm [agreement]	

The limits of waste pickers' idealised front is revealed here when Steven talks about the middle classes (lines 1-4) who live a life of comfort that far exceeds that of waste pickers or low-wage workers. Seeing comparatively affluent people does not take away the pleasure that Steven gains from living on the street (lines 4-5). This is in part because he could have a roof over his head indefinitely, at a moment's notice (lines 5-7), because he has a loving family (lines 8-9) that miss him (lines 16-19). He has an affinity with the people with whom he interacts in his life on the streets of the southern suburbs (lines 4-5, 10). Steven's references to affection (lines 8, 16-17) disproves the stereotype of homelessness where people cease to be "fully social beings" (Desjarlais, 1997, p. 124).

His idealised front is used to irrefutably construct waste picking as a choice. He achieves dual closure (Murphy, 1986) from "bergies" who are unable to sustain social relations. Instead, Steven demonstrates that he does not see his circumstances as dire and, even if they were, he could return to his family, who would welcome him back home. His idealised agential capacity is strengthened by the rationality of avoiding the Cape Flats (see Extract 7). Steven's conviction is summed up when he prophesises that, if I visited his family home, I would agree that he had made the right choice to be a waste picker:

> Steven: We got our families. We rather choose it this way man. One day, even if I take you to my location, and you walk around in my location you will see, 'no Steven, you choose the right way.'
>
> (Fieldnotes, Week 11, 27th March 2014)

The use of "we" implies that what he says applies to the whole team. There was a sense that compared to others who also lived and worked on the streets, the group with whom I worked thought of themselves as of a higher calibre.

6.3.3 Self Reliance

This last section considers how an idealised impression of life as a waste picker helps to raise individuals' status compared to other team members. Contrary to stereotypes that stigmatise homeless people as a homogeneous mass, the waste pickers I met were a highly diverse group. The following interaction reveals the different political opinions that waste pickers held about how to respond to people who are worse off. By discrediting other people who live and work on the street as less self-sufficient, waste pickers elevated their comparative position amongst the homeless population in Cape Town. They achieved a sense of dual closure by criticising others' lack of projective capacity and contrasted it to their own ability to be independent.

"they are not like us"

Despite very little talk about the hardships of waste picking and sleeping outside, during a winter month, security officers told Tamas and his friends that they could not continue to sleep in their usual place. The ongoing restrictions meant that the group had started to use a nearby subway (underpass) as an alternative sleeping spot, which is communal and more cramped than the previous space that they were using. In Extract 15, waste pickers discuss the previous night's happenings, which lead to a broader analysis of the politics of charitable giving. Although Tamas is exasperated with people arriving to bed down for the night in an unprepared state, there is disagreement about how individuals should respond. The unwritten rule is that if you can spare it, one should comply with requests to share.

EXTRACT 15
Fieldnotes, week 20, August 7, 2014

1	Tamas: What did they do? Don't they	What do they do all day? Don't they
2	skarrel? They don't work, why don't you	waste pick? If they don't work, why
3	go skarrel something for you. You know	don't they waste pick so that have
4	you going to sleep now. You must have	something for themselves? They know
5	everything with you. Your water, or	that they are going to go to sleep and will
6	maybe your, something to eat, your	therefore need food or cigarettes, or
7	smoke like, or whatever you going to do	whatever they want to have
8	Me: yeah	
9	Tamas: You must also look that you have	Individuals must see to it that they have
10	everything, now you are going to sleep	everything
11	mos now. You don't disturb other people.	No direct translation for "mos." The
12	Now them, if you come in the subway,	nearest English equivalent is "you know"
13	nothing to smoke, nothing to eat, even	Even girls come to the subway with
14	girls, even girls, even girls.	nothing
15	Steven: They are not like us	

Tamas asks several rhetorical questions to express his frustration at the shortcomings of other people (lines 1-2). Annoyance partly stems from his reasoning that if he has arrived fully prepared, there is no plausible explanation for others not to do the same. The same amount of time to prepare has been equally available to everyone (lines 1-3), in the knowledge that they will be sleeping rough (lines 3-4), yet others have not secured provisions to sustain themselves through the night (lines 4-6). Tamas emphasises the importance of being self-sufficient (lines 9-11) and the irritation it causes him when people arrive at the subway for the night and, over the course of the night ask others for cigarettes and food (lines 11-13). In particular he exclaims at the extent to which a lack of responsibility for oneself supersedes traditional gendered expectations of women. His assumption is that because women are domestically orientated, it is surprising that they are not better prepared than men (lines 13-14). In case I am left with the mistaken impression that all waste pickers are like this, Steven differentiates Tamas and Steven from the rest of the team (line 15).

The theme of the interaction is the politics of individual responsibilities to meet basic human needs and if/when requests for charitable support are justified. According to Tamas people do not have the right to disturb him and ask for food (line 11) when there has been equal opportunity for everyone in the subway to waste pick (lines 1-2). Tamas describes others' behaviour as resulting from a lack of foresight (lines 3-5) and bad manners (line 11). The emphasis on why people arrive unprepared and the impact on Tamas frames the act of asking others for food as a debate about charitable giving. The

extract presents begging from residents (Chapter 5) as very different to homeless people asking waste pickers for food. What others do when they arrived unprepared is not described as begging. This is in part explained by Tamas's adherence to the unwritten rules of reciprocity, that mean team members are obliged to share (see Extract 12).

Extract 15 espouses a collectivist way of thinking about the distribution of resources but does not extend to a critique of individualist policies and practices in wider society. In the same way that waste pickers did not raise the inadequate remuneration for workers as a cause for concern (Extract 12), seemingly here no thought is voiced about the injustice of the situation. The emphasis is on why people are ill prepared rather than why people sleep in a subway with no food. The bigger picture of why people have to frequently use a subway for shelter is ignored. Criticism is placed on the individual rather than the structural causes of inadequate housing provision in Cape Town. While I do not suppose that waste pickers are social analysts, it remained strange to me that waste pickers did not complain more about the unequal distribution of power and resources in South Africa.

The topic of conversation anticipates the stereotype of waste pickers as part of a homogeneous mass of homeless people. Tamas and Steven therefore use impression management strategies to distance waste pickers from homeless stereotypes. These strategies achieve an avoidance of stigma by association in several ways. Firstly, they define themselves as exhibiting agential capacity. Unlike homeless people, waste pickers have all the provisions that they will need by nightfall. Waste pickers' resourcefulness and self-reliance is used as evidence that they are superior to other homeless people who do not think ahead. Waste pickers' projective capacity (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) differentiates them from homeless people with no wherewithal, whom the public otherwise approximated to waste pickers in the social hierarchy.

Secondly, Tamas and Steven discredit homeless people by portraying others in the subway as less rational because they make impractical decisions about how to use their time. This positions homeless people as inferior because, unlike waste pickers, they are a burden. This leaves waste pickers with the quandary of how to respond to others who are, by design or misfortune, ill equipped for the night. This gives the impression that waste pickers too, like normals, face the moral dilemma about how to deal with people who are dependent on the goodwill of others. As with their relationship with workers, Tamas and Steven discredit homeless people to usurp the status of normals. This status is used to

create social distance from homeless people and give the impression that waste pickers occupy a superior position in the social hierarchy (dual closure).

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

One aspect of agency is when actors attempt to reconfigure received schemas by generating alternative possible responses to the problematic situations they confront in their lives" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 984). This chapter has traversed some of these attempts to reconfigure schemas, through waste pickers' presentation of self. Waste pickers gave a performance that aimed to define waste picking as a conscious and rational choice. Tamas and Steven in particular characterised waste picking as equally lucrative as unskilled formal employment, yet afforded them greater autonomy. This careful selection of information is agential in that it gives waste pickers the capacity to "reconfigure" stereotypical images of waste pickers and waste picking.

Furthermore, by discrediting groups conventionally seen as superior and distancing themselves from other marginalised social groups, waste pickers used idealisation to achieve dual closure. Waste pickers usurped the status of normals by emphasising commonalities between waste pickers and wageworkers. At the same time, they discredited workers and homeless people to achieve social distance from them. Dual closure helped waste pickers to avoid being positioned at the bottom of hierarchies both within the team, and in comparison to other teams who are traditionally seen as immediately above or below them in the social ladder. An idealised front is analogous to the construction of a mask, in anticipation of being stigmatised as homeless, alcoholic, or criminal.

However, the mask slips when waste pickers contradict idealised performances of life as a waste picker. The next chapter explores how waste pickers unintentionally undermine the agential capacity of stigma and impression management strategies.

CHAPTER SEVEN
FINDINGS: AGENCY AND CONSTRAINT

As prefaced in Chapter 5, homeless stereotypes result in an avoidance of people who are associated with drunken beggars and madmen (Desjarlais, 1997, p. 5). This chapter discusses the attributes of waste pickers who conform to this homeless stereotype and therefore undermine the idealised front, which might otherwise redefine discourses that position waste pickers as inferior. In doing so, I consider how waste pickers cast themselves as physically and psychologically damaged, unable to help themselves and unlikely to change. The overarching theme is how waste pickers' undermine the agential capacity of impression management, set out in Chapter 6, by intermittently adhering to stereotypical images. I argue that waste pickers unintentionally entrench the negative stereotypes that stigmatise them and their work.

Further to the physical attributes of waste pickers' personal front, discussed in Chapter 5, this chapter explores waste pickers' gestures that conform to homeless stereotypes. **Part one** looks at how waste pickers' interactions are characterised by conflict which stigmatises the team as violent. **Part two** analyses how these stigmatising attributes counter waste pickers' idealised performance of agential capacity. I explain how discrediting information defines waste pickers as only able to think short term, and lacking in projective capacity (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). I use the example of interactions with the public to show how waste pickers use alcoholism to evade individual responsibility. **Part three** maintains the focus on agency, through the constraints of hierarchical power relations between team members. Each part surfaces waste pickers' difficulty in maintaining an idealised front, given the limited separation between front and back region settings.

7. PART 1. DISCREDITING INFORMATION

This section looks at instances that were indicative of the ways in which waste pickers conformed to stereotypes. In doing so they undermined the idealised impression of themselves as autonomous individuals and workers (see Chapter 6). Although there were multiple discrediting attributes that can be connected to homeless stereotypes, in this section I focus on the constraints of violent behaviour. This section also reveals the disjuncture between what I was told during fieldwork (front region) and what happened in waste pickers' interactions in my absence (back region). Unlike other performers, waste pickers were unable to prevent the leakage from back region into front region spaces.

Although this may occur in many areas of social life outside waste picking, the surveillance of public spaces made it additionally difficult to keep discrediting information out of the sight of audiences.

7.1.1 Visual Markers

As established in Chapter 5, waste pickers physical appearance stigmatises them as homeless, alcoholic criminals. Due to an avoidance of extended verbal interactions with waste pickers, audiences rely on visual markers for information about how to label them. Unlike other workers, waste pickers do not have any sign equipment (such as a uniform or gloves) to communicate non-verbally that they are any different to homeless people. The assumption that waste pickers are no different to "bergies" is exacerbated when visible injuries communicate waste pickers' involvement in violence. This information can subsequently be used by audiences as a reason for avoidance of interactions with waste pickers.

"I had a fight"

One morning when I meet Tamas, I see that he is wearing sunglasses. I do not comment on them and given that it is summer, his eyewear does not seem unusual. Presumably he thinks I have interpreted his sunglasses as strange and/or will notice what is beneath his sunglasses eventually. Pre-empting that he will have to explain his appearance to me, he starts a conversation about how he came to have a black eye (Extract 16).

EXTRACT 16
Fieldnotes, week 6, February 13, 2014

1	I had a fight also now in the week.	
2	Me: Oh dear	
3	Tamas: Got a blue eye	
4	Me: You got a black eye?	
5	Tamas: Blue	
6	Me: Blue	
7	[Tamas lifts up his sunglasses and shows	
8	me his eye]	
9	Me: Oh, gosh	
10	Tamas: Three other white guys. Maybe I	It was three white guys. Maybe there was
11	was naughty or I don't know, or drunk, I	wrong doing on my part, I don't know, or
12	don't know what did I do. Did I steal?	I was drunk. I don't know what I did.
13	Me: Three other white guys?	Maybe I stole from them?
14	Tamas: Big guys	
15	Me: In [Suburb name]?	
16	Tamas: Mmm. And we made friends	Yes, but then we made friends afterwards
17	again	
18	Me: After they hit you?	
19	Tamas: Ja they say sorry, that I was	Yes, they apologised but confirmed that I
20	naughty they said.	was in the wrong

When Tamas shows me his damaged eye I am sympathetic towards him (line 2). I do not ask about the details of how he came to be hurt apart from enquiring about where the fight happened (line 15). He volunteers information, speculating about what prompted the attack, which brings his idealised presentation of self into disrepute. Having gone to great lengths in other interactions with me, to present waste picking as an honest living and better than committing crime, he admits that he might have stolen something (line 12). Rather than merely sharing with me that he does not know why they hit him, he entertains the idea that he might have done something wrong or been drunk to the extent that it caused offence (lines 10-12).

Regardless of the "white guy's" motives, Tamas sees it within the bounds of acceptability to leave the interaction on good terms (lines 16-17). I confirm that the amicable part of the encounter happened after the violence with Tamas (line 18). He explains that the men apologised but that Tamas had provoked them (lines 19-20). His sense of justice is a strange mix of having no respect for others when intoxicated (see later in this chapter) with a willingness to be physically disciplined if his conduct warrants it. Even though he admits that he might have stolen something, there is a sense of redemption in his willingness to forgive men who outweigh him in stature and number.

Although Tamas is wearing sunglasses, he is unable to convincingly conceal his injury from me for any length of time. Rather than wait for me to form my own judgement he discloses the circumstances of the fight without prompting. A black eye, unlike other injuries that could have been sustained accidentally is indicative of physical violence. A black eye on its own could feasibly be a sports injury, but the rest of Tamas's appearance makes it difficult not to assume that he has been in a fight. He can successfully conceal scars and prison tattoos with clothing because they are on his skull and body. He cannot conceal his lack of teeth, skin colour, gender and being excessively underweight. A black eye combines with more fixed physical attributes to entrench negative stereotypes associated with involvement in criminal gangs.

Alcohol-induced amnesia (lines 10-12) is a two edged sword. On the one hand, ambiguity enables Tamas to avoid admitting to his wrong doing to me with any certainty. His reflection on the rights and wrongs of what happened is conveyed with an air of concern. This presents Tamas as having moral integrity after the fact, which helps to keep his idealised presentation of self intact. On the other hand, the role of alcohol is a constraint because it meant he could not criticise some forms of prejudice against him. Several times waste pickers had bruises and injuries from fights that happened in my absence. I was astounded at the number of times waste pickers were unable to recall the precise circumstances under which injuries had been sustained. As an unintended consequence, alcohol-induced memory loss limits waste pickers' ability to discredit other workers or homeless people with any conviction. This constrains the capacity of impression management to achieve dual closure by marking themselves as different to their nearest neighbours in the social hierarchy (see Chapter 6).

7.1.2 Discrediting Attitudes

Goffman (1959) describes the different types of secrets that can be revealed that can discredit individual and team performances. In the early stages of fieldwork, despite the destructive information that connected team members to stereotypes, it remained conceivable to me that fighting was not waste pickers' first choice of conflict resolution method. However, I came to know "team secrets" (Goffman, 1959) about waste pickers' attitude towards violence, which made it clear that violence was anything but a last resort. This discrepancy between front and back region performances discredits the idealised front of waste pickers as morally superior (see Chapter 6). In fact, it was at the very times when waste pickers tried to convey moral integrity to me, that they also unintentionally

conveyed the acceptability of violence. As a consequence, waste pickers' conformed to the homeless stereotype both physically and by their attitudes about appropriate conduct. This discredited the idealised front of waste pickers as superior to other violent groups in society, such as criminal gangs.

"Sorry to quarrel with the guys"

As with Steven, Tamas was conscious that I must see him in a positive light by explicitly telling me "You must think good about me" (fieldnotes, week 10, March 13, 2014). This may explain why he sometimes became agitated by his inability to direct the team in order to make a good impression. One such occasion occurred while the group was lined up outside a bottle store waiting to be served (Extract 17). Earlier in the morning, while the others were busy waste picking and out of earshot, Chris recounted to me the circumstances of the death of his brother the night before. He explained that he had started drinking immediately, in the early hours of the morning, which is why he was drunk when I arrive at 8:30 a.m. Understandably, no one perceived Chris to be out of sorts because ostensibly he looked and acted how he always does. Amongst the group, consumption of alcohol was not unusual at any hour of the day or night. Over the course of the morning Ryan noticed that he was missing an empty returnable glass bottle that he had collected. Extract 17 is my conversation with Tamas where he explains that Chris has been apportioned blame for the missing bottle.

EXTRACT 17
Fieldnotes, week 24, September 11, 2014

1	Tamas: You know what Chris done now?	Do you know what Chris did?
2	Me: Chris	Chris?
3	Tamas: Stole one out of his bag, that	He stole a bottle out of Ryan's bag, that's
4	Chris done now. That isn't nice, that isn't	what he did. That's not nice, it's not nice
5	nice to steal from other people. I steal	to steal from other people. If people steal
6	from other people I going to steal	from us, I am going to steal from them.
7	everything from them. Because just,	All this is over one bottle that he stole.
8	because of that one (…)[inaudible] five,	"Five" is short for a 500ml returnable
9	that he stole out of his bag now.	glass bottle
10	Me: He told me his brother's just died	
11	Tamas: Who?	
12	Me: Chris	
13	Tamas: He didn't tell me	
14	[Chris arrives and Tamas argues with	
15	him in Afrikaans]	
16	Tamas: He stole. He stole from us	
17	Me: Yeah, you said	
18	Tamas: Chris is stole, the one sommer	Chris stole one of the 500ml bottles this
19	five, this morning. Now I will moer him.	morning. Now I am going to beat him up
20	Me: Can't you talk about it instead	
21	[Chris defends himself to the group and	
22	they carry on talking in Afrikaans]	
23	Tamas: [Talking to the group] (…)	
24	[Afrikaans] change the fucking bottles	I wish the bottle store staff would hurry
25	[addressing the group]	up and remunerate us for the glass bottles
26	Tamas: [He turns to address me] Sorry to	
27	quarrel with the guys	
28	Me: I don't mind	

It seems to me unlikely than anyone would steal an empty 500ml bottle, given that it has a returnable value of ZAR 1.50 (USD 0.10 cents/ GBP 0.08 pence). For Tamas, it is not the financial loss but rather the moral transgression that upsets him (lines 4-5). A lot of talk has happened in Afrikaans and I do not know how strong the case is against Chris. Even if he did steal the bottle, it seems insensitive to scold him when he is traumatised by his brother's death. I do not know whether Chris was speaking to me in confidence which puts me in an awkward position. Given what I have been led to believe about the reciprocal relationships in the group, I opt to tell Tamas that Chris is bereaved (line 10). Tamas denies any knowledge of Chris's personal circumstances (line 13) and when Chris arrives Tamas confronts him about taking the bottle (lines 14-15). The interaction happens in Afrikaans and Tamas translates only that they are convinced of Chris's guilt (line 16) and the consequences that Chris can expect (line 19).

Tamas's frustration is compounded by the length of time he is made to wait to return his empty glass bottles (line 24). As if catching himself through my eyes, he apologises for arguing in my presence (lines 26-27) and I reassure him that I am unconcerned (line 28). The scene results in the emergence of our contrasting approaches to conflict resolution. Perhaps in a continuation of habits taught through gang affiliation, Tamas settles conflict through corporal punishment (lines 5-7). In comparison, my usual response to conflict is to talk (line 20) and hence quarrelling for me is normal but physically fighting is not. In contrast, Tamas sees arguing in front of me as something to apologise for, but his plans to assault Chris do not come with any expression of regret. What I regard as a disproportionately harsh response to a transgression, Tamas sees as entirely warranted.

Through waste pickers' discussion of violence, I come to see that their definition of crime is somewhat narrow. In Extract 17, theft is criminal and immoral but violence is not because it is a deserving punishment. The ubiquity of violence is inferred by no leniency being shown towards Chris, even though I disclosed his bereavement to Tamas. The connection between fighting and committing a criminal act (Actual Bodily Harm) is seemingly never made. The omission of in-fighting from waste pickers' definition of crime means they can continue to rationalise that they are better than criminals (see Chapter 6). However, by condoning violence waste pickers' conform to the homeless, alcoholic, criminal stereotype. In turn, their violence stigmatises waste pickers as having no self-control or ability to break with the criminal habits of their past (international agency). This stigma undermines waste pickers' claim to be morally superior to criminals or achieve dual closure.

The fact that Tamas was unaware of Chris's emotional state, and that Chris confided in a comparative stranger over his supposed teammates, discredits team presentations of a united front. For all their claims to moral superiority, Extract 17 gives the impression that waste pickers attached more significance to tangible "benefits" (Chapter 6) than to emotional support. Chris unintentionally becomes a renegade (Goffman, 1959) because he prompts an interaction where stealing is described as wrong rather than out of the ordinary. Alternative explanations for how a bottle might have become misplaced are backgrounded as if theft from team mates is commonplace. Ryan later confirms that team members are routinely regarded with suspicion, when he has his blankets stolen and speculates that the culprit is among his friends (fieldnotes, week 21, August 21, 2014). In this way interactions within the group were tinged with mistrust.

7. PART 2. PROJECTIVE CAPACITY

Homeless stereotypes are associated with cognitive deficiency. This correlates with Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) concept of projective capacity, where waste pickers are seen as motivated by short term rewards. As a consequence, stereotypes define waste pickers as incapable of changing their current habits which revolve around the procurement of alcohol. Alcohol consumption thereby reinforces the doubt that audiences might have about waste pickers' will to change. It is this point that I wish to now expand on, to strengthen my overall argument that waste pickers' performance is too inconsistent to achieve a convincing performance of agency. Inconsistent performances constrain their capacity to achieve social distance from homeless and alcoholic stereotypes.

7.2.1 Discrediting Spending Habits

In presenting the team as superior, Tamas cast aspersions on working parents' spending habits, their inability to budget and their propensity to waste their money on drugs (see Chapter 6). However, waste pickers' spending habits discredit their idealised front because, like the working classes that Tamas criticises, waste pickers waste their money on alcohol. In contravention of a hierarchical theory of needs (Wolff, 2016), waste pickers are labelled irrational because they do not save the little money that they have for necessities. This in turn entrenches the stereotype, associated with addiction, that homeless people have "a repetitive habit pattern that increases the risk of disease and/or associated personal and social problems" (Marlatt, Baer, Donovan, & Kivlahan, 1988, p. 224).

"You know we drink"

On an average day, after the last bin has been picked through, recovered items are taken to a space outside a train station where they are sorted and, if the opportunity presents itself, sold to passersby. On one occasion a lady hurriedly buys a pair of shoes from Tamas in her haste to catch her train. She misses her train and on a closer inspection of her purchase, finds that the shoes are in need of repair and returns to Tamas for a refund. Tamas's reaction is to suggest she exchanges the shoes for a more expensive pair and gives him the difference in price (An extra R5). Extract 18 is the tail end of this conversation when the customer explains to Tamas that she would like a refund.

EXTRACT 18
Fieldnotes, week 12, March 27, 2014

1	Tamas: I haven't got that (…)[inaudible].	I haven't got your money. Are you going
2	Are you going to take this one? Take this	to swap the broken shoes for this other
3	one. I spend the R10 for a dop, you know	pair? Take those instead. You know what
4	we drink	we are like, I have already spent the
5	Customer: (…)[inaudible]	money on alcohol
6	Tamas: hm?	
7	Customer: (…)[inaudible]	
8	Tamas: ok, take that one, and leave that	Ok, take the cheaper pair instead and
9	one. Take that one and that one ne?	leave the ones that are more expensive
10	Customer: (…)[inaudible]	
11	[The lady walks away and Tamas turns to	
12	me]	
13	Tamas: To do business you must use	To do business you must use your head.
14	your mind. You can't get your money	People can't get their money back once
15	back, the money is already in my pocket.	it's in my pocket. She was hurrying to get
16	You see you got the train, just in time ne?	the train and rushed her purchase. If you
17	You don't (…)[inaudible] because if you	buy something you must check it and
18	buy something by someone, check and	reject it if it is faulty
19	reject	You have to check it before you leave. If
20	Me: Check and reject	she had not missed her train, she would
21	Tamas: Before you go. Now if she was in	not have been able to come back and try
22	the train, she gone. But she come back to	and get a refund. But being as she missed
23	me, and I still give her something again	her train, she had time to come back to
24	for R20. I can't give money back.	me and I gave her something for R20
		instead

Tamas takes on the role of shop manager in his interaction with his customer. Rather than give her the R10 back that she paid for the shoes, that she now realises are broken, Tamas tries to sell her a more expensive pair (lines 1-3, 8-9). He does this successfully and rather than get a R10 refund, she gives Tamas an extra R10 for a different pair of shoes. He implies that she must have known that she could not get a refund, given that the sales team are alcoholics (lines 3-4) and hence the money is already in the till of the nearest liquor store (lines 2-3). I take on the role of apprentice, when he explains that the failure of judgement is on her part, not his. She cannot expect to get a refund, not because he has spent the money on alcohol, but because it does not make business sense to give people back their money (lines 13-15).

Extract 18 shows how negative stereotypes can be both a source of enablement and constraint. Tamas gives a performance that conforms to the expectations that normals have of him as alcohol dependent. In doing so he easily dupes his audience into thinking that he does not have any cash. He makes light work of manipulating the buyer so as to extract

more money from her. In doing so, Tamas re-appropriates homeless stereotypes that define him as a drunk in order to have the upper hand. His ability to use the stigma of alcoholism to his own advantage, successfully defines him as intelligent. I am left with a sense that Tamas is getting his own back on normals who are otherwise quick to dismiss him as cognitively impaired (see Extract 4, Chapter 5). However, operating simultaneously to this impression of enablement are several constraints.

By conforming to the label of homeless alcoholic, Tamas entrenches dominant discourses that position waste pickers as untrustworthy. Although I am impressed by Tamas's astuteness, the customer in Extract 18 leaves the interaction with information that confirms negative stereotypes. If the passerby did not assume that Tamas was an alcoholic to start with, she leaves with the impression that as soon as waste pickers have cash, it is immediately spent on alcohol. As noted in other studies that highlight the unintended consequences of stigma management strategies (Roschelle & Kaufman, 2004), Tamas entrenches negative stereotypes about waste pickers as alcoholics.

The alcoholic label is applied to the whole group because Tamas uses the word "we" which implicates the rest of the team in his "mis-representation" (Goffman, 1959, p. 38). Tamas's performance therefore constrains waste pickers' capacity to change normals impression of them. Instead his comments justify local government's campaigns that portray giving cash to people who look homeless as irresponsible (City of Cape Town, 2014a). As a result, Tamas may have contributed to normals' avoidance waste pickers.

Tamas switches his performance from one moment to the next. As soon as the customer has walked away, he returns to presenting me with an idealised front of waste pickers as independent business people. The contradiction between front and back region performance does not pose a problem for Tamas because he treats me like a trainee team member. To him it does not matter what reason he gives for refusing a refund, the lesson to me is to never give people their money back once it is in your pocket. What matters is that I see that he has guile and power over groups who are traditionally seen as superior to him, thus proving the "benefit" of waste picking and his role as autonomous.

As Wolff notes, it seems strange that poor areas are full of nail bars and Shebeens[29] (Wolff, 2016). This is because there is an expectation that people on a low income spend all their money on food and cannot afford luxury items such as alcohol. This logic was used by Tamas to discredit working parents (see Extract 11, Chapter 6). However,

[29] "A shebeen is a private home where alcoholic beverages are served for consumption or to be taken away, and can be licensed or unlicensed" (Morojele et al., 2006, p. 220)

audiences use the same logic about spending habits to form judgements about waste pickers. Even if audiences do not witness waste pickers buying alcohol, their spending habits and tastes are noticeable from their unruly and sometimes violent behaviour in public. Wolff (2016) contends that, given the inequality in South Africa, the gap between class groupings is too big to make it worthwhile for people on the lowest rung of the social hierarchy to save surplus income. Assuming that most audiences are unlikely to use political philosophy to see the sense in excessive alcohol consumption, waste pickers are seen as lacking projective capacity. Audiences make the connection between homeless alcoholic and irresponsible spending habits, which stigmatises waste pickers as irrational.

The respondents in my study match the image of alcoholism reported in other studies about waste pickers in South Africa (R. Schenck & Blaauw, 2011). In Schenck and Blaauw's presentation of their recent research at a national dialogue (GreenCape, 2015), the link between waste picking and addiction was repeated. During the question and answer session that followed the presentation, the implication was that waste pickers' spending habits matter. The presentation was a forum designed to discuss if and how the informal economy should be incorporated into waste management in South Africa. Amid the policy debates that ensued was the importance of differentiating between two types of informal street waste pickers. One type are alcoholics who are not worth helping because they stop work for the day once they have enough money to fund their addiction. The other types are sober, work longer hours and are therefore people worth taking into account when formulating policy (personal notes taken at GreenCape, 2015).

These two types were discussed as if mutually exclusive, but the waste pickers with whom I worked fell into both categories. Although waste pickers adhered to the stereotype of homeless alcoholic in many respects, alcoholism did not impair waste pickers' capacity to rationalise and plan. For example the group had a highly structured and well organised work routine. This capacity to organise their work day was not adversely affected by the choice to spend earnings on alcohol, as implied by the audience at the national dialogue (GreenCape, 2015). The agential aspects of waste pickers' resourcefulness are obscured by alcohol consumption and rowdy conduct, which stigmatises them as incapable of forward planning.

7.2.2 Cynical and Sincere Performances

Goffman acknowledges that performers are not necessarily convinced by the authenticity of their performance. Instead, actors move between being sincere and cynical,

to occupy a "transitional point," between belief and lack of self-belief (1959, p. 10). Among waste pickers, a lack of sincerity does not preclude them from feeling entitled to validation. This meant that idealised fronts and discrediting performances co-existed in a contradictory way. Therefore waste pickers simultaneously contradicted and conformed to homeless stereotypes.

"We don't know what we doing"

Extract 19 takes place while we are standing outside the bottle store waiting for the staff to serve us. Steven recounts the previous evening's debacle when he set off distress flares, one of which was aimed at his brother. The group talk for a while in Afrikaans but then Andrey spontaneously translates what they are talking about in English. He says they are trying to resolve the problem of where to obtain hot water to wash. They have been prohibited from frequenting their usual sleeping places on a small field. The discussion begins with my speculation that the field has become out of bounds to them because of their antics with flare guns the previous evening.

EXTRACT 19
Fieldnotes, week 20, August 7, 2014

1	Me: They closed the field? What because	
2	of the flares?	
3	Andrey: No it's because of the noise	
4	Me: From the flares?	
5	Andrey: No not because of that noise,	
6	because the people make a noise every	
7	evening	
8	Me: ok. What people	
9	Tamas: we	Us
10	Me: oh, you lot, ok, oh so they closed the	
11	field so you can't stay there anymore	
12	Tamas: No, people walk past the field or	When we are drunk if people walk past
13	stop there, they talk nonsense to every	or come to sit down, we talk nonsense
14	people, and then swear at the people,	and swear at them
15	when we're drunk and (…)[inaudible] at	
16	the people	
17	Me: What you do that? Or they said that	
18	you do it, they lied	
19	Tamas: No, we do it	
20	Me: ok	
21	Tamas: sometime we don't know what	Sometimes when we're drunk we don't
22	we doing we drunk.	know what we are doing
23	Me: ok, then people complained and now	
24	they have closed the field	
25	Tamas: Look here, I went now, 2 or 3	Two or three years ago I was charged
26	years ago I went for a murder case, you	with murdering a student on that same
27	can ask them. From a student murdered	field
28	Me: A student got murdered on the field?	
29	Tams: Ja, I went to prison for that, but I	I went to prison for it but I won the case
30	win the case	
31	Me: They let you out early	
32	Tamas: No I win it, in court	No, I won the case in court
33	Me: So where are you staying now if you	
34	are not on the field?	
35	Tamas: Subway, by the train line	
36	Me: By the train line	
37	Tamas: There is a lot of other places also	
38	Me: ok	
39	Tamas: You must just spend one day	You should spend the whole day with us,
40	with us, till we drunk. See what nuisance	until we are drunk. You will see what a
41	we are the people. Asking the people,	nuisance we are to people. Asking
42	begging by everyone, go door to door,	passersby for things, going door to door,
43	beg for food or	begging for food
44	Me: mmm	

I assume that the group were evicted because of a one off incident (lines 1-2).

Andrey emphasises that the cause of their eviction is noise pollution (line 3), which I

continue to connect to the previous night's events (line 4). Andrey corrects my understanding by underlining that the root cause of the problem is the frequency with which noise occurs (lines 5-7). Unable to visualise who would be making a noise, I ask for clarification (line 8). Tamas makes clear *they* are the noisy ones (line 9). To correct my confusion, I repeat back a version of events that prefaces the prevention of access to the field (lines 10-11). As if I have still missed the point, Tamas elucidates what they mean by noise (lines 12-16). Still unconvinced of the group's villainy, I imply that the officials who administer access to the field may have lied (lines 17-18). Tamas verifies that the claims made against them are entirely accurate (line 19) but reverts to the trappings of alcoholism to deny that they are fully in control of themselves (lines 21-22). I finally admit their behaviour attracted complaints leading to the closure of the field (lines 23-24).

Juxtaposed with this explanation is Tamas's spontaneous revelation about having been wrongfully charged with murdering a student (lines 25-32). The only connection to the preceding conversation I can make out is that the setting for both happenings is the field. He tells a story, which although ends with him being found not guilty is to needlessly volunteer discreditable information. I bring the conversation back to living arrangements now that they are no longer allowed on the field (lines 33-34). He says that he is living in a subway but this is one of several options available to him (lines 35-37). Rather than idealising the assortment of sleeping locations as a choice, he reverts back to re-confirm discrediting information about the team (lines 39-43). I give a lukewarm and non-committal reply to Tamas's suggestion that I bear witness to scenes when the team are drunk (line 44).

Where previously Tamas delineated begging as a strategic endeavour with people who are fond of him (see Extract 5, Chapter 5), he now construes begging as being a nuisance to people (line 38). Where previously waste pickers presented themselves as proactive and self-sufficient (Extract 15) in Extract 19 they are now not fully in control of their faculties. Where other homeless people were criticised for not thinking ahead (Extract 15), now waste pickers are the victims of the "delayed deleterious effects (long-term costs)" of addiction (Marlatt et al., 1988, p. 224). The revelations conform to stereotypes and bring into question the idealised impression that waste pickers presented at other times (see Chapter 6).

The unintended consequence of an inconsistent performance is that it constrains the agential capacity of impression management strategies. When audiences see interactions that present contradictory meanings, all performances come under suspicion. Goffman

uses the phrase "social doubt" (1959) to describe these times where audiences start to question the sincerity of the performer or their performance. The agential capacity of an idealised front is thwarted by the discrediting information that waste pickers reveal to audiences. This means that definitions of waste pickers as homeless, alcoholic, criminals are likely to persist because of the social doubt among normals about the sincerity of idealised performances.

Tamas and Andrey's admissions of causing a nuisance also creates a disjuncture between their criticisms of audiences for prejudging waste pickers and their confession that, in some respects, the audiences' trepidation is well founded. Waste pickers' behaviour and outlook varies enormously, a trait found in other research with waste pickers (King, 2014). Waste pickers changeable position in interactions constrains "expectation maintenance" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). In short, audiences can never be sure what to expect from a waste pickers' performance and this uncertainty breeds a lack of trust and avoidance.

Although all humans are full of contradictions, waste pickers use of dramatic realisation and idealisation with me is striking because it is so far removed from performances in other settings. This disjuncture is inherent in strategies used by people who are acutely aware of having a spoiled identity. A symptom of shame and stigma is this propensity to fiercely protect an idealised identity, with the full knowledge that this definition is a façade. Thus, waste pickers use defence mechanisms to manage the discrediting aspects of themselves even though this undercuts what they seek to achieve through impression management.

7. PART 3. CONSTRAINT

As documented in Chapter 6, waste pickers attempted to "reconfigure received schemas" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) through dual closure and creating social distance. All of the waste pickers stand to gain from any individual use of impression management strategies that successfully avoid being stigmatised. Individual efforts can therefore improve public perceptions of the team and reduce the polarity between waste pickers and normals in the social hierarchy. In contrast, this section draws attention to the constraints on waste pickers' capacity to change routines, due to hierarchical power relations within the team. I also argue that the nature of interactions often mean that audiences are unlikely to detect individual waste pickers' attempts to change.

7.3.1 Team Routines and Habits

Several waste pickers with whom I spoke took pride in the past habits that they had managed to break free from (iterative agency). Tamas emphasised that he no longer smoked Mandrax[30] or committed violent crimes and therefore had successfully shed the habits from his past (fieldnotes, week 6, February 13, 2014). There was group cohesion in this regard evidenced by the effort made in interactions with me, to differentiate waste pickers from drug users and criminals (see Chapter 6). Tamas frequently used the term "choice" in his interactions to emphasise the agential aspect of human behaviour and to justify his decisions. Among these was an explanation of why he did not judge working parents who continued to abuse illegal substances, because it is their choice (see Extract 11, Chapter 6). However, this non-judgmental attitude did not always play out in practice, particularly with regard to two waste pickers who had decided to give up alcohol.

"You can lead a horse to water"

During my 13th week of fieldwork, Ryan arrives to join the group straight from the hospital. He shows me a note with his diagnosis that states "recommended diagnosis: pulmonary tuberculosis" (fieldnotes week 13, June 12, 2014). Later when we are gathering our things having finished waste picking for the day, Ryan tells me "I don't drink anymore." He does not elaborate and I do not pry, but I am impressed that he has even considered becoming teetotal given that alcoholics permanently surround him. Four weeks later while we are sitting at the river, Ryan asks me to pour him some wine and the following exchange ensues (Extract 20).

[30] "Mandrax is a synthetic drug that is made and processed in tablet form. The active ingredient in Mandrax is methaqualone. The tablet is usually crushed and mixed with marijuana and smoked in a pipe" (Stephens et al., 2016, p. 142).

EXTRACT 20
Fieldnotes, week 17, July 10, 2014

1	Ryan: pour	Pour another glass of wine
2	Tamas: You know, he kept on, Teresa, he	
3	kept on ne, to um, he didn't drink even	Ryan stayed sober for a month and a half
4	for a month and a half	
5	Me: Yeah I remember	
6	Tamas: I mos told you	I told you that he had given up alcohol
7	Me: No, Ryan said that he wasn't	
8	drinking for a while	
9	Tamas: Ja, he started again. It's his	Ryan has started drinking alcohol again
10	choice, his own big man. I can't force	Reference to the idiom, "you can lead a
11	him. Like um, like a horse. I can take him	horse to water but you can't make it
12	to the water, but you can't force it	drink"
13	Me: You can take it to the water but you	
14	can't make it drink	
15	Nothando: And you cannot make jealous	And you shouldn't be jealous of the little
16	of the little bit water the fucking horse is	that others have
17	drinking	
18	Ryan: I want the sun	Let's move into the sun
19	Me: Let's move again	Yes let's move
20	Tamas: Ja	Yes

The most obvious connection to agency is that Ryan has successfully, albeit temporarily, adopted a different habit. This is counter to the ingrained tradition of drinking alcohol immediately after the work of waste picking has ended. What is revealed in Extract 20 is not what Ryan has achieved, but the reception that Ryan's attempt to break a habit receives. Tamas begins by sharing that he has mentally documented Ryan's period of abstinence (lines 2-4), which initially sounds to me as if it may cause Tamas to express congratulatory sentiments. Instead Tamas (incorrectly) claims it was him who had informed me that Ryan had given up drinking (line 6). I correct him (lines 7-8) and embellish Ryan's original phrase of "…not drinking *anymore*" with "…*for a while*" to emphasise that Ryan's plan all along was not necessarily to give up alcohol permanently. My intention was to frame Ryan's behaviour as a success rather than a failure. Tamas follows my comment with a reminder that Ryan had started drinking again (line 9) despite this being obvious from Ryan's request to pour him some wine (line 1).

Tamas identifies Ryan's decision to re-commence his drinking habit as in the realm of Ryan's choice (lines 9-10), linked to his masculinity (line 10) and as such falls outside Tamas's jurisdiction (lines 10-11). However, Tamas goes on to appropriate Ryan's decision as having been in part a result of his actions, indicated by his use of the "you can

lead a horse to water" idiom (lines 11-12). It strikes me that at no point does anyone, including Ryan, acknowledge the enormity of the goal that he set himself: to be a non-drinker among a group of alcoholics. Given that Tamas in particular goes to great lengths to construct an image of himself that is positive, it seemed strange to me that he did not use Ryan's decision as an opportunity to prove how supportive the group is of one another. This would after all reinforce the sense of reciprocity among the team that Tamas professed at other times (see Extract 12, Chapter 6).

There is no acknowledgement of how Tamas's choice to continue drinking excessively might make it more difficult for Ryan to abstain. There were no congratulatory remarks that could raise Ryan's status or impress me in my role as the audience. Instead, Tamas uses Ryan's attempt to change as an opportunity to cement his leadership position, by claiming to have unsuccessfully led Ryan to try and embrace change. This assumes that conveying the hierarchical nature of the group is important, which is also reinforced by talking as if Ryan is not present (lines 2-12). Ryan interjects only to change the topic of conversation by requesting that we move to sit in the sun (line 18).

Being part of this group of waste pickers therefore poses a constraint to the agential capacity of individuals within it. Not only is it difficult to break with established routines but, because audiences rely on visual gestures, modifications to habits are unlikely to be noticed. Particularly as the group tends to be treated by outsiders as homogeneous, it is difficult for waste pickers to reap any benefit from changing stigmatised habits and having different aspirations (iterational and projective agency). For example, when Ryan stands outside the bottle store with the others he will be labelled a homeless, alcoholic, criminal along with the rest of the group. He can change his personal front but not the social front used to categorise him.

7.3.2 Iterative Agency

Underlying Emirbayer and Mische's explication of agency is the assumption that people adhere to established patterns of interaction with the aim of maintaining social relationships (1998, p. 980). To exhibit projective capacity individuals have to negotiate the norms and values within their existing friendship groups. When individuals make rapid changes, to the extent that they become unrecognisable to friends or colleagues, they are sometimes criticised for selling out. In the context of waste pickers, there was a danger that exhibiting projective capacity could be seen as negative. Breaking with established

routines could therefore jeopardise established social relationships that were important for waste pickers' emotional and material support in times of need.

"She mustn't forget where she came from"

Ryan was not the only waste picker to try to break with team routines. Amanda, now in her ninth year as a waste picker living on the streets, had successfully given up alcohol and tobacco and remained sober throughout my fieldwork. She explained to me, several times, that God had spoken to her which had spurred her on to change her habits. Although no one took issue with her choice, they did tire of Amanda's complaints about others' drunken behaviour and her long monologues about demons. In Extract 21 Steven, Amanda's partner, explains to me why he and the group object to her religious rants.

EXTRACT 21
Fieldnotes, week 19, July 31, 2014

1	Steven: Sorry Teresa, if you are a person,	Having got to know each other over the years, we know that some people in the group talk a lot when they get drunk
2	you live with these guys all the years,	
3	you were drinking wine, you were	
4	smoking cigarettes, ok we know you that	
5	way, you like to talk when you are drunk.	
6	But now, but, now you feel like, you	I am pleased that she has been able to change, I care about her
7	know I'm glad for her, but you know	
8	(…)[inaudible] these guys, I care for her.	
9	Me: Is this Amanda?	
10	Steven: Amanda ja, it's not like you	
11	know	
12	Tamas: She's noisy man, that's what she	
13	is, very noisy	We don't mind that she is loud so much as what she says indicates that she is somehow better than us now, but actually we are all the same because we are all homeless
14	Steven: You know it's not like	
15	(…)[inaudible] we live on the street, we	
16	don't live in a house, we have no keys,	
17	we don't have no table, no chair, we	
18	don't have a bed, we sleep on the, like	
19	any street people. But you know what,	
20	where she go wrong, she mustn't forget	
21	where she came from.	

Steven begins his explanation as if he were talking generally (lines 1-5) to give the impression that the point he is making is a principle that applies to everyone. It becomes obvious that he is referring to Amanda when he talks about "her" (lines 7-8), which I clarify (line 9). Unlike Tamas's reaction to Ryan's attempt to change, Steven commended Amanda's achievements (line 7) and reinforced that he cared about her (line 8). However, it was not the fact that she had changed her habits that bothered him. It was more that she

tried to use her abstention from alcohol to deny their shared history, as if she had somehow always been different. Steven explains the similarities between all homeless people in prefacing the things that the group have in common, which prohibit Amanda from having the right to make any claims that she is somehow above the rest of the group. Thus, he concludes that she must not forget where she came from (lines 19-21).

Conversely, remembering where they came from is used by other members of the group as a bench mark, to show how much they have changed, in order to prove their elevated status above criminals and illegal drug users (see Chapter 6). For example, Tamas was always quick to point out to me which waste pickers had an illegal drug habit. It was acceptable for Tamas to criticise illegal drug users even though he previously had been one himself. It was also acceptable for Steven to criticise illegal drug users even though they were part of the same homeless community as he was. But when Amanda was critical of Steven for his excessive alcohol consumption (and subsequent abusive behaviour) she was dismissed by him for denying the similarities between them all. Tamas discredits her more broadly for being "noisy" (lines 12-13) which implies that there is no substance to what she says, only sound.

Amanda, unlike Tamas or Steven, seems not to be entitled to voice opinions that draw attention to the differences between her and other waste pickers. Thus there was a double standard in terms of who was seen as being entitled to criticise. This hierarchy meant that not all group members were equally able to generate status from demarcating their habits as superior to others, within the immediate group of waste pickers and the broader community of homeless people. Amanda's treatment by the rest of the group also helps to explain why Ryan may be reluctant to disrupt the status quo. His attempt to give up alcohol risked aligning himself with Amanda who was discredited and bullied by other waste pickers. Or it risked giving the impression that he thought of himself as in some way better than the rest of the group, whom have not attempted to give up alcohol.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

Different parts of waste pickers' personal front (physical appearance, gestures and manner) combined to convey discrediting information about waste pickers. This information conformed to homeless stereotypes, which justified prejudices that waste pickers felt some normals exhibited towards them (see Chapter 5). The unintended consequence of discrediting attributes was that they contradicted idealised presentations of self, which brought into question the sincerity of waste pickers' performances more

generally. This social doubt constrains the agential capacity of impression management strategies that could otherwise more convincingly counter stereotypes and re-define waste picking. Resultantly, waste pickers continue to be stigmatised and avoided by audiences because performances are contradictory and unpredictable. Stigma therefore constrains the agency of waste pickers to change stereotypical discourses that position them at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

In my role as a team member I appreciate that waste pickers are resourceful and strategic, despite their alcohol dependency. However most other audiences do not have easy access to, or seek out, extended verbal interactions with waste pickers. The passing public are unlikely to appreciate the complexities of group dynamics and the difficulty of changing routines, especially when they see that waste pickers' working day is structured around alcohol consumption. It is not obvious that in giving up alcohol some waste pickers stand to lose valuable social relationships. In summary, the capacity for waste pickers to change stigmatising habits is constrained by in-group hierarchical power relations that are invisible to most audiences. The next chapter interrogates the subtle yet significant ways in which waste pickers exhibit agency, but with a view to uncovering sources of enablement.

CHAPTER EIGHT
FINDINGS: AGENCY AND ENABLEMENT

Along with Emirbayer and Mische (1998), James Scott's (1985) "Weapons of the Weak" provides a way to conceptualise the less obvious parts of waste pickers agential capacity:

> The dominant ideology can be turned against its privileged beneficiaries not only because subordinate groups develop their own interpretations, understandings and readings of its ambiguous terms, but also because of the promises that the dominant classes must make to propagate it in the first place. (Scott, 1985, p. 338)

The "dominant ideology" is felt by waste pickers in that stereotypical discourses position them and their work as subordinate. The "privileged beneficiaries" of this hierarchy are affluent residents and government officials. These dominant classes try to attract foreign tourism and investment by cleansing the streets of people who disrupt the order of front region city spaces. Seemingly equally high on the agenda is job creation and housing provision, which form the "promises that the dominant classes must make," which are communicated through widely publicised national targets (see Chapter 2). Theoretically these priorities should mean that the arms of government are working to ensure that waste pickers are able to enjoy their right to work and a home. In practice, the pursuit of neo-liberal capitalist policies entrenches and perpetuates inequality. This presents a paradox within neo-liberal democracy that Scott (1985) theorises as an opportunity for subordinate groups to exploit.

Following Giddens (1984), I argue that while stereotypical discourses have considerable influence over ways of thinking, this power is never complete. Although waste pickers' capacity to shift the way that people see them and their work is limited, waste pickers always retain agential capacity of some sort. Having established that the rifts in dominant ideologies enable and constrain, Scott's (1985) work encourages researchers to examine back region spaces. Upon doing so, researchers are likely to find subtle forms of resistance to dominant discourses. Although informal street waste pickers in Cape Town are not a revolutionary social movement, this does not preclude them from being able to defy dominant classes. This chapter explains the ways that waste pickers were able to "develop their own interpretations, understandings and readings" of situations, to evade the multiple constraints imposed on them by normals.

This final installment of my findings is divided into three parts. The theme of **Part one** is stigma and stereotypes, which looks at instances where waste pickers were able to

consistently re-define waste picking. In doing so they present a convincing challenge to the stereotype of waste pickers as messy, disorderly and disorganised, to manage the stigma of informal work. **Part two** disaggregates the past, present and future components of agency. In contrast to Chapter 7, I argue that waste pickers can and do make changes and choices that are noticed by some audiences. **Part three** focuses on enablement in terms of the sources of disruption to the status quo, that waste pickers quietly draw on to assert themselves amid discourses that otherwise position them as inferior.

8. PART 1. STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

Stigma is the connection that audiences make between attribute and stereotype (Goffman, 1963). So far I have shown how waste pickers' disorderly performances conform to stereotypes and result in an avoidance of waste pickers. This section focuses on aspects of waste pickers' conduct that countered stereotypes and avoided the group being stigmatised as unpredictable. Impression management therefore enabled audiences to identify the group of waste pickers with whom I worked as different to generic homeless, alcoholic beggars.

8.1.1 Will to Order

To the untrained eye, waste pickers wander around the city looking through bins at random. In actual fact, the waste pickers with whom I worked had a strict routine characterised by an orderly approach. Contrary to the stereotype, I found that waste pickers were staunchly tidy while engaged in the act of waste picking. Full rubbish bags were taken out of the bin, and then emptied out back into the bin one at a time. Care was taken to leave the bins as they had found them, lids closed, handles facing away from buildings, neatly lined up ready for municipal workers to empty them. These rituals were a crucial part of impression management in interactions with audiences who had the power to deny waste pickers access to the bins.

The area that I worked in with waste pickers each week was in close proximity to the university campus. Housing were therefore mostly student accommodation, either large blocks of university owned residences or privately let flats. All these dwellings had staff to maintain the household surrounds and rubbish bins were stored behind security gates within the confines of the complex. One street in particular had several multiple occupancy properties that were managed by the same landlord, who employed two caretakers. Caretakers gave waste pickers access to household bins by arriving to work on time and

putting the bins out as soon as they started their shift. This ensured that waste pickers had enough time to sort through all the bins before the municipal truck arrived to empty them.

Caretakers were not obliged to consider waste pickers while carrying out their duties. They were only one of several audience teams with the power to stop waste pickers from accessing rubbish bins. These teams can be divided into different hierarchies to form a web, amid which caretakers occupy a tricky position. With regard to the removal of household waste from public areas, caretakers are answerable to municipal refuse collectors (fellow workers), landlords (direct employers), and residents (indirect employers). If waste pickers attract complaints from any of these audiences, caretakers are likely to be hassled along with waste pickers for not carrying out their work with due care and attention. This is because, like waste pickers, caretakers' performances were in front region public spaces in full view of multiple audiences.

The waste pickers with whom I worked greeted caretakers by name, helped to pull bins out from behind flats into the street, and checked that the street was tidy before moving on. Caretakers' verbal responses were brief but civil, striking a balance between being polite but not so affable that an onlooker would think that they were friends with waste pickers. By the end of fieldwork, even though waste pickers had known the two caretakers for at least a year, the interaction still felt as if they were strangers meeting for the first time. Waste pickers had gained the trust of caretakers but this was never a given. Impression management had achieved a relationship between caretakers and waste pickers, but it remained precarious.

"He made a mess"

Extract 22 takes place after the last bin of the day has been searched. The group stand and have a cigarette break before the next sorting and selling phase begins. The compactor truck, staffed with municipal workers arrived to empty the bins. The truck slowly made its way towards the end of the street, where a waste picker (Hicham) hastily tried to salvage what he could from the bins before they were emptied. I stood with the group who casually smoked and looked on, as Hicham frantically opened and closed bins, all the while allowing the wind to blow rubbish out on to the kerb. The following conversation (Extract 22) narrates the scene, as it unfolds, from our vantage point in the middle of the street.

EXTRACT 22
Fieldnotes, week 18, July 17, 2015

1	Me: Yo!	"Yo!" is an exclamation meaning "gosh!"
2	Tamas: They tell him now, we must	The municipal refuse truck drivers are
3	clean around the dustbins, now this one	telling Hicham that we have to clean up
4	he don't want to clean, his whole black	after ourselves. He doesn't want to clean
5	bag, full of benefit, he put it in there. He	and so, as a punishment, they have
6	throw it away, because he is messing	thrown his bag full of the things he has
7	Me: He made a mess.	collected into the compactor truck
8	Tamas: Ja, he made a mess	
9	Me: Did you see the ones at [street	Did you see the mess in [street name]?
10	name], the ones, before this road, the	
11	mess, who did that?	
12	Tamas: You know why, no, they did	You know why there's a mess there?
13	themselves. They put it out that dustbins	Because the caretakers have not put the
14	and that mess just this week, and it was 6	bins out for weeks on end and now they
15	or 8 weeks they didn't put it out na?	have put it all out in one go and left a
16	They didn't put it out, that's why there's	mess
17	a lot of mess. That is before the students	
18	went on holiday	
19	Me: ah ok, so it has been there a long	
20	time	
21	Tamas: Before the students went on	
22	holiday didn't get put out, anything there,	
23	until now.	
24	Me: But then people think that that mess	
25	is	
26	Tamas: Maybe like us now	They think we caused the mess
27	Me: Is us	
28	Tamas: They going to come towards that	The municipal workers are going to go to
29	mess now, then they going to be more	that street next and that will make them
30	cross	even more cross

In contrast to my surprise (line 1), Tamas exhibits a degree of smugness about the situation and makes no attempt to come to Hicham's rescue. He matter-of-factly explains what the municipal workers are saying to Hicham and that his things are being confiscated (lines 2-6). We establish that the scene boils down to a failure to be tidy (line 8). On the subject of mess, I draw Tamas's attention to the enormous pile of rubbish, strewn across a large section of the pavement by the bins, which I saw earlier on in the neighbouring street (lines 9-11). He says that although the mess is a result of bins being overfull, having not been put out for municipal collection for several weeks (lines 12-18, 21-23), waste pickers will likely be blamed (line 26). Already riled by Hicham, Tamas predicts that the sight of the mess in the neighbouring street will exacerbate refuse collectors' irritation.

Extract 22 illustrates the iterational agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) of impression management in several ways. Firstly, waste pickers' performance keeps them on good terms with municipal workers. Tamas avoids being stigmatised as messy through his inaction when sanctions are imposed on disorganised waste pickers. Mess reflects badly on municipal workers if residents blame them when rubbish is strewn across the street. Waste pickers, municipal workers and residents become part of the same team through their shared hostility towards "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966). By not helping Hicham, Tamas and his team communicate their interpretation of mess as a threat to order and their approval of Hicham's punishment. Although taking this position entrenches discourses of dirt, sharing normals' tacit assumptions about dirt can also be a source of enablement. For example, Tamas and the group are better positioned to maintain access to waste if audiences think that waste pickers views about tidiness are in alignment with their own.

Secondly, waste pickers' performance in Extract 22 achieves dual closure (Murphy, 1986). By siding with municipal workers and separating himself from a fellow waste picker, Tamas achieves social distance from performers who discredit waste pickers. The team maintain a physical distance, looking down on Hicham (literally and metaphorically), from the middle of the street. Waste pickers take the moral high ground by choosing not to help Hicham and instead re-enforce unwritten rules through repetition of them. Dual closure achieves a presentation of waste pickers that communicates the difference among waste pickers, a team who might otherwise be perceived as a homogeneous group. Tamas does not side with people who threaten future access to bins, access that has been enabled through establishing a routine and relationships with formal workers. This exemplifies waste pickers' agential capacity. By acting in ways that communicated their difference and superiority, their actions are driven by the goal of maintaining access to the bins. Unlike Hicham, they are habitually tidy and trustworthy and able to stay on good terms with caretakers and municipal workers.

The presentation of the team as tidy and orderly, while they are waste picking, is a sincere performance that contradicts the stereotype of waste pickers as messy (see Chapter 1 and 2). Unlike at other times, no team members discredit or contradict Tamas's performance in Extract 22. The group who I came to know maintained a collegial relationship with both caretakers and municipal workers. On one occasion a family had been evicted and much of the contents of their flat had been dumped around the bins together with piles of loose rubbish. Waste pickers helped Gennaro (the caretaker) clean

and bag up the rubbish, for which Tamas received R30 as a gesture of gratitude. From time to time Tamas helped municipal workers by operating the emptying mechanism on the compactor truck. He also sells to municipal workers and targets them on payday. His performance is commensurate with constructing an idealised image of the team as characterised by reciprocal relationships. This affirms Goffman's (1959) theory of the importance of minimising social doubt by giving a consistently sincere performance.

A sincere performance of tidiness and achieving dual closure means that waste pickers can avoid stigma by association. Although Hicham was a team member, he was not supported by any of the other waste pickers. Instead the group with whom I worked, watched on and commented on the spectacle, which underlines the hierarchical divisions between waste pickers described in previous chapters. Waste pickers' behaviour communicates personal attributes that are not stigmatised, having long since finished waste picking by the time the municipal truck arrives. Where Hicham is guilty of being disorganised, waste pickers remain silent to mark themselves as systematic and organised. Audiences, in this case municipal workers, can see that not all waste pickers are the same. If structuration theory is applied here, municipal workers' experiences could inform bodies of knowledge about waste pickers that may alter the stereotypical discourses that position all waste pickers as messy.

As Tamas notes (line 19), waste pickers remain convenient scapegoats for caretakers, municipal workers and residents. They occupy the bottom of the waste worker hierarchy, making it difficult to protest their innocence, especially when some waste pickers *do* make a mess. But stigma resulting from a connection between being messy and the stereotype of homelessness, does not consistently result in caretakers' avoidance of waste pickers. Given that interactions with waste pickers happen in public settings (front region), audiences are subject to the same disciplinary power over their conduct as waste pickers. The next section considers how interactions with audiences alter when waste pickers have established a tidy routine.

8.1.2 Panoptic Power

Waste pickers' interactions happen in panoptic (Foucault, 1979) city spaces, which both enable and constrain their movement in front region suburbia. Historically, the movement of people categorised by the State as 'non-white' was restricted by legal structures under apartheid. In the "new" South Africa, the presence of 'coloured' bodies in traditionally 'white' areas remains political. The choices people make about who to

interact with and how to interact with others communicates one's political position. Any behaviour that could be interpreted as discriminatory towards waste pickers risks being categorised as racist. The 'white' minority that were privileged and continue to benefit from South Africa's history grapple with how best to interact with others to avoid the shame of the past (Vice, 2010). This tension enables waste pickers to resist the constraints of "world city syndrome." By capitalising on residents' fear of being seen as apartheid relics, waste pickers can assert their right to freedom of movement in public spaces.

"What is wrong with this lady?"

As with caretakers, the landlords who I saw operated on a "live and let live" philosophy with regard to waste pickers. A male landlord sometimes interacted with us and used humour to give the impression that he was at ease with waste pickers' presence. The only exception to this exhibition of neutrality towards waste pickers by property owners happened when a landlady had arranged a viewing for potential tenants (Extract 23). Earlier in the morning, the landlady (Leandra) requested that waste pickers leave by 9.30 a.m. Sometime before this deadline Leandra came out into the street looking flustered. She spoke to the other waste pickers who were further up the road, while Jared and I hung back at the end of the street and passed judgement.

EXTRACT 23
Fieldnotes, week 3, January 23, 2014

1	[Leandra speaks to other waste pickers]	
2	Leandra: That's now, now	
3	Me: No it's not half past [shouting up the	
4	road to Leandra]	It is not 9.30 a.m yet
5	Jared: (…)[Afrikaans] o.k.	
6	Leandra: No you have to go now because	Waste pickers have to go now because
7	they are going to be here at half past	prospective tenants are arriving at 9.30
8	nine.	a.m
9	Me: You want us to go now?	
10	[Jared turns to me]	
11	Jared: What is wrong with this lady?	
12	(…)[inaudible] she says, you know she	She own several properties in this road
13	owns the road.	
14	Me: Some students are coming to look at	
15	the flat so she wants us to go	
16	Jared: Why? Why? It's good for them to	
17	see us	
18	Me: I agree. It's nothing that no one	
19	doesn't know anyway, it's not like 'ooh	
20	surprise, people are looking through the	
21	bins on bin day.' It happens in every	
22	area, it happens in every area.	
23	Jared: And it's only, it's only on	
24	Thursday Me: Ja	
25	(we walk to join the others)	
26	Jared: So ja, like now (…)[Inaudible] 10	We usually go at 10 a.m
27	o'clock.	
28	Leandra: If you come back at 12 o'clock	
29	and I'll give you something, but if you	
30	could just, if you could just, you know	
31	what it is...I'll give you something, come	
32	back at 12 o'clock...I'll have something	
33	for Robert to give to you	
34	Jared: o.k.	
35	Leandra: Thank you very much	
36	Jared: Thank you my (…)[inaudible]	
37	Me: Thank you	
38	Leandra: You know these are American	
39	people, they want to see the road is, you	
40	know, they want to come and see, if they	
41	see all of you guys on the road then they	
42	get freaked out	
43	Jared: Ja ja ja	

None of the other waste pickers know what the time is, but I do. Leandra claims it is 9.30 a.m. already (line 2) which I dispute (lines 3-4) and she ignores this. Leandra changes her request to leave by 9.30 a.m. because that is the time the viewing is scheduled to take place, and instead she needs us to be gone before the appointment time (lines 6-8). Out of earshot of Leandra, Jared suggests her behaviour is at odds with what is considered normal (line 11) and informs me of the monopoly that she has over property in this street (lines 12-13). I summarise Leandra's motivation for asking us to leave (lines 14-15), which Jared dismisses as irrational logic (lines 16-17). I agree with Jared (lines 18-22) who emphasises waste pickers' intermittent presence (lines 23-24). We walk to join the others and converse with Leandra.

Jared reminds Leandra of the time of day when waste pickers usually vacate the area (lines 26-27), at which point Leandra tries to offer waste pickers compensation for loss of earnings as a result of having to leave early (lines 28-33). Jared gives the impression that he accepts her proposal (line 34) and she shows her gratitude (line 35), emulated by Jared and myself (lines 36-37). Unprompted, she justifies her request for waste pickers to leave by identifying the nationality of the prospective tenants (lines 38-39). Seemingly these tenants will become panicked at the sight of waste pickers (lines 40-42), which again Jared agrees with (line 43). Leandra's relief that waste pickers will be going by the time tenants arrive turns out to be premature. Waste pickers continue to stand in the road talking amongst themselves in Afrikaans. Tamas eventually resolves to leave and I go with him. As I say goodbye the scene is the same as it was when Leandra first addressed the group.

The interaction connects with other studies that examine "whiteness, space and epistemics, as a white minority population renegotiates a sense of belonging in a new black majority governed state" (McEwen & Steyn, 2013, p. 4). In a space where historically the movement of 'non-white' bodies was formally sanctioned, I now stood watching a member of a privileged class cautiously negotiate the unwanted presence of a low status team. Out of all the options available to Leandra which could result in the swift exit of waste pickers, she chooses to bargain with them in person. Her choice to confer with waste pickers communicates a level of regard for the shift in power relations between racial groups, since the first democratic elections in 1994. Waste pickers' capacity to assert their rights are enabled by their legal status guaranteed by the constitution. The discourse of the "new" South Africa, while not as yet having led to economic change for the

majority of previously disenfranchised groups, makes it less socially acceptable to restrict others' freedom of movement.

If interpreted as a performer rather than audience, Leandra struggles to find a way to rationalise her wish for waste pickers to leave without appearing somewhat racist. Although I analyse interactions using impression management, Leandra's behaviour is also associated with "strategic ignorance" where white people avoid acknowledging their role in injustices and/or tackling difficult subjects (Steyn, 2012). Her stigma management strategy is to transfer her audiences' attention away from her 'whiteness,' towards the attributes of foreigners and the stereotype of American students (lines 38-42). In doing so she implies that although she does not see waste pickers as posing a threat, because she is South African, she predicts that Americans will be troubled by the sight of waste pickers. She reinforces her interpretation of waste pickers as a legitimate presence by offering them remuneration and inviting the group to return later. She frames the problem as firmly with Americans, not her or waste pickers.

Unlike Tamas's interactions with residents when he begs from door to door, there is a noticeably different dynamic here. Where previously Tamas leaves a scene quickly, so as to "not work on their nerves" (see Extract 5, Chapter 5), he and the others show no interest in sparing Leandra's feelings. They toy with her, saying that they will leave but all the while steadfastly congregating. Waste pickers' "insubordination" towards Leandra, who outweighs them in all social categories, is analogous to Scott's (1985) weapons of the weak. Rather than confining resistance to back region spaces, waste pickers in this interaction are able to assert themselves in front region spaces. Waste pickers' status is such that they need not scurry away if they are asked to leave.

In Chapter 7, I argued that waste pickers are constrained by living and working in public spaces because their conduct is exposed to public viewing almost continuously. The above interaction shows how the panoptic nature of public space can equally enable waste pickers to hold audiences to account. Waste pickers have established a tradition of accessing waste every week from bins in the street where the above interaction takes place. Their right to forage in the bins is such that any disruption of this routine is subject to scrutiny. No one can simply ask them to leave without good cause. Rather than audiences having the right to ask "what is wrong with waste pickers," this interaction turns the tables to the extent that Jared can ask "what is wrong with this lady?" Any action that Leandra takes to get her own way has to be carried out in full view of passersby. If she wants to avoid the stigma of 'white' privilege, Leandra cannot use agencies of formal social control

without the risk of being associated with the discrediting image of apartheid-era forced removals.

Leandra's apprehension, emerging from a worry about what others will think and subsequent impact on her livelihood, exposes an uneasiness that bubbles beneath the surface in interactions with waste pickers. Waste pickers used their judgement in different situations, variously appreciating the impression management tight rope that normals walk, to decide how much mercy to show to their audience. In Extract 23 waste pickers choose to hang around, safe in the knowledge that Leandra has no legitimate grounds upon which to ask waste pickers to leave. This interaction helps to explain the demand for the Community Improvement District (CID) security staff. Their presence has the potential to help residents to avoid Leandra's predicament in Extract 23.

8.1.3. Reciprocity

As in waste pickers' interactions with residents and caretakers, waste pickers were also able to build reciprocal relationships with Groote Schuur Community Improvement District officers (GSCID hereafter). Waste pickers live and work in City Improvement Districts. This means that in addition to rates paid to the local government for provision of basic services, homeowners pay for additional local service provision to the GSCID (GSCID, 2009). The publicised vision of GSCID on its website is to improve the "public environment to make it a sought after, attractive and pleasant destination in which to live, work and shop" (GSCID, 2015). Among the problems identified by GSCID, are residents' perceptions of "danger; homelessness; neglected river due to homeless and perceived or real danger" (GSCID, 2014a).

The presence of GSCID security officers is an additional source of surveillance that potentially further limits waste pickers' ability to confine discreditable behaviour to out of sight, back region spaces. However, the nature of public space meant GSCID officers could carry out their duties rather shrewdly. Reminiscent of Cicourel's study (1968), the extent to which security enabled or constrained the movement of waste pickers was dependent on the individual GSCID officers. As with other low-wage workers and passersby, I witnessed GSCID buying items from waste pickers. At times when waste pickers were not waste picking, GSCID officers were able to negotiate with them to reach mutually beneficial agreements.

"They know the difference"

Extract 24 takes place on a cold, wet, winter's day. Waste pickers have walked from one suburb to another (1.6 km) and have taken shelter outside some shops, with all the belongings that have been collected from the morning's waste picking. One of the items was a chair that Tamas planned to refurbish. Viera was using the chair and I sat on her lap in a bid to try and share my body warmth. The other waste pickers were attempting to sell items to passersby. The following conversation (Extract 24) ensues when two GSCID officers approach the group.

EXTRACT 24
Fieldnotes, week 18, July 17, 2014

1	Tamas: They are with us also around	The GSCID officers spend time with us
2	here. Talk to them	on the street. Talk to them
3	Me: I'm trying to warm her up, she's	I am trying to keep Viera warm
4	freezing	
5	GSCID officer: oh (…)[inaudible]	
6	Me: Ja, she is wet and cold	
7	Viera: Wena, wena, look here, the two of	"wena" means "you" in Xhosa, and is
8	them, they are the cool cats	used here to indicate that she is talking
9	Me: Oh really?	to, and about, the GSCID officers
10	Viera: Ja	
11	Me: They are the cool ones	
12	Viera: They are the cool ones yeah, but	These ones are cool but not all of them
13	there's other ones that like	are cool
14	(…)[inaudible]	
15	Me: So some are ok and some are not ok	
16	Viera: But these they look out for us,	The GSCID officers look out for us but
17	people that is living on the streets, so	they have to be seen to be telling us not
18	here and there they have to say 'look	to sleep outside
19	here, don't do this' 'don't sleep in this	
20	door'	
21	Me: So they tip you off and look out for	
22	you	
23	Viera: And we also look out for them,	We help them which makes their job
24	because why (…)[inaudible] we are	easier
25	communicating and they also help, it	
26	makes their job more easier	
27	Me: Easy	
28	Viera: Because why, sometimes they will	They don't know everyone to the extent
29	stand here, they don't know the people	that we do
30	that (…)[inaudible]	
31	Me: They know the difference between	
32	Viera: They know the difference ja,	They know the difference between us and
33	several times it also happens, so you save	criminals. We can point out to them
34	a lot of peoples' cars with that. Because	which people are car thieves
35	of that, if they don't acknowledge that	They have to be seen to be policing the
36	they can lose their jobs, because why	area otherwise they will lose their jobs.
37	(…)[inaudible] security, anything. So us	So because we know people who are on
38	being on the streets, knowing the skelms	the streets we can identify the thieves
39	car	
40	Me: You are like the eyes and ears	
41	Viera: Oh yes, they see the other side of	They see another side to us that others do
42	us, why we doing it, we are looking out	not. They know why we are on the streets
43	for their jobs (…)[inaudible]	and act as look outs for them which helps
44	Me: So you work together	them to do their job
45	Viera: Yeah (…)	

In an attempt to help me with my research, Tamas suggests I interrupt my conversation with Viera to talk to these GSCID officers whom he knows (lines 1-2). In my own act of subtle subordination (Scott, 1985), I state that I will not redirect my attention because keeping Viera warm is more important (lines 3-4). Viera differentiates between GSCID officers according to their attitude towards waste pickers and classifies the two men in front of us as "cool," calm and composed (lines 7-8, 12). She understands that officers have to give the impression that they are engaged in the work of maintaining order. She realises part of this performance is telling people that they cannot sleep in doorways because that is what officers "*have* to say" (line 18) [emphasis added].

Where other waste pickers complained to me about GSCID officers waking them up to move them out of sight, Viera sees this as part of a broader agenda to look out for them (lines 16 and 17). I interpret waking up waste pickers as "looking out for them," if it saves waste pickers from harsher sanctions at the hands of less sympathetic enforcers of social control (lines 21-22). In return, waste pickers informally work as informants to help GSCID officers do their job and justify their presence (lines 23-26, 28-30, 32-39). I repeat the line that I read from a security firm newsletter (Medcalf, 2013), but in this context it shows how waste pickers enable security personnel to do their job rather than pose a threat to public safety (lines 41-43).

Although conversations with GSCID officers happen in front region spaces, interactions are back region because other audiences are not privy to the content of conversations. Ostensibly, uniformed GSCID officers only have cause to talk to anyone when there is a threat to public safety. What normals see when they pass the scene in Extract 24 is a GSCID officer doing their job by monitoring waste pickers' behaviour to maintain order. Although the interaction is in public it is not possible to fully grasp the meaning of what is being said unless passersby stop and listen. Thus, conversations become back region which enables waste pickers and GSCID staff to collude with one another, allowing each team to put on a performance to the satisfaction of the public. What residents may not realise is that these interactions can enable waste pickers to frequent suburban streets, achieving the opposite of the intended purpose of officers' presence.

GSCID officers represent a veiled attempt by normals to remove waste pickers from public spaces, both during and after they finish working. The unintended consequence of normals avoiding verbal interactions with waste pickers is that it enables teams who are tasked with controlling waste pickers to be co-opted. GSCID officers provide additional surveillance but negotiate with waste pickers to achieve a mutually

beneficial situation. Residents feel safer because they see GSCID officers talking to waste pickers. GSCID officers can perform the role of security to the satisfaction of residents, without confronting waste pickers about their ongoing presence in the suburbs. For example, rather than confiscate alcohol some security staff merely asked waste pickers to consume alcohol out of sight and return later. GSCID officers treated waste pickers differently to car thieves (lines 32-34) which enabled waste pickers to use an idealised front to position the team as superior to criminals.

So far this section has established that not all responses to waste pickers constrained their ability to avoid being stigmatised as messy, abnormal and potential criminals. Interactions enabled waste pickers to distance themselves from the homeless stereotype by capitalising on opportunities to show how waste pickers are not a homogeneous group. The next section takes the discussion of sources of enablement forward by interpreting interactions using three aspects of agency as theorised by Emirbayer and Mische (1998).

8. PART 2. AGENCY

Although waste pickers idealised their standard of living, it is undeniable that there is a notable change between their current identity and past involvement in prison gang violence. Waste pickers have a work routine and a route around the suburbs that means by 10 a.m., on a good day, they have what they need to provide for themselves for the next 24 hours. Their ability to sell re-usable items from the bin relied on fostering good relationships with potential buyers. Although Tamas said that he could get more money elsewhere for the goods he had, the small second hand market at the station provided reliable and immediate remuneration. The relationship between waste pickers and stallholders provided a glimpse of how interactions with normals could be if both performer and audience actively decided to change patterns of interaction.

8.2.1 Iteration

Audiences characterised their relationship with waste pickers in various ways, which led to different patterns of communication. Discussed so far have been the reactions of municipal workers, caretakers, a landlady and GSCID officers. In these interactions waste pickers' conformity to established routines enabled them to reassure audiences that waste pickers are trustworthy. However, there were some audiences with whom waste pickers had a shared history, which meant waste pickers did not have to work

as hard to gain trust as they did in other interactions. For example, waste pickers did not have to prove themselves to stallholders because they interacted with waste pickers as equals. In my presence and in contrast to other audiences, stallholders consistently dealt with conflicts of interest with waste pickers in a calm and respectful manner.

"I have known him for many years"

In Extract 25, Tamas and the group are sitting on the steps of a bridge at the station next to the market stalls. We are surrounded by bags of things that have been picked from the bins that morning. Upon seeing a pair of slippers in one of Tamas's bags, a passerby stops and makes enquiries. Unlike waste pickers who sell from the street, market stallholders at the station have to pay for their space. The market manager and stallholder (Martin) intervenes in the sales negotiation, because of the unfair competition that Tamas's impromptu informal clothes stall poses to the formal stalls (which vendors pay a premium to have).

EXTRACT 25
Fieldnotes, week 15, June 26, 2014

1	Passerby: How much is this?	
2	Tamas: R10	
3	Passerby: R5 it's finished	I'll give you R5 because they are old
4	Tamas: ok R5. Nothing wrong	R5 is fine but there is nothing wrong with
5	[The manager comes to the front of his	them
6	stall]	
7	Martin: You mustn't sell here ne?	You can't sell your things here, you
8	Tamas: (…) [Speaks to Martin in	know
9	Afrikaans]	
10	Passerby: (…)[inaudible] change	Do you have change?
11	Tamas: I haven't got	I don't have change
12	[Tamas turns to me]	
13	Tamas: Where is that bag now, that white	
14	bag	
15	Me: This one?	
16	Tamas: yes	You can't sell here. I don't mind that you
17	Martin: You mustn't sell there, I'm not	are selling but just not here
18	worried what you have (…)[inaudible]	
19	[Tamas is busying himself with finding	
20	change so I greet Martin]	
21	Me: Hi	
22	Martin: I have known him for many	
23	years.	
24	[I smile back at Martin]	Tamas is going to get change for you
25	[Martin speaks to Claire's customer]	
26	Martin: He is just going to make change	
27	for you na? (…)[He repeats himself in	
28	Afrikaans]	
29	[He turns his attention back to his stall]	
30	Martin: The rain is coming	

Much like the other interaction with a customer (see Extract 18, Chapter 7), Tamas has a familiar sales patter (lines 1-4). Martin informs Tamas and the others that they cannot sell next to the market stalls (line 6). Tamas acknowledges that he has heard Martin (line 7) but continues with the sale of the slippers and asks for my help to find a bag to put them in (lines 10-12). Martin repeats himself, adding an explanation of the market fee that stallholders pay for their spot (lines 14-15). He is addressing both Tamas and myself so I acknowledge him with a greeting (line 18). Martin seems to interpret my body language as expressing concern about the situation, and reassures me that there is no animosity between him and Tamas (line 19). He continues to busy himself with his stall, speaks to a customer in Claire's neighbouring stall and reflects on the weather (lines 21-25). In the

meantime the passerby who was interested in the slippers has walked on and we continue to sit on the station steps.

As in the waste pickers' interaction with Leandra (Extract 23), Martin is also asking Tamas and the group to change their behaviour. Although he uses a similar tactic, explaining the rationale behind his request, the outcome is different and no one gets fraught. By hanging back and continuing to busy himself with folding clothes, the stallholder communicates that what he is saying is not of the utmost importance to the extent that it warrants stopping what he is doing to meet Tamas's eye. His tone remains the same although he addresses different audiences (Tamas, me, Claire's customer). When he muses on the weather, he seems to be half talking to us and half to himself, which communicates that his attention is easily diverted and waste pickers' presence is trivial (line 25). Unlike Leandra, Martin seems untroubled about what his customers will think when they see waste pickers. This interaction gives credence to Tamas's idealised front that he is a likable and liked person (see Extract 5, Chapter 5).

To return to Scott (1985), the interaction poses a challenge to the workings of stereotypical discourses. The stigma of the "bergie" stereotype relies on the assumption that waste pickers are unable to nurture meaningful social relations (Ross, 2005). Martin and Tamas not only have a trusting relationship, but one that can withstand conflicts of interest with seeming ease. When waste pickers pose no threat to order it undermines the power of dominant ideologies, used by the powerful to justify the restriction on waste pickers' freedom of movement in front region city spaces. In short Martin is not ashamed to know Tamas and have him sit next to his stall (as long as Tamas does not pose unfair competition). Extract 25 shows that the stigma of homelessness is a construction rather than an inevitable and fixed part of waste pickers' identity. The assumptions made about waste pickers are therefore open to change.

8.2.2 Projection

Claire was a waste picker before she became a stallholder at the second-hand market at the station. Waste pickers' interactions with her enabled the agential capacity of impression management by confirming that waste picking is a choice. Her ability to become socially mobile served as evidence that waste picking was one option among several. Furthermore, given the alternatives, it was feasible for waste pickers to prefer the road they had chosen (see Chapter 6). Claire's narrative brings into question assumptions

made about waste pickers' cognitive capacity to think long term, based on homeless and alcoholic stereotypes.

"you can work yourself up"

Preceding Extract 26, Claire and I talk at cross-purposes. She asks me if I smoke, which I interpret as a question about tobacco but in actual fact she is referring to tik (the highly addictive, illegal substance resembling crystal methamphetamine). Having established that I am not addicted to any illegal substances she evaluated my disposition as salvageable. Extract 26 starts with Claire's summation of what rock bottom feels like.

EXTRACT 26
Fieldnotes, week 17, July 10, 2014

1	Claire: You don't have, you don't care	When you are on tik, you don't care
2	about nothing and nobody, you just want	about anything or anyone. But eventually
3	what you want, so I'm telling you my	you are going to get tired of waste
4	sister, when you, maybe you are still	picking and want to be a normal person,
5	alright now, you still alright with this	doing normal things.
6	thing, but one day I'm telling you, you're	
7	going to be tired of this life, you are	
8	going to want to be a normal person	
9	doing normal things, not skarrelling up	
10	and down, scratching in the bins, you	
11	gonna get tired of that rubbish. I was	
12	tired, and then I say God, I'm tired now.	
13	So God say, ok you there's, there's a job,	
14	there's everything you need.	
15	Me: Congratulations	
16	Claire: Thank you ne, bye	
17	(…) [She shouts in Afrikaans as she	
18	walks off and I laugh]	
19	Tamas: She was also on the skarrel like	
20	us,	
21	Me: How did she manage to get a job and	
22	a house?	
23	Tamas: A what?	
24	Me: How did she manage to get a job and	
25	a house?	
26	Tamas: A job?	
27	Me: How did she do that?	
28	Tamas: No she, she, she got her own	
29	shop here, second hand shop	
30	Me: Ah	
31	Tamas: Ja	
32	Me: ok	
33	Tamas: She got her own second hand	She was homeless too, you can become
34	shop, but she was a stroller, you can	upwardly mobile. I also have plans to
35	work yourself up. I also plan to not to do	stop being a waste picker, I can run my
36	these things anymore, I can also do	own business or whatever.
37	business and whatever.	

Mistaking me for a waste picker, Claire gives me a pep talk to try raise my aspirations and lead me to God (lines 1-11). I congratulate her on her achievements and she hurries off to open her stall (lines 13-15). Tamas confirms that Claire was previously part of the group of waste pickers (line 16). Finding it unlikely that God was solely responsible for Claire's change of circumstances, I ask Tamas how he thinks Claire managed it (line 17). Assuming that my question was about *what* she does rather than *how* she managed to

change her state of affairs, Tamas repeats to me what Claire's job is (lines 22-23). I do not probe but Tamas volunteers more information, comparing her elevated status to his current circumstances and his plans for the future (lines 27-30). The interaction was a rare moment in my time with Tamas, when he explicitly considers what his long-term future might look like.

As Goffman points out, making too much or too little of collegiality can cause difficulties for performers. In one sense, Claire is a "colleague turned renegade" (Goffman, 1959, p. 105) because she is an audience member but also an ex-team member and therefore knows "team secrets." Contrary to waste pickers' idealised front, she discredits waste picking by defining it as a short-term livelihood strategy (lines 2-6). Most damning is when she talks about waste pickers and waste picking as if the people and their work are not normal (lines 6-7). These otherwise unspoken parts of waste picking cast social doubt over waste pickers' definition of their situation. In another sense, she is not a turncoat in the way that Goffman defined collegial renegades because her remarks do not intend to shame waste pickers. She unintentionally embarrasses Tamas in her evangelism about her new life. By professing her achievements, Claire enables a vision of waste picking as a first rung on the entrepreneurial ladder. She is evidence that waste pickers could pursue an alternative means of income, if they chose to do so, as vehemently conveyed by Steven (see Extract 13, Chapter 6).

8.2.3 Practical Evaluation

While waste pickers rarely talked to me about long term implications of the decisions they made, practical evaluation was explicit in some situations. In particular, waste pickers thought about the impact of their conduct on building relationships with gatekeepers. Just as waste pickers were conscious of putting on a credible performance for caretakers to retain access to waste, they were also keen to stay on the good side of bottle store (liquor store/off-licence) staff. The weekly routine consisted of waste pickers arriving at the bottle store with returnable bottles, alerting staff to their presence at the front of the shop, then standing at the backyard gate to wait for staff. At a moment of the staff's choosing a person came to the back gate, and let in only one waste picker at a time to put their returnable bottles into crates ready to be counted. The value of bottles was calculated and written on a scrap of paper, which one waste picker must then take to the cashier inside the shop. Rather than take the more direct route from the back yard through the inside of the shop to the cashier, waste pickers were asked to go back outside and go

straight to the cashier at the shop entrance. Waste pickers were eligible to exchange the value of the bottles for alcohol, topped up with cash if needs be to purchase between 2-5 litres of wine. This was a specific type of cheap wine that was not on display that staff produced from underneath the counter.

"I'm thinking for the future also"

Extract 27 is from a conversation that happened while the group and I wait outside the bottle store. Having waited for much longer than usual waste pickers ask what is causing the delay. They are told that the shop is short staffed, which means that a male member of staff is unavailable to collect empty bottles. He is currently out making deliveries so the group have to remain outside until he returns before waste pickers can be remunerated. By the time we have waited for an hour, some waste pickers have bought alcohol with their own money. They start drinking outside the bottle store while waiting to exchange their bottles. As the group became louder, the following conversation ensues between Tamas and myself (Extract 27).

EXTRACT 27
Fieldnotes, week 24, September 11, 2014

1	Tamas: Now we getting drunk here,	Now we are going to get drunk and cause
2	going to make kak here now. We going	trouble and I don't want that
3	to make nonsense here my darling and I	
4	don't want that.	
5	Me: But if they'd have just taken your	
6	bottles and you could have gone	
7	Tamas: I'm thinking. I don't think for	I'm thinking about the consequences of
8	now, I'm thinking for the future also	our behaviour not just in the here and
9	Me: Ja,	now but for the future too
10	Tamas: Some people don't think so. Like	The others don't necessarily think about
11	them maybe don't think that. Now we are	the consequences for the future. We are
12	going to make kak here now.	going to cause trouble here now
13	Me: Shall I go and remind them that we	Should I speak to the bottle store staff?
14	are waiting?	No, I am going to remind them myself
15	Tamas: Ja I going to remind them now.	now
16	You see, if we get drunk here now, it's	
17	going to be (…)[inaudible]	
18	Me: It's going to be what?	
19	Tamas: We going to make wrong things	We are going to cause a scene if we stay
20	here.	here now and get drunk
21	Me: ok	
22	Tamas: We going to be naughty in other	
23	words	
24	Me: And then they won't have you back	
25	next week when you want to come	They won't exchange our empty bottles
26	Tamas: Ja, then they don't help us	for wine next time we are here

Tamas anticipates that remaining outside the bottle store is, in all likelihood, going to have an adverse effect on the waste pickers' relationship with the staff (lines 1-4, 11-12, 16-17). This does not prompt him to take on a leadership role that at other times he has professed. He could perhaps persuade waste pickers to wait patiently for the staff to attend to them or to go to another bottle store to exchange their bottles. Instead he participates in events and lets them unfold as he predicted. Despite this, he still uses the interaction as an opportunity to draw a distinction between himself and the rest of the team. Although he contributes to the drunken disturbance, what sets him apart is his awareness of what is happening and the consequences for the future. This is a capacity that he thinks the others do not possess (lines 10-11). Consistent with the homeless stereotype, his primary concern is retaining access to alcohol (line 26).

In one way, the scene is a stereotypical image of a group of homeless alcoholics drinking during the daytime. They are in a front region space, with customers and

passersby making judgements about the people they see who are intoxicated during the early hours of the day. On the face of it, the team show no regard for how their deviance contradicts the impression that Tamas has fostered in interactions with me, or the negative image displayed to the public. In another way, the scene could be interpreted as an act of protest against the imposition of authority. The rule stipulating the gender of staff who are allowed to collect and count bottles in the presence of a waste picker is arbitrary and not applied to any other customers. The group demonstrate that they can afford to buy alcohol without relying on the extraction of value from the returnable bottles. Waste pickers expose the hypocrisy of the bottle store in their willingness to sell them alcohol but not collect their bottles for recycling.

Eventually a male staff member arrives back at the bottle store, but when the waste pickers speak to him he ignores them and deals with another customer. The male staff member speaks to waste pickers curtly in Afrikaans. Andrey tells me that the staff member is angry because his boss made him come back from the other work that he was doing. He locks the yard, goes inside the shop and does not return. Soon after this, a police patrol car arrives and the officer tells us that his presence is in response to complaints. Events unfold as Tamas predicted but the inevitability of the scene does not take away from the fact that his decision to stay and "make nonsense" (line 3) was a conscious one. In other altercations Tamas had chosen to stand back (with municipal workers in Extract 22), leave the scene (with Leandra in Extract 23) or stay and conform to rules (with Martin in Extract 25). But here he is willing to risk severing any goodwill he has accrued with bottle store staff. Being alcohol dependent is not used to deny responsibility for his actions as he has done previously (see Extract 19, Chapter 7).

It is not that waste pickers lack projective capacity, but rather they refuse to have their "after work drinks" stopped or delayed by normals. The actions of the group remind the bottle store that "those with power are not in total control of the stage" (Scott, 1985, p. 26). Waste pickers make sure that the bottle store does not profit from a business that relies on peoples' taste for alcohol, without being confronted with alcohol addiction. Waste pickers are a reminder that the bottle store selectively feeds peoples' alcohol addiction. However as noted by Friedman and Graham (2008), when people labelled as poor assert themselves an unintended consequence is often conformity to stereotypes. Although Tamas expresses his concern about the ramifications of drinking outside the bottle store, waste pickers have little to lose given the mistrust that the bottle store already exhibit towards the group. The antagonism between bottle store staff and waste pickers

entrenches a "them and us" mentality that surfaced in waste pickers' experiences of prejudice (Chapter 5). What the interaction shows is that waste pickers make practical judgements in response to dilemmas (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). So although the outcome of decisions may entrench stereotypical discourses, a conscious decision was made at several moments as events unfolded.

8. PART 3. ENABLEMENT

This section examines how incidents that ostensibly constrain, have underlying features that can be associated with enablement. Stereotypical discourses position waste pickers at the bottom of the social hierarchy, but following Giddens this power is not all consuming. This section focuses on sources of enablement where waste pickers demonstrate their capacity to respond to unequal power relations. So far I have evaluated the extent to which impression management acts as an effective enabler of change. I now turn to other "everyday forms" of resistance (Scott, 1985), which I argue have agential capacity despite being processes that are hidden from the audience in back region interactions.

8.3.1 Disrupting Discourses

When "the poor symbolically undermine the self-awarded status of the rich (…) they are simultaneously asserting their own claim to status" (Scott, 1985, p. 240). Scott (1985) gives examples of "small but significant" signs of determination, which can be used to understand waste pickers' consumption habits. As already mentioned, buying alcohol does not conform to a hierarchical theory of needs (Wolff, 2016), which discredits waste pickers as lacking projective capacity (see Chapter 7). The same act, of spending what little waste pickers have on wine, can be interpreted as a "refusal to accept the definition of the situation as seen from above" (Scott, 1985, p. 240). Waste pickers showed an awareness of their legal status and used this knowledge to exercise their right to waste pick and sit in public drinking alcohol. Waste pickers were able to weaken the impact of strategies employed by the rich to curtail the movement of waste pickers, such as increased public surveillance in front region areas. In doing so they undermined the power of residents to protect their neat suburban enclaves and disrupt the power of discourses that position them as "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966).

"There's no crime"

Extract 28 takes place when waste pickers are sitting outside the bottle store waiting to exchange their bottles, previous to the interaction in Extract 27. While waste pickers are resting on the pavement talking, a police car patrolling the area drives down the street and stops next to us. The police officer rolls down the window and talks to the group in Afrikaans. They have a brief but jovial exchange and he drives off. It transpires afterwards, when Andrey and Tamas translate, that the officer did not recognise me. This prompted enquiries about my identity at which point the following conversation ensues.

EXTRACT 28
Fieldnotes, week 24, September 11, 2015

1	Me: What did he say?	What did the police officer say?
2	Andrey: That you one of us, skarrelling	We told him that you are one of us, that
3	in the bins [laughs]	you are a waste picker
4	Tamas: It is mos so	It's true isn't it?
5	Me: Only once a week but	Yes, but only once a week
6	Tamas: Nothing what we do, no, he say	No, you are one of us because you pick
7	you skarrel, you one of us skarrelling in	through the dustbins
8	the dustbins.	
9	Me: yes	
10	Tamas: It's not (…)[inaudible]	
11	Me: I don't mind	
12	Tamas: It's not robbing, there's no crime	Waste picking is not theft so it isn't a
13	Me: No, there's nothing wrong with that	crime
		No there is nothing wrong with waste
		picking

The interaction has prompted amusement that piques my interest in what is said (line 1). They misinterpret my question as what did *you* say, so Andrey tells me that he told the officer I was a waste picker (lines 2-3). Tamas takes this literally (line 4) and I modestly amend my waste picker status (line 5). Tamas stipulates an inclusive definition of a waste picker to include me (lines 6-8) that I cannot refute (line 9). He defends waste picking as if my reluctance to be called a waste picker is founded on avoiding the shame of waste picking (line 10), which I try to correct (line 11). He reminds me that waste picking is not illegal (line 12) and I agree (13). We talk at cross purposes with me trying not to undeservedly call myself a waste picker, while Tamas assures me that there is no reason to fear being labelled a waste picker.

The significance of the interaction between waste pickers and the police officer is not so much the specifics of what was said but the spirit of the encounter. The historical legacy of "the regulation of spaced and raced hierarchies" (McEwen & Steyn, 2013, p. 2)

was not apparent from the good-humored exchange. The police officer saw no cause to move the group as had been reported by Jared (fieldnotes, week 31, November 13, 2014) and in the run-up to the football world cup (see Chapter 2). Waste pickers were able to communicate their difference to homeless stereotypes, by getting to a point in the conversation where they are able to describe me as part of the group of waste pickers. His interest is not that the group is sitting outside a bottle store but in my identity. There is a mutual respect between the two teams. The police officer avoids likening waste pickers to the homeless stereotype and, despite negative experiences with law enforcement, waste pickers casually converse with the police officer.

The interaction symbolises the subtle co-option of a State representative, which although it may be an exception, enable waste pickers to transgress the "will to order" (Scanlon, 2005). In Extract 28, the way that Tamas prefaces waste picking as a non-criminal act is part of an idealised front (Chapter 6) that lends him legal legitimacy. Tamas's legal status means the police officer can interact with the waste pickers without fear of being criticised by audiences for neglecting his duties. Unless the government criminalises waste picking, legal structures can enable waste pickers to enforce their right to access waste as part of the commons. As with GSCID officers, the police officer is able to give a performance of exerting social control. No one can hear what the officer is saying, so the interaction means whatever the audience wants it to mean: a police officer doing his job.

The stereotypes that position waste pickers at the bottom of the social hierarchy may remain in place, but other discourses that define waste pickers as dirt to be removed from the streets of affluent suburbs are disrupted. When able to forge relationships with agents of social control, waste pickers negotiated with officers to retain their right to freedom of movement in front region parts of the city. This undermines the power of residents to use discourses of dirt to position waste pickers as "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966) and therefore justify their removal. Normals may think they see a police officer doing their bidding. In actual fact, it is a performance of surveillance and does not dissuade waste pickers from occupying the street or frequenting the bottle store. Residents do not have the upper hand in the way that they think they do.

8.3.2 Resistance

Everyday forms of resistance "make no headlines," but do have a political presence (Scott, 1985, p. xvii). Enabled by some audiences' selective application of rules, waste

pickers were able to capitalise on their ability to make their presence felt. Waste pickers refusal to lay low and quietly merge into the rest of the working classes (see Chapter 7), resists the will to order that otherwise dictates that their rightful place should be in the Cape Flats. Waste pickers know where the "cracks in the system" are and can make judgments (practical evaluation) about when and how much to assert themselves or withdraw in any given situation. In this way they push the boundaries of acceptability and gradually disrupt traditional spatial segregation in the city.

"this is a business area"

The sequence of events on the 11th of September discussed so far have been the congenial interaction with a police officer (Extract 28) followed by waste pickers refusing to be allowed to exchange their bottles after a lengthy wait (Extract 27). Waste pickers pass the time by buying alcohol and continue to congregate outside the bottle store drinking and talking. At one point Amanda gets into an argument with the other waste pickers. Ironically Amanda is the only sober one in the group yet her voice is the loudest. I become increasingly aware of the disturbance that the volume of Amanda's voice is causing. I also notice a lady emerge from her house in the opposite street who stands in her front garden. She stares at the group for a time before returning inside. Shortly afterwards, the same police patrol who greeted the group earlier returns to the scene to investigate a noise complaint. The following interaction ensues (Extract 29).

EXTRACT 29
Fieldnotes, week 24, September 11, 2015

1	Police: I am giving you a chance to	
2	(…)[inaudible]. Take your alcohol and	
3	go and drink elsewhere. Otherwise I am	
4	going confiscate the alcohol and give you	
5	a fine. I am giving you a chance to take	
6	your alcohol and drink outside at another	
7	place. Because people are complaining	
8	here. Remember this is a business area	
9	(…)[inaudible]	
10	Andrey: I understand	
11	Police: If you understand, you are going	
12	to take your things and go	
13	Andrey: We haven't got another bottle	
14	store that we can take our bottles to	
15	Police: people don't want you here, even	
16	the bottle store doesn't want you here.	
17	They don't want you to be here also.	
18	[The officer hoots the car horn and gives	I am giving you a chance to go without
19	one turn on the siren]	any further action being taken

The officer gives waste pickers an ultimatum to either leave immediately or have sanctions imposed (lines 1-5), which he sandwiches between requests to commit transgressions in a back region space (lines 2-3, 5-7). As with Leandra the landlady (Extract 23) and Martin the stallholder and manager (Extract 25) the police officer makes clear the justification for his request (lines 7-8). Andrey acknowledges the officer but gives no assurance of compliance (line 10), which the officer notices as vague and corrects (lines 11-12). Andrey explains why the group is reluctant to leave (lines 13-14), which the officer disregards as peripheral (lines 15-17). The police officer uses "sign equipment" (Goffman, 1959) to aid his performance of law enforcement and waits for waste pickers to start packing up their bottles (lines 18-19).

The police officer carefully manages the impression that he gives to both waste pickers and normals. He does not raise personal objections to waste pickers but instead uses gestures to put on a sincere performance of policing for the benefit of other audiences. For example, he speaks in English unlike earlier when he spoke in Afrikaans. He stays in his car like he did earlier but instead of leaning over to talk to us he uses the loud hailer attached to the roof. Even though the interaction takes place in exactly the same setting as earlier, the interaction is thrust from back to front region by the use of props. The complainant remains invisible but is perhaps watching the scene from a concealed space

(panoptic power). Whoever called the police can be satisfied that action is being taken, although this does not preclude waste pickers from continuing to drink in another location. As with GSCID officers, the police officer puts on a convincing performance of law enforcement.

Of all the reasons the officer could have given for moving waste pickers on, he picks out protecting business interests as the primary concern and motivation for the original complaint (line 8). The precise nature of how waste pickers cause less business revenue is never fully expounded but neither is it questioned. All the actors involved in the interaction tacitly understand the rationale for the avoidance of waste pickers. The officer's aim is not to question whether complaints are legitimate, he merely wants to meet the short-term goal of removing waste pickers from the immediate vicinity. To achieve this he offers to let waste pickers continue to consume alcohol in return for waste pickers moving to a space away from shops (lines 5-7). In a similar way to how "world city syndrome" (D. A. McDonald, 2008) influences local government's decision making, the officer also emphasises the connection between the presence of waste pickers and their adverse effects on trade.

The group gather their bottles slowly and Tamas narrowly avoids provoking the police officer by swearing at him out of earshot. Eventually waste pickers start to walk away. This can be seen as a form of "pragmatic submission" (Scott, 1985), meaning that although waste pickers are compliant they do not blindly follow the rules. By "foot dragging" (Scott, 1985, p. 29) waste pickers tarnish the police officer's performance. The officer cannot claim his requests are being ignored but equally waste pickers make him wait. By giving waste pickers an ultimatum the officer has put pressure on himself to impose sanctions, even though his earlier attitude and rationale for intervening indicates no desire to do so. In this way waste pickers made a conscious judgement about the extent to which they could assert themselves in encounters with agencies of social control (practical evaluation).

Although the officer passes on the message from residents and staff that they do not want waste pickers to shop at this bottle store (lines 15-16), the group have no intention of taking their bottles to be exchanged elsewhere in future. Waste pickers take advantage of the inconsistent attitude of the bottle store staff's variable application of the rules. When I return with the group in my next fieldwork session, I learn that along with the rest of the group, I have been banned from the bottle store. This rule is easy to by-pass because the staff were unable to tell which people are affiliated to the banned group. If

waste pickers went alone to the bottle store they would likely be served. The only exception to this was Tamas and I who staff did recognise. Therefore Tamas sends another waste picker to exchange his bottles and bring him the wine.

My ban meant that my presence with the group while at the bottle store was an inconvenience. I had become a stigma symbol and reminder to the bottle store staff to look out for the group who were led by Tamas. Together with the fact that I had worked as a waste picker through all four seasons, I saw my ban as a sign that it was time to bring my fieldwork to an end. My ban therefore had little impact on my access to waste pickers because it coincided with my final weeks of fieldwork.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

Sources of enablement come in various guises, most notably from the relationships that waste pickers foster with different audiences to assert their right to be in public spaces and access the contents of household bins. Security and police are willing to divert their attention away from the indiscretions of waste pickers without discrediting their performance of upholding security and safety. Methods of social control designed to confine waste pickers to back region spaces, are less effective because waste pickers have the support of caretakers and stallholders. In areas where waste pickers are well established, residents' disquiet risks being seen as unfairly discriminatory. Waste pickers use their judgement to decide which situations can be fully exploited to their own advantage, and which require practical submission in the interests of long term gains.

Stereotypes of dirt and homelessness make it difficult for normals to see how being a waste picker could be anything other than utterly degrading. Although changing this perception is constrained by the stigma of dirt and alcoholism, I saw interactions that presented waste pickers as methodical and strategic. This impression challenges conceptions of informal work and the associated objections to waste pickers' presence on suburban streets. Although confined to back region spaces the agency of waste pickers is more than a fictional notion to give the impression of status. Choices, while ostensibly not in the interests of conforming to an idealised front, do enable waste pickers to pick away at the fabric of dominant discourses that stigmatise them as homeless, alcoholic, criminals.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

Key themes running through this thesis have been the simultaneous processes of enablement and constraint. I have argued that although a stigmatised identity constrains the agency of waste pickers, this was not evident from how they presented themselves in interactions with me. The suppression of stigma enabled waste pickers to present waste picking as a choice. This tension between what waste pickers wanted me to see and the more hidden realities of their work is used as a way to tie together the findings in this concluding chapter. In doing so I use Goffman's (1959) language to foreground the interplay between front and back region spaces. I begin with an overview of the global backdrop against which waste pickers' interactions in Cape Town are set. Stemming from Chapter 2, I point to the constraints that are imposed on waste pickers' geographical mobility, born out of government's concern about what international audiences think.

I move on to traverse sources of enablement and constraint to waste pickers' agential capacity in interactions with different audience teams, arising out of Chapters 5 to 8. In doing so I summarise the following empirical stepping-stones: Waste pickers struggle to change negative stereotypes because they are labelled as homeless; avoidance of verbal engagement with waste pickers means that audiences heavily rely on visual markers and body language; the multiple discreditable physical and behavioural attributes of waste pickers have the power to spoil their identity; this power is exacerbated because waste pickers performances are in panoptic front region spaces, which makes it impossible to conceal stigma symbols. I end with a synopsis of how stigma surfaces in the agency of waste pickers.

9.1 The Global Stage

There is a tension between front and back region spaces on a global and local scale. World class cities in "the west" (front region) are rivalled by emerging cities, such as Cape Town, in "the rest" of the world (back regions). Within the waste management industry recycling projects are seen as progressive, but only generate status if methods are modern. When set against European waste minimisation technology, the manual sorting of waste carried out by ostensibly homeless people, informally and in public spaces, does not portray a world city image. Waste pickers interrupt the cleanliness and orderliness of city

streets, which constrain the government's ability to emulate aesthetically pleasing European waste management methods. Documents such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals put the spotlight on Africa, and put South Africa under pressure to join the mainstream of the world economy on the international stage (front region). However, Cape Town's performance of making significant strides towards achieving development goals is discredited when pickers refuse to stay hidden in peripheral spaces (back region).

Local government's impression management strategies are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand waste pickers are prohibited from landfill sites in Cape Town, which are out of sight, back region spaces. This means waste pickers can only access household waste from residential streets. The most lucrative of these are in the affluent suburbs (front region) where bins are more likely to contain objects of value. On the other hand, out of concern for what tourists and residents will think, the government discourages waste pickers from being seen on the streets. Anxiety about the impression formed by international audiences was exacerbated before and during high profile events such as the Football World Cup (see Chapter 2). At these times, emphasis is placed on repatriating waste pickers to their childhood settlements in informal, marginalised parts of the city (back region). Local government encourages residents to help homeless people anonymously and indirectly by donating money to NGOs. The result simultaneously pushes waste pickers into peripheral city spaces and pulls them back into formal affluent areas. Either way, waste pickers have the power to undermine the government's performance of modernity.

9.2 Interactions with Agents of Social Control

Another response to the threat that waste pickers pose to the aesthetics of the city is to employ multiple agents of social control to guard public spaces (front region). The surveillance of communal space is justified by the government using the language of security, which contributes to existing prejudices against homeless people as "the eyes and ears of criminal networks" (see Chapter 2). City Improvement Districts demarcate affluent parts of the city, where residents can afford to pay for security personnel in addition to police patrols and private security systems. Public spaces are particularly panoptic for waste pickers because they live *and* work in front region spaces. This constrains their ability to conceal discrediting stigma symbols in public (see Chapter 7). Waste pickers'

limited access to private spaces means any discrediting performances are always potentially visible.

Although agents of formal social control exacerbate the public gaze, interactions with waste pickers were not always negative. Waste pickers were able to build relationships with security staff and police to achieve different ends. Firstly, building rapport with security personnel meant that both teams could tell individual team members apart. Consequently, waste pickers were more likely to be treated as individuals rather than generic homeless people. Equally, waste pickers could adjust their attitude according to the person on duty, giving them an idea of how far they could push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour while on their watch. Getting to know each other enabled both teams to change negative perceptions, by distancing themselves from negative stereotypes (see Chapter 8).

Secondly, working relationships enabled a reciprocal exchange to take place between teams. Waste pickers gave information to staff that could help them to police the area, for example, by informing them of the identity of potential criminals and/or details of acts that had been committed. In return, sanctions for comparatively minor acts of disobedience were reduced. Rather than confiscate alcohol, waste pickers were asked to consume it in places where they were less visible to the general public (back region). The confinement of waste pickers to less prominent streets was understood by both teams to be temporary, merely to perform the role of law enforcers for the benefit of residents (front region). Collusion between the two teams took the sting out of attempts to restrict waste pickers' movements, enabling the disruption of normals' monopoly over public space.

9.3 Interactions with Residents

Fear and suspicion towards waste pickers, propagated by the State and exacerbated by security firms, was communicated non-verbally by householders. Waste pickers had the impression that people thought of them as homeless and dirty, with no idea as to what waste pickers actually felt or thought (see Chapter 5). In some parts of Cape Town, residents' associations tell householders not to put their bin in the street the night before collection. Instead they should wait until immediately before the municipal workers arrive, thus minimising the gains to be made from waste picking by restricting access to household waste. In other parts of the world, the right to privacy is used to rationalise objections to waste pickers looking through residents' rubbish (see Chapter 2). On both

counts, waste pickers threaten the neat division between the confinement of dirt to back region (private home) and front region spaces (public streets). Rubbish reveals personal consumption habits, communicating what happens behind closed doors, which can become a source of shame when propelled into public view.

Cognisant of suburban residents' prejudicial views towards them, waste pickers anticipated the unease that their presence in front region spaces (outside their home) may cause. They employ a range of impression management strategies to present themselves as trustworthy and reliable (Chapter 8). They used dramatic realisation to convey attributes that may otherwise remain obscure. These included ostentatious displays of being meticulously clean and tidy. In the absence of prolonged verbal engagement with normals, these performances enabled non-verbal communication with audiences. In this way, waste pickers successfully upheld their right to freedom of movement through suburban streets. However, this right was negotiated and renegotiated in each encounter with residents, caretakers, landlords and municipal workers.

Although waste pickers' right to access household waste hung in the balance from one week to the next, they were able to resist restrictions on their freedom of movement. They were able to exploit the fact that all their interactions with normals happen in public, front region spaces. Waste pickers could therefore become part of the audience in residents' performances. When people in relative positions of power tried to wield influence over the movement of waste pickers, they had to do so in full view of the public. Any imposition of restrictions on the movement of waste pickers is a discreditable stigma symbol for residents and landlords, because of the synonymous link between autocracy and apartheid-era stereotypes. Audiences' fear of being judged as racist has changed the power relations between waste pickers and normals, to the extent that waste pickers can legitimately contest restrictions on their mobility (see Chapter 8).

While thrusting residents into front region spaces enabled waste pickers to assert their right to freedom of movement, waste pickers were also constrained by spending so much time in the public eye (see Chapter 7). Waste pickers start work in the very early hours of the morning when the streets are quiet and dark. Because the working day of residents commences much later than that of waste pickers, there is a slim window of opportunity for waste pickers to make a good impression. Many residents, even if they want to stop to talk, are on their way to work. When they finish work, unlike most other informal street workers, waste pickers do not return to a home. This means that they work

and live in front region spaces, with limited access to private, personal space. Stigma symbols are thus always at risk of being seen.

Waste pickers are unable to consistently maintain an idealised front beyond the hours of the morning when they are at work, for several reasons. Firstly, they can never be sure who is watching and when. Anyone, if subject to this panoptic gaze would have little control over the power of stigma symbols to discredit them, unless they were able to permanently maintain an idealised front. This is particularly difficult for waste pickers, given that they have multiple stigma symbols, some of which are based on their appearance, and are impossible to conceal (see Chapter 5). Thus, audiences are permanently able to access discrediting and discreditable information about waste pickers from their dishevelled appearance. People think waste pickers are homeless, alcoholic criminals, because that is what they look like.

Secondly, waste pickers consume alcohol in places and at times of the day that are frowned upon. Drinking in licensed premises in the evening is socially acceptable, but congregating next to a river at 10.30 a.m. to consume alcohol is not. Legislation makes it illegal to consume alcohol in public spaces, which gives the police the right to impose sanctions against waste pickers. In response to this threat, waste pickers drink quickly to minimise the likelihood that they will be caught drinking and have their alcohol confiscated. As a consequence, they quickly become intoxicated and disorderly. In the absence of any private spaces to retreat to, drunken behaviour happens in public, which conforms to stereotypes and discredits the good impression that they make while working (Chapter 7).

9.4 Interactions with Researchers

Waste pickers were quick to use my presence to portray waste picking as relatively lucrative. By discrediting their nearest neighbours in the social hierarchy, they attempted to position themselves above criminals and the working urban poor. Although their definition of waste picking was idealised, they presented evidence that was difficult to refute (see Chapter 6). For example, seeing waste pickers donate food to a construction worker gave credence to their performance of superiority, especially in contrast to the exploitative working conditions of those living on the Cape Flats. Given the choice, it was easy to see how a life on the streets in the suburbs was preferable to repatriation to their

childhood homes. For several waste pickers, kinship ties had not been completely severed, but the willingness of their family to accommodate them was conditional on abstinence.

As explained in Chapter 4, in anticipation of waste pickers' experiences of prejudice and discrimination, I tried to design and practise a research approach that would minimise the differences between waste pickers and myself. Even amid my conscious attempt to avoid entrenching stigma, my comparative privilege bubbled beneath the surface. My status as a researcher, and a representative of opposing teams, meant I presented both an opportunity and a threat to the agency of waste pickers to change their public image. In order to impress on me their definition of waste picking, the team gave me access to back region conversations. Given that I do not understand Afrikaans, the waste pickers had complete control over what I did and did not hear. Although not being able to talk to them in their first language was a weakness, it was also an invaluable tool in placing the power in their hands during my fieldwork.

A small fraction of the interactions that we had appear in the preceding chapters. Giving over substantial proportions of the thesis to fieldnote extracts was an attempt to balance my voice with that of waste pickers, but is also evidence of the power of researchers over the data once they leave the field. Since fieldwork ended at the end of 2014, Adam van Heerden, another University of Cape Town student, contacted me to see if I could put him in touch with waste pickers. I introduced Adam to Tamas and left them to it. In my writing I have taken care to try to protect the research participants' anonymity. While working with Adam, the waste pickers with whom I worked have told Adam to use their names in his minor dissertation. Tamas also features in a short film that Adam made (van Heerden, 2016). In doing so he nonchalantly overturns the academic conventions that are theoretically in place to protect vulnerable groups, which I thought of as important to adhere to on ethical grounds.

9.5 Stigma and the Agency of Waste Pickers

Although forging a bond with some normals enabled waste pickers to enjoy otherwise embargoed privileges, their agential capacity in this regard remained confined to back region spaces. Thus they conformed to the homeless, alcoholic stereotype, and enabled audiences to justify the need to maintain and increase levels of security. What remains largely unseen is the volume of work performed by waste pickers, for example, the work of making a living from what others throw away, the impression management

work they do to maintain access to household waste, and the work of sustaining a bond with agents of formal social control. Instead the audiences' attention is distracted by the physical appearance of waste pickers, fear of the unknown resulting from a lack of information about the meaning and motives of people who pick through bins, disruption of the order and image of modern public spaces, and emotional responses to the sight of dirt and matter out of place.

While the waste pickers were consistently able to posit waste picking as a choice, in the absence of prolonged interaction, onlookers may struggle to see how trawling through bins is driven by anything other than necessity. Audiences are somewhat blinkered by the stigma of homelessness, resulting in a reluctance to see beyond the visual. The onus is on waste pickers to forge relationships through impression management, and to form tentative bonds with normals, which are routinely negotiated and renegotiated. After the working day ends, waste pickers sow the seeds of doubt as to the robustness of their front region performance as people who are trustworthy. Alcoholism and associated violence discredited the idealised front that they had constructed in their interactions with me, and conformed to negative stereotypes in the eyes of other audiences. The bulk of time spent in the public gaze was during the hours other workers would spend in private back region spaces. Instead, waste pickers live their life on permanent display, subjected to discipline and exposed to judgment that is exacerbated by the multiple sources of surveillance. However, panoptic power is never complete, and the waste pickers used subtle forms of resistance to thwart attempts to modernise, cleanse and order public spaces to emulate European aesthetics.

Overall, stigma occupies an insidious place in the agency of waste pickers. Based on their interactions with me, stigma is almost completely invisible and does not constrain their ability to present themselves as superior to the working poor in Cape Town. In terms of changing public perceptions of waste pickers to enable a non-stereotypical interpretation of people and their work, however, there is a long way to go. From the perspective of waste pickers, though rarely acknowledged by them, there is still a tendency for them to feel stigmatised as homeless, smelly, stupid, poor, dirty and messy. The emphasis on visual markers is a constraint to their ability to present themselves as approachable and trustworthy. Once normals can get past how waste pickers look, they might be able to see them as individuals, recognise them by character traits, and know them by name. At the moment, waste pickers are doing more work than normals in attempting to build relationships, in order to maintain the freedoms that they have worked

hard to achieve and sustain. Despite these constraints, waste pickers have forged relationships - particularly with me - to present themselves as agents with projective capacity and a force to be reckoned with.

9.6 Implications and Further Research

Environmentalist and anti-globalisation movements have re-invigorated the concept of people re-using and re-purposing items when they have served their original purpose. However, a concurrent trend has been the increase in the privatisation of waste in South Africa, which has blurred the distinction between public and private property. It has therefore become easier to portray waste picking as theft. However, the process of taking items that other people no longer want, and giving them to people who can make use of them, is a long-standing tradition. Charity shops and second-hand markets work on this principle. Waste picking is the process of checking to see if residents have thrown away things that could actually have already been taken out to be recycled or given to a charity shop. My research did not uncover any objection to people benefitting from things a person has decided they no longer want or need. The objection comes when the people benefitting physically fit the appearance of a criminal. I therefore argue that putting rubbish in a bin does not cause crime. Consequently, one of the implications of this research is that policies implemented to increase security and surveillance in the suburbs are not justifiable on the grounds that waste picking is a threat to security and safety.

Although it would make a difference to waste pickers if people stopped judging them solely on their appearance, the implications of my findings go beyond "don't judge a book by its cover." Everyone has prejudices, some of which are well-founded, and it is not my intention to try to change how people form first impressions. That said, if people actually talked to the waste pickers in their area, then in getting to know them as individuals they might learn the difference between a waste picker and an active gang member. Waste pickers are continually on the streets and have an in-depth knowledge of how to navigate suburban spaces on foot. Their presence and knowledge could be interpreted as an opportunity for residents to build alliances with waste pickers. This is speculative, and an area for further research could be to find out what residents' perceptions of waste pickers are and how they arrive at these judgments. Specifically, what needs to be in place for residents to have a positive relationship with the waste pickers in their area?

Previous gains that have enhanced the image of waste pickers have been achieved through efforts to help them receive recognition from government. While a consequence of these collaborations might be to reduce stigma, policies to formalise waste pickers do not address the underlying cause of prejudices that are held against them. Even if waste pickers have the legitimate legal right to access bins to operate a kerbside recycling scheme, this does not change the negative impression that many residents have of waste pickers as a group. When policy-makers change the status of a minority of waste pickers who are willing to become formal employees, it continues to divide workers into legitimate and illegitimate ones. This exacerbates the stigma of criminality experienced by waste pickers who do not want to enter into standard employment relationships. An alternative approach could be to support *all* waste pickers, regardless of how they choose to operate.

A contribution to existing literature about collaborations among waste pickers around the world, could be to conduct research into the micro level interactions. This may help to explain why co-operative movements have had more success in parts of South America than South Africa. In contexts that share South Africa's neo-liberal political agenda and extreme levels of inequality, a useful pursuit could be to examine the role of micro scale interactions among waste pickers. For example, a comparative analysis of waste pickers who do and do not choose to engage in collective mobilization and collective action could shed light on differing understanding of the possibility for transformation.

The findings of this study show that there is enormous diversity among waste pickers. This is currently not reflected in the attitude of policy-makers in Cape Town, who tend to assume informal street waste pickers are all the same. This means that waste pickers feature in policy only in terms of their identity as homeless people, ex-criminals, or addicts. Working to resolve housing issues and addiction does not address the work life of waste pickers. Other than researchers and non-governmental organisations, currently waste pickers have no one to talk to about waste picking. Nevertheless, the people to whom I spoke went to great lengths to distinguish themselves from generic homeless alcoholics. The final point I would like to make, then, is that if these differences are significant to individuals, then they should be significant to policy-makers too.

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APPENDIX
Summary of fieldwork sessions

Week	Date	Minutes
1	December 12 2013 [Transcribed before I noted down time]	
2	January 16, 2014 [Recorder turned itself off]	10
3	January 23 2014	193
4	January 30, 2014 [Off ill]	0
5	February 6, 2014	228
6	February 13, 2014	203
7	February 20, 2014	260
8	February 27, 2014	208
9	March 5, 2014	222
10	March 13, 2014	253
11	March 20, 2014	241
12	March 27, 2014	240
	April and May, 2014 [2 month break]/ June 5, 2014 [PhD Retreat]	0
13	June 12, 2014	110
14	June 19, 2014	190
15	June 26, 2014	202
16	July 3, 2014	178
17	July 10, 2014	386
18	July 17, 2014	185
	July 24, 2014 [Off ill]	0
19	July 31, 2014	156
20	August 7, 2014	180
	August 14, 2014 [Off ill]	0
21	August 21, 2014	71
22	August 28, 2014	122
23	Sept 4, 2014	73
24	Sept 11, 2014	192
	September 18, 2014 [LEP Worksop]/ September 25, 2014 [PhD retreat]	0
25	October 2, 2014	174
26	October 9, 2014	108
27	October 16, 2014	115
28	October 23, 2014	135
29	October 30, 2014 [Morning off to sort out my visa]	4
30	November 6, 2014	84
31	November 13, 2014	149
32	November 20, 2014	86
33	November 27, 2014	11
	Total (minutes)	4969
	Total (hours)	82.8